United States General Accounting Office

GAO

Report to the Honorable Bob Barr
House of Representatives

June 2002

THE WHITE HOUSE

Allegations of Damage During the 2001 Presidential Transition

GAO
Accountability ★ Integrity ★ Reliability

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Abbreviations

EEOB	Eisenhower Executive Office Building
EOP	Executive Office of the President
GSA	General Services Administration
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration
NEOB	New Executive Office Building
OA	Office of Administration
ONDCP	Office of National Drug Control Policy
WHCA	White House Communications Agency

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United States General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

June 7, 2002

The Honorable Bob Barr
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Barr:

This report responds to your June 4, 2001, request that we review alleged damage at the White House during the 2001 presidential transition. We agreed to determine (1) whether damage, vandalism, or pranks occurred in the White House and the adjacent Eisenhower Executive Office Building (EEOB) during the transition by obtaining the observations of Executive Office of the President (EOP) staff and preparers of White House office space during the transition and reviewing any available documentation, as well as obtaining the comments of former Clinton administration staff; (2) to the extent possible, how the 2001 presidential transition compared with previous presidential transitions in terms of damage, vandalism, or pranks; and (3) what steps, if any, should be taken to help prevent and document any vandalism during future presidential transitions.

Background

On January 29, 2001, you wrote us that you had become increasingly concerned about media reports of damage to the White House and the EEOB that was discovered by the incoming Bush administration and asked that we investigate whether damage may have been deliberately caused by former Clinton administration staff. We subsequently asked EOP and the General Services Administration (GSA) whether they had any information that may be responsive to your request. On April 18, 2001, the director of the Office of Administration (OA),[1] an EOP unit, wrote us a letter indicating that the White House had no record of damage that "may have been deliberately caused by employees of the prior [a]dministration" and that "….repair records do not contain information that would allow someone to determine the cause of damage that is being repaired."

In late May and early June 2001, these allegations resurfaced in the news media and on June 4, you asked us to investigate the matter further. On June 5, 2001, the counsel to the president provided us with a list of damage that was discovered in the White House complex during the first days of the

[1]This official's title is also special assistant to the president.

Bush administration. In his transmittal letter, the counsel to the president said that the list "…may be responsive to your earlier request for written records documenting damage deliberately caused by employees of the prior [a]dministration…." Further, the counsel said that the list was not the result of a comprehensive or systematic investigation into the issue and should not be considered a complete record of the damage that was found. The list was prepared by OA, which provides common administrative support and services to units within the White House complex, which may include the procurement and maintenance of computers, telephones, furniture, and other personal property. OA prepared the list on the basis of the recollections of five EOP officials with responsibilities in the areas of administration, management, telephones, facilities, and supplies. It listed missing building fixtures, such as doorknobs and a presidential seal; computer keyboards with missing "W" keys; damaged and overturned furniture; telephone lines pulled from the wall; telephones with missing telephone number labels; fax machines moved to the wrong areas and a secure telephone left open with the key in it; offices left in a state of "general trashing," including the contents of desk drawers dumped on the floor, a glass desk top smashed and on the floor, and refrigerators unplugged with spoiled food; writing on the walls; and voice mail greetings that had obscene messages. The list also indicated that six to eight 14-foot trucks were needed to recover usable supplies that had been thrown away.

The EOP consists of a number of units, including the White House Office, the Office of the Vice President, the National Security Council (NSC), and OA.[2] The White House Office is composed of staff who directly support and advance the president's goals and are commonly referred to as "White House staff." Offices of the White House Office include, but are not limited to, advance, cabinet affairs, communications, counsel, the first lady, legislative affairs, management and administration, political affairs, presidential personnel, press secretary, public liaison, and scheduling. Although White House Office staff generally leave their positions at the end of an administration, many EOP staff at agencies such as the NSC and OA hold their positions during consecutive administrations. In this report, we referred to staff who are working or worked in the White House complex during the current administration as "EOP staff" and staff who worked in

[2]Other EOP units include the Council of Economic Advisers, Council on Environmental Quality, Office of Homeland Security, Office of Management and Budget, Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), Office of Science and Technology Policy, and the Office of the United States Trade Representative.

the previous administration and no longer worked in the White House complex after January 20, 2001, as "former Clinton administration staff."

The White House complex consists of several buildings, including the White House, the adjacent EEOB, and the New Executive Office Building (NEOB). This report focuses on observations that were made in the West Wing of the White House and the EEOB during the transition, and not the White House residence or the NEOB. Excluding military staff, most White House Office staff work in the East and West Wings of the White House or the EEOB. GSA maintains the White House office space, including cleaning the offices and repairing the physical structure. OA asks GSA to repair furniture in the White House complex. Some EOP agencies, such as the Office of the Vice President, also handle some of their own administrative functions. The Secret Service, a unit of the Department of the Treasury, is responsible for the security of the White House complex and its occupants.

Scope and Methodology

To obtain information regarding observations of damage, vandalism, and pranks, we interviewed the five EOP officials who contributed to the June 2001 list (the OA director, the OA associate director for facilities management, the OA associate director for general services, the management office director, and the telephone service director); the OA associate director for information systems and technology; an on-site manager for a contractor providing telecommunications services in the White House complex; the Secret Service deputy special agent in charge, presidential protection division, White House security branch; the director of GSA's White House service center; the chief usher for the executive residence; and four GSA cleaning crew leaders who worked in the White House complex during the transition.

We also sent letters to 518 EOP staff who worked in the West Wing and EEOB during the first 3 weeks of the Bush administration, asking those who observed any damage, vandalism, or pranks during the weeks surrounding the 2001 transition to arrange a meeting with us through the Office of White House Counsel.[3] We believed that staff who were in the complex during the first 3 weeks of the administration were the most likely staff to have observed damage, vandalism, or pranks. The Office of White House Counsel arranged for interviews with a total of 78 EOP staff, and an associate counsel to the president was present during our interviews with EOP staff. Of the 78 staff, 23 worked for the EOP before January 20, 2001,[4] and 55 began working for the EOP on or after January 20. The interviews with EOP staff were conducted between June 2001 and May 2002. Because these interviews were conducted between 5 and 16 months after the transition, we recognize that recollections could have been imprecise. It was not possible to determine whether, in all cases, the reported incidents had occurred, when they occurred, why they occurred, and who may have been responsible for them. More detailed information about our methodology in reporting the observations is contained in appendix I.

To determine if any documentation existed that may not have been previously located, we asked the EOP, GSA, and the Secret Service to provide any documentation they had regarding damage or theft reports, requests for repairs, and invoices for items that had to be purchased. In a June 6, 2001, letter to an associate counsel to the president, we said that "we will need access to any records and documents maintained by the White House, GSA, the Secret Service, or other organizations at the White House that relate to the alleged damage as well as to federal employees and contractors working at the White House who might have information bearing on the allegations."

We also interviewed a total of 29 GSA staff who prepared the office space for the new administration. In addition, we interviewed two National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) staff who worked in the

[3]We did not send letters to occupants of other EOP office space, such as the East Wing, because our initial interviews of EOP and GSA staff did not indicate that any damage, vandalism, or pranks were observed there. We also did not send letters to eight EOP staff whom we had already interviewed before July 31, 2001, when we prepared the letters.

[4]Most of the EOP staff we interviewed who worked for the EOP before January 20, 2001, were OA staff. We did not interview any EOP staff who worked for certain EOP units, such as the United States Trade Representative, ONDCP, or the Office of Homeland Security.

White House complex to assemble presidential materials during the last days of the Clinton administration about their observations; a contract employee who helped discard keyboards from the EOP after the transition; and an official from the White House Communications Agency (WHCA), which handles communications equipment for the White House.

After interviewing EOP and GSA staff about their observations, we interviewed a total of 72 former Clinton administration staff to obtain their comments on the allegations during the 2001 transition and to obtain their observations about the 1993 transition. We interviewed 35 former Clinton administration staff who were identified by the senior advisor for presidential transition during the Clinton administration as having worked in the White House complex during the 1993 or 2001 transitions. We also contacted an additional 37 former Clinton administration staff because they were former directors, managers, or representatives from the primary offices where observations were made. We did not, however, obtain comments from former Clinton administration staff regarding every observation. Of the 72 former Clinton administration staff we interviewed, 67 worked in the White House complex during the 2001 transition and 19 worked there during the 1993 transition. Five of the 72 former Clinton administration staff we interviewed left before the end of the administration, but had worked in the White House complex during the 1993 transition.

We obtained repair or replacement costs for some of the observed incidents. However, as explained in more detail later in this report, we did not request cost information associated with all of the observations because we did not believe certain costs would be material or readily available. We also believed that the effort that would have been needed to obtain and verify cost data for all observed incidents would not have been commensurate with the benefit of having reported the information. Further, although certain repair and replacement costs were provided, it was unclear what portion of these costs was incurred or will be incurred due to vandalism.

To determine how the 2001 presidential transition compared with others in terms of damage, we asked 14 EOP and 2 GSA staff who worked in the White House complex during previous transitions about their recollections of damage, vandalism, or pranks during previous transitions. In addition, we reviewed news media reports to identify any reported damage, vandalism, or pranks during previous transitions. We searched for news reports concerning the 1981, 1989, and 1993 transitions.

We assessed what steps could be taken to help prevent and document any damage during future presidential transitions by discussing the issue with GSA and EOP officials and by obtaining the check-out procedures for departing Clinton administration staff. We also discussed check-out procedures with personnel responsible for the office space and equipment at the U.S. Capitol, including staff from the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer, House of Representatives; Office of Customer Relations, Office of the Senate Sergeant-at-Arms; and Office of the Building Superintendent, Office of the Architect of the Capitol. We contacted them because the change of staff and offices on Capitol Hill after elections appeared somewhat comparable to the turnover of EOP staff at the end of an administration. We did our work from June 2001 to May 2002 in Washington, D.C., in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

Results

Damage, theft, vandalism, and pranks did occur in the White House complex during the 2001 presidential transition. Multiple people said that, at the beginning of the Bush administration, they observed (1) many offices that were messy, disheveled, or contained excessive trash or personal items; (2) numerous prank signs, printed materials, stickers, and written messages that were left behind, some of which contained derogatory and offensive statements about the president; (3) government property that was damaged, including computer keyboards with missing or damaged "W" keys and broken furniture; and (4) items that were missing, such as office signs, a presidential seal, cellular telephones, doorknobs, and telephone number labels. In addition, documentation provided indicated that some broken, missing, or possibly stolen items were repaired or replaced at the beginning of the Bush administration. Several EOP staff said they believed that what they observed during the transition, such as broken furniture and excessive trash left behind, was done intentionally.

Some former Clinton administration staff acknowledged that they had observed a few keyboards with missing "W" keys and some prank signs at the end of the administration. However, the former Clinton administration staff we interviewed also said that (1) the amount of trash that was observed during the transition was what could be expected when staff move out of their offices after 8 years; (2) they did not take the items that were discovered missing; (3) some furniture was broken, but not intentionally, before the transition and little money was spent on repairs and upkeep during the administration; and (4) many of the reported observations were not of vandalism. Further, two former Clinton

administration representatives told us that, in their opinion, most of the observations were not true.

Incidents such as the removal of keys from computer keyboards; the theft of various items; the leaving of certain voice mail messages, signs, and written messages; and the placing of glue on desk drawers, clearly were done intentionally. Any intentional damage at the White House complex, which is a national treasure, is both inappropriate and a serious matter. The theft of or willful damage to government property would constitute a criminal act in violation of federal law. Although it is clear that some of the reported incidents were intentional, such as the removal and damaging of keys on computer keyboards, it was unclear whether, in all cases, the reported incidents occurred, when they occurred, how many occurred, and who was responsible for them. In addition, regarding the items reported missing, it was not known whether all of them were thefts, and if they were, who was responsible for them.

Some documentation corroborating a number of the observations existed. EOP facilities, computer, and telephone officials said that much repair and replacement work was done during the transition without documentation being prepared because of the need to complete the work quickly. The OA associate director for facilities management, for example, said that no documentation was prepared regarding three to four missing office signs, a doorknob, and two or three medallions (small metal presidential seals affixed to office signs) that were replaced during that time. Further, documentation was provided indicating that much telephone service work was done during the transition, but this information did not directly corroborate allegations of vandalism and pranks involving the telephones.

Observations of EOP Staff and Related Documentation

Seventy-eight EOP staff who worked in the White House complex during the 2001 transition provided observations about the condition of the complex shortly before or at the beginning of the administration. In addition, 10 of the 29 GSA staff we interviewed told us about observations that related to the items contained in the June 2001 list. The observations generally reflected the types of incidents included in the June 2001 list and also included additional items that were not on it. In certain categories, the observations of EOP staff differed from the June 2001 list in terms of the total numbers of incidents or the alleged extent of the damage. More observations of damage, vandalism, and pranks were made on the first floor of the EEOB in the offices of advance and scheduling, the counsel's

offices, and the offices of the first lady; and on the second floor of the EEOB in the offices of the vice president, than in other offices.[5]

Summarized below are observations made in specific locations[6] in the main categories, related comments from former Clinton administration staff and GSA staff, and any documentation relating to the observations. Appendix I contains additional information about the observations and additional comments from former Clinton administration staff.

- Twenty-nine EOP staff said they observed about two dozen prank signs, printed materials, stickers, or written messages that were affixed to walls or desks; placed in copiers, desks, and cabinets; or placed on the floor. They said some of these were derogatory and offensive in nature about the president, and sometimes there were multiple copies in certain locations. Six EOP staff also said that they had observed writing on the walls (words) in a total of two rooms. Thirteen former Clinton administration staff said that they saw a total of 10 to 27 prank signs in the EEOB during the transition, but one former employee also said that the prank signs that she saw were harmless jokes.

  - In June and November 2001, EOP staff provided copies of 2 prank signs that they said were found during the transition, which were derogatory jokes about the president and vice president. In August and September 2001, we were also shown a roll of political stickers that were left behind and 2 stickers affixed to a file cabinet and desk containing derogatory statements about the president.

- Twenty-six EOP staff said that they observed a total of 30 to 64 computer keyboards with missing or damaged "W" keys. Two former Clinton administration staff said that they saw a total of 3 or 4 keyboards with missing "W" keys.

  - Purchase records indicated that the EOP bought 62 computer keyboards on January 23 and 24, 2001. The January 23 purchase request for 31 keyboards indicated that the keyboards were "needed

[5]The vice president has an office in the West Wing and a ceremonial office in the EEOB. Most of the vice president's staff work in the EEOB.

[6]Appendix I contains information regarding additional observations that staff identified by floor or building, or about which staff did not provide information about where they made their observations.

to support the transition," and the January 24 purchase request for another 31 keyboards indicated that it was a "second request for the letter 'W' problem." The purchase requests were approved by an OA financial manager who, in April 2001, sent an E-mail to an OA branch chief indicating that the 62 keyboards purchased in January 2001 were approximately the number that were defective because "W" keys were missing or inoperable during the transition. (The actual number of keyboards that were damaged during the transition is uncertain because of different statements provided by EOP staff regarding the number of damaged keyboards that had to be replaced.)

  - A March 27, 2001, OA excess property report indicated that 12 boxes of keyboards, speakers, cords, and soundcards were discarded, but did not specify the number of keyboards that were included. (More information about the excess property report is contained in appendix I.)

- Twenty-two EOP staff and one GSA employee told us that they observed offices that were messy, disheveled, dirty, or contained excessive trash or personal items left behind. Some of those staff also said they believed that offices were intentionally "trashed." Former Clinton administration staff said the amount of trash that was observed during the transition was what could be expected when staff moved out of their offices after 8 years.

  - The EOP provided seven photographs that, according to an associate counsel to the president, were taken of two or three offices in the EEOB by an EOP employee on January 21, 2001, and that showed piles of binders and office supplies, empty beverage containers, and other items. However, a Clinton administration transition official said that the pictures showed trash and not vandalism.

  - A January 30, 2001, GSA facility request form documented a request to clean carpet, furniture, and drapes and to patch and paint walls and moldings in an office that an EOP employee said was "trashed out," including the carpet, furniture, and walls, and had three to four "sizable" holes in a wall. The facility request was made by the EOP employee who told us about this observation.

  - Another January 30, 2001, GSA facility request form documented a request to clean carpet, furniture, and drapes in a different office that

an EOP employee said was filthy and contained worn and dirty furniture.

  - January 25, 2001, and February 17, 2001, GSA facility request forms documented requests to clean carpet, furniture, and drapes in a suite of offices that an EOP employee told us was "extremely trashed" and smelled bad. The facility requests were made by the EOP employee who told us about this observation.

- Ten EOP staff said that they observed a total of 16 to 21 pieces of broken furniture. Former Clinton administration staff said that some furniture was broken before the transition and could have been the result of normal wear and tear, and little money was spent on repairs and upkeep during the administration.

  - January 25 and 29, 2001, GSA facility request forms documented requests to gain access to and for a key to a locked file cabinet in a room where an EOP employee said that he had found a key that was bent and almost entirely broken off in a cabinet that, once opened by a locksmith, contained Gore-Lieberman stickers. The requests were made by the EOP employee who told us about this observation.

  - A January 30, 2001, GSA facility request form documented a request to fix a broken desk lock in an office where an EOP employee told us that a lock on her desk appeared to have been smashed. The facility request was made by the EOP employee who told us about this observation.

  - A February 12, 2001, GSA facility request form documented a request to repair a leg on a sofa in an office on a floor of the EEOB where an EOP employee observed a sofa with broken legs.

  - A February 21, 2001, GSA facility request form documented a request to repair arms on two chairs in an office where two EOP staff told us that they had observed broken chairs. The facility request was made for the EOP employee who told us about this observation. However, the manager of the office during the Clinton administration where EOP staff said they observed broken chairs said that arms on two chairs in that suite of offices had become detached a year or two before the transition and that carpenters had glued them back, but that they did not hold. Two GSA facility request forms in 1999

documented requests made by the former office manager for previous repairs of chairs in that office suite.

- Five EOP staff told us they observed a total of 11 to 13 pieces of furniture that were on their sides or overturned. Six EOP staff said they observed a total of four to five desks with a sticky substance or glue on the top or on drawers.

- Six EOP staff said that they observed a total of 5 to 11 missing office signs, which include medallions (presidential seals about 2 inches in diameter), and one of those six EOP staff also said he observed that six medallions were missing from office signs; four EOP staff said that they observed a total of 10 to 11 missing doorknobs, which may have been historic originals; an EOP official, a GSA official, and a Secret Service official said that a presidential seal 12 inches in diameter was stolen; two EOP staff said they observed a total of 9 to 11 missing television remote controls; and two EOP staff said that two cameras were missing. In addition, two EOP officials said that about 20 cellular telephones could not be located in the office suite where they belonged. The former occupants of offices during the Clinton administration whom we interviewed where items were observed missing said that they did not take them.

  - An April 19, 2001, GSA facility request form documented a request for "replacement of frames & medallions" for four rooms, including an office where three EOP staff observed a missing office sign and medallion. The three other rooms that, according to the facility request form, needed office signs were located on one of two floors of the EEOB where an EOP employee observed four missing office signs.

  - A February 7, 2001, GSA facility request form documented a request to "put doorknob on inter-office…door" in an office where an EOP employee told us that he had observed two pairs of missing doorknobs. The facility request was made for the EOP employee who told us about this observation. However, a GSA planner/estimator said that the work done in response to that request was not to replace a missing doorknob, but to perform maintenance on a doorknob with a worn-out part.

  - A Secret Service report documented the theft of a presidential seal that was 12 inches in diameter from the EEOB on January 19, 2001.

- Purchase records indicated that the EOP bought a total of 15 television remote controls on March 6 and 15; June 5; and July 10, 2001. The EOP indicated that these purchases were made to replace remote controls that were missing from offices during the transition.

- Purchase records indicated that the EOP bought two cameras on March 16, 2001, and April 4, 2001. The EOP indicated that these purchases were made to replace cameras that two EOP staff said were discovered missing. However, the director of the office during the Clinton administration where the cameras belonged said that the cameras were still in the office when the staff left on their last day of employment with the EOP.

- Purchase records indicated that the EOP bought 26 cellular telephones on January 26, 2001. The EOP indicated that these purchases were made to replace cellular telephones that could not be located. However, former Clinton administration staff who worked in the office where the cellular telephones belonged said that they left them there at the end of the administration. In addition, a former official from that office during the Clinton administration provided copies of check-out forms documenting that the staff had returned their cellular telephones at the end of the administration.

- Five EOP staff said that they observed a total of 98 to 107 telephones that had no labels identifying the telephone numbers, and seven EOP staff said they saw telephones unplugged or piled up. Former Clinton administration staff said that some telephones did not have labels identifying the numbers during the administration, mainly because certain telephones were used for outgoing calls only.

  - The EOP provided documentation summarizing telephone service orders closed from January 20, 2001, through February 20, 2001, containing 29 service orders that cited the need for or placing of labels on telephones; 6 of the 29 service orders were for work in offices where telephone labels were observed missing. EOP also provided two blanket work orders and four individual work orders that cited relabeling or placing labels on telephones for which the summary document did not mention labels. However, all of the 29 service orders on the summary document and the blanket and individual work orders EOP provided were part of other requests for service and the extent to which the work was done solely to replace missing labels was not clear.

- A January 29, 2001, telecommunications service request documented a request for services including "replace labels on all phones that [sic] removed."[7]

- A February 7, 2001, telecommunications service request documented a request to remove a telephone from an office where piles of telephones were observed.

- Thirteen EOP staff said they heard a total of 22 to 28 inappropriate or prank voice mail greetings or messages, and two EOP staff said they heard a total of 6 to 7 obscene or vulgar voice mail messages that were left on telephones in vacated offices. One former Clinton administration employee said that he left what he considered to be a humorous voice mail greeting on his telephone on his last day of employment.

- Two EOP staff said that they saw a total of 5 to 6 telephone lines "ripped" (not simply disconnected) or pulled from walls, and another EOP employee said that at least 25 cords were pulled from walls in two rooms. Former Clinton administration staff we interviewed who occupied those offices said they did not pull the cords from the walls.

  - A January 24, 2001, GSA facility request form documented a request to "organize all loose wires and make them not so visible" in an office suite where an EOP employee said that at least 25 cords were pulled from the walls. The facility request was made by the EOP employee who told us about this observation. The former occupant of the main room in that office suite said that he did not observe any computer or telephone cords that were cut or torn out of walls, and that his office only had 5 telephone and computer cords.

Observations of damage, vandalism, or pranks were reported by EOP staff in about 100 of about 1,074 rooms in the EEOB and in 8 of about 137 rooms[8] in the East and West Wings of the White House. According to the OA

[7]In commenting on a draft of this report, the counsel to the president cited other documentation that the White House believed was indicative of having to replace missing telephone labels. However, we were not provided with all of the documentation cited, and we did not believe that the documentation that we were provided, other than the one cited above, was definitive in that regard.

[8]The total number of rooms in the East and West Wings included reception areas, restrooms, and nonoffice space.

associate director for facilities management, approximately 395 offices were vacated during the transition: 304 in the EEOB, 54 in the West Wing, and 37 in the East Wing. In the overwhelming majority of cases, one person said that he or she observed a specific incident in a particular location. However, more than one person observed most types of incidents. In addition, we were generally unable to determine when the observed incidents occurred and who was responsible for them because no one said he or she saw people carrying out what was observed or said that he or she was responsible for what was observed, with three exceptions: (1) an EOP employee who said she saw a volunteer remove an office sign from a wall, (2) a former Clinton administration employee who said he wrote a "goodwill" message inside the drawer of his former desk, and (3) another former Clinton administration employee who said that he left what he believed to be a humorous voice mail message greeting at the end of the administration.[9] Further, we were told that many contractor staff, such as movers and cleaners, were working in the White House complex during the weekend of January 20 and 21, 2001, but the White House did not provide the data we had requested regarding visitors to the EEOB during that time.[10]

From our interviews of EOP staff, we totaled the number of incidents that were observed in the categories indicated in the June 2001 list of damage. In certain categories, the observations of EOP staff differed from the list in terms of the total numbers of incidents or alleged extent of the damage. For example, regarding the statement contained in the June 2001 list that 100 keyboards had to replaced because the "W" keys were removed, EOP staff provided different estimates of the number of keyboards that had to be replaced because of missing or damaged keys, ranging from about 33 keyboards to 150 keyboards. As a result, we could not determine how many keyboards were actually replaced because of missing or damaged "W" keys. Regarding the statement contained in the list that furniture in six offices was damaged severely enough to require a complete refurbishment or destruction, we were told that 16 to 21 pieces of broken furniture were observed during the transition. This included 5 to 7 chairs with broken legs or backs, but we did not obtain any documentation indicating that they were either completely refurbished or destroyed. The EOP provided

[9]See appendix I for more information about these incidents.

[10]GSA indicated that the staff who cleaned the EEOB during the weekend of January 20 to 21, 2001, included 55 GSA custodial workers, 67 contract workers, and additional contract crews for carpet cleaning and furniture moving.

photographs of 4 pieces of furniture that, according to an associate counsel to the president, were moved to an EOP remote storage facility that is now quarantined. They included a chair with a missing leg, a chair with a missing back, a sofa without a seat cushion, and a desk with missing drawer fronts. However, no information was provided identifying the offices from which these pieces of furniture were taken, when the damage occurred, or whether any of the damage was done intentionally. Further, EOP staff told us about fewer incidences of writing on walls than were indicated in the list. Regarding the statement in the list that eight trucks were needed to recover new and usable supplies that had been thrown away, the EOP official responsible for office supplies said that about eight truckloads of excessed items were brought to an EOP warehouse where they were sorted into usable and nonusable materials, but he was not aware of any usable supplies being discarded.

Costs Associated with the Observations

Cost data were not readily available regarding all of the observations. Further, although certain repair and replacement costs were provided, it was unclear what portion of these costs was incurred or will be incurred due to vandalism. The EOP and GSA provided documentation indicating that at least $9,324 was spent to repair and replace items that were observed broken or missing in specific locations and for cleaning services in offices where observations were made. The following list itemizes those costs:

- $4,850 to purchase 62 keyboards;[11]
- $2,040 to purchase 26 cellular telephones;
- $1,150 for professional cleaning services;
- $729 to purchase 2 cameras;

[11]Although the EOP provided documents regarding the purchase of 62 computer keyboards in late January 2001, EOP staff with responsibilities involving computers provided different estimates of the number of keyboards that had to be replaced at the beginning of the new administration because they were intentionally damaged, ranging from 33 to 150. Using the $75 per-unit price that the EOP paid in January 2001 for keyboards, 33 keyboards would cost $2,475, and 150 keyboards would cost $11,250. The $4,850 that the EOP paid for keyboards in January 2001 included $200 in expedite fees, which we excluded in calculating the per-unit price.

- $221 to purchase 15 television remote controls;
- $108 for locksmith services regarding furniture;
- $76 to remove a telephone from an office;
- $75 to repair 2 chairs with broken arms; and
- $75 to repair a sofa leg.

EOP and GSA officials also provided estimates of $3,750 to $4,675 in costs that could have been incurred or may be spent in the future to replace missing items for which no documentation, such as facility request forms or purchase records, was available. Because specific locations were not provided regarding some of the observations of missing items, we were unable to determine whether all of the missing items had been replaced. The costs estimated by EOP or GSA staff for replacing the government property that was observed missing included:

- $2,100 to $2,200 for 9 to 10 doorknobs;[12]
- $675 to $750 for 9 to 10 medallions;
- $625 to $1,375 for 5 to 11 office signs; and
- $350 for a presidential seal that was 12 inches in diameter.

Based on what the White House said were extremely conservative estimates and straightforward documentation, the White House said that the government incurred costs of at least $6,020 to replace missing telephone labels and reroute forwarded telephones. The documentation provided included two blanket work orders and associated bills, a closed orders log for the period January 20 through February 20, 2001, 8 individual work orders for telephone service, and two monthly AT&T invoices. The

[12]This total estimated cost assumes that all of the doorknobs that were observed missing, except for one, were replaced with historic replicas, which was unknown. We deducted the value of replacing one historic doorknob from the total number observed missing because as noted earlier, a GSA planner/estimator said that a facility request to install a doorknob in an office where one was observed missing during the transition was to perform maintenance on a doorknob with a worn-out part, not to replace a missing one. It was also unknown whether all of the doorknobs that were observed missing were historic originals.

White House also identified, but did not provide, other individual telephone service work orders that cited the need for or placing labels on telephones. Six of the 29 work orders listed on the closed orders log that cited needing or placing labels and four individual work orders that included labels were for work in offices where telephone labels were observed missing. However, both the orders listed on the closed orders log and the individual work orders, as well as the blanket work orders, cited other services besides labeling, and it was not clear to us from the documentation provided the extent to which relabeling was done solely to replace missing labels or would have been necessary anyway due to changes requested by new office occupants. None of the documents provided specifically cited correcting forwarded telephones. Thus, while we do not question that costs were incurred to replace labels or reroute forwarded telephones, we do not believe the documentation provided is clear enough to indicate what those costs were.

Appendix I contains information regarding additional costs to repair furniture that was not in locations where EOP staff told us they observed pieces of damaged or broken furniture during the transition. We did not request cost information associated with some observations, such as the time associated with removing prank signs, placing overturned furniture upright, or investigating missing items because we did not believe these costs would be material or readily available or that the information would be beneficial relative to the effort that would have been required to obtain the data. These costs also did not include any EOP or GSA costs associated with our review or responding to other inquiries related to the alleged damage.

Previous Presidential Transitions

According to a limited number of EOP, GSA, and former Clinton administration staff we interviewed who worked in the White House complex during previous transitions, as well as a press account that we reviewed, some of the same types of observations that were made concerning the condition of the White House complex during the 2001 transition were also made during the 1993 transition. These observations included missing office signs and doorknobs, messages written inside desks, prank signs and messages, piles of furniture and equipment, and excessive trash left in offices. We also observed writing in a desk in the EEOB that was dated 1993. In addition, words and initials were reported observed carved into desks during the 1993 transition, which were not reported observed during the 2001 transition. On the other hand, no one said they observed keyboards with missing and damaged keys during

previous transitions, as numerous people said they observed in the White House complex during the 2001 transition.

Seven EOP staff and one former Clinton administration employee who had worked in the White House complex during previous transitions made comparisons regarding the condition of the space during the 2001 transition with conditions during previous transitions. Six EOP staff said that the condition was worse in 2001 than previous transitions, while one EOP employee and one former Clinton administration employee said the office space was worse in 1993 than 2001. Because of the lack of definitive data available to compare the extent of damage, vandalism, and pranks during the 2001 transition with past transitions, we were unable to conclude whether the 2001 transition was worse than previous ones. Appendix II contains observations and a press account regarding the condition of the White House office space during previous transitions.

Avoiding Problems in Future Transitions

Former Clinton administration officials told us that departing EOP staff were required to follow a check-out procedure that involved turning in such items as building passes, library materials, and government cellular telephones at the end of the administration. The procedure did not include an inspection of office space or equipment to assess whether any damage had occurred. A January 4, 2001, memorandum from President Clinton's chief of staff encouraged staff to check out by January 12, 2001, but did not indicate in what condition the office space should be left or provide any warning about penalties for vandalism. When members of Congress and their staff vacate offices on Capitol Hill, their office space and equipment are inspected, and members are held accountable for any damages.

Because it is likely that allegations of damage, vandalism, and pranks in the White House complex could be made during future transitions and because of the historic nature of the White House complex and the attention it receives, we are recommending actions to help deter future problems during presidential transitions, including a check-out process for departing EOP staff that includes clear instructions; and an office inspection documenting the condition of office space, furniture, and equipment.

In addition, EOP, GSA, and former Clinton administration staff identified a number of issues related to office cleaning during our interviews, such as whether (1) a sufficient number of people were available to do the cleaning as quickly as necessary, (2) cleaning had begun soon enough, (3) sufficient coordination existed between the EOP and GSA, and (4) a sufficient

number of containers were available for departing staff to deposit their trash. Accordingly, we are recommending that the EOP and GSA work together to explore what steps should be taken to expedite the cleaning of White House office space during presidential transitions. Appendix III discusses steps to help prevent damage to government property during future presidential transitions.

Conclusions

Damage, theft, vandalism, and pranks occurred in the White House complex during the 2001 presidential transition. Incidents such as the removal of keys from computer keyboards; the theft of various items; the leaving of certain voice mail messages, signs, and written messages; and the placing of glue on desk drawers clearly were intentional acts. However, it was unknown whether other observations, such as broken furniture, were the result of intentional acts, when and how they occurred, or who may have been responsible for them. Further, with regard to stolen items, such as the presidential seal, because no one witnessed the thefts and many people were in the White House complex during the transition, it was not known who was responsible for taking them. Moreover, regarding other items reported missing, such as doorknobs, cellular telephones, and television remote controls, it was unknown whether all of them were thefts, and if they were, who was responsible for taking those items and when they were taken. Further complicating our attempt to determine the amount of damage that may have occurred was the lack of documentation directly corroborating some observations and our inability to reconcile certain observations only a few hours apart in locations where some people saw damage, vandalism, or pranks and where others saw none.

We realize the difficulty of preparing the White House office space for occupancy by the new administration in the short amount of time that is available during presidential transitions. We also recognize that some prank-type activity has occurred in the White House complex during past transitions and could occur in the future. Because of the historic nature and symbolism of the White House and the public attention it receives, as well as the costs associated with investigating allegations of damage, we believe that current and future administrations should have a cost-effective inspection of office space, furniture, and equipment as part of the check-out process for departing employees during transitions and document any damage observed. We also believe that departing EOP staff should be given clear instructions regarding what condition their office space and equipment should be left in and how to handle office supplies, and they should be informed about the penalties for damage and vandalism.

Many EOP staff reported observing what they believed to be an excessive amount of trash in the office space during the transition. Because future presidential transitions may not fall on a weekend, as the 2001 transition did, even less time will be available to clean the space. The EOP and GSA should explore what additional steps could be taken to ensure that the EOP office space is immediately cleaned and prepared for an incoming administration, including communicating with both outgoing and incoming administrations concerning the timetable and procedures for the transition.

Recommendations for Executive Action

Steps should be taken to help (1) prevent and document damage that results in repair or replacement costs during presidential transitions; (2) ensure that the space is ready for occupancy; and (3) avoid potential future costs associated with investigating allegations of damage, vandalism, and pranks. We recommend that the director of the Office of Management and Administration for the White House Office and the GSA administrator work together to

- revise the employee check-out process to require a cost-effective inspection of office space, furniture, and equipment by the EOP and GSA within their respective areas of responsibility and to document any damage observed; and

- explore what additional steps could be taken to ensure that the EOP office space is immediately cleaned and prepared for an incoming administration, including communicating with both outgoing and incoming administrations concerning the timetable and procedures for transition.

We also recommend that the officials provide clear instructions to staff about what condition the office space and equipment should be left in, how office supplies should be handled, and the penalties for damaging and vandalizing government property.

Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

In March and April 2002, we held exit conferences with White House officials and former Clinton administration representatives during which we provided them an opportunity to review our preliminary findings. The White House provided written comments on the preliminary findings, and former Clinton administration representatives provided oral comments. We considered those comments in preparing our draft report.

On May 3, 2002, we provided copies of a formal draft of this report for comment to the counsel to the president and the GSA administrator. On May 31, 2002, the counsel to the president provided written comments on the draft, which are reprinted in appendix IV. Our response to the White House's general statements is provided below, and our response to the White House's specific comments is contained in appendix V. The deputy commissioner of GSA's Public Buildings Service also provided comments on May 13, which are summarized below and reprinted in appendix VI.

We had intended to provide representatives from the Clinton administration with a draft of this report for their review and comment. However, we did not do so because one or more representatives prematurely provided information to the press on the basis of their discussions with us during our review, and we believed that another premature release of the contents of the draft report was likely. Nonetheless, on the basis of the discussions we did have with Clinton administration representatives during the course of our review, we believe that our report fairly reflects the information they provided to us.

White House Comments

The White House's general comments on the draft and our response follow.

Report Comment Process

The White House said that, in our May 3 draft of the report, we had failed to address many of the concerns it had raised in its April 26 set of comments on our preliminary findings. Accordingly, the White House said, it had provided us with a second set of detailed comments on the May 3 draft. The White House also said that it was disappointed that it would not have an opportunity to consider or reply to our response to its comments prior to publication of the final report. It said that this was inconsistent with all previous representations regarding our process.

We carefully considered the comments that the White House provided regarding our preliminary findings and made changes in our report where we believed appropriate. On May 13, the White House provided written comments on our May 3 draft report that included the names of people we interviewed during our review. The White House subsequently decided to delete these individuals' names from its comments, and on May 31, provided us with a second set of comments on our May 3 draft report that did not contain those names. Moreover, we did not provide the White

House with an opportunity to reply to our response to its comments because that is not part of our normal comment process; we do not normally provide agencies with our response to their comments prior to publication of the report. The White House is incorrect in indicating that, by not providing the White House with an opportunity to consider or reply to our response to its comments prior to the publication of the report, we were being inconsistent with all previous representations regarding our process. We explained the process on numerous occasions and provided a copy of our congressional protocols to an associate counsel to the president, and we never indicated that the White House would have an opportunity to consider or reply to our response to its comments before the report was published.

Amount of Detail Provided

The White House said that we had not reported many facts that readers needed to know to have a complete and accurate understanding of what happened during the 2001 transition. The White House said that it believed the report did not provide sufficient detail to respond to Representative Barr's request or to meet *Government Auditing Standards*, and noted that we did not specifically identify each reported instance of vandalism, damage, or a prank. Further, the White House said that, in many cases, we reported a former staff member's comments without having discussed the observation itself. The White House noted that reporting when, where, and by whom an observation was made would be helpful in determining the likely perpetrator.

The White House also noted that we had not reported the specific content of graffiti, messages, and signs. According to the White House, this written content would provide (1) indications of who wrote the messages and when; (2) an insight into the mind-set or intention of the person who wrote the message; (3) an opportunity to infer that, if departing staff left a vulgar or derogatory message, those same individuals may be responsible for other incidents that were observed near the location of the message; (4) an opportunity to compare the 2001 transition to prior ones; and (5) an opportunity to decide whether we had fairly and objectively characterized the content of the messages.

In transmitting a revised set of comments on May 31, the counsel to the president stated his objection to our decision to redact from the White House's comments, which are reprinted in appendix IV, a word that we considered to be inappropriate that was contained in a prank sign that was found during the transition. He also said that with respect to our

description of a particular message that said "jail to the thief" as "arguably" derogatory to the president, because we did not reveal the content of the message, readers have no way of knowing whether our characterization of it being "arguably" derogatory is accurate.

We disagree with the White House that we had not reported many facts that readers needed to know to have a complete and accurate understanding of what happened during the 2001 transition. Our report includes the information (1) we agreed to provide to Representative Barr, (2) to support our conclusions and recommendations, and (3) to comply with *Government Auditing Standards*. As provided for under our congressional protocols when we receive congressional requests, we work with the requesters to agree on a scope of work and an approach that takes into consideration a number of factors. They include the nature of the issues raised; the likelihood of being able to address them in a fair, objective, and complete manner; a consideration of professional standards, rules of evidence, and the nature and sufficiency of evidence likely to be available on the particular engagement; known or possible constraints related to obtaining the information needed; and the time and resources needed and available to accomplish the work. For this review, after independently taking these factors into consideration, we used a thorough, reasonable approach to provide as complete and objective a picture as possible of the damage that may have occurred during the 2001 presidential transition, given that (1) we could not physically observe evidence of most of the incidents that were reportedly observed, (2) limited definitive documentation was available regarding these events, and (3) views of interested parties would likely differ on many issues and would be difficult or impossible to reconcile. Accordingly, we agreed to respond to Representative Barr's request by reporting on the documentation provided by the White House; summarizing the observations made by occupants and preparers of White House office space during the 2001 transition; and obtaining explanations and other comments of former Clinton administration staff related to any damage, vandalism, or pranks. We neither agreed to nor performed an investigation into who may have been responsible for any damage, vandalism, or pranks identified, nor did we agree to report each individual observation.

We reported all observations in a summary fashion (i.e., total number of observations in a particular category) and discussed some observations in detail when warranted. For example, in the section of appendix I regarding furniture, we not only provided the total number of pieces of broken furniture that people observed, but also described the specific problems

they observed. However, regarding other categories of observations, such as missing telephone labels, we did not provide details regarding each observation because such information would not have been meaningful; rather, we reported a range of the total number of telephone labels observed missing. Reporting each instance was not only unneeded, but would have been redundant. Further, we separately mentioned each observation that was made in the White House itself. Although we would agree with the White House that the details about when, where, and by whom observations were made may be relevant in assessing the credibility of statements and determining the likely perpetrators, we do not believe that reporting additional detail would have allowed readers to make sound, independent conclusions.

Although, as the White House correctly states, *Government Auditing Standards* require audit reports to contain all the information needed to satisfy audit objectives and promote a correct understanding of the matters to be reported, these standards also recognize that considerable judgment must be exercised in determining an appropriate amount and level of detail to include. Excessive detail can detract from a report, conceal the real message, and confuse or discourage readers. Consistent with these professional standards, we believe that we have provided the appropriate amount of detail needed to satisfy our objectives and support our conclusions and recommendations. In our view, reporting more detail could, at a minimum, confuse readers and contribute to unproductive speculation, rather than lead to sound conclusions.

As we have reported, we believe that sufficient, competent, and relevant evidence exists to support our conclusion that damage, vandalism, and pranks did occur during the 2001 presidential transition, and we have presented this evidence in our report. However, we believe it is also important to recognize that corroborating evidence was not provided for all observations, and that definitive evidence regarding who was responsible for the incidents observed generally was not provided. In addition, although a number of incidents appeared intentional by their nature, it often was unknown whether other types of incidents were intentional, malicious acts. Accordingly, we do not believe it was appropriate to include all of the details that the White House suggested because we did not want to mislead readers into concluding that corroboration existed and that all of the reported incidents occurred and were intentional, nor did we believe it was appropriate to contribute to speculation about who may have been responsible for any acts that were intentional for which credible evidence was not provided.

In its comments, the White House cited several cases where we failed to report information regarding what staff said other people had seen or had told them. This is correct; in reporting the observations, we did not include information people relayed to us from third parties. We reported what people told us they personally observed. In addition, in certain cases, the White House cited statements in its comments that it claimed staff had said that were not contained in our interview records. An associate counsel to the president told us that, in preparing the White House's comments, she discussed the accuracy of statements attributed to EOP staff in the report draft with those individuals. Had we known in advance that an associate counsel to the president was going to recontact the EOP staff we interviewed, we would have asked to participate in those discussions. Since we did not participate in those discussions, we have no information about the context or manner in which they took place. Therefore, we reported only what our interview records indicated EOP staff told us.

Although we would typically confirm our understanding of statements made to us during interviews directly with the interviewees whenever a question or doubt arises, this was problematic in this review due to the protocol established by the White House for our work. Under this protocol, we were asked to provide written requests for follow-up interviews or additional documentation to the counsel's office, and all such interviews were arranged by that office. This was a time consuming process that at times involved significant delays in gaining access to the individuals we sought to interview. Had we been granted direct, prompt access to the people we needed to interview, we would have been in a better position to have quickly and efficiently resolved any questions or misunderstandings that may have arisen. Nonetheless, with the exception of one follow-up interview, at least two GAO staff attended interviews in the White House complex, and we believe this approach provided reasonable assurance that we accurately captured what the interviewees told us.

Regarding the White House's statement that, in many cases, in reporting a former staff member's comments in response to a particular observation, we had not discussed the observation itself, each observation was included in summary fashion, and in some cases, in detail, before we reported the comments by former Clinton administration staff. In a few cases, in response to the White House's comments, we added additional detail regarding an observation. Moreover, although we reported every observation in summary fashion, we did not obtain comments from former Clinton administration staff regarding all observations, nor did we report every comment provided by former Clinton administration staff. Further,

we did not report positive actions that people said former Clinton administration staff had taken to facilitate the transition or welcome new staff because they did not directly relate to the allegations.

Regarding the specific contents of graffiti, messages, and signs, we did not believe that it was appropriate or necessary to report their specific contents. Although most of the messages reportedly observed or heard did not contain profane language, some of them did. However, we will not report them and, thus, we decided to redact an obscene word that the White House included in its comments in reference to a message that was found. Further, although we did not report their specific content, we described the general nature of those messages. We believe that the White House is being speculative in suggesting that reporting their specific content would provide indications of who wrote them and when they were written and would provide an insight into the mind-set of the person who wrote them. Further, although whoever left a vulgar or derogatory message could have been responsible for other incidents that were observed near the location of the message, no substantive evidence was presented linking messages to other incidents that were observed. We also do not believe that reporting the specific contents would have provided a meaningful opportunity to compare the 2001 transition to previous ones because we also did not report the specific content of signs and messages that were found during previous transitions, nor was there sufficient information about the condition of White House office space during previous transitions to make a meaningful comparison.

In a draft of this report, we had characterized a sticker that said "jail to the thief" as being "arguably" derogatory to the president because we did not know the intent of the person who left the message. However, in response to the White House's comments, we deleted "arguably." We informed an associate counsel to the president of our intention to make this change before the White House sent us its May 31 letter raising this concern.

Although we agree with the White House's view that it is solely responsible for its comments, we are publishing its comments as part of our report, and we are responsible for our report. Further, although we would normally not make any changes to an agency's comments on our draft report, the situation in this case is highly unusual and, in our view, calls for an unusual step on our part. With respect to the White House's objection to our redaction of a word contained in a sign found during the transition, the word in question is clearly obscene and, in our independent and professional judgment, should not be used in a public report that bears

GAO's name. As a result, we have deleted this word from the White House's comments, used "*" to reflect the number of letters in the word, and indicated that GAO deleted an obscenity. By doing so, we believe that readers will know that an unacceptable word was used in a message left in the White House complex during the 2001 presidential transition. In addition, because the word was part of its comments, we will refer inquiries about this matter to the White House. Finally, we do not believe that our deletion of one word out of over 70 pages of detailed comments, with full disclosure of the reason why we deleted it, seriously undermines the White House's comments.

June 2001 List of Damage

The White House objected to our structuring the report around the June 2001 list of damage and comparing the staff members' observations with the contents of the list. In stating its objection, the White House highlighted the cautionary statement that the counsel to the president made in transmitting the list to us. Further, the White House indicated that we did not ask the individuals who prepared the list to explain how the list was prepared, who transcribed it, what its purpose was, and or what each line referred to. In addition, the White House indicated that we, at times, misstated the contents of the list.

We structured appendix I, but not the letter portion of this report, around the June 2001 list because the list highlighted congressional and other interest in initiating our review. Further, interviewees were not restricted to observations about items on the list. Rather, during our interviews, we solicited observations regarding anything that could be damage, vandalism, or pranks. Before the list was prepared, the OA director informed us in writing that no documentation existed regarding the allegations. On page 2 of our draft report and this report, we quoted the counsel to the president's cautionary remarks about the list that were contained in his June 4, 2001, transmittal letter to us. Further, we note that, according to an article in the June 4, 2001, issue of the *Washington Post*, the White House press secretary provided the list to the newspaper, which suggested that the White House had sufficient confidence in its contents to release it publicly. In addition, the White House's assertion is incorrect that we did not ask the individuals whose names appeared on the list to explain how it was prepared. Our record of a June 6, 2001, entrance conference at the White House indicated that the OA director, who contributed to the list, discussed at that meeting how it was prepared. Further, our initial interviews of EOP staff included four of the five individuals who helped prepare the list, which allowed us to ask them about their observations, and, in one case,

our interview records indicated that one of the individuals said that a statement on the list "bothered" him. Regarding the White House's statement that we often misstated the contents of the list, we summarized the contents of the list on page 2 of the report and revised the report as necessary to quote directly from the list throughout the remainder of the report.

Number of Observations Reported

The White House said that we materially understated the number of observations, and that our methodology of calculating the ranges was flawed. For example, the White House objected to the method that we used to calculate a range of keyboards observed with missing and damaged "W" keys. The White House said that our flawed methodology infected each of the ranges presented in the report. Further, the White House also said that the problem with our analysis was compounded because, in the instance cited, we had grouped three offices together.

As indicated in our report regarding the methodology used to report the number of keyboards observed with missing or damaged "W" keys, we reported a range representing the number of incidents observed because some staff said they saw different numbers of incidents in the same rooms or offices. Our methodology in calculating the range of keyboards with missing or damaged keys, as well as for other categories of observations, was used to include both the lowest and the highest numbers that were reported to us in particular locations and to eliminate possible double counting. The White House mischaracterized how we determined our range in the hypothetical cases it provided. For example, in the hypothetical case involving three people who observed 1, 25, and 100 incidents, respectively, the White House said that, using our methodology, we would calculate the range of total observed incidents as being from 1 to 126, which the White House said would be an absurd conclusion. However, the White House's application of our methodology in this hypothetical case is incorrect and would have resulted in the wrong conclusion; our range of observed incidents in that location would be 1 to 100. The White House similarly mischaracterized the other example it gave on this issue.

We disagree with the White House's argument that, when multiple people provided different numbers of observations in the same specific locations, the lowest number observed in a particular location cannot be used as the low end of the range. We used ranges to account for the different observations made in the same locations and did not make any judgments about which observation was correct because it was not possible in many

cases to do so. We believe this approach is the most accurate and objective depiction of views that were shared with us. Further, we did not conclude what the precise numbers of incidents observed in various categories were because they would have been impossible to determine. Regarding the situation that the White House cited when we grouped observations of keyboards with missing and damaged "W" keys in three offices, we did it that way because an EOP employee said that her observation pertained to them.

Use of the Term "EOP"

The White House objected to our use of the term "EOP" staff, rather than identifying the specific EOP unit being discussed. The White House said that it is not accurate to refer to each EOP unit individually or all units collectively as the EOP because not all offices in the complex fall within the EOP umbrella and that we did not investigate all EOP units. Further, the White House said we had inaccurately referred to EOP units as agencies.

Except for staff we interviewed who worked for the Secret Service, GSA, and the Executive Residence, all of the people we interviewed at the White House complex worked for or had worked for the EOP. We did not believe that it was necessary to break out, in all categories of observations, staff members' respective EOP units, nor was it an objective of our review. However, when we reported specific observations or comments made by EOP officials, we used their titles, which identified their respective EOP units. To address the White House's comment that the term "EOP" may be over-inclusive, we added a note to the report indicating that we did not interview, for example, any staff who worked for the United States Trade Representative, the Office of National Drug Control Policy, or the Office of Homeland Security. We also noted that most of the EOP staff we interviewed who worked at the White House before January 20, 2001, worked for OA.

Concerning the White House's comment that we misidentified units that comprise the EOP and misidentified EOP components as "agencies," we understand that the Executive Residence, although treated as "analogous to an EOP unit" (by the court, e.g., in *Sweetland v. Walters*, 60 F. 3d 852, 854 (D.C. Cir. 1995)), is technically not an EOP component because it was not

created as such.[13] Notwithstanding this technicality, we had listed the Executive Residence as an EOP component because it is shown as such in the White House staff manual that was in effect at the time of the transition and in the *Budget of the United States Government*, *Fiscal Year 2003*. To recognize the White House's comments about this issue, however, we deleted the Executive Residence from our list of EOP components.

On the other hand, we do not agree with the White House's objection to our characterization of EOP components as agencies. We recognize, as the White House contends, that EOP components are not all treated as agencies for purposes of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. § 552 (*Sweetland v. Walters*, *supra*), although some are. *Armstrong v. Executive Office of the President*, 90 F. 3d 553, 559 (D.C. Cir. 1995). However, a government entity may be an agency for some purposes but notfor others. We have, for example, consistently viewed the Executive Residence as an agency in applying 31 U.S.C. 716.[14]

Reporting the Extent of Damage

Finally, the White House said that we made a concerted effort to downplay the damage found in the White House complex because we (1) did not individually report each instance of vandalism, damage, or a prank; (2) underreported the number of observations in nearly every category of damage and ignored additional observations that were made; (3) omitted any mention of several individuals who told us that damage found during the 2001 transition was worse than during prior transitions; (4) ignored documents that showed requests were made to repair telephone damage and clean offices; (5) failed to quantify or estimate certain real costs incurred to remedy or repair the damage; (6) failed to report the content of the graffiti and signs that were found in the complex; and (7) were unwilling to conclude that the vandalism, damage, and pranks were intentional, even when the circumstances plainly indicate that they were.

We did not downplay the damage found in the White House complex, as the White House suggested. Rather, we tried to eliminate possible or actual

[13]See Reorganization Plan No. 1 of 1977, reprinted in 3 U.S.C., Ch. 2, note at 431, 434 (1994) (Message of the President) (listing units within the EOP).

[14]See *The White House: Status of Review of the Executive Residence*, pages 6-7, Statement of Robert P. Murphy, General Counsel, U.S. General Accounting Office, November 6, 1997, before the Subcommittee on Treasury, Postal Service, and General Government, Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives.

double-counting of observations, present the information fairly and objectively, and avoid speculation. Regarding the White House's statement (1) that we omitted a reference to each reported instance of vandalism, damage or a prank, as previously explained, all of the reported observations were reported in a summary fashion (i.e., total number of observations in a particular category) and some were also discussed in detail. We also disagree with the White House's statement (2) that we underreported the number of observations in nearly every category of damage and ignored additional observations that were made. As previously explained and discussed in appendix V in our response to the White House's specific comments, we reported the number of observations in various categories as a means of eliminating possible or actual double-counting. Regarding the White House's statement (3) that we omitted any mention of several individuals who told us that the damage found during this transition was worse than prior transitions, the letter portion of the report summarized these individuals' observations, and appendix II contained statements by six EOP staff that the condition of the White House complex was worse in 2001 than during previous transitions. Consequently, we did not revise the report. Regarding the White House's statement (4) that we ignored documents that showed requests were made to repair telephone damage and clean offices, the report in fact cited several facility requests for cleaning and telephone service orders, but we could not conclude that they documented intentional damage. This conclusion is inconsistent with the OA director's April 2001 letter in which he stated that repair records do not indicate the cause of repairs. Further, we did not ignore any of the documentation that the EOP provided, but carefully reviewed all of the documentation that was provided. Finally, the White House did not provide us with copies of all of the documents related to telephone repairs that it cited in its comments.

Regarding the White House's statement (5) that we failed to quantify or estimate certain real costs incurred to remedy or repair the damage, it was not our objective to independently estimate or determine all such costs, and we clearly stated in our report that we did not do so. We did not obtain repair and replacement costs for all reported incidents because we did not believe that they would be readily available or material, nor did we believe that the value of the information would have been commensurate with the level of resources required to obtain and verify such data. Regarding the White House's statement (6) that we failed to report the content of graffiti and signs that were found in the complex, as previously discussed, we did not believe it was necessary or appropriate to include their specific content in this report, but we did describe their general nature. Finally, contrary to

the White House's assertion (7) that we were unwilling to conclude that the vandalism, damage, and pranks were intentional, even where the circumstances plainly indicated that they were, we stated in our conclusions that incidents such as the removal of keys from computer keyboards; the theft of various items; the leaving of certain voice mail messages, signs, and written messages; and the placing of glue on desk drawers clearly were done intentionally. However, we also concluded that it was unknown whether other observations, such as broken furniture, were the result of intentional acts and when and how they occurred.

Government Auditing Standards

In its specific comments, the White House identified instances in which it did not believe that the oral evidence or the amount of detail included in the report was sufficient to meet provisions of the *Government Auditing Standards* pertaining to the competency of evidence or the objectivity and completeness of reports. Although we address the White House's specific substantive points in appendix V of our report, we believe that it is important to state here that the report does comply with *Government Auditing Standards*. In citing the particular standard in question, the White House either did not cite the entire standard or all of the factors that must be considered in interpreting the standard, or both. For example, in discussing the competency of the oral evidence provided by an EOP employee, the White House described the employee's overall responsibility for handling telecommunications problems during the first month of the new administration and cited the following excerpt from *Government Auditing Standards* 6.54(f):

> Testimonial evidence obtained from an individual who…has complete knowledge about the area is more competent than testimonial evidence obtained from an individual who…has only partial knowledge about an area.

However, in addition to excluding a portion of this standard, the White House did not refer to other parts of standard 6.54 or other factors that need to be considered. Other relevant parts of standard 6.54 follow:

> 6.54 The following presumptions are useful in judging the competence of evidence. However, these presumptions are not to be considered sufficient in themselves to determine competence.
>
> 6.54(e) Testimonial evidence obtained under conditions where persons may speak freely is more competent than testimonial evidence

obtained under compromising conditions (for example, where the persons may be intimidated).

6.54 (f) Testimonial evidence obtained from an individual who is not biased or has complete knowledge about the area is more competent than testimonial evidence obtained from an individual who is biased or has only partial knowledge about the area.

Thus, in considering the competency of oral evidence, other factors besides a person's level of responsibility must be considered, such as the circumstance under which they provide the oral information; whether they are reporting what they observed versus what someone else said they saw; factors that could influence their objectivity; the reasonableness or consistency of the information presented compared to other information or facts; and the extent to which corroborating or contradictory information is provided. We gave appropriate and careful consideration of all of these factors in conducting this review.

Similarly, in interpreting other *Government Auditing Standards*, such as those related to the objectivity or completeness of reports, considerable judgment must be exercised regarding the amount of detail provided to promote an adequate and complete understanding of the matters reported and to present the information in an unbiased manner with appropriate balance and tone. This must be done so that readers can be persuaded by facts, as called for by the standards (7.50, 7.51, and 7.57). In making judgments about the level of detail to provide, it must be recognized that too much detail can detract from a report, as previously discussed. But, even more importantly, aside from the level of detail, the competency and sufficiency of the evidence and completeness of information must be considered, including differentiating between uncorroborated oral statements and substantiated facts. In judging what details to report and how to report them, it is also important to consider what information is not known about particular situations so as to avoid misleading readers into drawing inappropriate or premature conclusions.

Notwithstanding our disagreement with the White House's interpretation of *Government Auditing Standards*, we agree that efforts should be made to avoid possible misinterpretation of information in audit reports. In that regard, we have clarified our report where we felt it was appropriate.

Finally, both in its general and specific comments, the White House expressed concern about our exclusion of certain EOP staff observations

in the report, or what it views as our lack of consideration of the documentation it provided and our unwillingness to draw the same conclusions it did based on the information at hand. We believe that it is important to note here that many of the observations in question involved relaying views espoused by others, which we do not believe is acceptable evidence in these cases. Further, although we carefully reviewed and considered all of the evidence that the White House provided, we did not always believe it was sufficient to support the conclusions that the White House suggested or reached.

The White House did not provide any comments on our recommendations.

GSA Comments

GSA's deputy commissioner of the Public Buildings Service said that GSA had carefully reviewed the draft report and agreed with the two recommendations regarding the logistics of future transitions. The deputy commissioner said that GSA had made every effort during transitions to meet the very considerable demands that are placed on the agency when several hundred staff move out of the White House complex. For this reason, the deputy commissioner said GSA believes that its ability to carry out its responsibilities during future transitions will be strengthened by working with the Office of Management and Administration of the White House Office to develop procedures for both office space inspection and cleaning and office space preparations. He added that improved communication will be an integral part of these procedures.

As agreed with your office, unless you publicly announce the contents of this report earlier, we plan no further distribution until 30 days from the report date. At that time, we will send copies of this report to the chairman and ranking minority member, House Committee on Appropriations; the chairman and ranking minority member, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Treasury, Postal Service and General Government; the chairmen and ranking minority members, House Committee on Government Reform and Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs; the chairman and ranking minority member, Senate Committee on Appropriations; the chairman and ranking minority member, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Treasury and Postal Service; the deputy assistant to the president for management and administration; the administrator of the General Services Administration; former President Clinton; and the former deputy assistant to the president for management

and administration during the Clinton administration. We will also make copies available to others upon request. In addition, the report will be available at no charge on the GAO Web site at http://www.gao.gov.

Major contributors to this report were Bob Homan, John Baldwin, and Don Allison. If you have any questions, please contact me on (202) 512-8387 or at ungarb@gao.gov.

Sincerely yours,

Bernard L. Ungar
Director, Physical Infrastructure Issues

EOP and GSA Staff Observations of Damage, Vandalism, and Pranks and Comments from Former Clinton Administration Staff

This appendix contains the observations of Executive Office of the President (EOP) and General Services Administration (GSA) staff and former Clinton administration staff regarding the condition of the White House office space during the 2001 presidential transition. Staff we interviewed generally told us that they saw evidence of damage, vandalism, or pranks shortly before or at the beginning of the administration. The observations are discussed in the categories contained in the June 2001 list of damage.[15]

Some EOP staff said they believed that what they observed during the transition, such as broken furniture and excessive trash left behind, was done intentionally. Incidents such as the removal of keys from computer keyboards; the theft of various items; the leaving of certain voice mail messages, signs, and written messages; and the placing of glue on desk drawers clearly were done intentionally. However, regarding other observations, we generally could not make judgments about whether they were acts of vandalism because we did not have information regarding who was responsible for them, when they occurred, or why they occurred. Further, in most cases, we were unable to determine the exact number of incidents. When staff said they observed different numbers of incidents in the same location and/or category, we did not attempt to make judgments regarding which account was correct; rather, we used ranges. In the few instances where people observed a different number of items in a particular location, we used the lowest and highest numbers observed by different people in that location as the range. In addition, when an individual provided a range of the number of items that he or she saw, we included that range in our calculation of the total range of observations for that category. When people said they observed incidents, but did not provide a specific number, we did not estimate a number, but noted this situation when relevant. Our interviews were conducted between 5 and 16 months after the transition, and we recognized that recollections could have been imprecise. Further, in some cases, when we conducted follow-up interviews with certain individuals for the purposes of clarification, different accounts of their observations were provided. In those instances, we generally noted both accounts.

[15]As noted on p. 2 of this report, in transmitting the list of damage to us, the counsel to the president indicated that the list was not the result of a comprehensive or systematic investigation into the issue and should not be considered a complete record of the damage that was found.

In the overwhelming majority of cases, one person said that he or she observed a specific incident in a particular location. However, more than one person we interviewed observed most types of incidents. In some cases, people said that they observed damage, vandalism, or pranks in the same areas where others said they observed none, sometimes only hours apart. In calculating the number of incidents, we attempted to eliminate double counting when people said that they observed the same types of incidents in the same locations or could not recall any location. We included repair and replacement costs provided by EOP and GSA for some, but not all, reported damage, vandalism, and theft in this appendix.

When it opened in 1888, the Eisenhower Executive Office Building (EEOB), which was originally known as the State, War, and Navy Building and later as the Old Executive Office Building, contained 553 rooms. Over the years, the original configuration of the EEOB office space has been altered, and it now contains about 1,074 rooms. During the Clinton administration, the office space in the East and West Wings of the White House consisted of about 137 rooms.[16] EOP staff [17] cited about 100 rooms in the EEOB and 8 rooms in the White House where incidents were observed.[18] According to the Office of Administration (OA) associate director for facilities management, approximately 395 offices were vacated during the transition: 304 in the EEOB, 54 in the West Wing, and 37 in the East Wing.

Observations were made in 16 different units of the White House Office.[19] However, more observations of damage, vandalism, and pranks were made on the first floor of the EEOB in the offices of advance and scheduling, the counsel's offices, and the offices of the first lady; and on the second floor of the EEOB in the offices of the vice president, than in other offices.[20] Observations that were made in the White House are specifically noted in

[16]This included reception areas, restrooms, and other nonoffice space.

[17]GSA staff generally cited observations made on certain floors, rather than in specific rooms or offices.

[18]Room numbers were identified for most of the observations. Rooms in the West Wing do not have room numbers.

[19]This includes the names of two units that did not exist during the Clinton administration.

[20]The vice president has an office in the West Wing and a ceremonial office in the EEOB. Most of the vice president's staff work in the EEOB.

this appendix, while observations made in the EEOB are provided in the totals for each category or discussed as examples.

Missing Items

The June 2001 list indicated that six door signs, six medallions, two EEOB doorknobs, and a presidential seal were stolen.

Observations of EOP and GSA Staff and Related Documentation

Six EOP staff told us they observed that a total of 5 to 11 office signs, which are affixed with medallions (presidential seals about 2 inches in diameter) were missing. One of those six EOP staff also said he observed that six medallions were missing from office signs. These observations included an office sign that an EOP employee said that she saw a volunteer remove on January 19 outside an office in the EEOB. The EOP employee said that the person who removed the sign said that he planned to take a photograph with it, and that she reported the incident to an OA employee. Further, the EOP employee said that the person attempted to put the sign back on the wall, but it was loose. Two other EOP staff said they noticed that the sign outside that office was missing during the transition.

Four EOP staff said they saw that a total of 10 to 11 doorknobs, which may have been historic originals, were missing in different locations.[21] A February 7, 2001, GSA facility request form documented a request to "put doorknob on inter-office…door" in an office where an EOP employee said he observed two pairs of doorknobs were missing. A GSA planner/estimator who said he was in charge of repairing and replacing building fixtures in the EEOB, including office signs, medallions, and doorknobs, said he received no written facility requests made to GSA for replacing missing office signs, medallions, or doorknobs during the transition. He said that work done in response to the February 7, 2001, GSA facility request form was not to replace a missing doorknob, but to repair one that had a worn-out part. He also said that over the past 20 years, doorknobs have been found missing about a half-dozen times in the

[21]Another EOP employee said she observed that a doorknob was missing in the EEOB, but did not specify a location, so it is not included in the total above. It is unknown how many of these doorknobs were historic originals. The director of GSA's White House service center said that historic doorknobs, which are bronze cast and have different designs for the former State, War, and Navy Departments' sections of the EEOB, are favorite souvenirs of departing staff. (The EEOB was built between 1872 and 1888 to house the Departments of State, War, and the Navy.)

EEOB, and not only during transitions. In addition, he said the medallions are difficult to remove and that a special wrench is needed to remove them from an office sign.

An April 19, 2001, GSA facility request form documented a request for "replacement of frames & medallions," including an office where three EOP staff observed a missing office sign and medallion. The three other rooms that, according to the facility request form, needed office signs were located on one of two floors of the EEOB where an EOP employee observed four missing office signs. The OA associate director for facilities management said that much repair and replacement work was done during the transition without documentation being prepared because of the need to complete the work quickly. This official said, for example, that three to four missing office signs, a doorknob, and two or three medallions were replaced during the weekend of the inauguration without documentation being prepared.

The OA director for facilities management; the director of GSA's White House service center; and the Secret Service deputy special agent in charge, presidential protection division, White House security branch, said that a presidential seal was stolen from a door in the EEOB. The Secret Service provided an incident report indicating that a presidential seal was reported missing at 8:40 a.m. on January 19, 2001, and last seen at 6:30 a.m. that day. According to the report, the seal was molded, hand-painted, 12 inches in diameter, and had been attached to a door with glue and screws. The Secret Service deputy special agent in charge of the presidential protection division, White House security branch, said that fingerprints were taken from the door where the seal was located, but no suspects were identified. The OA associate director for facilities management showed us where the seal had been located.

EOP staff told us about additional missing items that were not contained in the June 2001 list. Two EOP staff told us that a total of 9 to 11 television remote control devices were missing from two offices.[22] In addition, two EOP officials said that about 20 cellular telephones could not be located in

[22]One of these two EOP staff worked in the office where the remote controls were observed missing during the previous administration. In the scope and methodology section of this report, we indicated the number of EOP staff we interviewed who worked in the White House complex before and after January 20, 2001, but did not break out the observations reported in this appendix made by staff who worked for the EOP before and after January 20, 2001.

the office where they belonged. Regarding the cellular telephones, the deputy assistant for operations in that office said that she was told by an OA employee at the beginning of the administration that the telephones could be found in a particular room; however, they could not be found anywhere in the office suite, so new ones were purchased. Two EOP staff said that two cameras were missing from an office in the EEOB, and another EOP employee said that an ethics manual that a former Clinton administration employee told him had been prepared could not be located.

Three EOP officials and one GSA official said that items that were on loan from a private collector and on display in the EEOB during the Clinton administration were found to be missing sometime after the beginning of the new administration. According to the OA senior preservation and facilities officer, the items consisted of a small oil painting, two china soup bowls, a china plate, a brass mantle clock, and a bust of President Lincoln. We were also provided with documentation describing these items. The director of GSA's White House service center said that he observed the items in the office (except for the Lincoln bust, which was in a different room, the vice president's ceremonial office) during the morning of January 20; but when he returned to the office in midafternoon, he noticed that many of the items were missing, but did not know the exact number.

In August 2001, the OA associate director for security said that the Lincoln bust had been returned from the former vice president (for more information about the return of the missing bust, see comments later in this section made by the former vice president's former staff). Regarding the other collector's items that had been on display in another office, this official also said that he had contacted several former Clinton administration staff who had worked in the office where they had been displayed and that he was unsuccessful in locating the items. The associate director for security said that all of the former Clinton administration staff whom he contacted said that the items were still in the office when they left on January 20. Further, the associate director for security said that he had contacted the person in charge of the contract movers who were working in that office on January 20; according to the associate director for security, this person said that the items were still there at 4:00 p.m. or 4:30 p.m. on January 20.

Costs

According to a GSA planner/estimator, it would cost $400 to replace an historic doorknob set (doorknobs on both sides of a door) with a solid brass replica, or $300 for a single historic doorknob replica; $125 for a new office sign with a medallion; and $75 to replace a medallion. Using those per-unit costs, if all of the items observed missing were replaced, it would have cost $2,100 to $2,200 for 9 to 10 doorknobs;[23] $625 to $1,375 to replace 5 to 11 missing office signs with medallions; and $675 to $750 to replace 9 to 10 missing medallions. However, because specific locations were not provided regarding some of the observations of missing items, we were unable to determine whether all of the missing items had been replaced. In addition, the estimated cost of replacing missing doorknobs assumes that all of the doorknobs that were observed missing will be replaced with historic replicas, which was unknown. It was also unknown how many of the doorknobs that were discovered missing were historic originals. We also did not obtain any information on the value of the original historic doorknobs.

The EOP provided purchase records indicating that it spent $2,040 for 26 cellular telephones on January 26, 2001; $729 for two cameras (including a digital camera costing $685) on March 16, 2001, and April 4, 2001; and $221 for 15 television remote controls on March 6 and15; June 5; and July 10, 2001. The OA associate director for facilities management estimated it will cost about $350 to make a replica of the presidential seal that was reported stolen which, as of March 2002, had not been replaced. Although we did not obtain a dollar value regarding the possible historic value of the seal that was stolen, according to the OA associate director for facilities management, the $350 purchase price would not purchase an exact replica of the brass seal that was stolen; the seal was purchased in the mid-1970s, and is no longer available; and the $350 would purchase a plastic-type casting.

[23]This total estimated cost assumes that all of the doorknobs that were observed missing, except for one, will be replaced with historic replicas. We deducted the value of replacing one historic doorknob from the total number observed missing because, as noted earlier, the GSA official in charge of building fixtures in the EEOB said that a facility request to install a doorknob in an office where one was observed missing during the transition was to perform maintenance on a doorknob with a worn-out part, not to replace a missing one. Another EOP employee said that she observed a missing doorknob in the EEOB during the transition, but could not recall the location. We did not count that doorknob in the total cost because it could have been the same one seen by other EOP staff.

Comments by Former Clinton Administration Staff

The former director of an office where an EOP employee told us that she saw someone remove an office sign said that an elderly volunteer in her office removed the sign from the wall on January 19, 2001. She said that she did not know why he had removed the sign. She said that she attempted to put the sign back on the wall, but it would not stay, so she contacted OA and was told to leave it on the floor next to the door. The former office director said that she left the sign on the floor, and it was still there when she left between 8:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. on January 19.

The former director of an office where an EOP employee told us that he observed two pairs of missing doorknobs said that the office had several doors to the hallway that at some time had been made inoperable, and he was not sure whether the interior sides of those doors had doorknobs.

The former occupant of an office, where an EOP employee told us he observed that two pairs of doorknobs were missing (interior and exterior doorknobs for two doors to the outside that were no longer used) and a bolt was missing from a lock, said that a bookcase covered the door to the outside, and he did not know if that door had ever had any doorknobs. He said that to the best of his recollection, the bookcase still covered the door when he left between 10:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. on January 20, 2001. He also said that he did not take any doorknobs. A former employee whose office was next door also said that shelves were in front of the door with the missing doorknobs when she worked in that office suite.[24]

The deputy assistant to the president for management and administration from 1997 to 2001 said that people frequently take items such as doorknobs from the EEOB to keep as souvenirs, and he believed that visitors to the building were responsible for most of the thefts. He estimated that two to three doorknobs were taken from the EEOB per year.

No former Clinton administration staff we interviewed who worked in the two offices where remote controls were observed missing by two EOP staff said they took the remote controls. In one of those two offices, we obtained comments from four former employees. One of those former employees said that it is possible that the remote controls were missing when she worked there; she remembered having to manually change

[24]The EOP employee who occupied this office at the beginning of the administration said that he put a safe in front of the doors with the missing doorknobs to keep them closed.

channels on a television set in that office, and she questioned why someone would take a remote control if they also did not have the television set. Another former employee said that some remote controls were missing from that office throughout the administration. A third former employee said that some of the televisions in that suite of offices did not have remote controls, and he was not sure whether they had ever had them. The fourth former employee said that it was possible that the remote controls were missing when he worked there.

The former director of another office where two EOP staff told us that she observed four to five missing television remote controls said that most of the television sets that were in her suite of offices were very old and may not have had remote controls. She said that she remembered staff in her office standing on chairs to manually change the channels on the televisions in the suite of offices.

The former director of the office from where two EOP staff told us two cameras were missing[25] said that the cameras were still in the office when she and her staff left between 9:30 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. on January 19, 2001. The former office director said that she was instructed to leave the office unlocked (she did not recall who gave her that instruction); she also said that, when the staff left, the cameras were left on an open shelf in the office.

Regarding an ethics manual that an EOP employee told us that he could not locate, a former official who handled ethics issues during the Clinton administration said that a manual containing ethics materials was being compiled at the end of the administration for the new administration staff, but he did not know where the manual had been left. Three other former employees who worked for that office said that they were unaware of such a manual.

With regard to the collector's items that two EOP staff and a GSA official told us were missing, the former director of the office where the items were displayed said that they were still in his office when he left at 12:30 p.m. on January 20 (except for the Lincoln bust, which was in another room). Another EOP employee who worked in that office during both the Clinton and Bush administrations said that she saw the items in the office at 5:00

[25]One of the EOP staff who told us about the missing cameras noted that the office where the cameras belonged was a locked office with an alarm.

p.m. on January 20, but she noticed that they were missing when she returned on January 22. She also noted that the office was left unlocked when she left on January 20 and that the items were left on open shelves.

Regarding a Lincoln bust that two EOP staff told us was missing, but was subsequently returned, a former employee who also worked the former vice president's transition office provided us with a copy of a July 6, 2001, letter that he received from the counsel to Vice President Cheney asking about the missing item. The former employee said that, after receiving the letter, he located the bust at former Vice President Gore's personal residence and that he returned it to the White House on July 11, 2001. The former employee also provided us with a July 11, 2001, letter to the counsel to the vice president, in which he wrote that "it appears that the bust was inadvertently packed with the personal effects of Vice President Gore." The former counsel to the former vice president told us that Mr. Gore did not pack his own items in his office at the end of the administration.

The former director of an office where an EOP official told us that she could not locate cellular telephones anywhere in the office suite where they belonged said that the former staff from that office turned in their cellular telephones as part of the check-out process. A former official from that office provided copies of the check-out forms completed for 71 staff who worked in that office indicating that the cellular telephones were returned or that the category did not apply to certain employees. A former employee who helped collect the cellular telephones in that office said that all of the cellular telephones were returned and that he left them on a shelf in his office.

Keyboards

The June 2001 list indicated that 100 computer keyboards had to be replaced because the "W" keys had been removed.

Observations of EOP and GSA Staff and Related Documentation

Twenty-six EOP staff told us that they observed a total of 30 to 64 computer keyboards with missing or damaged (glued, whited-out, or pushed down) "W" keys in specific rooms or offices.[26] We developed a range reflecting the observations because some staff said they saw different numbers of keyboards with missing or damaged "W" keys in the same rooms or offices and as a means of eliminating double counting. In calculating the range, we took the lowest number of keyboards with missing or damaged keys observed and the highest number observed in specific rooms or offices, and then added the observations of all people. The low end of the range could be understated, however, because some EOP staff did not indicate that they looked at every keyboard in a room or office or did not provide a specific number of keyboards that they observed with missing or damaged keys. Further, the high end of the range could be overstated because, in at least one case, the number of keyboards observed with broken or missing "W" keys was greater than the number of keyboards that former Clinton staff said was in that space.

Five other EOP staff said that they saw a total of four keyboards with inoperable, missing, or switched keys; they said they were not "W" keys or could not recall which keys were affected. In addition, five EOP staff and one GSA employee said that they saw 13 to 15 "W" keys taped or glued on walls;[27] five EOP staff said they observed piles of keyboards or computers or a computer monitor overturned; three EOP staff said that something was spilled on their keyboards; one EOP official said that she found 3 "W" keys in a desk; and one EOP employee said that his keyboard was missing at the beginning of the new administration.

In addition to the EOP staff we interviewed about their observations regarding the keyboards, we interviewed EOP personnel who worked with computers during the transition. The OA associate director for information systems and technology provided us with documentation indicating that on January 23 and 24, 2001, the EOP purchased 62 new keyboards. The January 23, 2001, purchase order for 31 keyboards indicated that "[k]eyboards are needed to support the transition." The January 24, 2001,

[26]This included the observation of the branch chief for program management of the OA information systems and technology division, who said she saw 6 to 10 keyboards with missing "W" keys in the West Wing.

[27]This included an observation of a "W' key taped to a wall in specific location in the West Wing. Two other EOP staff also said they observed "W" keys taped or glued on walls in the EEOB but did not specify how many.

purchase request for another 31 keyboards indicated "[s]econd request for the letter 'W' problem." The OA associate director for information systems and technology said that some of the replacement keyboards were taken out of inventory for the new administration staff, but she did not know how many. In an interview in June 2001, this official said that 57 keyboards were missing keys during the transition, and 7 other keyboards were not working because of other reasons, such as inoperable space bars. She also said that she believed that more of the keyboards with problems were found in the offices of the first lady and the vice president, compared to other offices.

After later obtaining an estimate from the branch chief for program management and strategic planning in the information systems and technology division, who worked with computers during the transition, that about 150 keyboards had to be replaced because of missing or damaged "W" keys, we conducted a follow-up interview with the OA associate director for information systems and technology. In February 2002, the OA associate director for information systems and technology said that her memory regarding this matter was not as good as when we interviewed her in June 2001, but she estimated that 100 keyboards had to be replaced at the end of the Clinton administration and that one-third of them were missing the "W" key or were intentionally damaged in some way. She also said that of those 100 keyboards, about one-third to one–half would have been replaced anyway because of their age. The official also said that she was not focused on the keyboards during the transition, but saw about 10 keyboards with missing "W" keys, some space bars that were glued down, and a lot of keyboards that were "filthy." This official said that she took notes regarding the computers during the transition, but she was unable to locate them.

An April 12, 2001, E-mail sent from the OA financial manager who approved the request to purchase 62 keyboards in January 2001 to an OA Information Systems and Technology Division branch chief indicated that

> There were a number of keyboards which had the 'W' missing/inoperable during [the] transition. Based upon our need to provide working keyboards to incoming EOP staff, we placed rush keyboard orders on January 23rd and January 24th. We ordered a total of 62 keyboards for a total cost of $4,850. This is the approximate number of keyboards that were defective.

The EOP provided a copy of a March 27, 2001, OA excess property report that was prepared regarding its disposal of computer equipment. The report indicated that 12 boxes of keyboards, speakers, cords, and soundcards were discarded, but did not specify the number of keyboards that were included. The contract employee who prepared that report said that she did not know how many keyboards were discarded, but that each box could have contained 10 to 20 keyboards, depending on the size of the box. The EOP also provided a copy of a February 11, 2002, E-mail from a computer contract employee to the OA associate director for information systems and technology indicating that the contract employee had told the OA employee that "… she excessed eight boxes of 'junk' after the transition. Six of those boxes each contained 20 or more keyboards with either the 'W' problem or a broken space bar." When we interviewed the contract employee who was referred to in the E-mail as having excessed damaged keyboards, she said that she did not pack all of the boxes and did not look at all of the keyboards, but that most of the keyboards that she saw were missing "W" keys. She also said that she did not know how many discarded keyboards had missing or damaged "W" keys and that she did not know how many damaged keyboards were discarded after the transition. Further, she said that some of the keyboards that were discarded had been waiting to be disposed of before the transition because they were dirty or because of wear and tear. In a February 2002 interview, the OA associate director for information systems and technology said that she believed that four of the boxes of excessed computer equipment contained damaged keyboards.

Costs

Because of the lack of documentation, we could not determine how many keyboards may have been taken out of inventory to replace keyboards that were intentionally damaged during the transition. As a result, it was not possible to determine the total costs associated with replacing damaged keyboards. However, we are providing cost estimates for various totals provided by EOP staff. In reviewing the costs, it must be recognized that according to the OA associate director for information systems and technology, one-third to one-half of the keyboards for EOP staff, including the ones provided to EOP staff at the beginning of the administration, may have been replaced anyway because staff receive new computers every 3 or 4 years. Therefore, some of the damaged keyboards would have been replaced anyway. We did not attempt to obtain information on any other costs that may have been associated with replacing damaged keyboards, such as those related to delivering and installing new keyboards.

Below is a table showing the different costs that could have been incurred on the basis of different estimates we were provided regarding the number of damaged keyboards that were replaced and the range we calculated regarding the observations of keyboards with damaged and missing keys. The cost estimates were calculated on the basis of the per-unit cost of the 62 keyboards that the EOP purchased in late January 2001 for $4,650, or $75 per keyboard.[28]

Table 1: Estimated Costs of Replacing Damaged Keyboards

Source of estimate regarding the number of damaged keyboards	Total replacement cost
Range of 30 to 64 keyboards that were observed by EOP staff with missing and damaged keys in specific rooms or offices	**$2,250-$4,800**
Estimate provided by the OA associate director for information systems and technology in February 2002 interview that one-third of 100 keyboards replaced during the transition were intentionally damaged, or about 33 keyboards; and a statement by her in June 2001 that 64 keyboards were missing keys or were inoperable in some way	**$2,475-$4,800**
Statement by an OA financial manager in an April 2001 E-mail that the 62 keyboards purchased in January 2001 were approximately the number of keyboards that were defective because "W" keys were missing or inoperable during the transition	**$4,850[a]**
Estimate by the branch chief for program management and strategic planning in the information systems and technology division, who worked with office equipment during the transition, that 150 damaged keyboards had to be replaced	**$11,250**

[a]Includes a $200 expedite fee.

Source: EOP staff.

Comments by Former Clinton Administration Staff

One former senior Clinton administration official said that he found the reports of keyboards with missing "W" keys to be believable but regrettable and indefensible. Two former employees said that they observed a total of three to four keyboards with missing "W" keys in offices in the EEOB at the end of the administration. Another five former Clinton administration staff said that they heard people talking about removing "W" keys or keyboards with missing "W" keys before the end of the administration, but did not see any keyboards with missing "W" keys or see anyone removing them.

[28]The EOP also paid a $200 expedite fee in January 2001, which we excluded in calculating the per-unit cost.

The former senior advisor for presidential transition questioned whether as many as 60 keyboards could have been intentionally damaged because, while helping with the downloading and archiving of data from computers during the morning of January 20, he moved about 50 computer central processing units[29] from offices in the EEOB during the morning of January 20 and did not see any "W" keys missing from keyboards. In addition, regarding an observation of two keyboards with missing "W" keys in a certain office suite, this former official said that he was in that office suite after 10:30 a.m. on January 20 helping with the downloading and archiving of data from computers, and he did not see any keyboards with missing "W" keys there.

The former manager of an office where an EOP employee said she observed 18 keyboards with missing "W" keys in an office suite said that there were 12 keyboards in that office suite at the end of the administration.

Furniture

The June 2001 list indicated that the damage included "[f]urniture that was damaged severely enough to require complete refurbishment or destruction--6 offices." It also indicated that a glass desk top was smashed and on the floor, and that desks and other furniture were overturned in six offices.

Observations of EOP Staff and Related Documentation

Ten EOP staff told us that they observed a total of 16 to 21 pieces of broken furniture, including 5 to 7 chairs with broken legs or backs; 5 to 7 broken glass desk tops, including one on the floor;[30] 1 to 2 chairs with missing or broken arms; a desk with the drawer fronts removed; a sofa with broken legs; a credenza with broken door glass; a broken mirror;[31] and a cabinet with its doors hanging with only one hinge.

[29]He said that these were computers from which information had not yet been downloaded.

[30]A GSA cleaning team leader said that the cleaning staff accidentally broke a glass top in an office, but that it was on the floor for only 10 to 15 minutes before it was cleaned up.

[31]A GSA facility request indicated that a request was made to fix a mirror in a certain office. However, the EOP employee who said that he observed a broken mirror could not recall where he saw it.

Six EOP staff also said that the locks on four desks or cabinet drawers were damaged or the keys were missing or broken off in the locks. This included the observation of a file cabinet with a key broken off, which, when opened, contained a Gore bumper sticker. Another EOP employee said that he saw that the fabric was torn on three chairs. This employee said that the tears were made in the same spots on two of the chairs, which he observed in a hallway, and that the fabric on them appeared to have been new. He thought that they had been intentionally cut with a knife. One EOP employee said that her desk had five to six large cigar burns on it, and other desks had scratches that she said appeared to have been made with a knife.

Five EOP staff also said that they observed writing inside drawers of five desks.[32] Four of these employees said the writing was found written inside the top drawers of the desks. The other employee could only recall on which floor he saw the writing. In August and September 2001, we were shown the writing in four of the five desks.

Five EOP staff told us that they saw a total of 11 to 13 pieces of furniture that were on their sides or overturned in specific rooms or offices. The five people who told us the approximate time that they observed overturned furniture said they made those observations between the early morning hours and the afternoon of January 20. In addition, another EOP employee and the director of GSA's White House service center said they observed overturned furniture, but did not indicate where. The director of GSA's White House service center also said that furniture could have been overturned for a variety of reasons other than vandalism, such as to reach electrical or computer connections. Further, five EOP staff also said they saw pieces of furniture that appeared to have been moved to areas where they did not belong, such as desks moved up against doors.

[32]The writing in one of the desks was dated January 1993.

Six EOP staff said they observed a total of four to five desks with a sticky substance on them between January 20 and 22 in two different locations (an office in the EEOB and an office area in the West Wing). In addition, three EOP staff said that they saw a total of two to four desks with handles missing on January 20 or 21. Included were the observations of two employees who worked in the West Wing who said that their desks had a sticky substance on the bottom of drawers or a pull-out tray (one of those two employees who worked in that area also said that her desk was missing handles); an employee who said that a desk in that area[33] had a sticky substance on the bottom of a drawer and was missing handles; an employee who said that another desk in the West Wing had glue on the bottom of a drawer and was missing handles; and an employee who worked in the EEOB who said that she had to scrub "sticky stuff" on her desk, but did not know what it was and that it could have been the accumulation of years of grime.

Documentation relating to the observations made in specific locations included the following:

- January 25 and 29, 2001, GSA facility request forms documented requests to gain access to and for a key to a locked file cabinet in a room where an EOP employee said that he found a key that was bent and almost entirely broken off in a cabinet that, once opened by a locksmith, contained Gore-Lieberman stickers. The facility requests were made by the EOP employee who told us about this observation.

- A January 30, 2001, GSA facility request form documented a request to fix a broken desk lock in an office where an EOP employee said the lock on her desk appeared to have been smashed. The facility request was made by the EOP employee who told us about this observation.

- A February 12, 2001, GSA facility request form documented a request to repair a leg on a sofa in an office on a floor of the EEOB where an EOP employee observed a sofa with broken legs.

[33]It was not clear whether this desk was one of the desks that belonged to the two staff who worked in that area and made the same observation.

- A February 21, 2001, GSA facility request form documented a request to repair arms on two chairs in an office where two EOP staff told us that they had observed broken chairs.[34] The facility request was made for the EOP employee who told us about this observation.

In August 2001, we observed the desk with the drawer fronts that were detached, which had not been repaired at that time.

Other GSA facility request forms for the period January 18, 2001, to February 27, 2001, documented furniture-related requests that were not in locations where EOP reported observing these types of problems. They included requests to repair a chair back, a desk lock, and a mirror, and five requests to repair or replace broken or missing desk handles. Also included were requests for furniture repairs that did not reflect observations made by EOP staff, such as a request to repair a bookcase.

Definitive information was not available regarding when the furniture damage occurred; whether it was intentional and, if so, who caused it. The management office director said that during the first two weeks of the administration, the EEOB was filled with furniture that had exceeded its useful life. She believed that the broken furniture that she saw was in that condition as a result of wear and tear and neglect and not something intentional. Similarly, an EOP employee who saw four chairs with broken legs placed in the hall said the chairs could have been in that condition due to normal wear and tear and were not necessarily intentionally damaged. The OA director said that some furniture was thrown away because it was damaged, but "not a lot." He said that some furniture was put into a dumpster, and other pieces were transferred to the EOP storage facility. He also said that damaged furniture was put in the halls.[35] In addition, he said that there were no records indicating that furniture was deliberately damaged, and that no inventory of furniture in the EEOB exists. An associate counsel to the president provided photographs of four pieces of furniture that she indicated were moved to an EOP remote storage facility that is now quarantined. They included a chair with a missing leg, a chair with a missing back, a sofa without a seat cushion, and a desk with missing

[34]One EOP employee (the occupant of that office at the beginning of the administration) said that the arms on two chairs in his office were loose. Another EOP employee said that the arms were missing from a chair in that office.

[35]Two of the three EOP staff who observed the chairs with broken legs and backs said that they placed them in the halls for removal.

drawer fronts. No information was provided regarding from which offices these pieces of furniture had been taken or when or how the damage occurred.

Costs

GSA provided facility request forms dated between January 18, 2001, and February 27, 2001; we reviewed these and found 49 furniture-related requests that cost a total of $6,964 to complete. Some individual repair costs were substantially more than others, such as $1,855 to refinish a desk and $628 to repair a bookcase. It was unknown what portion of those repair costs, if any, was the result of intentional damage caused during the transition. Further, the work requests for some repairs indicated that they included work other than furniture repair.

GSA facility request forms relating to observations made in specific locations indicated that about $258 was incurred and included the following:

- $75 to repair arms on two chairs,
- $75 to repair a sofa leg,
- $54 to gain access to a locked file cabinet, and
- $54 to fix a broken desk lock.

We did not obtain any additional possible costs related to other furniture-related observations, such as those associated with placing overturned furniture upright, removing glue that had been left on desks, or replacing broken glass desk tops.

Comments by Former Clinton Administration Staff

A former Clinton administration employee who worked in an office where an EOP employee showed us writing in his desk told us that he wrote a "goodwill" message inside a drawer of his desk. This former employee said that he obtained the idea to write a message inside of his desk because, historically, vice presidents sign the inside of a desk in their office.[36]

[36]According to a page on the White House Web site, which contains a description of the EEOB, vice presidents since the 1940s have signed the inside top drawer of the desk in the vice president's ceremonial office.

Clinton administration officials said that some of the space they vacated needed cleaning and that a conscious decision had been made early in the administration not to spend much money on repairs and upkeep during the administration in view of the generally tight budget; therefore, it could be expected that some furniture showed wear and tear. The former director of one office where EOP staff told us they observed two to four pieces of broken furniture said that the office furniture had been in poor shape for some time, but the staff tolerated it. He said that they did not want to send the furniture away to be repaired because it was uncertain how long it would take or whether the furniture would be returned.

The former manager of an office where two EOP staff told us they observed one to two chairs with broken or missing arms said that arms on two chairs in that suite of offices had become detached a year or two before the transition, that carpenters had tried to glue them back, but the glue did not hold. We asked GSA to provide facility request forms for 1999, and we found two requests to repair chairs in that office suite made by the former office manager.

A former Clinton administration employee who worked in an office where three EOP staff told us they observed a desk with two detached drawer fronts said that the fronts of two drawers on his desk had come off when he worked there and that someone was contacted once or twice over 5 years to have them fixed, but the glue did not hold. In addition, this former employee said, regarding observations by EOP staff of two to three chairs with broken backs in his office, that a chair with a broken back had been in his office for a long time before the transition. Another former employee in that office said that he remembered that the front of a drawer of the other employee's desk was held on with rubber bands and that it had been that way for about the last 2 years of the administration.

The former director of an office where an EOP official told us he observed a broken glass desk top on the floor during the afternoon of January 20 said that he did not observe that when he left the EEOB at about 1:00 a.m. on January 20, and he said that he and the deputy director were the last office staff to leave. Similarly, the former senior advisor for presidential transition said that he was in the same office after 11:00 a.m. on January 20, and he did not see a broken glass desk top.[37]

Three former staff who worked in an area of the West Wing where five EOP staff told us they found glue or a sticky substance on two to three desks said that they left the White House between midnight on January 19 and 4:30 a.m. on January 20 and were not aware of glue being left on desks. One of those former employees who worked in that same area where EOP staff said they observed one to three desks with missing handles said that her desk was missing handles when she started working at that desk in 1998, and it was still missing them at the end of the administration.

The former occupant of an office suite where an EOP employee told us she observed a desk with five to six large cigar burns said that there may have been a burn on one of the two desks in his office, but he did not put it there. He said that he smoked, but not cigars, and not in his office. This former employee also said that with respect to an additional observation by an EOP employee that a desk in the office suite had scratches on it that appeared to have been made with a knife, he did not recall seeing any scratches on either of the two desks in his office.[38] Similarly, the former senior advisor for presidential transition said that he was in the same office after 10:30 a.m. on January 20, and he did not see any scratches on a desk in that office.

[37]A National Records and Archives Administration (NARA) official said that she went to various offices in the EEOB with the former senior advisor for presidential transition around 11:00 a.m. on January 20, checking to see whether presidential materials had been obtained from computers. This NARA official said that she did not remember the specific rooms where she went that morning, but she did not see any evidence of damage, vandalism, or pranks.

[38]The same EOP employee made both observations about the burn marks and scratches. During our initial interview with this employee, she said that the desks with burn marks and scratches were in a particular office. During a follow-up interview 4 months later, she said her observations pertained to an office suite, rather than a single office.

Three former occupants of a suite of three rooms where two EOP officials told us they observed a table and two desks overturned in the afternoon of January 20[39] said that no furniture was overturned in their offices when they left on January 20 and that their desks would have been difficult or impossible to move because of the weight of the desks. One of the three former occupants said that he was in his office until 3:30 a.m. or 4:30 a.m. on January 20, the second former employee said he was in his office until 10:00 a.m. or 11:00 a.m. on January 20, and the third former employee said that she was in her office until 11:50 a.m. or 11:55 a.m. on January 20.

Regarding another office where an EOP official told us that he observed overturned furniture between 3 a.m. and 4 a.m. on January 20, the former senior advisor for presidential transition said that he was in that office after 11:00 a.m. on January 20, and he did not see any overturned furniture. Similarly, the former director of that office, who said that he left the office around 1:00 a.m. on January 20, said that he did not observe any overturned furniture.

Regarding furniture in a hallway of the EEOB that an EOP employee said she observed,[40] two former employees who worked in an office outside of which the furniture was seen in the hallway said that they had moved bookcases, file cabinets, tables, and chairs out of their office into the hallway to help the cleaning staff at the end of the administration.

Telephones

The June 2001 list indicated that:

- "The phones [sic] lines had been cut in the EEOB--pulled from the wall."
- "50-75 phone instruments had been tampered with requiring more work than the standard reset. Of those, most had the identifying templates removed."
- "Voice mail announcements had been changed to answer the line with obscene messages. After finding 10–15, workers stopped resetting them individually and reset the entire system."

[39]The OA director, who observed overturned furniture in this office, said that he began touring the floor of the EEOB containing this office starting at 12:02 p.m. on January 20.

[40]The EOP employee said that furniture was in the hallway so that offices could be cleaned.

- "A stu3 phone[41] in the First Lady's office was left open with the key in it."

Observations of EOP Staff and Related Documentation

Two EOP staff told us that they saw a total of 5 to 6 telephone lines "ripped" (not simply disconnected) or pulled from the walls during the early morning hours of January 20.[42] In addition, the OA director said he saw some plugs that looked like they were damaged, and another EOP employee said that she saw a telephone cord that appeared to have been cut with scissors. One EOP employee said that she saw at least 25 cords torn out of walls in two rooms on January 22.[43] That employee did not know exactly what types of cords were torn out of the walls, but said she thought that they were telephone and computer cords and also could have been fax and electrical cords. A January 24, 2001, GSA facility request form documented a request to "organize all loose wires and make them not so visible" in an office suite where an EOP employee said that at least 25 cords were pulled from the walls. The facility request was made by the EOP employee who told us about this observation.

[41]This is a secure telephone.

[42]The OA associate director for facilities management, who was one of the two EOP staff who made these observations, told us that telephone cords were ripped out of walls in a certain office, but did not indicate how many he saw. That office was located on one of two floors where he said he observed 3 to 4 telephone cords ripped out of walls.

[43]This EOP employee originally said that 25 telephone and computer cords were torn out of office walls. In a follow-up interview, this employee said that the cords also could have been electrical and fax cords, but did not know for certain. She also could not recall whether the cords were torn out of several walls or whether they were concentrated in a certain area.

Five EOP staff said they observed a total of 98 to 107 telephones that had no labels identifying the telephone numbers in specific rooms or offices.[44] Further, an EOP employee who coordinated telephone service during the first month of the administration estimated that 85 percent of the telephones in the EEOB and the White House were missing identifying templates or did not ring at the correct number.[45] She did not identify the locations of these telephones, which could include those that were observed without identifying labels by four other EOP staff. This employee said that she was the "middleman" between EOP staff and contractors regarding the telephones during the first month of the administration, and that she went into every office of the EEOB and the White House during that time.

The OA telephone services coordinator said she believed that telephone labels were removed intentionally and that "quite a few" labels were missing during the transition, but she did not agree that 85 percent of the telephones were missing them. She said that she had observed 18 telephones that were missing number labels.[46] The telephone service director said that in one room, missing telephone labels were replaced before noon on January 20, but were found missing again later that day.

Five EOP staff said that 13 to 19 telephones were forwarded to ring at other numbers.[47] Further, the EOP employee who coordinated telephone service during the first month of the new administration estimated that about 100 telephones were forwarded to other numbers, but, with one exception, did not specifically identify which telephones.

The telephone service director said the numbers for telephones that were missing identifying labels were determined in most cases by placing calls

[44]This range included 82 telephones in a suite of offices in the EEOB where an official said that all of the telephones were missing identifying templates at the beginning of the administration. The EOP estimated that there were 82 telephones in that office in January 2001. The range does not reflect a number of telephones with missing labels in an office where the telephone service director said that he saw them missing, but did not specify how many.

[45]We counted 699 telephone numbers in the EEOB and East and West Wings of the White House in the February 2001 EOP telephone book; 85 percent would have been about 594 telephones that were missing identifying labels or did not ring at the correct numbers.

[46]This observation was included in the total range of missing labels provided in this section.

[47]This included one report of calls being forwarded from the West Wing.

and noting what numbers appeared on the displays of receiving telephones. He also said that another way to identify the telephone numbers was for a telephone technician to obtain them from the telephone service provider. This official also said that, although there is a standard form for telephone service requests, preparation of this paperwork was not required between January 20 and 22 because of the urgency to get new employees moved into their offices.

Seven EOP staff, including the telephone service director, said they saw telephones unplugged and/or piled up on two floors of the EEOB and in four specific rooms on those floors. Two EOP staff said that they found telephones that were not working. One of those employees told us that, because many telephones were not working in a section of a floor of the EEOB, the switchboard forwarded calls from that area to other offices where telephones were working, and that she walked from office to office delivering telephone messages. In addition, one EOP employee (a different employee for each of the following observations) said that he or she observed "some" telephones that were moved to other rooms while still connected, two telephones plugged into the wrong plugs, and one telephone with an incorrect number.

The EOP provided documentation that summarized telephone service orders closed from January 20, 2001, through February 20, 2001, and contained 29 service orders that cited needing or placing labels; 6 of the 29 service orders were for work in offices where telephone labels were observed missing.[48] All of the 29 service orders mentioning labels were part of orders for other telephone services, as were four individual work orders EOP provided that cited labeling that were not part of the 29 service orders. In discussing the telephone service requests, the OA telephone services coordinator said that the requests for labels did not necessarily mean that the telephones had been missing labels with telephone numbers. She said that a new label might have been needed for a new service, such as having two lines ring at one telephone. Documentation provided by the EOP included a work order to retrieve a telephone that was on the floor in one room, and another work order that said, in part, "replace labels on all phones that [sic] removed." The documentation did not include any work orders indicating that work was performed specifically to correct the forwarding of telephone calls.

[48]None of the service orders mentioning labels were for work in the East or West Wings of the White House.

Two EOP employees who helped establish telephone service for new staff said that they heard a total of 6 to 7 obscene or vulgar voice mail messages that were left on telephones in vacated offices. These employees could not recall the specific content of the messages or the locations of the telephones. In addition, 13 EOP staff said they heard a total of 22 to 28 inappropriate or prank voice mail greetings or incoming messages left. Included in these total numbers was the statement of the telephone service director, who told us that he heard 10 inappropriate voice mail messages, 5 to 6 of which were vulgar, during the early morning hours of January 20.

The content of the most commonly heard voice mail message that EOP staff told us about (3 messages heard by four EOP staff) was that the former staff would be out of their offices for the next 4 years. Two EOP staff said they heard a voice mail greeting left by a former Clinton administration employee, who identified himself in the message, that said he would be out of the office for 4 years due to the Supreme Court decision and left his home telephone number. The telephone service director said that EOP staff needed to be physically present in the White House complex to record these greetings on their voice mail by using a passcode.

Ten EOP staff said that they had no voice mail service when they began working in the White House complex. The telephone service director said that they initially attempted to erase inappropriate and vulgar voice mail messages on an individual basis, but it was eventually decided to erase all of them. The OA associate director for facilities management said that no record was kept of voice mail complaints, but so many complaints were received about them that voice mail service was discontinued for a while to clear out the system. This official said that no one had access to voice mail for at least 5 days and possibly up to 2 weeks. This official said that he made the decision not to erase all voice mail messages and greetings at the end of the administration because doing so would have deleted voice mail for all EOP staff, including staff who did not leave at the end of the administration, and not just for the departing staff. The OA telephone services coordinator said that voice mail greetings and messages were not removed on a systemwide basis at the end of the Clinton administration because the EOP had not yet done an equipment upgrade, which was done later.

Two EOP officials said they observed a stu3 (secure) telephone with the key left in it. We interviewed the director of operations support at the White House Communications Agency (WHCA), which coordinates the installation of secure telecommunications equipment in the White House complex. This official said that WHCA had no record of having installed a secure telephone in the office where EOP staff said they observed it and did not know whether such equipment had been used during the Clinton administration. He also said that, for the equipment to be operational in a secure mode, the key in the receiving equipment also must be engaged. The official said that, typically, this type of equipment is picked up from offices by WHCA at the end of an administration, but because the agency had no record of the equipment in that office, it was apparently left there.[49]

Costs

According to the White House, based on what it said was extremely conservative estimates and straightforward documentation, the government incurred costs of at least $6,020 to replace missing telephone labels and reroute forwarded telephones. The documentation provided included two blanket work orders and associated bills, a closed orders log for the period January 20 through February 20, 2001, 8 individual work orders for telephone service, and two monthly AT&T invoices. The White House also identified, but did not provide 19 other individual telephone service work orders that it used in its cost estimate for or placing labels on telephones.

Six of the 29 work orders listed on the closed orders log that cited needing or placing labels and four individual work orders that included labels were for work in offices where telephone labels were observed missing. However, both the orders listed on the closed orders log and the individual work orders, as well as the blanket work orders, cited other services besides labeling, and it was not clear to us from the documentation provided the extent to which relabeling was done solely to replace missing labels or would have been necessary anyway due to changes requested by new office occupants. None of the documents provided specifically cited correcting forwarded telephones. The documentation provided included blanket work orders representing 114 hours for work done on January 20

[49]This official said that another secure telephone with the key in it was found in the West Wing at the end of the administration. He said that typically, at the end of an administration, the employee to whom the equipment is assigned contacts WHCA to have it picked up. The official did not know whether WHCA had been contacted in that case.

and 78.5 hours for work on January 21. Costs associated with individual services were not identified for the blanket work orders, but they indicated that the services were for "install, moves, relabeling, rewire, etc." The summary of work orders closed between January 20, 2001, and February 20, 2001, listed work orders for services such as installing new telephones and fax lines, replacing labels on telephones, clearing voice mail, resetting passwords, and reprogramming telephone numbers.

The OA telephone services coordinator estimated that a technician could determine the numbers for 20 to 30 telephones per hour, but also indicated that a technician's $75.92 hourly charge ($113.88 per hour on Saturdays and $151.84 per hour on Sundays) would be charged even if it took less than an hour to complete a service order. Although we do not question that costs were incurred to replace labels or reroute forwarded telephones, we do not believe the documentation provided is clear or descriptive enough to indicate what those costs were.

A January 29, 2001, telecommunications service request documented a request for services including "replace labels on all phones that [sic] removed," but the orders closed log for this service request showed "install new [numbers]/replace label." This service request was not made for an office where telephone labels were observed missing.

A February 7, 2001, telecommunications service request documented a request to remove a telephone from an office where piles of telephones were observed at a cost of $75.92.

Comments by Former Clinton Administration Staff

Regarding observations by EOP staff that telephone cords were "ripped" from walls, one former Clinton administration employee said that cords may have been pulled out of walls as a result of moving. She said that she remembered seeing two telephone cords pulled out of walls previously, but not around the time of the transition, which she believed was the result of an office move. Another former Clinton administration employee noted that, with respect to the observation that telephone cords were cut, when the carpet was being stretched in an office, a computer cord was cut with a carpet stapler.[50] (She said this did not occur during the transition.)

The former occupant of an office suite (consisting of his office and a reception area) where an EOP employee told us she observed more than 25 cords torn out of the walls said that he did not observe any computer or telephone cords that were cut or torn out of the walls in any office when he was helping to remove hard drives from computers during the morning of January 20. He said that his office had only 5 telephone and computer cords when he worked there.[51] Similarly, the former senior advisor for presidential transition said that he was in that office after 10:30 a.m. on January 20, and he did not see any telephone or computer cords cut or torn out of walls.

[50]The director of GSA's White House service center said that there were "any number" of reasons why problems could have been observed with telephone and computer wires besides having people cut them deliberately. He said, for example, that the cleaning staff could have hit the wires with the vacuum cleaners; computer staff could have been working with the wires; movers could have hit them, or wires could have been disconnected for a long period and not removed.

[51]The OA telephone services coordinator said the EOP had no documentation regarding the number of telephone and computer lines that were in this office at the end of the Clinton administration. In February 2002, this official counted 14 telephone, computer, and fax lines in the main room of this office suite, which was then occupied by several people. At the end of the Clinton administration, two people occupied these two rooms.

The former chief of staff of an office where two EOP staff told us they observed 9 to 11 missing labels identifying the telephone numbers said she was aware that six telephones in that office suite were missing labels before the transition. She said those telephones were used by interns to invite people to events and that they were used for outgoing calls only, not to receive calls. In addition, another former employee said that a telephone in a room (a reception area) in an office where EOP staff told us they observed missing labels identifying the telephone numbers was missing such a label before the transition. She said that, while she worked there, the office staff did not know the number for that telephone.[52] She also said that the telephone was used only by visitors for outgoing calls. A former employee who also worked in that office suite said that other telephones in the office suite were missing labels before the transition, but he did not know how many were missing.

Another former employee who worked in another office where two EOP staff told us they observed missing telephone labels[53] said that her telephone did not have a label identifying the number when she started working there in 1997, and that someone told her what her telephone number was. The former director of another office, where an EOP official told us he observed missing telephone labels, said that staff sometimes moved to other desks and took their telephone numbers with them. The deputy assistant to the president for management and administration during the Clinton administration said that he did not know why labels identifying the telephone numbers were missing. He noted that the label for his telephone was missing when he started working in the White House complex in 1997.

The former manager of an office where an EOP employee told us he observed telephones that were unplugged said that he was not aware of anyone in that office unplugging them. A former employee in another office where EOP staff told us they observed telephones that were piled up said that there were extra telephones in that office that did not work and had never been discarded.

[52]This former employee said that a telephone in her office was also missing a label when she worked there. No Bush administration staff said they observed missing labels in that room during the transition.

[53]One of the two EOP staff who made this observation said that all of the labels were missing from telephones in this office.

The former senior advisor for presidential transition said that, during transition meetings, EOP staff discussed a plan to erase the voice mail greetings on all of the telephones during the transition. He provided a typewritten copy of notes regarding an April 28, 2000, transition team meeting indicating "telephones—mass clearing." However, he said that given the reports of inappropriate voice mail messages found at the beginning of the new administration, the plan apparently had not been carried out. He also said that it would have been technically possible to erase voice mail greetings for most departing EOP staff without also deleting the greetings for staff who did not leave at the end of the administration.[54] In January 2002, he provided us with his telephone number in the White House complex during the Clinton administration; when we called it, his voice mail greeting could still be heard.[55] This former official also said that some telephones were forwarded to other numbers for business purposes at the end of the Clinton administration. He said, for example, that some of the remaining staff forwarded their calls to locations where they could be reached when no one was available to handle their calls at their former offices.

A former employee who worked in an office where three EOP staff told us they heard a prank voice mail greeting said that on his last day of work at the end of the administration, he left a voice mail greeting on his telephone indicating that he would be out of the office for the next 4 years due to a decision by the Supreme Court, and he provided his home telephone number. He said that he presumed that the message would be erased the day after he left because he would no longer be employed there. He also said that departing staff were told that they would not be able to access voice mail after they left, but could not recall who told him that or how it was communicated to him (verbally or by E-mail). This former employee said that he left the message in "good humor."

The former manager of the office where two EOP officials told us they observed a secure telephone with the key left in it said that the telephone had not been used for 4 years and was not active.

[54]As noted earlier, the OA telephone services coordinator said that voice mail messages and greetings were not removed at the end of the Clinton administration because the EOP had not yet done an equipment upgrade.

[55]The OA telephone services coordinator said in February 2002 that this voice mail greeting was attached to a telephone number, but not an actual telephone, and that the greeting recently had been deleted.

Fax Machines, Printers, and Copiers

The June 2001 list indicated that "[s]ix fax machines were moved to areas other than the ones in which they had been installed, making them inoperable."

Observations of EOP Staff and Related Documentation

One EOP official told us that he had seen 12 fax machines with the telephone lines switched and another fax machine that was disconnected. Another EOP official said that he also observed some fax machines that were swapped between rooms. Three EOP staff said that they observed a total of 5 copy machines, fax machines, and printers that did not work. Two EOP staff said they observed fax machines moved to areas where they did not appear to belong, including some in the middle of a room, unplugged. An EOP employee who helped prepare the offices for new staff said that the serial numbers for 5 to 7 copy and fax machines and 10 printers were marked out or removed, and that without the serial numbers, he was unable to determine whether the machines were subject to maintenance agreements. He also said that no one knew the access codes needed for some copy machines. Another employee said that a printer and fax machine had been emptied of paper.

The EOP provided a copy of a log of broken copy and fax machines for the period from January 29, 2001, to February 28, 2001. The log indicated 18 instances of problems with copiers, such as paper jamming, feeder not working, and printing crooked during this period; and 19 instances of fax machine problems, including not being able to send or receive and a request for service that had not been completed the previous week. One of the items on the log was to repair a copy machine in an office where an EOP employee said that the copy and fax machines and printer did not work, although he said that he did not believe that they were not working because of something intentional. It was not possible to ascertain when the copier and fax machines in the log were broken and whether they were broken intentionally, and if so, who was responsible.

Costs

We did not request cost information associated with preparing these fax machines, printers, and copy machines for use by the new staff.

Comments by Former Clinton Administration Staff

The former director of an office where an EOP official told us that fax machines were swapped between rooms said that a fax machine may have

been pulled around a corner, but it was not done as a prank. Regarding a statement by an EOP employee that no one knew the access codes needed for some copy machines, the former senior advisor for presidential transition said he did not believe that any copy machines in the White House complex had access codes.

Trash and Related Observations

The June 2001 list indicated that "[o]ffices were left in a state of general trashing," including contents of drawers dumped on the floor, desk top glass smashed and on the floor,[56] and refrigerators unplugged with spoiled food. In addition, the list indicated that only 20 percent of the offices could be made available to incoming staff late in the afternoon of January 20.

Observations of EOP and GSA Staff and Related Documentation

Twenty-two EOP staff and 1 GSA employee told us that they observed offices that were messy, disheveled, or dirty or contained trash or personal items left behind in specific rooms or offices.[57] In addition, 6 EOP staff and 4 GSA staff said they observed office space in this condition on specific floors of the EEOB but could not recall the specific room or office. Nine additional EOP staff and 2 GSA staff said that they observed office space in this condition, but they could not recall any locations. (These could be the same observations made by EOP staff in specific rooms or offices.) Included among these observations were EOP staff who described the office space as being "extremely filthy" or "trashed out," and that a certain room contained "a malodorous stench" or looked like there had been a party. GSA's director of the White House service center also said that numerous unopened liquor and wine bottles were found.

GSA facility requests requesting cleaning in offices where observations were made included the following:

- A January 30, 2001, GSA facility request form documented a request to clean carpet, furniture, and drapes and to patch and paint walls and moldings in an office that an EOP employee said was "trashed out,"

[56]The observations regarding broken glass tops are discussed in the furniture section.

[57]This included one EOP employee who said that in an office in the West Wing, she saw a basketball hoop on a wall and champagne bottles in a fireplace, and that it looked like there had been a party. Another EOP employee told us that she saw empty cans of "Texas Trash," a nut mix, in the West Wing.

including the carpet, furniture, and walls, and had three to four "sizable" holes in a wall. The facility request was made by the EOP employee who told us about this observation.

- Another January 30, 2001, GSA facility request form documented a request to clean carpet, furniture, and drapes in a different office that an EOP employee said was filthy and contained worn and dirty furniture.

- January 25, 2001, and February 17, 2001, GSA facility request forms documented requests to clean carpet, furniture, and drapes in a suite of offices that an EOP employee told us was "extremely trashed" and smelled bad. The facility requests were made by the EOP employee who told us about this observation.

We interviewed 23 GSA staff who cleaned the offices during the transition and 4 GSA team leaders.[58] None of the 23 cleaning staff said they observed any damage, vandalism, or pranks. Two of the cleaning staff said that they saw personal items left behind, such as books and an eyeglasses case; 2 employees said that they observed a lot of trash; 1 employee said that he saw empty desk drawers on tables; and 1 employee said that she saw discarded unused office supplies. Three of the 4 team leaders, who were responsible for different floors of the EEOB, said they did not observe any damage.[59] Three of the team leaders said that they saw personal items left behind, such as unopened beer and wine bottles, a blanket, shoes, and a T-shirt with a picture of a tongue sticking out on it draped over a chair. One team leader said that the space on the floor of the EEOB where she worked was "extremely filthy," and another leader said that trash was piled up because there were not enough dumpsters to handle all of the trash.[60]

[58]These were staff who worked during the first shift starting on January 20.

[59]One of the team leaders observed "W" keys glued to a wall.

[60]These team leaders' observations are included in the total of four GSA staff who observed excessive trash or personal items on certain floors of the EEOB.

EOP and GSA staff also provided specific examples of their observations regarding the condition of the office space. Four EOP staff (4 different employees for each of the following observations) said they saw food left in refrigerators[61] and that the furniture, carpet, or drapes in their offices were dirty. Three EOP staff (3 different employees for each of the following observations) said they saw holes or unpainted areas of walls where items had been removed and a key broken off in a door leading to a balcony.[62] Two EOP staff and 1 GSA employee said they saw drawers pulled out of desks. Two EOP staff (2 different employees for each of the following) said they saw the contents of desk drawers or filing cabinets dumped on the floor in two offices; pencil sharpener shavings on the floor of two offices; and paper hole punches arranged on a floor to spell a word. Either one EOP or GSA employee said he or she saw the following: an unplugged refrigerator, a plant turned upside down, a room without lightbulbs, a broken safe lock, and a bolt missing from a lock on the door to the outside.[63]

The director of GSA's White House service center during the transition said that most of the cleaning began at about 7:00 a.m. or 8:00 a.m. on January 20 after OA provided a list of offices to be cleaned.[64] He said that OA authorized GSA to clean only a few offices before January 20 and that the cleaning was completed by the morning of Monday, January 22. The OA director said that the offices were in "pretty good shape" by the evening of January 22. Of the 23 EOP and GSA staff who said they saw offices that

[61]A GSA facility request documented a request to clean a refrigerator in a certain office. Two of the four EOP staff who said they observed food left in refrigerators could not recall where they saw the food, so the GSA facility request could corroborate those observations.

[62]All three staff referred to the same door.

[63]This was an office that had a door to the outside that was no longer used.

[64]The chief of staff to the president said that he toured the first floor of the EEOB during the afternoon of January 20, 2001, entered several offices, and did not see any cleaning crews. Further, as explained later, in January 2002, two former Clinton administration officials wrote us a letter indicating that they had not seen any cleaning crews during the night of January 19 or the morning of January 20. As a result, we asked GSA to contact the four former cleaning crew leaders about when they started cleaning offices during the transition. Two of the crew leaders said that they began cleaning the offices around 8:00 a.m. or 8:30 a.m. on January 20. Another former crew leader said that she began cleaning offices at 6:45 a.m. on January 20. The other former crew leader was no longer employed at GSA when we inquired about this in March 2002. The time cards for the four crew leaders did not indicate what time they started working on January 20, but indicated that one leader worked 8 hours, another worked 14 hours, and two worked 16 hours that day.

were messy, disheveled, or dirty or contained trash or personal items left behind in specific rooms or offices, 13 staff made these observations on January 20 and 21; the remaining 10 staff made these observations on or after January 22.

The OA associate director for facilities management said that there were "not a lot" of offices that could have been cleaned before January 20, and that maybe 20 such offices were on a list that was given to GSA. He also said that it took 3 to 4 days after January 20 to complete the cleaning. He said that there was more to clean during the 2001 transition than during previous transitions because (1) more staff were working in White House office space during the Clinton administration compared with previous administrations, (2) many people were messier than they should have been, and (3) it was more difficult to do routine cleaning in some offices because of their condition. This official said the amount of trash he saw was "beyond the norm" and that he observed a limited amount of "trashing" of offices. He also said that it would have taken an "astronomical" amount of resources to have cleaned all of the offices by Monday, January 22. In his opinion, he said that departing staff should have left their offices in a condition so that only vacuuming and dusting would have been needed.

A White House management office employee who said that he went into almost all of the offices on three floors of the EEOB and part of another floor said that he observed trash "everywhere" on January 21. He said that what he observed was probably a combination of some trash having been dumped intentionally and an accumulation built up over the years. Another employee said that an office that he saw looked like someone had deliberately left a mess, and that it appeared that someone was sending a message that they were going to make a mess for everyone. For example, he said that desk drawers were dumped out, lamps were on chairs, pictures taken down from the walls, and the door was jammed with pictures leaning against it so that the door could not be easily opened. Further, the OA director said that it looked as if a large number of people had "deliberately trashed the place," which he considered to be vandalism.

The EOP also provided seven photographs of two or three offices in the EEOB taken on January 21, 2001, because, according to an associate counsel to the president, they were possibly responsive to our request for any record of damage that may have been caused deliberately by former Clinton administration staff. These photographs showed piles of empty binders and other office supplies left on the floor, empty filing trays stacked on a sofa, an empty styrofoam coffee cup on a desk, a desk pad

with writing on it, a box of empty bottles left under a desk, a Christmas wreath on a table, a string of Christmas lights on a wall, Easter decorations, and three soda cans on a shelf.

Costs

A GSA facility request form indicated that $1,150 was spent on professional cleaning services in a suite of offices that included a room that an EOP employee said was "extremely trashed" and smelled bad. We did not attempt to determine the costs associated with any additional cleaning effort that may have been needed as a result of excessive trash that needed to be discarded.

Comments by Former Clinton Administration Staff

Former Clinton administration staff generally said the amount of trash that EOP and GSA staff said they observed during the transition was what could be expected when staff move out of office space after 8 years; many staff were working up to the end of the administration and moved out at the last minute; staff worked long hours in their offices, often eating meals at their desks; certain offices were messy throughout the administration and not only at the end of the administration; trash cans and dumpsters were full, so trash was placed next to them; and that staff expected GSA to clean their offices after they left.

Regarding the observations by some EOP staff who said that excessive trash had been intentionally left in vacated offices, none of the 67 former Clinton administration staff we interviewed who worked in the White House complex at the end of the administration said that trash was left behind intentionally as a prank or act of vandalism. One former employee who worked in an administrative office said that she did not observe much cleaning of offices before January 20, and she believed that GSA did not have enough supervisors and decision makers to oversee the cleaning. A former administrative head of another office that no one said was left dirty said that he had asked 25 professional staff to help clean the office before they left.

In a letter sent to us in January 2002, the former deputy assistant to the president for management and administration and the former senior advisor for presidential transition said that, for months before the transition, they had been assured that additional cleaning crews would be detailed to the White House complex to assist GSA cleaning crews during the final week of the administration. However, the former officials said

that they did not observe any cleaning crews during the evening of January 19 or the morning of January 20.[65]

Regarding files that an EOP official told us he observed dumped on a floor in another office during the afternoon of January 20, the former senior advisor for presidential transition said that he was in that office after 11:00 a.m. on January 20, and he did not see any files on the floor.[66] The former director of that office also said that files could not have been found dumped on the floor on January 20 because they were archived before he left on January 19.

A former official in an office where an EOP employee told us she observed dirty carpet said that, except for one room in the office suite, no money had been available for carpet cleaning throughout the administration.

A former employee of an office where three EOP staff told us they observed a key to a door to a balcony broken off in the lock said that only the Secret Service had a key to that door. The office manager for the office where an EOP employee told us it appeared that a pencil sharpener was thrown against the wall and that pencil shavings were on the floor said the sharpener in that office did not work and may have been placed on the floor with other items to be removed. Regarding things that appeared to have been "ripped" from walls that an EOP employee told us about, a former employee said the room had not been painted for years, and items had been put up and removed from that office several times. In addition, the former director of an office, where an EOP employee told us he observed paint missing from the walls, said that when the office was painted about a year before the transition there were air bubbles in the paint that turned into cracks and peeled.

[65]As noted previously, the director of GSA's White House service center said that the cleaning began at about 7:00 a.m. or 8:00 a.m. on January 20, 2001. In a follow-up interview, the former senior advisor for presidential transition said that two OA officials had provided the assurance that additional cleaning crews would be detailed to the White House during the final week of the administration.

[66]A NARA official said that she went to various offices in the EEOB with the former senior advisor for presidential transition around 11:00 a.m. on January 20, checking to see whether presidential materials had been obtained from computers. This NARA official said that she did not remember the specific rooms where she went that morning, but she did not see any evidence of damage, vandalism, or pranks.

The former director of another office where an EOP employee told us she observed a broken safe lock said that it had not worked correctly for some time. The former occupant of an office, which an EOP employee told us contained an odor when he started working there, said that his former office had smelled bad since he started working there in 1999. He said the office smelled moldy every time it rained, and he believed that water seeped into his office from a balcony. In addition, regarding another office that an EOP employee told us smelled bad,[67] the former occupant of that office said that he did not smoke in his office.

Regarding the photographs of messy offices that the EOP provided of offices during the transition, the former senior advisor for presidential transition said the photographs showed trash, but they did not show evidence of vandalism.

Writing on Walls and Prank Signs

The June 2001 list indicated that "[w]riting on the walls (graffiti) in six offices" was found.

Observations of EOP and GSA Staff

Six EOP staff said that they observed writing on the wall of a stall in a men's restroom that was derogatory to President Bush. In addition, two EOP staff and one GSA employee said that they observed messages written on an office wall.[68] Two of those three employees said that the writing they observed in that office was on a writing board that could be erased. Two other EOP employees said that they saw pen and pencil marks on the walls of two offices, but no written words. This included one employee who said that it looked like there were cracks in the paint, but because the marks washed off, he thought it looked like someone had used a pencil on the wall.

[67]This was a room that was part of a suite of offices where an EOP employee requested professional cleaning of carpet, furniture, and drapes. A February 17, 2001, GSA facility request documented this employee's request. This EOP employee originally told us that the office smelled like cigars. In a follow-up interview, this employee did not say that the office smelled like cigars, but that it "smelled bad" perhaps because it was in an old building.

[68]The two EOP staff recalled the specific room number where they saw writing on the wall. The GSA employee did not remember the room number, but she said that she saw the writing on the same floor where the EOP staff saw the writing. According to these employees, the content of the writing was not profane in nature.

Twenty-nine EOP staff said that they observed a total of 25 to 26 prank signs, printed materials, stickers, or written messages that were affixed to walls or desks; placed in copiers, printers, desks, and cabinets; or placed on the floor in specific rooms or offices, and that there were multiple copies of these in some locations.[69] The observers said these materials were generally uncomplimentary pictures or messages about President Bush or jokes about the names of certain offices. Six EOP staff said they saw a total of four messages that they said contained obscene words; three of the messages were observed in the same location. No one told us the pictures that they observed were obscene.

Three other EOP staff and two GSA staff said that they observed a total of eight to nine prank messages and materials on certain floors of the EEOB, but they could not recall the specific rooms or offices. The messages and materials that were observed on certain floors, but not identified by specific office or room, could be the same as those that were observed in specific locations.

In June and November 2001, EOP staff provided copies of 2 prank signs that were found during the transition, which were derogatory jokes about the president and vice president. In August and September 2001, we were also shown a roll of political stickers that were left behind and 2 stickers affixed to a file cabinet and desk containing derogatory statements about the president.

Costs

We did not request cost information associated with removing writing on walls and removing prank signs, stickers, and other written messages from the office space because we did not believe that such costs would be readily available.

Comments by Former Clinton Administration Staff

Thirteen former Clinton administration staff said they saw a total of 10 to 27 prank signs in the corridors of the EEOB.[70] One of those former

[69]Eight EOP staff observed prank pictures or a sticker in the West Wing. One EOP employee said she saw a prank picture in the East Wing.

[70]One of those employees also said that he found three to four Gore campaign signs and took them down. Another former employee said that she saw writing on a writing board that could be erased.

employees, who saw 2 signs, said she could not recall their content, but said they were "harmless jokes."

Office Supplies

The June 2001 list indicated that "six to eight 14-foot trucks were needed to recover new and usable supplies that had been thrown away."

Observations of EOP and GSA Staff

The OA associate director for the general services division, who is responsible for office supplies, said that about eight truckloads of excessed items were brought to an EOP warehouse where they were sorted into usable and nonusable materials. He said that departing staff brought excess office supplies to a room in the basement of the EEOB, which eventually became overloaded, and supplies were left in the hallway. However, he was not aware of any usable supplies being discarded.

One EOP employee and one GSA employee said they saw supplies that were thrown away, but no one said that trucks were needed to recover supplies that had been thrown away. Another EOP employee said that there were no office supplies in her office when she started working in the EEOB.

Costs

We did not obtain cost information concerning the value of office supplies that may have been thrown away because the statement that six to eight 14-foot trucks were needed to recover new and usable supplies that had been thrown away generally was not corroborated.

Comments by Former Clinton Administration Staff

The former deputy assistant to the president for management and administration said that departing staff were instructed at the end of the administration to recycle usable office supplies by bringing them to the basement of the EEOB. The former senior advisor for presidential transition said that office supplies were brought to that room so that staff could obtain them from there, rather than obtaining them from the supply center. A former EOP employee said that the room where the supplies were taken became overloaded at the end of the administration. A former office manager said that staff received E-mails indicating that any office supplies that were left in their offices would be thrown away.

Additional Observations Not on the June 2001 List

The OA associate director for facilities management said that he found a secure employee identification and two-way radios that were left in an office and not turned into WHCA. Another EOP employee said that he observed materials that were not returned to the White House library. A GSA employee said that she observed a few classified documents left unsecured in closets and the telephone service director said that he found classified documents in an unlocked safe.[71] Another EOP employee said that he found sensitive documents in a room. No costs were associated with these additional observations.

Regarding two-way radios that an EOP official said were left in an office and not turned into WHCA, the director of operations support at WHCA, which handles such equipment, said that the agency had no record of having provided two-way radios to the office where they were observed. The official said that this type of equipment is typically picked up from offices by WHCA at the end of an administration, but because the agency had no record of having provided equipment to that office, it was apparently left there.

Comments by Former Clinton Administration Staff

The former manager of the office where an EOP official told us he observed two-way radios left and not turned into WHCA said it was possible that they were not turned into that office.

[71]The locations were not identified. The director of records management said that he went into every office on two floors of the EEOB during the night of January 19 checking for documents and did not find any classified documents.

Observations Concerning the White House Office Space During Previous Presidential Transitions

We attempted to determine how the condition of the White House office space during the 2001 presidential transition compared with the conditions during previous recent transitions by interviewing 14 Executive Office of the President (EOP) staff, 2 General Services Administration (GSA) staff, 19 former Clinton administration staff, and a National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) official about their recollections of damage, vandalism, or pranks during previous transitions. In addition, we reviewed news media reports to identify any reported damage, vandalism, or pranks during the 1993, 1989, and 1981 transitions.

Observations of EOP, GSA, and NARA Staff During Previous Transitions

Five EOP staff told us they observed damage, vandalism, or pranks in the White House complex when they worked there during past transitions. Regarding the 1993 transition, an EOP employee said that she observed five desks containing prank pictures of former Vice President Gore with written messages on them and a banner on a balcony. In addition, two EOP staff (a different employee for each of the following observations) said he or she observed 1 to 2 poster-sized signs, and 5 to 10 missing office signs. Another EOP employee showed us writing inside a desk that was dated January 1993.

Seven EOP staff who had worked in the White House complex during previous transitions made observations comparing the condition of the office space in 2001 to previous transitions; six said that the condition was worse in 2001 than previous transitions and one said that the office space was messier in 1993 than 2001. The director of the Office of Administration (OA), who had been present during five previous transitions, said that he was "stunned" by what he saw during the 2001 transition and had not seen anything similar during previous ones, particularly in terms of the amount of trash. The OA associate director for facilities management said that there was more to clean during the 2001 transition than during previous transitions.[72] The telephone service director, who had worked in the White House complex since 1973, said that he did not recall seeing, in past transitions, the large amount of trash that he had seen during the 2001 transition. Further, an employee who had worked in the White House complex since 1984 said that office space in the complex was messier during the 2001 transition than all of the other transitions he had seen.

[72]See appendix I for the reasons that this official believed that there was more to clean during the 2001 transition, compared to past transitions.

The chief of staff to the president, who was in charge of the 1993 transition for the George H. W. Bush administration, said that he saw nothing comparable during prior transitions to what he saw during the 2001 transition. (He said that he saw during the 2001 transition, among other things, overturned furniture, prank signs, keyboards with missing "W" keys, and trash and telephones on the floors of vacated offices.) The director of records management, who had worked in the White House complex since 1969 said that, over time, he noticed that more personal items have been left behind by departing staff. The OA senior preservation and facilities officer, who had worked for the EOP since 1978, said she observed some evidence of vandalism or pranks during the 2001 transition, but had not seen any damage, vandalism, or pranks during previous transitions. However, a facilities employee who said that she was responsible for overseeing the custodial staff in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building (EEOB) during the 2001 transition and was involved in the cleanup effort in the EEOB during the 1993 transition said that she believed more trash was left in the building during the 1993 transition than the 2001 transition. She said that she found papers "all over the floor" and the remnants of a party during the 1993 transition.

The OA associate director for facilities management said that every transition has had a problem with missing historic doorknobs. The telephone service director said that telephone cords were unplugged and office signs were missing in previous transitions and that unplugging telephones is a "standard prank."

The director of GSA's White House service center during the 2001 transition said that the condition of the office space during the 2001 transition was the same as what he observed during the 1989 transition. (He said that he observed little during the 2001 transition in terms of damage, vandalism, or pranks.) Similarly, a GSA employee who was one of the cleaning crew leaders during the 2001 transition and was the EEOB building manager when we interviewed him in July 2001, said that he had not seen any damage or pranks during any transition during his 31 years of working in the White House complex. He said there was an excessive amount of trash during the 2001 transition, but that was not unusual for a transition. Further, in a March 2, 2001, letter to Representative Barr on this matter, the acting administrator of GSA said, regarding the condition of the White House complex during the 2001 transition, that "[t]he condition of the real property was consistent with what we would expect to encounter when tenants vacate office space after an extended occupancy with limited cyclical maintenance, such as painting and carpet replacement." (Real

property includes the physical structure of the building and not items such as telephones, computers, and furniture.)

NARA's director of presidential materials said that she was in the White House complex during the 1993 and 2001 transitions and that she went into about 20 offices in the EEOB during the morning of January 20, 2001. She said that she saw a lot of trash in the EEOB during the 2001 transition, but that it was no more than what she observed during the 1993 transition. She said that she did not see any damage, vandalism, or pranks during the 1993 or 2001 transitions.

Observations of Former Clinton Administration Staff Regarding the 1993 Transition

Regarding the 1993 transition, five former employees told us they observed furniture in hallways, piled up, or in places it did not appear to belong. One of those former employees also said there was no furniture in an office. One former employee (a different former employee for each of the following observations) said he or she observed each of the following: a person's initials carved into the front of the middle drawer of her desk, words carved into two additional desks (a former employee said one of the carved words was an obscenity; the person who observed the other carving in a desk said it was the name of the vice president during the George H. W. Bush administration), and broken chairs.

Seven former employees also said that computers were not operational or were missing hard drives at the beginning of the Clinton administration. Two of those employees said that it took 1 to 2 weeks for the computers to work.[73] Two former employees said that telephones were piled on the floors or were disconnected. (One of those former employees said she was told that staff would receive new telephones.)[74] Another former employee said that she saw telephone lines pulled out of walls and that they appeared to have been pulled out intentionally.

One former employee who started working in the White House complex in January 1993 and left in January 2001 said that the offices were messier in

[73]In *Armstrong v. Bush*, 807 F. Supp. 816 (D.D.C., 1992), the United States District Court for the District of Columbia issued a temporary restraining order requiring personnel of the first Bush administration to preserve backup tapes generated for certain EOP electronic systems.

[74]The telephone service director said that the EOP received a new telephone system during the Clinton administration.

January 1993 compared with January 2001. Another former employee said that on January 20, 1993, his office contained leftover food and that the walls needed repainting. A third former employee said the offices were still not cleaned by the afternoon of January 21, 1993. Another former employee said that there were "dusty and dirty" typewriters on desks.

Three former staff said they saw a total of at least six Bush bumper stickers in different offices, on cubicle walls, in a desk, and on a telephone. One former employee said she saw one to two photocopies of political cartoons left in a copy machine, a medicine bottle with a prank note inside a desk, a banner on the balcony of the EEOB, and a tent tarp.

Three former Clinton administration staff said that there were no office supplies when they started working in the White House complex in January 1993.

News Report Regarding the Condition of White House Complex during Previous Transitions

We searched major newspapers and selected magazines for any news reports regarding the condition of the White House office space during the 1981, 1989, or 1993 presidential transitions and found only one such mention. The March 1981 issue of *Washingtonian* magazine indicated that incoming Reagan administration staff had some complaints about the condition of the EEOB that were similar to observations made by EOP staff in 2001. According to the article, a visitor described the EEOB as being "trashed," and indicated that memorandums taped to walls, lampshades torn by paper clips hung on them to hold messages, a refrigerator with thick mold, and a large coffee stain on a sofa outside the vice president's office were found.

Procedures for Vacating Office Space

According to former Clinton administration and General Services Administration (GSA) officials, departing Executive Office of the President (EOP) staff at the end of the Clinton administration were required to follow a check-out process that involved obtaining written approval in 21 categories, including the return of library materials, government cellular telephones, pagers, and building passes. The form indicated that the employee's final paycheck and/or lump sum leave payment could not be issued until he or she had completed the form and returned it to the White House director of personnel.[75] However, the check-out process did not include an office inspection, including an inspection of the physical condition of the office, equipment, or furniture.

We asked former Clinton administration officials what instructions were provided to departing staff regarding vacating their offices at the end of the administration. We were provided with a January 4, 2001, memorandum sent by President Clinton's chief of staff to the office heads of the White House Office and the Office of Policy Development that encouraged staff to check out by the close of business on January 12, 2001, unless there was an operational need to be on the premises until January 19.[76] However, this memorandum did not indicate in what condition the office space should be left or how office supplies should be handled, nor did it provide any warning about penalties for vandalism. Provisions of 18 U.S.C. 1361 provide for the punishment of anyone who willfully commits or attempts to commit damage to U.S. government property. If the damage to government property exceeds $1,000, the crime is treated as a felony; if the damage does not exceed $1,000, the crime is a misdemeanor.

We contacted congressional personnel to ask what procedures are followed regarding offices on Capitol Hill that are vacated by members of Congress and their staff. They included staff from the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer, House of Representatives; Office of Customer Relations; Office of the Senate Sergeant-at-Arms; and Office of the Building

[75]We did not review whether this check-out process was followed by all departing Clinton administration staff.

[76]The EOP provided us with records indicating on what day building passes were terminated for departing staff in January 2001, but also indicated that this information was not reliable, so it was not known when former Clinton administration staff left at the end of the administration. Forty-three of the 71 check-out forms for former staff from one office (which we had obtained to check the return of cellular telephones) indicated that their building passes were turned in on January 19 or 20, 2001. However, this office's staff may not necessarily be representative of when all former Clinton administration staff left.

Superintendent, Office of the Architect of the Capitol. The staff said that House and Senate offices are inspected when members vacate their space, and they are held personally liable for any damaged or missing equipment. They also said that former members of both the House and Senate have been charged for this reason. Further, we were informed that furniture is inspected in House members' district offices. In addition, we note that landlords of privately owned office space and apartments routinely inspect the vacated space when tenants leave, and they charge for any damages.

Comments from the White House

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 31, 2002

The Honorable David M. Walker
Comptroller General of the United States
441 G Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Walker:

On May 13, 2002, I provided you with my office's comments on the May 3, 2002 draft of the General Accounting Office's report on vandalism, damage, and pranks that occurred in the White House complex during the 2001 presidential transition. Enclosed are a revised draft of those comments in which the names of individuals who provided information during the GAO's investigation have been removed, and certain conforming changes made. Please use this draft in preparing the comments for publication together with the final version of the GAO report.

In addition, I wish to address a matter which has been discussed between our respective staffs. We understand that you propose to redact in the published version of our comments a specific reference to a matter that GAO considers "inappropriate" for publication by the GAO. Specifically, as I understand it, this redaction would cover portions of a sign of a mock *Time* magazine cover (p. 9 of our May 13 comments and pp. 10 and 70 of our May 31 comments). For the following reasons, I strongly disagree with GAO's proposal to redact some of this material (or any other portion of our comments).

First, as we have repeatedly stated in our comments on the draft report, we believe it is vital to include the substance of specific graffiti, messages and signs observed in the White House complex if the report is to achieve the objective set for the GAO by Congressman Barr: to "*fully document* the reported examples of vandalism" during the transition. While we agree that the statement itself is not "appropriate", particularly when affixed to government property, and while we certainly do not wish to propagate such statements, those considerations are outweighed here by the clear relevance of the content of the statement to the objectives of the GAO's inquiry. Indeed, to the extent that this specific message is especially offensive or vulgar, it may be *more* relevant to the inquiry because, among other things,

- the content of a message can –and often does – indicate who wrote the message, and when. We think it unlikely that a reader would attribute the message in question to members of the incoming Administration, for example.

Now on pp. 8 and 14.

- the content often provides an insight into the mindset or intention of the person who wrote it. This is important because it allows the reader to determine for himself whether some of the statements found in the White House complex were "harmless jokes" or "goodwill messages", as former Clinton Administration officials now claim. (See May 3 Report at 10 and 17).

- the content of the message allows the reader to assess whether the GAO's characterization of the observations is fair and objective. For instance, in the May 3 draft report, the GAO describes a particular message as "*arguably* derogatory to the President." That message reads, "jail to the

thief." Because the report does not reveal the content of the message, readers have no way of knowing whether the GAO's characterization of it as "arguably" derogatory is accurate.

We raised these (and other) considerations in our May 13 comments in the hope the GAO would recognize the deficiencies in the current draft and revise accordingly. While we have not seen the final report to be published, we are disappointed to learn that apparently not only has the GAO *not* revised the report as we suggested (at least with respect to this comment), but in fact it proposes to redact *our comments,* which will effectively prevent the reader from having the necessary information about this particular matter to judge for themselves.

Second, we do not agree with the suggestion that by publishing our comments, GAO as an institution will be tainted or associated in some way with the offensive matters they report -- any more than the White House itself has been tainted by the offensive material discovered during the transition. Any such taint reflects only on the individuals who created the material, not those who discover and report it.

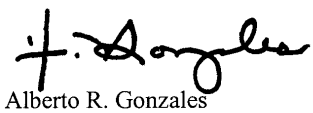
Third, although the President and the Administration had no interest – and have no interest – in dwelling upon what happened in the 2001 transition, we have cooperated fully in the GAO investigation and we believe that if there is to be a report, it is incumbent upon us to ensure through our published comments that the facts are accurately and fully reported. Whatever changes the GAO may or may not choose to make in the final report in light of our comments, those comments are a separate document for which we are solely responsible and over which we must exercise sole control.

Finally, I note that the suggestion made by your staff that the GAO would provide the substance of the redacted material to persons who make specific inquiry after reviewing the published comments, is not sufficient in our view to address these concerns. The published version of the report and accompanying published comments will be the definitive public documents for current and historical purposes, and will reach a much broader audience than any information made available to those who specifically request it.

We also understand that GAO intends to publish a response to our comments as an appendix to its final report. This is inconsistent with all previous representations regarding the GAO process, and we are disappointed that we will not have an opportunity to consider or reply to GAO's responses to our comments prior to publication of the final report.

If you have any questions about the enclosed comments, or wish to discuss these matters further, please do not hesitate to contact me or Associate Counsel Jennifer Newstead at 202-456-1984.

Sincerely,



Alberto R. Gonzales
Counsel to the President

cc: Bernard L. Ungar

COMMENTS OF THE OFFICE OF THE COUNSEL TO THE PRESIDENT
ON THE GAO'S DRAFT REPORT: "ALLEGATIONS OF DAMAGE
DURING THE 2001 PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITION" (DATED MAY 3, 2002)

The President and his Administration had no interest – and have no interest – in dwelling upon what happened during the 2001 transition. In early 2001, when the press first asked about damage found in the complex, the President said that "[i]t's time now to move forward." Members of this Administration went to great lengths to dampen public interest in the issue, hoping – as Press Secretary Ari Fleischer said at the time – "to put it all behind us" and to "focus [on] . . . just do[ing] the job that the American people elected President Bush to do." We certainly did not instigate an investigation by the General Accounting Office (GAO), nor revel at the prospect of such an inquiry. However, once the GAO agreed to undertake the investigation, we agreed to cooperate fully. We have done so. And we now believe that, if there is to be a report, it is incumbent upon us to ensure that the facts are accurately and fully reported.

With that goal in mind, and as a matter of comity between the legislative and executive branches, we provide the GAO with the following comments. We have now provided the GAO with two rounds of extensive comments on their draft. Our first round of comments were provided on April 26, 2002. Unfortunately, the GAO's revised draft, which we received on May 3, failed to address many of the concerns we had raised. Accordingly, we have now provided a second set of detailed comments on the May 3rd draft. We now understand that GAO intends to publish a response to our comments as an appendix to its final report. We are disappointed that we will not have an opportunity to consider or reply to GAO's responses to our comments prior to publication of the final report.

Part I of the comments describes some general concerns about the overall structure, content, and use of terminology in the draft report. [1] Part II offers more specific comments. And Part III addresses the GAO's proposed recommendations. In preparing these comments, we have consulted with representatives of the Office of the Vice President, the Office of Administration, the United States Secret Service, and others, on issues involving those entities or their personnel. We have also identified to the GAO the source of all factual information and statements cited herein.

Part I: General Comments

1. Failure To Report Material Facts. The GAO has not included in its draft report many facts that a reader needs, in our view, to have a complete and accurate understanding of what happened during the 2001 transition. In calling for this investigation, Congressman Barr asked the GAO to "*to fully document* the reported examples of vandalism." And section 7.51 of the Government Auditing Standards "requires that [a] report contain *all information* needed to satisfy the audit objectives [and] promote an adequate and correct understanding of the matters reported." In our view, neither Congressman Barr's directive nor the Government Auditing Standard has been met.

[1] As used in these comments, and unless otherwise noted, "draft report" or "report" refers to both the 27-page letter to Congressman Barr summarizing the GAO's findings and the report's three appendices.

For example, the GAO does not specifically identify anywhere in its report, including the appendices, each reported instance of vandalism, damage, or a prank. The GAO's omission is troubling not only because it ignores the explicit request of the sole Member of Congress who requested the investigation ("to fully document"), but also because the GAO seems willing to detail each comment made by a former staff member. Thus in many cases, the GAO has included a former staff member's comment *in response to* a particular observation without ever having discussed the observation itself. We believe that the GAO should treat observations by current staff members in the same manner it treats comments by former staff members. We also believe that the report should refer to each observation of damage individually.

The GAO also omits from its report details about *when*, *where*, and *by whom* an observation was made. *When* an incident was observed is often relevant to determining the likely perpetrator. For example, the damage, vandalism, and pranks were often observed during the night of January 19 – before the cleaning staff began cleaning offices and before members of the Bush Administration entered the complex – and thus eliminating those individuals as the possible culprits. *Where* damage was found is relevant, for example, because often more than one incident and type of damage was observed in the same location; a concentration of damage (such as that found in the Vice President's West Wing and EEOB offices) makes it less likely, in our view, that an innocent explanation exists. Finally, *who* made the observation can bear on issues of credibility; if staff who served in the White House complex during many Administrations observed the damage, as was often the case, then a reader may find the observation more credible than if a member of the incoming Bush Administration reported the same observation.

The report also does not contain the content of the graffiti, messages, and signs. We were told that the GAO thinks it is "not appropriate" to include such vulgar and disparaging statements about the President of the United States. While we agree that the statements themselves are "not appropriate," particularly when affixed to government property, and while we certainly do not wish to propagate such maledictions, we believe that including the content in the report is important for at least five reasons.

- *First*, the content of the message can – and often does – indicate who wrote the message and when.

Now on pp. 8 and 14.

- *Second*, the content often provides an insight into the mindset or intention of the person who wrote the message. This is important because it allows the reader to determine for himself whether the statements were "harmless jokes" or "goodwill" messages, as former Clinton Administration officials now claim (*see* Report at 10 and 17).

- *Third*, the content also allows the reader to infer that, if departing staff left a vulgar or derogatory message, those same individuals may also be responsible for other incidents that were observed near the location of the message.

- *Fourth*, the content of the messages and other details equip the reader to compare the 2001 transition and prior transitions.

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- *Finally*, the content of the message allows the reader to assess whether the GAO's characterization of the observations is fair and objective. For instance, in its report, the GAO describes a particular message as "*arguably* derogatory to the President." Report at 10. That message reads, "jail to the thief." But because the report does not reveal the content of the statement, readers have no way of knowing whether the GAO is accurate in describing the message as "arguably derogatory." By disclosing the content of the messages and other important details about the reported observations, the GAO can best assure the objectivity of the entire report.

Because we believe these details are important, many of our comments highlight facts that the GAO omitted. These facts are undisputed. The GAO omitted them from its report, we were told, not because it has reason to doubt their truth, but because the GAO concluded that it was "not appropriate" to include this level of detail and that the facts were not "material" to the GAO's conclusions. On this, we simply disagree. By including these facts in our comments and explaining their relevance, we hope that the GAO will recognize the deficiencies in the current draft and revise the final report accordingly. If not, the facts will be in our comments for the readers to judge for themselves.

2. The "June 2001 List." Throughout the draft report, the GAO refers to a "June 2001 list." The GAO structures its report around the list and compares the staff members' observations with the content of the list. The GAO uses the list in this manner even though the Counsel to the President cautioned the GAO, in transmitting the list, that

> [t]he list is not the result of a comprehensive or systematic investigation into the issue, and should not be considered a complete record of the damage that was found. Rather, the list was prepared quickly and based on the recollections of a handful of individuals who witnessed or learned of the damage.

Further, the GAO never even asked the individuals whose names appear on the list to explain how the list was prepared, who transcribed it, what its purpose was, or what each line refers to. Nonetheless, the GAO features the list prominently in its draft report as some type of benchmark or guidepost against which the observations are measured.

Worse, the GAO often misstates the contents of the list. For instance, on page 3, the draft report states that "[i]t listed . . . *offices with a lot of trash*." In fact, the list states that "[o]ffices were left *in a state of general trashing*." (And under that heading are three bullet points that read, "Contents of drawers dumped on floor," "Desk top glass smashed and on the floor," and "Refrigerators unplugged (spoiled food).") We highlighted the GAO's error – that in today's parlance saying an office was "generally trashed" is not the same as saying it had "a lot of trash" – in our April 26 comments on the GAO's preliminary findings. But for some reason, the GAO chose to ignore us. We will continue to note this type of error in this set of comments to allow the GAO another opportunity to correct the record and, in all events, to inform the reader about what the list actually says.

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3. Flawed Analysis. Rather than "fully document" each observation, the GAO generally states only "a range" of the "total" number of observations for each category of damage. While we would prefer that that GAO simply provide the underlying data, if the GAO includes these ranges, they must be correct. In our opinion, they are not. The GAO materially understates the number of observations, and its methodology for calculating the ranges, in our view, is flawed.

Here is the problem. The GAO said that, in calculating the "total" observations, it is crediting as true each person's observation. Yet, the GAO reports a range that takes the *lowest* number of observations in an office suite and then aggregates that lowest-possible number for each suite to arrive at the low end of the range. For the high end, the GAO, by and large, adds up each observation and assumes that no observer is repeating an observation reported by anyone else. Two examples – one taken from a data table which the GAO provided to us and the other a hypothetical – illustrate the flaw in this approach.

For purposes of the first example, let us assume that only two of the office suites from the GAO data table reported missing W keys – the Advance Office and the Communications/Media Affairs/Speechwriting Offices. For those office suites, the GAO data table shows:

Room no. or floor	No. observed[2]	No. for report (reason)
185 ½	3-4 3-4	2-8 (used range for different recollections)
Adv. (174, 185, 185½)	2 7-8	
192-198[3]	1-2	1-7 (used range for different recollections)
197	4 (observed by three persons) 1	
198	1	

Under the GAO's methodology, and this data, the GAO would say that 10 staff members reported "a total of" 3 to 15 damaged keyboards observed in the two office suites. But that is incorrect if, as the GAO says, all observations are being treated as truthful. One person alone said that he saw 7 or 8 keyboards with missing W keys; thus it could never be the case that *a total* of only 3 keyboards was observed damaged. Assuming the GAO's data were correct, the appropriate statement would be that 10 staff members reported a total of 11 to 26 (*i.e.*, 7 to 18 in the Advance Office and 4 to 8 in Rooms 192-198); here, the range properly reflects the possibility that an observer may or may not be reporting a keyboard that was observed and reported by another.

[2] The comments in this table were, collectively, reported by 10 separate individuals. Unless otherwise indicated, each line reports an observation by one person.
[3] The problem with the GAO's analysis is compounded by the fact that it groups offices together (*e.g.*, 192-198) that actually are three separate office suites – the Office of Media Affairs, the Office of Communications, and the Office of Speechwriting.

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A simplified and hypothetical example may further clarify the point.

Room no. or floor	No. observed (observer)	No. for report (reason)
Office Suite A	1 (Washington) 25 (Adams) 100 (Jefferson)	
Office Suite B	1 (Madison) 50 (Monroe)	

Under the GAO's methodology, the number of "total" observations would be 1 to 126 for Office Suite A and 1 to 51 for Office Suite B – or a total of 2 to 177 for both offices. But that would be an absurd conclusion since three people said that they each alone observed more than 2 damaged keyboards; so unless the GAO is going to simply ignore their observations, or find them not credible, the total must reflect what they said. Therefore a proper range would be 100 to 126 for Office Suite A and 50 to 51 for Office Suite B, or a combined total of 150 to 177.

It appears that this flaw in the GAO's methodology infects each of the ranges presented in the GAO report. It also appears that some of the data is inaccurate in the data tables that the GAO has provided. Without being provided copies of all of the data tables for each category of damage, we cannot know – and hence cannot comment specifically on – the factual accuracy of all data, nor on how each range was calculated. Where the GAO has provided copies of the data table or has described the underlying data to us, we provide specific comments below.

4. Use of the Term "Executive Office of the President." Throughout the draft report, the GAO refers to organizational units that are housed within the White House complex – such as the White House Office (WHO), the Office of the Vice President (OVP), or the Office of Administration (OA) – individually and collectively, as the "Executive Office of the President" or "EOP." As we explained to the GAO in our April 26 comments, it is not accurate to refer to each unit individually or all units collectively as the Executive Office of the President. In this context, the term is both under- and over-inclusive. It is under-inclusive because not all offices in the complex fall within the EOP umbrella. And it is over-inclusive to the extent that it covers units that the GAO did not investigate. Thus, for example, it is not accurate to say, as the GAO does, that it "asked EOP" for information (Report at 1). The GAO is also inaccurate when it refers to the EOP units as "agencies." Report at 3 n.2, 4. They are not.

Now on p. 4.

We therefore again recommend that the GAO state specifically the unit being referring to – whether it be the WHO, the OVP, the OA, the NSC, etc.

5. Effort To Downplay the Damage Found in the White House Complex. It appears that the GAO has undertaken a concerted effort in its report to downplay the damage found in the White House complex. The following facts lead us to that conclusion:

- the GAO omits from its report a reference to each reported instance of vandalism, damage, or a prank;
- the GAO underreports the number of observations for nearly every category of damage;
- the GAO omits from its report any mention of several individuals (all but two of whom served during the Clinton Administration) who told the GAO that the damage found during this transition was worse than prior transitions;
- the GAO ignores documents that show requests were made to repair telephone damage and clean offices;
- the GAO fails to quantify or estimate certain real costs incurred to remedy or repair the damage;
- the GAO fails to report the content of the graffiti and signs that were found in the complex; and
- the GAO is unwilling to conclude that the vandalism, damage, and pranks were intentional, even where the circumstances plainly indicate that they were (*e.g.*, damaged W keys, graffiti and signs disparaging the President and the incoming Administration, damaged furniture that contained anti-Bush statements, more than 100 missing phone labels, vulgar and inappropriate voicemail greetings, etc.).

Part II: Specific Comments

Now on p. 2.

1. **PAGES 2-3.** The GAO misstates the contents of the June 2001 list:

   - The GAO says that the list "listed . . . offices with a lot of trash." It does not. It says that the "[o]ffices were left in *a state of general trashing*," and then provides examples that the GAO omits – "[c]ontents of drawers dumped on the floor," "[d]esk top glass smashed and on the floor," and "[r]efrigerators unplugged (spoiled food)."

   - The GAO says that the list "listed . . . cut telephone lines." In fact, the list says "[t]en phone lines cut in the [E]EOB – *pulled from the wall*."

   - The GAO says that the list "listed . . . a secure telephone *left operational*." It does not. It says that "a stu3 phone . . . *was left open with the key in it*."

Now on p. 2.

2. **PAGE 3.** The GAO misidentifies the units that comprise the EOP. As stated above, not all of the units identified by the GAO fall squarely within the EOP. *See*, *e.g.*, *Sweetland v. Walters*, 60 F.3d 852, 854-55 (D.C. Cir. 1995) ("the Executive Residence is not a unit within the Executive Office of the President"). And none of the EOP units are "agencies," as the GAO contends (*see* Report at 3 n.2 and 4).

Now on pp. 6 and 19.

3. **PAGES 7 and 23.** The GAO concludes that "[d]amage, theft, and pranks did occur in the White House complex during the 2001 presidential transition." Congressman Barr asked the GAO to address "vandalism," and elsewhere in the report, the GAO discusses observations of vandalism. Is the GAO unwilling to conclude that "vandalism," as well as "damage, theft, and pranks" occurred? Or did the GAO simply inadvertently omit the word "vandalism" in these two instances?

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Now on p. 6.

4. **PAGE 8.** The GAO writes that "[m]ultiple people said that . . . they observed (1) many offices that were messy, disheveled, or contained excessive trash or personal items." That is an understatement, to say the least. The offices were not simply "messy" and "disheveled." Multiple observers told the GAO that the offices, for example, had more than 20 W keys glued to the walls; at least 14 to 19 pieces of furniture overturned; computers piled up or overturned on floor; telephones and fax machines unplugged and/or piled on the floor in 25 or more offices; at least a dozen fax lines switched; 5 or 6 glass desk tops broken; a plant dumped in the middle of the floor; drawers open and their contents dumped on the desk or the floor; food inside of desks; and beer, wine and liquor bottles littering offices. When one knows the specific allegations, a reader can evaluate the explanation offered by "some former Clinton administration staff" that "the amount of trash that was observed during the transition was what could be expected when staff move out of their offices after 8 years."

   Further, if the GAO is going to include the statement by former Clinton administration staff that the amount of trash was "what could be expected," it should also include the statements of longtime staff members who said the opposite. For example, an individual who has worked in the White House complex since 1971 told the GAO that the amount of trash "was beyond the norm," and a different individual, who has worked in the White House complex for 17 years, said that the trash was "worse this time" than in prior transitions and that the offices were "more messy" than what he had observed during other transitions.

Now on p. 6.

5. **PAGE 8.** The GAO reports that some former Clinton Administration staff said that "some reported observations were false." We are disappointed that President Clinton's former staff would make such a reckless statement – a statement that is neither based on nor supported by a single shred of evidence. We believe that self-serving accusations like this one illustrate why it is important to provide the reader with many of the details that the GAO omits. If, for example, the reader is told that a particular observation was made by a staff member who worked in the complex for many years (including during the Clinton Administration), or that the damage was found in a location where others observed lots of other damage, then the reader can determine for himself the credibility of the observation.

Now on p. 7.

6. **PAGE 9.** The GAO writes: "[D]ocumentation was provided indicating that much telephone service work was done during the transition, but this information did not directly corroborate allegations of vandalism and pranks involving the telephones." We simply do not understand how the GAO can say the documentation does not corroborate the allegations. Several staff members reported missing telephone labels, and the documentation shows, for example,

   - a list of closed telephone service orders that shows, among other things, at least 28 separate work-order requests for replacement of labels on one or multiple telephones;
   - a Telephone Service Request (TSR) that says, "NEED Button labels typed. Tech to label sets";

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- a TSR that says, "Room[s] 274, 272, 284, & 286. Program phones . . . NEED Button labels typed. Need tech to place labels on sets";
- a TSR that says, "Room[s] 272 & 276. Program phones . . . NEED Button labels typed & placed on sets";
- a TSR that says, "Reprogram sets in Room 263, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269 and 271. NEED labels placed on each set";
- a TSR that says, "NEED TECH TO PLACE BUTTON LABELS" on sets in Room 270;
- a TSR that says, "Replace labels on all phones that removed" in Room 18;
- a TSR that says, "Need label placed on set" in Room 148; and
- a TSR that says, "NEED Label placed on set" in Room 100.

In addition, the GAO received two TSRs that show work – "including . . . relabeling" – performed on January 20 and 21, 2001, when individual work orders were not completed.

Likewise, staff members reported that telephones were left on the floor, and the documentation shows a request for a technician to retrieve a telephone found on the floor.

Now on p 7.

7. **PAGE 9.** The GAO writes that "[s]eventy-nine EOP staff who worked in the White House complex on or after January 20, 2001, provided observations about the condition of the complex at the beginning of the administration." This statement is inaccurate in two respects. First, many of these 79 staff members worked in the complex *before*, during, and after January 20, not simply "on or after January 20, 2001." Second, those staff members provided observations of damage, vandalism, and pranks that occurred shortly *before* "the beginning of the administration" – on January 19 and the early morning of January 20, 2001.

Now on p. 8.

8. **PAGE 10.** The GAO reports that "EOP staff . . . observed a total of about two dozen prank signs, printed materials, stickers, or written messages that were affixed to walls or desks; placed in copiers, desks, and cabinets; or placed on the floor." We believe the GAO has substantially underreported the number of signs and messages. The GAO was informed of, and has not disputed, the following observations:

MESSAGES AND SIGNS WRITTEN ON OR AFFIXED (NOT SIMPLY TAPED) TO FURNITURE AND OTHER GOVERNMENT PROPERTY

Location	Observation[4]
EEOB – 191	Sticker affixed to filing cabinet that reads "jail to the thief"; shown to GAO
EEOB - 191A	Writing on a pull-out tray on desk that reads "W happens"; shown to GAO
EEOB - 191B	Writing in top left drawer of desk that reads "GET OUT"; shown to GAO

[4] The comments in this table were, collectively, reported by 7 separate individuals. Unless otherwise indicated, each line reports an observation by one person.

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EEOB - 196A	Writing in middle drawer of desk that reads "Hail to the Thief"; shown to GAO
EEOB – 197	Key broken off in file cabinet with Gore bumper sticker with the words "Bush Sucks" stuck to the inside of the cabinet (observed by two persons)
EEOB - 125A	Writing in middle drawer of desk that wishes all "who work here" "good luck"; shown to GAO.
EEOB – 1st floor	Writing in desk drawer
West Wing – outside COS and VP offices	Gore bumper sticker stuck to the bottom of paper tray in the copier

SIGNS AND MESSAGES (not including messages and signs written on or permanently affixed to property)	
Location	**Observation**[5]
West Wing – Vice President's Office	"Vulgar words" on white board*
West Wing	Sign comparing President Bush to a chimpanzee found "in a number of printers"; "laced" throughout the reams of paper**
West Wing – Vice President's Reception Area	Three copies of the same sign taped to wall (observed by two persons)*, ***
	15-20 copies of the same sign laced throughout ream of paper in fax machine and copier (observed by two persons)
West Wing – First Floor	Same sign shuffled throughout the paper tray in copy machine outside the Chief of Staff's office
West Wing	20-30 copies of same sign interspersed throughout ream of paper in printer in office that is adjacent to the Oval Office
East Wing	8" x 10" color piece of paper that said "see you in four, Al Gore" in drawer of the copy machine
EEOB – room not identified	Same President Bush/chimpanzee sign found in a printer*
EEOB – basement	In location where people "dumped" supplies, a sign read "Gifts for the New President" (Head Telephone Operator)+

[5] The comments in this table were, collectively, reported by 28 separate individuals. Unless otherwise indicated, each line reports an observation by one person.

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EEOB – 87	Sign taped to a desk of a mock MasterCard ad that includes a picture of President Bush and reads, "NEW BONG: $50, COCAINE HABIT: $300, FINDING OUT THAT THE GOOD-OLD-BOY NETWORK CAN STILL RIG AN ELECTION IN THE DEEP SOUTH: PRICELESS. For the rest of us there's honesty." The GAO was provided with a copy of this sign.
EEOB – 100-104	T-shirt with tongue sticking out draped over chair*
EEOB – 128	Sign that read "just laugh" taped to the wall
	Signs
EEOB – 160-164	"Inappropriate" message in printer or fax tray
	"Quite a few signs"
EEOB – 160	Picture of former First Lady taped to the inside of cabinet
EEOB – 162	Photo in safe that had the word "chad" spelled out in paper punch holes (observed by two persons)
EEOB – 177-189	Signs
	Notes in the desk drawers
EEOB – 192	Sign addressed to and disparaging of "Bush staffer" on wall
	Sign of a mock *Time* magazine cover that read "WE'RE ******" on wall (observed by five persons)
EEOB – 197B	Desk drawer had 2 Gore/Leiberman stickers displayed inside
EEOB – 2d floor	Picture of Bush with something drawn on it on the 2d floor^
EEOB – 3d floor library	Sign reading "VP's cardiac unit" (observed by two persons) ++, +++. The GAO was shown a copy of this sign.
EEOB – 4th floor	Pictures of President Clinton and notes about President Bush "were everywhere." ^^
EEOB	Signs inserted into office nameplates, including signs outside of the former First Lady's Office (Room 100-104), the OMB, and the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (observed by four persons; three of these (two OA employees and one GSA employee) had worked in the White House complex during the Clinton Administration)

*OA employee who worked in the White House complex during Clinton Administration
** OA employee who worked in the White House complex during Clinton Administration
*** OA employee who worked in the White House complex during Clinton Administration
+ OA employee who worked in the White House complex during Clinton Administration
++ OA employee who worked in the White House complex during Clinton Administration
+++ OA employee who worked in the White House complex during Clinton Administration
^ GSA employee who worked in the White House complex during the Clinton Administration
^^ GSA employee who worked in the White House complex during the Clinton Administration

Obscenity deleted by GAO.

Now on p. 8.

9. **PAGE 10.** While, in some cases, the signs listed above were easily removed and, in a few cases, were probably meant as a joke, we believe the GAO should describe the signs more fully and with greater detail for the reasons stated in General Comment No. 1. Two statements on page 10 illustrate why. *First*, the GAO reports that "one former employee . . . said that the prank signs that she saw were harmless jokes." The reader is unable to determine whether the signs were truly "harmless jokes" in some, many, or all of the cases, unless the content is included. *Second*, the GAO reports that it was shown "2

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stickers affixed to a file cabinet and desk containing arguably derogatory statements about the [P]resident." The GAO is referring to a sticker that reads "jail to the thief." We do not think that statement is "*arguably* derogatory," and we believe that many people would agree with us. Yet, since the report does not reveal the content of the statement, the reader cannot determine whether the GAO is accurate in saying the statement is "arguably derogatory."

Now on p. 8.

10. **PAGE 10.** The GAO reports that "[t]wenty-six EOP staff said that they observed a total of 30 to 64 computer keyboards with missing or damaged 'W' keys" where a specific room or office was identified. Again, we believe the range provided by the GAO ("30 to 64") does not accurately reflect the number of observations reported. According to our records, which we earlier provided to the GAO and the GAO did not dispute, staff members observed a total of 58 to 70 computer keyboards with missing or damaged W keys where a specific office or room was identified. In addition, staff members reported 150 keyboards with missing or damaged W keys, where the staff member did not associate the observation with a particular room or office. The data are set forth below:

MISSING OR OTHERWISE DAMAGED W KEYS (where a specific room or office was identified)		
Room no. or office	**No. observed[6]**	**No. for report (reason)**
Former 1st Lady's Office, 100-104	Approx. 10 (observer "A")[7] 7+ ("at least one in each of the 7 offices in suite") (observer "B") Approx. 18 (observer "C")	Approx. 18 (C's observation likely included the same damaged keyboards seen by A, B, D, and E)
102	2 (observer "D")	
104	1 (observer "E")	
106	Approx. 2	Approx. 2
158/160A	2	2
160	1	1
172	1	1
173	1	1
176	1	1
Advance Office (177-189)	3-4 3-4 15-16 "at least" 7-8	15-16
196, 197, 197A, 197 and/or 199	1-2 (observer "V")	5-7 (W's observation likely included the same keyboards seen by V, X, Y and Z)
197, 197A, 197B, and/or 199	5 (observer "W") (4 missing, 1 defaced)	
197B	1 (observers "X" and "Y")	
199	1 (observers "Y" and "Z")	

[6] The comments in this table were, collectively, reported by 26 separate individuals. Unless otherwise indicated, each line reports an observation by one person.
[7] Letter designations are for purposes of this table only.

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198	1	1
OVP	4-5 "heavy concentration" **; "some" ***	5-10
286	1	
288	4	
West Wing*	6-10****	6-10
Total		**Approx. 58-70**

*Although no specific room was identified in the West Wing, we have included this observation in this table because, as stated in footnote 19 of the Report, the GAO places it in this category.
** OA employee, worked in the White House complex during the Clinton Administration.
*** OA employee, worked in the White House complex during the Clinton Administration.
**** OA employee, worked in the White House complex during the Clinton Administration.

MISSING OR OTHERWISE DAMAGED W KEYS (where NO specific room or office was identified)		
Location	**No. observed[8]**	**No. for report (reason)**
EEOB and WW	150**	150
EEOB – no specific location	1***	0-1 (observation likely counted above)
First Floor, East Hall – EEOB	2	0-2 (observation likely counted above)
Total		**150**

**OA employee, worked in the White House complex during Clinton Administration
*** OA employee, worked in the White House complex during the Clinton Administration.

Now on p. 9.

11. **PAGE 11.** The GAO repeats its statement (found on page 8 of the Report) that staff "told us that they saw offices that were messy, disheveled, dirty or contained excessive trash or personal items left behind" and that "[f]ormer Clinton administration staff said that the amount of trash that was observed during the transition was what could be expected when staff move out of their offices after 8 years." Please refer to the comments we provided in Specific Comment No. 4.

Now on p. 9.

12. **PAGES 11-12.** The report states that the "EOP provided seven pictures that . . . showed piles of binders and office supplies, empty beverage containers, and other items left behind. However, a Clinton administration transition official said that the pictures showed trash, and not vandalism." The GAO's description of the photographs is, in our view, incomplete. Any description of the photos should also say that the pictures show, among other things, binders, folders, papers, and other trash piled in the middle of the floor; framed pictures and bulletin boards removed from the walls and placed on the ground and on furniture; Christmas lights and strands of tinsel hung from the walls; desk drawers and cabinets left open and containing Easter decorations and personal products; and office supplies piled on sofas.

[8] The comments in this table were, collectively, reported by 3 separate individuals. Each line reports an observation by one person.

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Now on p. 10.

13. **PAGE 12.** The report describes two facility request forms that document requests for cleaning in particular offices where the GAO was told by current staff that the offices were "trashed" or extremely "filthy." The GAO, however, fails to mention three additional and similar facility request forms that we provided:

- A January 30, 2001, facility request form (Form No. 56990.) shows that an employee asked for the following services in the Advance suite: "Walls/moldings need patching and paint. . . . 1 – Need carpet vacuumed – is awful! 2 – Furniture cleaned and drawers need vacuuming out. 3 – Drapery needs cleaning or replacement." Facility Request No. 56990. During her interview, this employee told the GAO that the Advance suite was "still trashed out" even after the GSA crew went through the offices for the first time and that it took approximately three weeks before things were "back to standard."

- A January 25, 2001, facility request form (Form No. 56662) shows that a different employee asked that GSA clean the carpet, furniture, and drapes in Room 160A. Facility Request No. 56662. This employee had to repeat that request on February 17, by submitting another form (which the GAO does describe) to clean a room that the employee said was "extremely trashed."

- A February 21, 2001, facility request form (Form No. 58369) shows a request to clean the carpet in the former First Lady's suite (Rooms 100-104). At least four current staff members told the GAO that this office suite was trashed, including reports of pencil shavings, dirt, and trash covering the floor.

- In addition, in describing the January 30, 2001, facility request form, the GAO writes that the form "documented a request to clean carpet, furniture, and drapes in an office that an EOP employee said was 'filthy' and contained worn and dirty furniture." This description is incomplete. The same employee, as well as others from her office suite, also told the GAO about significant damage to furniture in those offices, including a desk drawer with its drawer fronts removed, chairs without legs, and a chair with its entire back broken off.

Now on p. 11.

14. **P AGE 12.** The GAO underreports the number of reports of damaged furniture and the number of observers. Our records show *17* current staff members reported *a minimum of 31 to 33 pieces* of damaged furniture – not counting the furniture that was defaced with writing and stickers – as follows:

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DAMAGED FURNITURE	
Location	**Observation**[9]
100-104 (Former First Lady's office)	4 chairs with broken legs
102	Desk drawers kicked in – "clearly" intentional; "not just wear and tear"
103	Desk drawers locked; pried open the drawers and found 2 pieces of paper that had anti-Bush statements
104	2 broken chairs – arms lifted off (observed by two persons) (The GAO apparently believes that one of the two observers said that 1 or 2 chairs had broken arms. That is incorrect; he told the GAO that 2 chairs had broken arms, and indeed showed the GAO the chairs.)
158-160A	"Number of the desks" appeared to have been scratched with knives; multiple "big scratches with a sharp object"; other furniture had red pen marks and other stains
160A	Desk covered with 5-6 black, circular burn marks; appeared to be cigar burns
160-164 (Cabinet Aff.)	1 or 2 chairs with broken legs (observed by three persons)
	1 chair with its entire back broken out (observed by two persons)
	1 chair with ripped seat
162	Desk with 2 or 3 of the drawer fronts removed (observed by four persons, and witnessed by GAO)
177-189 (Advance)	Glass top shattered on floor; appeared that someone stomped on it
179	Lock to the cabinet in desk had been jammed inward so that it would not function
185-189	Desk had a key broken off in the lock
197B	Key broken off in file cabinet; key hanging in lock by metal thread, and Gore bumper sticker found inside (observed by four persons)
199	Glass in glass-fronted bookcase was broken with glass still sitting in cabinet
EEOB – Southwest corner of first floor	Cabinet with two doors hanging from hinges**
First floor EEOB – in hall	Chairs with slit seats
No specific room identified	Sofa with broken legs and other broken furniture – probably in Counsel's office, the Scheduling office, and in the Advance offices

[9] The comments in this table were, collectively, reported by 17 separate individuals. Unless otherwise noted, each line reports an observation by one person.

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No specific room identified	Some broken pieces of furniture; upholstered pieces of furniture were "filthy" and had spills on them in same offices, where months and weeks earlier, things looked "pretty good"**
No specific room identified	Broken glass tops in 5 or 6 offices
No specific room identified	Broken mirror

**OA employee, worked in the White House complex during Clinton Administration

Now on p. 11.

15. **PAGE 12.** The GAO reports that "[f]ormer Clinton administration staff said that some furniture was broken before the transition and could have been the result of normal wear and tear, and little money was spent on repairs and upkeep during the administration." This explanation cannot be squared with the circumstances surrounding the reported damage. For example,

- With respect to the key broken off in a file cabinet in Room 197B, the key was found still hanging in lock by a metal thread (suggesting that the damage occurred not long before the transition) and, when the locksmith opened the cabinet, a Gore bumper sticker with the words "Bush Sucks" was prominently displayed inside (suggesting that the damage was intentional and done by a member of the former Administration).

- Similarly, when the locked desk drawers were pried open in Room 103, two pieces of paper with anti-Bush statements were found displayed inside. Again, in our view, these facts indicate that the damage was intentional, occurred shortly before the transition, and was done by a member of the former Administration.

- One employee told the GAO that the drawers on her desk "clearly" had been kicked-in intentionally and that it was "not just wear and tear";

- A second employee told the GAO that it was unlikely that the slit seats were the result of wear and tear because "the fabric otherwise looked new," and "it looked like someone had taken a knife or sharp object to the seat"; and,

- A third employee told the GAO that she saw damaged furniture in offices where things had looked "pretty good" weeks or months earlier.

- Finally, in still other cases, the nature of the damage suggests that it occurred shortly before the Inauguration because the offices' prior occupants and cleaning staff would not have let the damage remain in the office for long. For example, it is hard to believe that occupants would not fix or remove a bookcase with broken glass (with shards of glass still in the cabinet) or would allow chairs with broken legs and no backs to remain in an office suite for very long.

Now on p. 10.

16. **PAGES 12-13.** The GAO lists four facility request forms that show that staff requested repairs of furniture that they told GAO was damaged. The GAO, however, to fails to include in its list a second facility request form (Form No. 56695) submitted by a staff

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member on January 29, 2001, to obtain "a key to lateral file cabinet," which was "locked."

Now on p. 11.

17. **PAGE 13.** We believe that the GAO has underreported the pieces of furniture that were observed overturned. Our notes show (notes that were provided to the GAO and the GAO did not dispute) that five White House employees, one OA employee, and one GSA employee reported seeing *at least 14 to 19 pieces of furniture* that were on their sides or overturned, as follows.

OVERTURNED FURNITURE		
Location	**Observation**[10]	**No. of pieces**
128	In each of the three offices and the secretary's space, almost every desk was overturned – at least one desk or table in each room	4+
177-189 (Advance Off.)	At least 2 "desks turned over"	2+
	Coffee table standing on end	1
	Sofa upside down	1
	Tables upturned	2+
OVP	Chair overturned	1
1st floor EEOB	3-4 pieces of furniture turned over; "couple desks on side," "couple of chairs"**	1-3
Not identified	Desks and credenzas turned on their sides *	2
Not identified	Overturned sofa	0-1 (may or may not be same one seen by a different person)
Not identified	Desks turned on sides	0-2 (may or may not be same ones that others observed)
TOTAL		**At least 14-19**

*GSA employee, worked in the White House complex during Clinton Administration
**OA employee, worked in the White House complex during Clinton Administration

[10] The comments in this table were, collectively, reported by 7 separate individuals. Unless otherwise indicated, each line reports an observation by one person.

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Now on p. 11.

18. **PAGE 13.** The report reads: "Six EOP staff said they observed a total of four to five desks with a sticky substance or glue on the top or on drawers." That is inaccurate and incomplete. The GAO was told that a thick layer of an oily glue-like substance was smeared on the bottom of the middle drawer of the desks and smeared all over the top of the right pull-out trays of at least two desks. In addition, three separate employees said that the desk-drawer handle on at least one of the desks was missing, and one of the three said that the handle was found inside the drawer along with more of the glue substance.

Now on p. 11.

19. **PAGE 13.** The GAO writes that "four EOP staff said that they observed a total of 10 to 11 missing doorknobs, which may have been historic originals." In fact, the GAO was told that 11 to 13 doorknobs were missing, as follows:

MISSING DOORKNOBS		
Location	**Observation**[11]	**No. of doorknobs**
EEOB - 128D	2 pairs of doorknobs missing on pair of exterior doors	4
EEOB – 1st floor, closet at top of Navy steps	1 doorknob missing **	1
EEOB – interior door between Rooms 286 and 288	1 pair missing	2
EEOB – Room 288, exterior door to hall	1 pair missing	2
EEOB – 4th floor	1 pair missing **	2
EEOB – location not identified	Missing doorknob***	0-2 (may or may not be accounted for in the above observations
TOTAL		**11-13**

**OA employee, worked in the White House complex during Clinton Administration
***OA employee, worked in the White House complex during Clinton Administration

Now on p. 11.

20. **PAGE 13.** The GAO is incorrect when its states that "two EOP staff said they observed a total of 9 to 10 missing television remote controls." An employee of the OVP said that five or six television remote controls were missing from the OVP offices, and a second employee said that "approximately five remote controls" disappeared from various offices throughout the correspondence suite. (The second employee had worked in the same offices before the transition.) Thus, there were reports of 10 to 11 missing remote controls.

[11] The comments in this table were, collectively, reported by 4 separate individuals. Unless otherwise indicated, each line reports an observation by one person.

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Now on p. 11.

21. **PAGE 13.** The report states that "two EOP officials said that about 20 cellular telephones could not be located in the office suite where they belonged" and that "[t]he former occupants of offices during the Clinton administration where items were observed missing said that they did not take them."

- The GAO is referring here to cellular phones that were missing from the OVP, and should so state.
- The second clause suggests that the GAO interviewed all former employees of the OVP, and all former OVP employees said they did not take them. But that is not true.

Now on p. 11.

22. **PAGE 14.** The GAO refers to a February 7, 2001 facility request form that asks the GSA to "put doorknob on" interoffice door. We ask the GAO to quote from – rather than paraphrase – this request since the form shows that the requesting employee is incorrect in his recollection that the doorknob was simply repaired (not replaced). Also, if the GAO includes this employee's recollection, we ask that it state his recollection is inconsistent with the facility request form and at least three current staff members, including the employee who prepared the form.

Now on p. 8.

23. **PAGE 15.** The report states that "[s]ix staff said that they observed writing on the walls of *two* rooms." In fact, the GAO was told about writing on the walls of *four rooms*, as follows:

WRITING ON WALLS		
Location	**Observation**[12]	**No. for report**
EEOB – 191M	Graffiti in the men's restroom read, "What W did to democracy, you are about to do in here" (observed by five persons)	1
EEOB – Scheduling Office	Writing on the wall that said something like "Republicans, don't get comfortable, we'll be back"	1
EEOB – wall on or near Room 158	a wall was covered in pencil and pen marks, which was described as "slasher marks" and "beyond normal" wear and tear	1
EEOB – 2d floor	Entire wall in one office was covered in lines that appeared at a distance to be cracks	1
TOTAL		**4**

Now on p. 12.

24. **PAGE 15.** The GAO underreports the number of telephones found with missing labels and the number of observers when it states that "[f]our EOP staff said that they observed a total of 99 to 108 telephones that had no labels identifying the telephone numbers." Based on conservative estimates and calculations, 5 (not 4) staff members (2 White

[12] The comments in this table were, collectively, reported by 8 separate individuals. Unless otherwise indicated, each line reports an observation by one person.

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House employees, 2 OA employees, and 1 OVP employee) recalled observing in specific offices or rooms *at least 112-133* telephones that had no labels identifying the telephone numbers. Specifically, our records show:

MISSING PHONE LABELS IN IDENTIFIED OFFICES OR ROOMS		
Location	**Observation**[13]	**No. of pieces for calculating total**
18	"at least 3 missing labels, possibly 5" (observed by two individuals)	3-5
100-114 ("south corridor")	"additional labels missing in rooms on the South corridor"	2+
115	1 phone missing label	1
118	"at least 3 phones" were missing labels	3+
119	8 phones; "all phones were missing their labels" – both the large paper panel that lists the lines that are in use and the small label that lists the number of the phone	8
121	"phones were missing labels"	2+
122	1 phone was missing label	1
118-122	"lot missing" in Public Liaison space **	0
	"all stations" in the Public Liaison offices were missing labels; personally saw roughly 18 phones without labels	0-18
123	"phones were missing labels"	2+
156/158	2 or 3 phones were missing labels	2-3
168/170	"couple missing phone labels"	2
177-189 (Advance)	"couple missing phone labels"	2
	"some missing in Advance" **	0
190-199 ("center corridor")	"some missing in center corridor" on 1st floor **	2+
OVP	"labels on phones were all gone" in all OVP offices	82
TOTAL		**AT LEAST 112-133**

**OA employee, worked in the White House complex during Clinton Administration

[13] The comments in this table were, collectively, reported by 5 separate individuals. Unless otherwise indicated, each line reports an observation by one person.

Now on p. 12.

25. **PAGE 15.** The draft report states that "seven EOP staff said they saw telephones unplugged or piled up." This statement provides the reader with no information regarding how many phones or how many offices were affected. Our records show that 25 or more offices in the EEOB had phones piled up or unplugged.

Now on p. 58.

26. **PAGE 16.** In its summary of the reported damage, the GAO fails to mention the telephones that were forwarded and reforwarded throughout the complex. According to our records, roughly 100 telephones were forwarded to ring at other numbers, as follows:

FORWARDED PHONES		
Location	**Observation**[14]	**Total no. of pieces**
129	"couldn't answer phone because, as soon as it rang, it would bounce to another phone in the suite, and then went straight into a voice-mail system that could not be accessed"	1
156 and other Presidential Personnel offices	"phones were forwarded and then reforwarded so we could not figure out what number would ring the phone" on desk	2+
187½	Phone number in office (187½) did not ring if dialed the number on the phone	1
West Wing – NEC	Phones forwarded	2-5
West Wing	"called someone and reached a different and unrelated person"	1
West Wing – Chief of Staff's Office	"the Chief of Staff's phone had been forwarded to ring at a phone in a closet"	1
West Wing and EEOB	"majority of the phones did not ring" at the assigned phone number; "roughly 100" phones had been forwarded to ring at a different number; "phones [in the West Wing] were forwarded from the first floor to the second floor" and "phones from the West Wing were forwarded to the EEOB"	Roughly 100
EEOB – not identified	Found at least 7-10 forwarded phones	7-10
TOTAL		**Roughly 100**

Now on p. 13.

27. **PAGE 16.** The draft report states that "[t]wo EOP staff said that they saw a total of 5 to 7 telephone lines 'ripped' (not simply disconnected) or pulled from the walls, and another EOP employee said that she saw at least 25 cords torn out of walls in two rooms. Former Clinton administration staff said that cords were probably torn by moving or carpet repairs." The GAO has failed to provide the reader with important information – information needed to promote "an adequate and correct understanding of the matters

[14] The comments in this table were, collectively, reported by 7 separate individuals. Unless otherwise indicated, each line reports an observation by one person.

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reported." Government Auditing Standard 7.51. The GAO fails to explain that the "two EOP staff" were the White House Director of Telephone Services and the OA's Associate Director for Facilities Management who together began touring offices and checking phone lines in the EEOB at approximately 1 a.m. on January 20 – before any moving or carpet repairs began in these offices. Thus, this is an instance where information that the GAO omits would have allowed the reader to test the credibility of the explanation provided by the Clinton administration staff.

Now on p. 14.

28. **PAGE 17.** The GAO writes that, "with three exceptions," "[the GAO] w[as] generally unable to determine when the observed incidents occurred and who was responsible for them because no one said he or she saw people carrying out what was observed or said that he or she was responsible for what was observed." We respectfully disagree.

- In many cases, the undisputed facts indicate when the incidents occurred and the likely perpetrators. For example,

  - With respect to the key broken off in a file cabinet in Room 197B, the key was found still hanging in lock by a metal thread (suggesting that the damage occurred not long before the transition) and, when the locksmith opened the cabinet, a Gore bumper sticker with the words "Bush Sucks" was prominently displayed inside (suggesting that the damage was intentional and done by a member of the former Administration).

  - Similarly, when the locked desk drawers were pried open in Room 103, two pieces of paper with anti-Bush statements were found displayed inside. Again, in our view, these facts indicate that the damage was intentional, occurred shortly before the transition, and was done by a member of the former Administration.

  - All of the obscene, inappropriate, and prank voicemail greetings must have been recorded shortly before the Inauguration (since many of the messages referred to the change of Administration and one presumes that former staff would not have left vulgar or inappropriate such messages on their phones during the Clinton Administration) and must have been recorded by the person who was assigned that telephone during the Clinton Administration (since a personal identification code is needed to change the voicemail greeting).

  - According to an individual who worked as White House Director of Telephone Services from 1973 to 2001, some of the missing telephone labels "were replaced early on January 20 – before noon"; but the labels were found "missing again later that day." These facts show that the removal of at least some of the labels was an intentional act, occurred early on January 20, and outgoing staff members were almost certainly responsible.

  - The oily glue-like substance that was smeared on desks in the Vice President's West Wing office; prank signs that were on walls and interspersed in reams of paper in printer trays and copy machines in the Vice President's West Wing

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office; and the "vulgar words" on a white board in that office were all discovered between midnight on January 19 and noon on January 20 by three different individuals. Since we presume that Vice President Gore's staff did not generally work under these conditions, we can reasonably conclude that that this damage occurred shortly before the Inauguration and again, members of the former Administration were the likely perpetrators.

- Similarly, it is unlikely that Clinton Administration staff worked for long without having W keys on their keyboards, again suggesting that the vandalism occurred shortly before the Inauguration.

- In other cases, the person who observed the damage firsthand told the GAO that the nature of the damage itself, and the surrounding conditions, suggested that the damage was done shortly before the transition weekend. For example, one employee told the GAO that she saw damaged furniture in offices where things had looked "pretty good" weeks or months earlier.

- In still other cases, the nature of the damage suggests that it occurred shortly before the Inauguration because the offices' prior occupants and cleaning staff would not have let the damage remain in the office for long. For example, it is hard to believe that occupants would not fix or remove a bookcase with broken glass (with shards of glass still in the cabinet) or would allow chairs with broken legs and no backs to remain in an office suite for very long.

- In addition, and with all due respect, it is not true that the GAO "was generally unable to determine who was responsible." The GAO simply failed to determine who was responsible. The GAO was able to identify the "former Clinton administration employee who said he wrote a 'goodwill' message inside the drawer of his former desk" because the GAO called that individual. The GAO failed, however, to try to contact the occupants of the offices where other written messages – expressing things other than "goodwill" – were left. Similarly, the GAO could have contacted – but failed to contact – several former Clinton administration staffers who left inappropriate voicemail messages. And the GAO did not contact all the former staff members who occupied offices where missing or damaged W keys, missing telephone labels, or other damage was found. Therefore, it is inaccurate, in our view, to say that the GAO was "generally *unable* to determine who was responsible." Respectfully, in our judgment, the GAO simply decided not to pursue the inquiry in many cases.

- Finally, the GAO's suggestion (at page 17) that "contractor staff, such as movers and cleaners" were responsible for the vandalism, damage, and pranks is, in our view, preposterous. It is an insult to the men and women who worked so hard during the weekend of January 20 to clean up the conditions left by the prior Administration and prepare the complex for the new staff.

Now on p. 14.

29. **PAGE 18.** The GAO writes that, for certain categories of damage, "the observations of EOP staff differed from the [June 2001] list in terms of total numbers of incidents or [the]

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alleged extent of damage." The GAO then provides, as an example, the statement included in the list that furniture in six offices was damaged severely enough to require a complete refurbishment or destruction. But the GAO learned of at least 28 to 31 pieces of damaged furniture, including 5 or 6 chairs with broken legs (reported by four employees), 1 chair with its entire back broken out (reported by two employees), and a desk with its drawers kicked in (reported by one employee). These pieces of furniture, at the very least, would have required a complete refurbishment or destruction; they simply could not have been used in their current condition. In addition, when the GAO asked the Director of the Office of Administration what happened to the damaged furniture, he said that some of it was "thrown in the dumpster." Thus the observations of staff members did not, as the GAO suggests, differ from the June 2001 list.

Now on pp. 15-17.

30. **PAGES 19-20.** The GAO omits the following documented costs from its list of "Costs Associated with the Observations":

- A January 30, 2001, facility request form (Form No. 56713) shows that Cabinet Affairs asked for someone to clean the carpet, furniture, and drapes in Rooms 160, 162, and 164. GSA charged $2,905.70 for that service. As the GAO acknowledged earlier in its report (at page 12), this request was for an office suite that a White House Office "employee said was 'filthy' and worn and dirty furniture." As noted above, that same employee, as well as others from her office, also told the GAO about significant damage to furniture in those offices, including a desk drawer with its drawer-fronts removed, chairs without legs, and a chair with its entire back broken off.

- The GAO's discussion of the "costs" associated with telephone problems is both inaccurate and incomplete. Based on extremely conservative estimates and straightforward documentation, the government incurred *at least* $6020 just replacing removed labels and rerouting the forwarded telephones. The evidence shows:

  - *First*, the GAO received, *but fails to mention*, a blanket work order and bill for work – including "relabeling" work – performed on Saturday, January 20, 2001. The techs billed 114 hours at a rate of $113.88 per hour for each hour or fraction of an hour spent on a particular job. Consequently, if technicians spent only ten percent of their time relabeling phones and correcting forwarded telephones on Saturday (a conservative estimate given that there were between 112 and 133 specifically identified missing labels and roughly 100 forwarded phones), that means it cost the taxpayer $1,298 for one day's work replacing the removed labels and fixing the forwarded phones.

  - *Second*, and similarly, the GAO acknowledges that it received a work order and bill for work – including "replacing labels on telephones" – performed on Sunday, January 21, 2001. But the GAO fails to estimate any costs associated with that work. The bill shows that the techs worked 78.5 hours that day at a rate of $151.84 per hour for each hour or fraction of an hour spent on a particular job. That means that, if technicians again spent only ten percent of their time

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relabeling phones and correcting forwarded telephones, the taxpayer incurred an additional cost of $1,192 for that day's work replacing the removed labels and fixing the forwarded phones.

- *Third*, the GAO fails to estimate the costs associated with replacing labels even where it was provided both individual work orders and a summary of orders that specifically identify the relabeling work performed and the amount of time spent on the job. Specifically, we provided the GAO with a document entitled "Orders Closed 1/20/01 Thru 2/20/01" that lists many orders (some of which are highlighted above) where a tech was asked to place one or more labels on the telephone sets. For each of those orders, a "T&M" charge (time and materials) is identified in terms of hours and minutes. Those charges can be computed in dollars by multiplying the total number of hours of T&M charged times $75.92. We do not understand why the GAO failed to perform this simple exercise, particularly given its willingness to provide cost estimates in the context of missing and damaged W keys. Had the GAO done the calculation, the reader would know that approximately $2201.68 was spent to replace labels on telephone sets, as set forth below:

  - On Monday, January 22, 2001, a telephone tech was asked by the OVP to "PROGRM PHNS PER MATT, NEED BTN [button] LABELS, TECH TO LABEL SETS." The tech billed "4HRS" (4 hours) on this order, for an estimated total cost of $303.68. TSR No. 01010183.

  - On January 31, 2001, a tech was called to Room 273 of the OVP because, among other things, the phones "NEED BTN [button] LABELS TYPED, PLACED." The tech billed "2HRS" on this order, for an estimated total cost of $151.84. TSR No. 01010386.

  - On February 5, 2001, a tech was called to Room 200 because the phones "NEED LABELS PLACED ON SETS." The tech billed "2HRS" on this order, for an estimated total cost of $151.84. TSR No. 01020071.

  - On February 9, 2001, a tech was asked to "REPROGRAM [phone] IN ROOM 276 EEOB, [and] PLACE BUTTON LABEL ON SET." The tech billed "1HR" on this order, for an estimated total cost of $75.92. TSR No. 01020225

  - On January 29, 2001, a tech was called to Room 18 to, among other things, "REPLACE LABEL." The tech billed "1HR" to this order, for an estimated total cost of $75.92. TSR No. 01010306.

  - On January 30, 2001, a tech was called to Room 113 because the occupants "NEED LABEL PLACED ON SET BY TECH." The tech billed "1HR" to this order, for an estimated total cost of $75.92. TSR No. 01010342.

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- On February 3, 2001, a tech was called to Room 100 to "PLACE BTN [button] LABEL." The tech billed "1HR," for an estimated total cost of $75.92. TSR No. 01020154.

- Also on February 3, 2001, a tech was called to Room 100 because the occupants "NEED BTN LABELS FOR SET." The tech billed "1 HR," for an estimated total cost of $75.92. TSR No. 01020156.

- In six additional and separate service orders on February 3, 2001, a tech was asked to "REPROGRAM" phones in the Room 100 suite and "TO PLACE LABEL ON SET." TSR No. 1020330; *see also* TSR Nos. 1020325 ("NEED LABELS PLACED ON SET"), 1020328 ("NEED BTN LABELS"), 1020329 ("NEED LABELS"), 1020331 ("NEED LABELS PLACED ON SET"), 1020340 ("NEED LABELS PLACED ON SET"). The tech billed "1HR" on each of the six service orders, for an estimated total cost of $455.52.

- On February 5, 2001, a tech was told that the occupants of Room 135 "NEED LABEL PLACED ON SET." The tech billed "1HR" for this order," for an estimated total cost of $75.92. TSR No. 01020075.

- On February 3, 2001, a tech was asked to "REPROGRAM SET [in] ROOM 137" and "PLACE LABEL ON SET." The tech billed "2HRS," for an estimated total cost of $151.84. TSR No. 01020099.

- On February 3, 2001, someone in Room 131 asked a tech to "PLACE LABEL ON SET." The tech billed "1HR," for an estimated total cost of $75.92. TSR No. 01020055.

- In a separate service request on February 3, 2001, a tech was asked to "REPROGRAM IN ROOM 137 EEOB" and "PLACE LABELS ON SET." The tech billed "1HR," for an estimated total cost of $75.92. TSR No. 01020168.

- On February 3, 2001, a tech was told that the occupants of Room 154 "NEED BUTTON LABEL," among other things. The tech billed "1HR" to this order," for an estimated total cost of $75.92. TSR No. 01020327.

- On February 5, 2001, a tech was told that "LABELS ALSO NEEDED" in a Presidential Personnel Office. The tech billed "1HR" for this order," for an estimated total cost of $75.92. TSR No. 01020360.

- On February 3, 2001, a tech was asked to "REPROGRAM [a phone] IN RM 131" and "PLACE LABEL ON SET." The tech billed "1HR," for an estimated total cost of $75.92. TSR No. 01020363.

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- On February 2, 2001, a tech was asked to "REPROGRAM IN ROOM 184 EEOB" and "PLACE LABEL ON SET." The tech billed "1HR," for an estimated total cost of $75.92. TSR No. 01020132.

- On February 8, 2001, a tech was told that the occupants of Room 87 "NEED LABELS PLACED ON SET." The tech billed "1HR" on this order, for an estimated total cost of $75.92. TSR No. 01020160.

- *Fourth*, and even more perplexing, the GAO ignores the AT&T invoices ("Activity Reports") and individual works orders (TSRS) that we provided that show the *actual* charges incurred on particular orders. We have not attempted in preparing these comments to review all such invoices, but a sampling shows $1,328.60 in charges in addition to those listed above:

  - TSR No. 01010184 (request to "program phones" and "place labels on sets" in Rooms 272, 274, 284, and 286): $341.64.

  - TSR No. 01010185 (request to program phones and place labels on sets in Rooms 272 and 276): $341.64.

  - TSR No. 01010195 (request for, among other things, labels for sets in Rooms 263, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, and 271): $341.64.

  - TSR No. 01010206 (request for, among other things, "tech to place button labels"): $303.68.

- *Fifth,* the GAO also can and should estimate, based on this data, how much it would cost to replace labels on 112-133 telephones (or, at least, on the 99 to 108 that the GAO concedes were observed missing) by estimating how much was charged per telephone and extrapolating that amount to account for the total number of missing labels.

- *Sixth*, the GAO suggests that it is unable to provide any estimate on the costs to repair the damaged phones because "the extent to which the service order that mentioned labels involved missing labels was not clear and all of the service order involving labels were part of order for other service." That is incorrect.

  - As we explained to the GAO, when a System Analyst (SA) performs work that does not require a technician to be dispatched to the office (*e.g.*, reprogramming a phone), there is no separate charge. If work requires a tech dispatch (*e.g.*, replacing a label), then there is a minimum charge of $75.92 for each hour or portion of an hour ($113.88 on Saturdays and $151.84 on Sundays), even if it takes only minutes to perform the work. Therefore, for service orders that requested, for example, both a telephone to be reprogrammed and its label to be replaced, the *entire charge* is attributable to replacing the label. This is clear from the AT&T billing invoices (or "Activity

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Reports") that show that the cost associated with the work orders is for "LABOR CHARGES FOR EQUIP. MOVES/CHGS," and not for reprogramming expenses.

- In addition, for the service orders where the minimum charge of $75.92 was assessed, it is immaterial whether work in addition to replacing the label was performed; a charge of $75.92 would have been incurred for replacing the label(s) regardless of whether other work was performed within that first hour.

- Finally, the closed order list and the service orders do far more than "mention[] labels," as the GAO suggests. *See* Specific Comment No. 79.

Now on p. 16.

31. **PAGE 20 n. 9.** In estimating the cost to replace missing doorknobs, the GAO has "deducted the value of replacing one historic doorknob from the total number observed missing because . . . a GSA planner/estimator said that a facility request to install a doorknob in an office . . . was to perform maintenance on a doorknob with a worn-out part, not to replace a missing one." We are puzzled that the GAO would decide to credit the recollection of the GSA planner/estimator, even though his recollection is inconsistent with both a contemporaneous facility request form that asks GSA to "put doorknob on" interoffice door and the recollection of at least three current staff members who recall that no doorknob was on the door. The GAO's decision simply makes no sense to us. But if the GAO persists with that decision, we ask that the GAO also state in footnote 9 that the statement by the GSA planner/estimator is contrary to the documentation and the recollection of at least three other witnesses.

Now on p. 17.

32. **PAGE 21.** The GAO concedes that it has not even attempted to quantify additional costs that were incurred as a result of the damage, including:

- To pay computer staff and contractors who spent time replacing keyboards with missing and damaged W keys;
- To pay staff who devoted extra hours to removing W keys and prank signs affixed to walls and to clean up trash and dirt that exceeded reasonable amounts or amounts seen in prior transitions;
- To pay staff who devoted time to placing overturned furniture upright;
- To pay telephone personnel and technicians to remove inappropriate or obscene voice-mail greetings and to correct phones that had been forwarded to unidentified numbers;
- To pay telephone personnel and technicians to repair cables, phone jacks, and/or electrical cords pulled from the wall;
- To pay personnel to investigate the theft of a Presidential seal;
- To pay movers to remove damaged furniture;
- To replace damaged furniture that was not repaired;
- To remove and replace broken glass tops; and
- To hire repairman to repair broken cabinets and copy machines.

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While it may not be possible to associate precise amounts with these costs, the GAO could have generated a range of estimates, but chose not to do so. We believe that this shortcoming in the investigation results in a substantial underreporting of the very real costs associated with the damage, vandalism, and pranks that occurred during the 2001 transition.

Now on pp. 17-18.

33. **PAGES 21-22.** In describing how the 2001 presidential transition compared with previous transitions in terms of damage, vandalism, or pranks, the GAO fails to include the statements of several current staff members – all of whom served during prior administrations and many of whom served during the Clinton Administration – who told the GAO that the damage observed during the 2001 transition was worse than prior transitions. The following statements are representative:

- "This was unusual. . . . Every administration has pranks," but this was "worse." (An employee who oversaw White House telephone services from 1973 to 2001)
- "Never remember seeing anything like this before." (same employee as above)
- "I never encountered any problems with telephones" when President George H.W. Bush left office. (same employee as above)
- Although he had been through many transitions, he "never thought [he] would find things like this." (same employee as above)
- One employee was "stunned" by the condition of the EEOB; he had "[n]ever seen anything like it" in prior transitions. (An employee who has observed five prior transitions)
- The amount of trash "was beyond the norm"; it was "cleaner in some other transitions." (An employee who has worked in the White House complex since 1971)
- The damage "was more than [he]'d seen in other transitions"; in the 1993 transition, this official saw "nothing comparable" to what he saw during this transition. (This Bush Administration official, who worked in the White House complex during Reagan Administration and the prior Bush Administration, personally toured four floors of the EEOB and West Wing on January 20, 1993)
- The trash was "worse this time" than in prior transitions; "more messy than other[]" transitions. (An employee who has worked in the White House complex for 17 years)

In addition, while pranks and damage may have been observed in prior administrations, the reported observations are not the same in number or kind as those observed during the 2001 transition. Yet the GAO does not mention this in its report. The reader, moreover, is hampered in drawing his own conclusion because the GAO fails to include details about how much damage was reported by current staff.

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In addition, the GAO seems to overstate the extent of the damage reported during prior transitions. For example, while the GAO writes that the "observations included missing building fixtures like office signs and doorknobs," we understand there were no observations of "missing building fixtures" other than office signs and doorknobs, and those observations were few in number. A more accurate statement therefore might read "observations included 'no more than' 10 missing office signs and 1 or 2 missing doorknobs." Similarly, the GAO writes that the "observations included . . . messages written inside and carved into desks." We understand that there was only one observation of a message written inside a desk – the same observation that that the GAO repeats, for some reason, in the sentence that follows. And apparently there were only three observations of carving in desks by staff who served *only* during the Clinton Administration.

Finally, while the GAO refers to "piles of . . . equipment" (apparently referring to *only one* observation by a Clinton staffer of piles of telephones), the GAO fails to explain that the individual who has overseen telephone services since 1973, said that he "never encountered any problems with telephones" during the 1993 transition; he said that "perhaps some were unplugged, but that would be it." This employee also told the GAO that, as the Clinton Administration entered office in 1993, he was instructed to "get[] rid of [the] Republican phone system," which apparently resulted in the replacement of all the phones.

Now on p. 18.

34. **PAGE 22.** The GAO says that "[f]ormer Clinton administration officials told [the GAO] that departing EOP staff were required to follow a check-out procedure that involved turning in such items as building passes, library materials, government cellular telephones at the end of the administration." We have repeatedly told the GAO that some current staff members who served during the prior administration believe that the check-out procedures were often not followed and, in particular, building passes were not returned. The GAO apparently did not ask the Clinton staff or the National Archives to produce copies of the check-out forms, so there is no documentation to shed light on the issue. Consequently, we asked the GAO to include in its report the understanding of current staff – that some or all of the check-out procedures were not followed – and that there was no documentation to support or refute their claim. Or, alternatively, we asked that the GAO delete from its report the description to the "check-out procedures." For reasons that were not explained to us, the GAO has chosen not to do so.

Now on p. 19.

35. **PAGE 23.** The GAO writes, "Incidents such as the removal of keys from computer keyboards; the theft of various items; the leaving of certain voice mail messages, signs, and written messages; and the placing of glue on desk drawers clearly were done intentionally." We believe that this list of incidents is incomplete. The GAO should also include on its list at least the following observations – all of which appear, based on their timing, recurrence, and/or content, to have been done deliberately by former staff leaving the complex.

- Damage to computer keys (primarily W keys);
- W keys glued to walls and placed in drawers;

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- Missing phone labels (some of which were replaced on January 19, only to have them removed again before noon on January 20);
- Forwarded telephones (including the Chief of Staff's phone which was forwarded to ring in a closet);
- "Crank" calls;
- Phones piled on floor (observed before cleaning staff and telephone technicians entered offices);
- Most if not all printers and fax machines emptied of paper in vacated offices in the EEOB;
- Removal of an office sign that was witnessed by current staff member;
- Overturned furniture (observed before cleaning staff entered offices);
- Key broken off in file cabinet that, when opened, displayed Gore bumper sticker with the words "Bush Sucks" on it;
- Desk drawers locked that, when opened, contained messages disparaging President Bush;
- Gore bumper sticker stuck to the inside of copy machine;
- Writing on and in desks that reads "W happens," "Hail to the Thief," and "GET OUT."
- Sticker inside a filing cabinet that reads "jail to the thief";
- Lamp placed on chair (observed before cleaning staff entered office);
- Pictures and other objects placed in front of doors (observed before cleaning staff entered office); and
- Desk drawers turned over on the desk and on the floor (observed before cleaning staff entered offices).

Now on p. 19.

36. **PAGE 23.** The GAO states that "it was unknown whether other observations, such as broken furniture, were the result of intentional acts and when and how they occurred."

While that may be true with respect to a few pieces of the furniture, that is not a reasonable conclusion with respect to other items. For example, in our view, it is not plausible that a key was broken off accidentally in the lock of a cabinet, the key was left hanging by a thread in the lock, and, when opened, a Gore bumper sticker with the words "Bush Sucks" on it was prominently displayed. Nor, in our view, is it reasonable to conclude that desk drawers were accidentally locked and just happened to contain two pieces of paper with anti-Bush statements displayed inside. It is also not plausible to think the cleaning staff completely broke off the backs and legs of multiple chairs within the same office, and then left that furniture in the offices for the new occupants. And it would certainly be odd behavior, in our view, for occupants of these offices to have broken those chairs through normal wear and tear and to have left those chairs in the office – unrepaired – for some period of time. Likewise, the nature of some of the damage – *e.g.*, two seat cushions slit in an identical manner on apparently new upholstery – indicates that it was not accidental. And the GAO's conclusion that the furniture damage could have been accidental fails to take into account the testimony of one employee who served during the Clinton Administration and told the GAO that some of the upholstered furniture that she saw damaged during the transition looked "pretty good" when she visited the same offices weeks and months earlier.

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Similarly, it is not reasonable, in our view, to conclude that the furniture was overturned unintentionally. *First*, most of the witnesses observed the overturned furniture *before* the cleaning staff or new occupants entered the rooms. *Second*, it is not plausible to think that cleaning staff would have upended extremely heavy furniture in the manner described by the witnesses:

- At least two "desks turned over" in the Advance Office (observed by employee with 29 years of service in the White House)
- Desks and credenzas turned on their sides (observed by two witnesses)
- Coffee table standing on end, sofa upside down, and tables turned over in the Advance Office
- In the Counsel's Office, in each of the three offices and the secretarial space, almost every desk was overturned – "at least one desk or table in each room"
- "Couple desks on side" and a "couple of chairs" turned over on the first floor of the EEOB (observed by employee with 31 years of service in the White House)
- Sofa overturned with broken legs

In fact, the GAO was told by two employees of the GSA that cleaning staff would "not move" large pieces of furniture in this fashion, and none of these things would happen in the normal course of "moving" out of an office.

Likewise, we know that the removal of at least some of the labels was an intentional act, occurred early on January 20, and outgoing staff members were almost certainly responsible. The employee who oversaw White House telephone services from 1973 to 2001 told the GAO that some of the missing telephone labels "were replaced early on January 20 – before noon," but were found "missing again later that day."

Now on p. 36.

37. **PAGE 28.** The GAO writes: "Staff we interviewed told us that they saw evidence of damage, vandalism, or pranks on or after January 20, 2001, when they started working in the White House complex." This statement is misleading for two reasons. *First,* it suggests that all observations were made by staff who "started working in the White House complex" "on or after January 20, 2001"; in fact, many, if not most, of the observations were made by employees who worked in the complex long before Inauguration Day. *Second*, the statement suggests that the staff members saw evidence of damage only "on or after January 20, 2001"; in fact, many observations were made on January 19, 2001. Therefore, to be accurate, this sentence should read: "The staff we interviewed, many of whom worked here during the Clinton Administration, told us that they saw evidence of damage, vandalism, or pranks shortly before, on, and shortly after January 20, 2001."

Now on p. 36.

38. **PAGE 28.** The GAO repeats a statement made on page 23 that, although "[i]ncidents such as the removal of keys from computer keyboard, the theft of various items, the leaving of certain voice mail messages, signs, and written messages, and the placing of glue on desk drawers clearly were done intentionally," the GAO "generally could not make judgments about whether [other observations] were acts of vandalism because [it]

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did not have information regarding who was responsible for them, when they occurred, or why they occurred." Again, we respectfully disagree.

The GAO's statement is categorical and speaks of an unwillingness to make any "judgments" about the observations. But the GAO certainly "could" make a judgment about whether at least some – if not most – of the observations were acts of vandalism. As explained in Specific Comment Nos. 35 and 36, the GAO's list of "clearly intentional" acts is under-inclusive, and the GAO had considerable "information regarding who was responsible for [other incidence of damage], when they occurred, or why they occurred." The GAO, it seems, has simply decided to ignore that evidence. It is simply not credible, in our view, for the GAO to claim that it cannot make a judgment about the incidents listed in Specific Comment No. 35.

In addition, we believe the GAO should report the views of many current staffers (including employees who served during the Clinton Administration) who said that, based on their firsthand observations, the damage appeared to have been "deliberate," "purpose[ful]," and "intentional." For example, one employee who has worked in the White House since June, 1998 told the GAO that the missing phone labels "must have been intentional," and another employee said that the damage done to a desk in Room 102 was "clearly" intentional and "not just wear and tear." A third person told the GAO that the broken file cabinet looked "deliberate." And two others (one of whom has observed five White House transitions, the other of whom has worked at the White House since 1998) said that, in their view, people had "deliberately" trashed their offices. An employee who worked at the White House from August 1999-August 2001 likewise told the GAO that the condition of 30-40 NSC rooms "was intentional, not accidental." Two other employees (one of whom has worked at the White House since 1971) also told the GAO that some of the "trashing" was "intentional." A Bush Administration official said that the conditions he observed were "more than wear and tear." And an employee who has worked in the White House since 1973 said it looked like the prior occupants had "purposely trashed the place."

By including these sorts of statements, the GAO would not only be providing the reader with "information needed to . . . promote an adequate and correct understanding of the matters reported,"[15] the GAO would also then be treating statements made by current and former staff alike. As drafted, the report contains the views of "[f]ormer Clinton administration staff" on whether the observed acts were intentional. *See*, *e.g.*, Report at 8 (Former Clinton administration staff said that some furniture was broken, "but not intentionally"); Report at 46 ("The former senior advisor for presidential transition questioned whether as many as 60 keyboards could have been intentionally damaged. . . ."); Report at 83 ("[F]ormer employee said that she saw telephone lines pulled out of walls [in the 1993 transition] and that they appeared to have been pulled out intentionally."). But the GAO fails to report the views of the current staff members regarding precisely the same issue.

[15] Government Auditing Standard 7.51.

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Now on p. 37.

39. **PAGE 29.** We disagree with the GAO's statement that, "[i]n the overwhelming majority of cases, one person said that he or she observed an incident in a particular location." According to our records, in many (if not most) cases, more than one person reported seeing the same incident in the same location. Indeed, the GAO reached that conclusion in its April 2002 preliminary draft report, where it stated (on page 22) that "[s]everal people observed most incidents; however, in a few cases, only one person observed them." The observations have not changed; we do not know why the GAO's conclusion has.

Now on p. 37.

40. **PAGE 29.** The GAO states that, " [i]n some cases, people said that they observed damage, vandalism, or pranks in the same areas where others said they observed none, sometimes only hours apart." In our April 26 comments on the GAO's preliminary draft, we explained that, without a description of the specific instances where one current staff member recalled seeing something and another expressly disavowed seeing the same thing, it was impossible to know whether the apparent conflict in testimony could be reconciled or whether the GAO's statement is factually accurate. We also complained that this vague sentence provides no indication of how many such conflicts existed or what types of incidents are involved.

The GAO provided us with only two specific instances to which this sentence refers. The first example was an observation by two individuals – a Bush Administration official, and an employee who has observed five prior transitions -- of overturned furniture in the Counsel's Office suite (Room 128), which another person claimed could not be reconciled with a third person's alleged statement that he observed no overturned furniture in the same office. *First*, according to our interview notes, when the GAO asked the third person (who has worked in the White House for 33 years) specifically about Room 128, and whether he had observed overturned furniture in that office, he told the GAO that he had "no specific recollection of going into that room." *Second*, this person told the GAO, during both interviews with him, that he entered rooms in the EEOB between approximately midnight and 2:30 a.m. on January 20, at which time his attention was diverted to the West Wing. This person also told the GAO, during his first interview, that when he entered the Counsel's Office, "there were still people working" there. (This is consistent with the testimony provided by the prior occupants of that office, who said they left the EEOB close to noon on January 20.) Consequently there is no conflict between this person's recollection and that of the other two individuals, who said that they did not enter Room 128 until after noon on January 20. This person had no specific recollection of entering that office and, even if had recalled seeing no overturned furniture, he would have made that observation roughly 12 or more hours before the observations of the two other individuals, leaving plenty of time for someone to overturn furniture.

The second example that the GAO provided was an observation by an employee who has observed five prior transitions, of a broken glass top and files on the floor in the Advance Office suite, which the GAO claims is inconsistent with "other staff," who "said they didn't see that." While again, the GAO has not identified who offered conflicting testimony, this employee's observations, which he made around 12:15 p.m. on January

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20, are entirely consistent with another employee's recollection that he saw 5 or 6 broken glass tops when he surveyed the first few floors of the EEOB shortly after noon on January 20. While current staff who occupy the Advance Office may not have seen the broken glass top or dumped files, that would not be surprising since they did not enter the building until much later, allowing time for the broken glass and files to have been removed.

Thus we are aware of no instance where there is a direct conflict where one person said they observed damage in a location where others observed none.

Now on p. 38.

41. **PAGE 31.** The GAO writes: "Six EOP staff told us that they observed a total of 5 to 11 missing office signs. . . ."

- Four of the "[s]ix EOP staff" members are employees of the OA and served here during the Clinton Administration. A fifth employee, who worked for the White House Office, also served during the Clinton Administration.

- One of the employees told the GAO that a former member of the Counsel's Office during the Clinton Administration told her that he too observed two missing brackets on the morning of January 20, 2001.

Now on p. 38.

42. **PAGE 31.** The GAO continues:

> These observations included an office sign that an EOP employee said that she saw someone remove on January 19 outside an office in the EEOB. The EOP employee said that the person who removed the sign said that he planned to take a photograph with it and that she reported the incident to an Office of Administration (OA) employee. Further, the EOP employee said that the person attempted to put the sign back on the wall, but it was loose.

- This statement implies that the individual who pried the sign off the wall intended all along to put the sign back. In fact, it was only when he was confronted by an OA employee that the individual claimed that he wanted to take a photograph with it and tried to put the sign back. This employee does not believe that the volunteer intended all along to return the sign, as the GAO's sentence suggests.

- The GAO fails to mention that the same employee also said that a former member of the Clinton Counsel's Office told her that he saw that the sign was missing at some point during the night of January 19, 2001.

Now on p. 39.

43. **PAGE 31.** The GAO fails to mention in its discussion of missing office signs that a facility request form, dated April 19, 2001, requests the "replacement of frames & medallions" on four rooms.

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Now on p. 38.

44. **PAGE 31.** We disagree with the GAO's statement that "[f]our EOP staff said they saw a total of 10 to 11 doorknobs, which may have been historic originals, were missing in different locations." As explained above (in Specific Comment No. 19), the GAO was told that 11 to 13 doorknobs were missing.

Now on p. 38.

45. **PAGES 31-32.** The GAO writes:

> A GSA planner/estimator who said he was in charge of repairing and replacing building fixtures in the EEOB, including office signs, medallions, and doorknobs, said he received no written facility requests made to GSA for replacing missing office signs, medallions, or doorknobs during the transition. He said that the February 7, 2001, GSA facility request was not to replace a missing doorknob, but to repair one that had a worn-out part. He also said that over the past 20 years, doorknobs have been found missing about a half-dozen times in the EEOB, and not only during transitions. In addition, he said that medallions are difficult to remove and that a special wrench is needed to remove them from an office sign.

First, if the GAO says that this GSA employee "said he received no written facility requests made to GSA for replacing missing office signs, medallions, or doorknobs during the transition," it is important that the GAO also say:

- there is, in fact, a work request, dated April 19, 2001, for "replacement of frames & medallions" on 4 rooms, as well as the February 7 work request to "put . . . on" a doorknob;
- An employee of the OA said he provided a written request (although perhaps not on a facility request form) to the GSA for the replacement of name brackets and medallions;
- An OA manager who has worked at the White House since 1971 recalled telling the GSA to replace missing knobs, brackets, and medallions and asking the GSA to check all signs and to take corrective actions; and
- A WHO employee told the GAO that the GSA noted that the office sign on Room 457 was missing when the GSA did a survey of the rooms.

Second, we again ask that the GAO note that the employee's recollection that the doorknob was repaired (not replaced) is inconsistent with the facility request form and the recollection of at least three current staff members, including the individual who prepared the facility request form.

Now on p. 39.

46. **PAGE 33.** GAO states that "[t]wo EOP staff told us that 9 to 10 television remote control devices were missing from two offices."

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- Here, the GAO conflates two separate reports – one the disappearance of five or six television remote controls from the OVP; the other the disappearance of approximately five remote controls from various offices throughout the correspondence suite – for a total of 10 to 11 missing remote controls. We believe that the GAO should discuss these incidents separately.

- The employee who reported the remote controls missing in the Correspondence Office, worked for the Correspondence Office during the Clinton Administration. This is an important fact because this employee's prior tenure with the Clinton Administration placed her in a position to know if remote controls were in the rooms before the transition.

Now on p. 41.

47. **PAGE 35.** The GAO says that "the OA associate director for facilities management estimated it will cost about $350 to make a replica of the presidential seal that was reported stolen. . . . We did not obtain any information about the possible historic value of the seal that was stolen." That is untrue. The GAO was told, in writing, that the $350 purchase price would not purchase an exact replica of the brass seal that was stolen; that seal was purchased in the mid-1970s, and is no longer available. Rather, the $350 would purchase a plastic-type casting.

Now on p. 42.

48. **PAGES 35-36.** The GAO begins its section on "Comments by Former Clinton Administration Staff," with the following statement:

> The former director of an office where an EOP employee told us that she saw someone remove an office sign said that an elderly volunteer in her office removed the sign from the wall on January 19, 2001. She said that she did not know why he had removed the sign. She said that she attempted to put the sign back on the wall, but it would not stay, so she contacted OA and was told to leave it on the floor next to the door. The former office director said that she left the sign on the floor, and it was still there when she left between 8 p.m. and 10 p.m. on January 19.

The GAO's report omits the fact that another employee, who also worked here during the Clinton Administration, told the GAO that she confronted the volunteer while he was removing the sign and that she contacted the OA immediately. We believe that it was the confrontation by this employee that explains why the volunteer ultimately did not take the sign, and hence that information should be included in the report. The GAO also fails to mention that a former member of the Counsel's Office said that the sign was missing during the night of January 19, 2001.

Now on p. 42.

49. **PAGE 36.** The GAO writes: "The former director of an office where an EOP employee told us that he observed two pairs of missing doorknobs said that the office had several doors to the hallway that at some time had been made inoperable, and he was not sure whether the interior sides of those doors had doorknobs." Even if it were true that the doorknob on the interior side of the door was missing, that fact would not explain this employee's observation that the door was missing both an interior and an exterior knob.

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Now on p. 44.

50. **PAGE 38.** It is noteworthy that the GAO describes one individual as "[a]nother EOP employee who worked in that office during the Clinton administration and continued working there during the Bush administration for 5 months," but the GAO fails to note when and for how long a current staff member worked for the Clinton Administration. If tenure during both Administrations is relevant for the individual referred to above, wouldn't it also be relevant for current employees? Again, we simply ask that the GAO treat statements made by staff serving during this Administration just as the GAO treats the statements made by members of the former Administration – with the same kind of characterization and level of detail.

Now on p. 45.

51. **PAGE 40.** We believe the range provided by the GAO ("30 to 64 computer keyboards with missing or damaged . . . 'W' keys") understates the actual number of observations. According to our records, which we earlier provided to the GAO and the GAO did not dispute, staff members observed a total of 58 to 70 computer keyboards with missing or damaged W keys where a specific office or room was identified. In addition, staff members reported 150 keyboards with missing or damaged W keys, where the staff member did not associate the observation with a particular room or office. The detailed data are set forth in Specific Comment No. 10.

Now on p. 49.

52. **PAGE 40.** The GAO states that "[o]ne EOP employee said that she observed 18 keyboards with missing 'W' keys in an office suite. However, the manager of that office during the Clinton administration said that there were 12 keyboards in that office suite at the end of the administration." We do not understand why the GAO includes the second sentence in its section on "Observations of EOP and GSA Staff," instead of the section on "Comments By Former Clinton Administration Staff," where it would appear to belong.

Now on p. 45.

53. **PAGE 40 n.19.** In calculating its range of missing or damaged W keys where the observer identified a specific office or room, the GAO "included the observation of one EOP employee who said that she saw 6 to 10 keyboards missing 'W' keys in the West Wing." The GAO is referring to an individual who was an employee of the Office of Administration. We ask that the GAO use her title – Branch Chief for Program Management and Strategic Planning in the OA Information Systems and Technology Division – and note (as the GAO did in identifying the person referred to in Specific Comment 50) that this individual worked in that position during the Clinton Administration and during the first four months of the Bush Administration.

Now on p. 45.

54. **PAGE 41.** The GAO continues its discussion of damaged keyboards on page 41: "Five other EOP staff said that they saw a total of four keyboards with inoperable, missing, or switched keys; they said they were not the 'W' keys or could not remember which keys were affected."

- The GAO fails to mention that, in addition to these five additional observations, the OA's Associate Director for Information Systems and Technology Division reported that she observed "some glued down space bars."

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- Also, for clarity, we recommend rewriting that sentence to read: "Five other current staff members said that they saw, in other rooms or offices, an additional four keyboards that had damaged keys (*e.g.*, a key or keys that were inoperable, switched, or missing). In these cases, either it was not the 'W' key that was affected, or the observer could not specifically recall the key or keys that were damaged."

Now on p. 45.

55. **PAGE 41.** The GAO continues:

> In addition, five EOP staff and one GSA employee said that they saw 13 to 15 'W' keys taped or glued on walls; four EOP staff said they observed piles of keyboards or computers or a computer monitor overturned; three EOP staff said that something was spilled on their keyboards; one EOP official said that she found 3 'W' keys in a desk; and one EOP employee said that his keyboard was missing at the beginning of the new administration.

- *First*, there were reports of at least 19-21 W keys taped or glued on walls (not 13 to 15), as follows:

W KEYS TAPED OR GLUED ON WALLS		
Location	**Observation**[16]	**No. for report**
EEOB – 128	W key "stuck over doorway"	1
EEOB – 197, 197A, 197B, 199, 199A, 199B	Saw on the walls "most" of the four keys that he observed missing from the keyboards	3
EEOB – 199	W key taped above door	1
EEOB – OVP 2nd floor	"some" W keys on walls**	2+
EEOB – 4th floor	10-12 Ws glued on the wall, over the doors and beside doors*	10-12
WW – including upper press secretary's office	"some keys" were taped above doorways" – for example, key was taped above door to press secretary's office suite***	2+
TOTAL		**At least 19-21**

*GSA employee, worked in the White House complex during Clinton Administration
**OA employee, worked in the White House complex during Clinton Administration
*** OA employee, worked in the White House complex during Clinton Administration

- *Second*, the GAO fails to mention that two other staff members also reported that they found W keys sitting next to keyboards and computers.

- *Third*, five (not four) staff members "observed piles of keyboards or computers or a computer monitor overturned" – including two WHO employees and three OVP employees -- in multiple locations in the EEOB.

[16] The comments in this table were, collectively, reported by 6 separate individuals. Unless otherwise indicated, each line reports an observation by one person.

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Now on pp. 45-46.

56. **PAGES 41-42.** The GAO's two paragraphs on the observations of computer personnel keyboards fail, in our view, to present the information that GAO received in a fair and objective manner. These paragraphs (like the entire discussion of damaged keyboards) appear to be designed to downplay the extent of the damage reported. The GAO writes:

> In addition to the EOP staff we interviewed about their observations regarding the keyboards, we met with EOP personnel who worked with computers during the transition. The OA associate director for information systems and technology provided us with documentation indicating that on January 23 and 24, 2001, the EOP purchased 62 new keyboards. The January 23, 2001, purchase order for 31 keyboards indicated that "[k]eyboards are needed to support the transition." The January 24, 2001, purchase order for another 31 keyboards indicated "[s]econd request for the letter 'W' problem." The OA associate director for information systems and technology said that some of the replacement keyboards were taken out of inventory for the new administration staff, but she did not know how many. In an interview in June 2001, this official said that 57 keyboards were missing keys during the transition and 7 other keyboards were not working because of other reasons, such as inoperable space bars.
>
> After later obtaining an estimate from the branch chief for program management and strategic planning in the information systems and technology division, who worked with computers during the transition, that 150 keyboards had to be replaced because of missing or damaged 'W' keys, we conducted a follow-up with the OA associate director for information systems and technology. In February 2002, the OA associate director for information systems and technology said that her memory regarding this matter was not as good as when we interviewed her in June 2001, but estimated that 100 keyboards had to be replaced at the end of the administration and that one-third of them were missing 'W' keys or were intentionally damaged in some way. She also said that of those 100 keyboards, about one-third to one-half would have been replaced anyway because of their age. This official said that she took notes regarding computers during the transition, but she was unable to locate them.

We offer the following specific comments:

- The GAO basically ignores the comments of the IS&T Branch Chief, by relegating her observation to the passing phrase, "[a]fter later obtaining an estimate from the branch chief . . . worked with computers during the transition that 150 keyboards had to be replaced because of missing or damaged 'W' keys . . . ." While the report dismisses her observations, this employee may, in truth, have been the one person in the best position to assess the total damage. This employee worked during the transition as the person with the cart who continually moved equipment around. She moved the broken and old items out of offices and made deliveries of replacement

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equipment. She thus personally saw many of the damaged keyboards, which she transported to a temporary workroom in the EEOB. She did this throughout the Inaugural weekend and into the following week. She specifically recalls that, on one of her last deliveries of broken items to the temporary workroom, someone said that the count of damaged keyboards was up to 150.

- Contrast the GAO's treatment of the IS&T Branch Chief's observations with its discussion of another individual, the IS&T Associate Director. The latter individual told the GAO (but the GAO fails to mention) that she was "not focused on keyboards" during the transition and that she "personally saw" only about "10 keyboards" with missing W keys and only heard about others. Her estimates of the total number of keyboards damaged were based purely on inferences drawn from what others may have said. The GAO nonetheless details the IS&T Associate Director's statements, but not those of the IS&T Branch Chief.

- Even then, the GAO's reporting of the IS&T Associate Director's statements is incomplete. The GAO fails to mention, for instance, that the IS&T Associate Director said that she "saw personally" a concentration of missing W keys in the former First Lady's Office and in the OVP; that there were "some keyboards" where the space bar had been glued down; and that she was "very upset at the condition" in which some of the keyboards were left. In describing her second interview, the GAO fails to mention that it asked her to estimate the number of keyboards with missing W keys, even though the GAO had asked the same question during her first interview (seven months earlier) and the GAO did not remind her about the earlier inquiry. Nor did the GAO ask her whether she had any reason in February 2002 to question the accuracy of what she had said in June 2001.

- The GAO also fails to say that the IS&T Associate Director recounted what the contractor who packed the damaged keyboards, had said – namely, that there were "6 boxes of 20 keyboards or more with 'W' problems or space-bar problems." The GAO pressed the IS&T Associate Director to give her own estimate of damaged keyboards (again, even though she had told the GAO that she did not have personal knowledge about the keyboards), and she said that she "thinks around 100 were damaged," and "if there were 100," then roughly one-third might have had a "W" missing "or looked like something intentional."

- The GAO says that it "met EOP personnel who worked with computers during the transition." The GAO actually did not "meet" the IS&T Branch Chief; the GAO interviewed her by telephone. So we would recommend rephrasing the report to say that the GAO "spoke to" computer personnel. Also, the IS&T Associate Director and the IS&T Branch Chief are both former employees of the OA and both served during the prior Administration. The contractor referred to in the paragraph immediately above is employed by a contractor, Northrop Grumman.

- Finally, the GAO misquotes the IS&T Associate Director, when it states that she "also said that of those 100 keyboards, about one-third to one-half would have been

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replaced anyway because of their age." The IS&T Associate Director told the GAO that the keyboards would have been replaced "*if they had not been changed out in 4 or 8 years*." It is not clear how many (if any) of the damaged keyboards were four years old or older. Therefore, it is not fair to say, and the IS&T Associate Director did not say, that "about one-third to one-half *would have been replaced* anyway; at most, they may have been.

Now on p. 47.

57. **PAGE 43.** The GAO says that "12 boxes of keyboards, speakers, cords, and soundcards were discarded," and "the contract employee who prepared that [excess] report said that she did not know how many keyboards were discarded, but that each box could have contained 10 to 20 keyboards, depending on the size of the box." We believe that the GAO should also explain that the contractor personally packed some of the boxes; and for those, she filled the box with keyboards and then used excessed speakers, cords, and soundcards to fill in gaps and ensure that the keyboards would not shift in the box.

Now on pp. 47-48.

58. **PAGE 44.** The GAO discusses the "costs" associated with the damaged keyboards:

> [W]e are providing cost estimates for each of the various totals provided by EOP staff. In reviewing the costs, it must be recognized that according to the OA associate director for information systems and technology, one-third to one-half of the keyboards for EOP staff, including the ones provided to EOP staff at the beginning of the Bush administration, may have been replaced every 3 or 4 years because of their age. Therefore, some of the damaged keyboards would have been replaced anyway.
>
> Below is a table showing the different costs that could have been incurred on the basis of different estimates that we were provided regarding the number of damaged keyboards replaced. The cost estimates were calculated on the basis of the per-unit cost of the 62 keyboards that the White House purchased in late January 2001 for $4,850, or $75 per keyboard.

This paragraph is followed by a table entitled "Estimated costs of replacing damaged keyboards." The table lists four estimates. The first estimate, for $2,250-$4,800, is based on the GAO's "range of 30 to 64 keyboards that were observed by EOP staff with missing or damaged keys." The second estimate, for $2475, is based on a statement that the IS&T Associate Director made that she "thinks around 100 were damaged," and "if there were 100," then roughly one-third might have had a W key missing "or looked like something intentional."

- The GAO's first estimate is simply wrong, in our view, because there were a total of 58 to 70 (not 30 to 64) keyboards with missing or damaged W keys where the witness specified the room or office where the keyboard was located. In addition, contrary to the GAO's statement in the table, that range does *not* represent "keyboards that were observed by EOP staff with missing and damaged keys." It represents only those where a room or office was specifically identified; it does not account for the

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observations of other "EOP staff" (including the IS&T Branch Chief) who told the GAO about additional damaged keyboards.

- It is remarkable to us that the GAO would include the second cost estimate when the GAO itself acknowledges that the IS&T Associate Director's February 2002 estimate of missing and damaged keyboards was unreliable. *See* Report at 42 ("[the IS&T Associate Director] said that her memory regarding this matter was not as good as when we interviewed her in June 2001.). It is all the more peculiar given that the GAO is unwilling to engage in the same sort of cost estimation when it comes to estimating the cost of missing telephone labels, the repair and replacement cost for damaged furniture, and many of the other categories of reported damage.

- Also, as stated earlier, it is not accurate to represent that the IS&T Associate Director said "one-third to one-half of the keyboards for EOP staff, including the ones provided to EOP staff at the beginning of the Bush administration, may have been replaced every 3 or 4 years because of their age." the IS&T Associate Director told the GAO that the keyboards would have been replaced "*if they had not been changed out in 4 or 8 years*." Again, it is not clear how many (if any) of the damaged keyboards were four years old or older. Therefore, it is not fair to say, as the GAO does, that "some of the damaged keyboards *would have been* replaced anyway"; at most, they may have been.

Now on p. 49.

59. **PAGES 46-47.** We believe that the GAO has underreported the extent of the damaged furniture. As set forth in the table that appears above (Specific Comment No. 14), 17 current staff members reported a minimum of 31 to 33 pieces of damaged furniture – not counting the furniture that was defaced with writing and stickers.

Now on p. 50.

60. **PAGE 47.** The GAO writes that "[s]ix EOP staff . . . said that the locks on four desks or cabinet drawers were damaged *or the keys were missing* or broken of in the locks." We do not recall anyone complaining simply because "keys were missing" – which, in the ordinary case, would hardly be called damage, vandalism, or a prank. Rather, current staff members observed situations where it appeared that keys may have been purposefully broken-off in the locks or drawers were left locked intentionally and keys taken or discarded. For instance,

- Four individuals told the GAO that a key was broken off inside the lock on a file cabinet in Room 197B; the key was still there hanging in lock by metal thread; and, when a locksmith opened the cabinet, a Gore bumper sticker with the words "Bush Sucks" was displayed inside.

- A different employee told the GAO that his desk drawers were locked and no key was found; when the drawers were pried open, there were two pieces of paper inside that had "anti-Bush" statements.

This is another instance where the GAO's lack of detail prevents the reader from having a complete and accurate understanding of the damage that was found.

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Now on p. 50.

61. **PAGE 47.** The GAO is mistaken when it says that "[f]ive EOP staff . . . said that they observed writing inside drawers in five desks. . . . We were shown the writing in four of the five desks." Again, the GAO has underreported the number of observations. The GAO has told us the names of the "[f]ive EOP staff" to whom it refers, each of whom, according to the GAO, observed only one desk with writing inside drawers. The GAO omits, however, that one of these employees showed the GAO a second desk in another room with writing on the pull-out tray that reads "W happens." Thus, five current staff members observed writing in or on *six desks*; not all the writing was "inside drawers"; and the GAO was shown the writing in *five of the six* cases. We also believe that the content of the messages is important because it indicates when and by whom the writings were made:

MESSAGES WRITTEN ON OR IN DESKS	
Location	**Observation**[17]
EEOB – 97	Writing in desk drawer reads "Take care of this place. We will be back in four (4) years! (1/93)"; shown to GAO
EEOB - 191A	Writing on a pull-out tray on desk that reads "W happens"; shown to GAO
EEOB – 191B	Writing in top left drawer of desk that reads "GET OUT"; shown to GAO
EEOB – 196A	Writing in top middle drawer of desk that reads "Hail to the Thief"; shown to GAO
EEOB – 125A	Writing in middle drawer of desk that wishes all "who work here" "good luck"; shown to GAO
EEOB – 1st floor	Writing in desk drawer

Now on p. 50.

62. **PAGE 47.** The GAO has underreported the number of pieces of furniture that were observed overturned. Our notes show (notes that were provided to the GAO and the GAO did not dispute) that five White House employees, one OA employee, and one GSA employee reported seeing *at least 14 to 19 pieces of furniture* that were on their sides or overturned, not the "8 to 10 pieces" that the GAO reports. The table detailing each observation of overturned furniture is found above in Specific Comment No. 17.

Now on p. 50.

63. **PAGE 47.** The GAO writes that "*four* EOP staff said they saw furniture that appeared to have been moved from areas where they did not appear to belong, such as desks moved up against doors." There were actually *five* such individuals – specifically, three WHO employees, one OVP employee and one NSC employee.

Now on p. 50.

64. **PAGES 47-48.** We believe that the GAO is mistaken when it reports that "[t]he director of GSA's White House service center said that furniture could have been overturned for a variety of reasons other than vandalism, such as to reach electrical or computer connections." Indeed, according to our notes, just the opposite is true: two GSA

[17] The comments in this table were, collectively, reported by 5 separate individuals. Each line reports an observation by one person. The GAO has been provided with the source of information for each observation.

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managers told the GAO that cleaning staff would "not move" large pieces of furniture in this fashion, and none of these things would happen in the normal course of "moving" out of an office.

Now on p. 51.

65. **PAGE 48.** The GAO's description of the "four to five desks found with a sticky substance on them" is incomplete.

- *First*, it is unclear from the GAO's description that the vandalized desks were in the Vice President's West Wing office area and included the Vice President's own desk.
- *Second*, the "sticky substance" was a thick layer of an oily glue-like substance (which one observer described as something like a mixture of Vaseline and glue).
- *Third*, the substance was smeared on the bottom of the middle drawer of the desks. Consequently, when someone sat at the desk the substance would get on the person's legs or, when you tried to open the drawer (which had no handles) it would get on your hands. (In fact, one employee of the Office of the Vice President told the GAO that the substance got on her pants.)
- *Fourth*, this OVP employee also told the GAO that, on her desk, the substance was smeared all over the top of the right pull-out tray of the desk, as well as under her middle desk drawer. A second OVP employee likewise told the GAO that the substance was on her desk's pull-out tray, as well as under her middle desk drawer.
- *Fifth*, an OVP employee and two OA employees said that the desk-drawer handle on at least one of the desks was missing, and one of the OA employees said that the handle was found inside the drawer along with more of the glue substance.
- *Finally*, the substance on some of the desks was first discovered between midnight on January 19 and noon on January 20, 2001.

We believe this additional information is relevant and should be included in the GAO report in order to promote an adequate and correct understanding of the matters reported. *See* Government Auditing Standard 7.51.

Now on pp. 51-52.

66. **PAGE 48.** The GAO's list of "[d]ocumentation relating to the observations" of damaged furniture is incomplete. A facility request form states that one named employee "[n]eeds key to lateral file cabinet. Cabinet is locked." Facility Request No. 56695 (Jan. 29, 2001).

Now on p. 52.

67. **PAGE 49.** The GAO states that "[d]efinitive information was not available regarding when the furniture damage occurred; whether it was intentional and, if so, who caused it." While "definitive" proof may be lacking in some cases, that does not mean that the GAO (or the reader) must ignore both common sense and the overwhelming circumstantial evidence that does, in fact, indicate when the damage occurred, whether it was intentional, and who the likely perpetrators are.

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- In some cases, the circumstances indicate that the damage was intentional, occurred shortly before the Inauguration, and the most likely perpetrators were members of the former Administration. For example,

  - With respect to the key broken off in a file cabinet in Room 197B, the key was found still hanging in lock by a metal thread (suggesting that the damage occurred not long before the transition) and, when the locksmith opened the cabinet, a Gore bumper sticker with the words "Bush Sucks" was prominently displayed inside (suggesting that the damage was intentional and done by a member of the former Administration).

  - Similarly, when the locked desk drawers were pried open in Room 103, two pieces of paper with anti-Bush statements were found displayed inside. Again, in our view, these facts indicate that the damage was intentional, occurred shortly before the transition, and was done by a member of the former Administration.

- In other cases, the person who observed the damage firsthand told the GAO that the nature of the damage itself, and the surrounding conditions, suggested that the damage was intentional and/or was done shortly before the transition weekend. For example,

  - One person told the GAO that the drawers on her desk "clearly" had been kicked-in intentionally and that it was "not just wear and tear";

  - A second person told the GAO that it was unlikely that the slit seats were the result of wear and tear because "the fabric otherwise looked new," and "it looked like someone had taken a knife or sharp object to the seat"; and,

  - A third person told the GAO that she saw damaged furniture in offices where things had looked "pretty good" weeks or months earlier.

- In still other cases, the nature of the damage suggests that it occurred shortly before the Inauguration because the offices' prior occupants and cleaning staff would not have let the damage remain in the office for long. For example, it is hard to believe that occupants would not fix or remove a bookcase with broken glass (with shards of glass still in the cabinet) or would allow chairs with broken legs and no backs to remain in an office suite for very long.

Now on p. 52.

68. **PAGES 49-50.** The GAO includes in its report statements from two employees – one who said that the damaged furniture that she observed was "not something intentional" and the second individual who said, according to GAO, that the four chairs with broken legs in her office were "not necessarily intentional."

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- *First*, the second employee told the GAO that, while it was *possible* that the legs were broken through wear and tear, she thought it "unlikely that you'd keep a broken chair in your office" in that condition.

- *Second*, and more important, it is remarkable to us that the GAO includes in its reports the two statements by current employees who noted that particular damage was "not *necessarily* intentional," when the GAO has refused, despite our requests, to include statements from individuals (in some cases, the same individuals) who stated that damage which they observed appeared to be intentional. For instance,

  - One person told the GAO that the desk drawers were clearly damaged intentionally and not just wear and tear.

  - A second person said that "it was intentional, not accidental" with respect to the damage he observed in dozens of rooms.

  - A third person said that the broken key in the file cabinet looked "deliberate" to him.

  - A fourth person said that the missing phone labels "must have been intentional."

  - A fifth person said that the rooms he observed were "deliberately made to look like someone was communicating a message."

  - A sixth person said that some of conditions he saw looked "intentional."

  - A Bush Administration official who has observed a prior transition said the conditions of the offices was "more than wear and tear."

  - An employee who has observed five prior transitions said the offices looked like a "[l]arge number of people . . . deliberately trashed the place."

  - A seventh person told the GAO that the repairman who fixed the broken copy machine found a pornographic or inappropriate message when he pulled out the copier's paper drawer and that the repairman thought the paper drawers had been "intentionally realigned" so that the paper supply would jam.

  - An OA manager who has worked at the White House since 1971 said that some of the damage was the result of "intentional trashing."

  - An employee with over 30 years of service in the White House said it looked like the prior occupants had "purposely trashed the place."

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Now on p. 53.

69. **PAGE 51.** The GAO's discussion of the "costs" attributable to the damage furniture fails to mention, or make any attempt to estimate, the costs incurred in replacing the furniture that was discarded because it was beyond repair. For instance, the GAO places no value on replacing the four chairs that an employee said had broken legs or the conference room chair that two other employees said had its back broken out. Likewise, the GAO made no attempt to determine how much it costs to reupholster chairs like the three that one employee told the GAO had slit seats. Nor did the GAO seek estimates on the cost of new glass tops for desks or to replace or repair a desk that had its drawers kicked in. The GAO has simply ignored these costs.

Similarly, the GAO has made no attempt to quantify the very real costs incurred in, for example, having movers remove damaged furniture and return with replacement furniture; having movers upright overturned furniture; having personnel (like the employees who found it, or the cleaning staff) clean the glue-like substance; or having personnel divert their time and attention to removing or fixing furniture that should have been found in working condition.

Now on p. 54.

70. **PAGE 52.** The GAO writes:

> The former manager of an office where two EOP staff told us they observed one or two chairs with broken or missing arms said that arms on two chairs in that suite of offices had become detached a year or two before the transition, that carpenters had tried to glue them back, but the glue did not hold.

We understand that the GAO is referring here to the former First Lady's offices – now the suite occupied by the Political Affairs office. At least six pieces of furniture were found damaged in that suite – some under circumstances that indicate the damage was intentional – in addition to the two broken armchairs. These additional reports of damaged furniture as well as other damage found in the same suite undermine the former manager's innocent explanation for the two chairs. And the former manager of the office apparently provided no explanation for the additional damage. However, because the GAO is unwilling to specify the locations where damage was found, and has not included in its report the details that indicate that the damage was intentional, reader are unable to assess for themselves the credibility of the former manager's explanation.

Now on p. 55.

71. **PAGE 53.** The GAO reports that "[t]hree former staff" of the Vice President's West Wing Office said they "were not aware of glue being left on desks" and that one of those employees "said that her desk was missing handles when she started working at that desk in 1998, and it was still missing them at the end of the administration."

- *First*, this explanation is inconsistent with one employee's observation that a handle was found *inside the desk with more of the oily glue-like substance on top of it*.

- *Second*, the reader again is unable to evaluate the credibility of the comments made by the former staff members because the report does not say where these vandalized

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desks were located and the various other damage and pranks that were found in the same location. For example, it is hard to believe the former staff members' claim of ignorance when one also knows that longtime OA employees found, in the Vice President's West Wing office, "vulgar words" on a board; signs comparing the President to a chimpanzee on the walls and interspersed in the reams of paper in the printers, copy machines, and fax machines (observed by three employees); empty champagne bottles; and a basketball stuck on a lighted ledge (each observed by one employee).

Now on p. 55.

72. **PAGES 53-54 and n. 32.** The GAO is just plain wrong when it says that "[d]uring [its] initial interview with [an] employee, she said that the desks with burn marks and scratches were in a particular office" and [d]uring a follow-up interview . . . she said her observations pertained to an office suite, rather than a single office." She said no such thing. During both interviews, this employee explained, in no uncertain terms, that her observations were with regard to a suite of offices. Indeed, there can be no doubt because this employee *personally took the two GAO investigators into the two offices that she was referring to.*

Thus this employee's observations referred to multiple offices, and she did not say that the desks (and there was more than one) that she observed with scratch marks were in Room 160A, as the GAO apparently told the former occupant. Consequently, the former occupant's statement that "he did not recall seeing any scratches . . . *in his office*" is somewhat beside the point because it does not address the condition of desks in the other office. Unfortunately, the GAO's report leaves the impression that the former occupant's statement has directly rebutted an allegation that was made by a member of the current staff, when it does not.

Now on p. 56.

73. **PAGE 54.** The GAO's report details at length the testimonials of former staff members who said that they observed no overturned furniture:

> Three former occupants of a suite of three rooms where two EOP officials told us they observed a table and two desks overturned in the afternoon of January 20 said that no furniture was overturned in their offices when they left on January 20 and that their desks would have been difficult or impossible to move because of the weight of the desks. One of the three former occupants said that he was in his office until 3:30 a.m. or 4:30 a.m. on January 20, the second former employee said he was in his office until 10:00 a.m. or 11:00 a.m. on January 20, and the third former employee said that she was in her office until 11:50 a.m. or 11:55 a.m. on January 20.
>
> Regarding another office where two EOP officials told us that they observed overturned furniture, the former senior advisor for presidential transition said that he was in that office after 11:00 a.m. on January 20, and he did not see any overturned furniture. Similarly, the former head of

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that office, who said that he left the office around 1:00 a.m. on January 20, said that he did not observe any overturned furniture.

- If the GAO is willing to include this detailed response by members of the former staff, we ask that the GAO also explain that two of individuals who observed the overturned furniture have worked in the White House complex for 29 and 31 years, respectively (including during the Clinton Administration), and that they both observed overturned furniture between approximately 1 a.m. and 5 a.m. on January 20. Likewise, a GSA employee, who served during the Clinton Administration, reported seeing overturned furniture. The GAO's report should also say that two other individuals observed overturned furniture at approximately 12:15 p.m. on January 20.

Now on p. 57.

74. **PAGES 55-56.** We believe that the GAO's data on cut and pulled cords is not accurate. Our records show that 5 staff members (4 White House and 1 OA) told the GAO that they saw a minimum total of 32 to 35 telephone lines or other cords either cut or pulled from the wall, as follows:

TELEPHONE AND OTHER CORDS CUT OR PULLED FROM WALL		
Location	**Observation**[18]	**Total no. of pieces**
EEOB	"total of 2 or 3 cords ripped from the walls" so that the "cables behind the jack were showing"	2-3
170	"phone cable ripped from wall"	
182 suite (Scheduling)	"phone line pulled out – jack and all"	
100-104	"some plugs" damaged	2+
1st Floor EEOB	"1 or 2" pulled cables or broken jacks that had been "yanked" **	0-2
2nd Floor EEOB	"couple" pulled cables or broken jacks that had been "yanked" **	2
WW or EEOB/probably in NEC offices	Phone wire cut	1
158/160A	Wires torn out of the wall	Approx. 25
TOTAL	5 observers	At least 32-35

**OA employee, worked in the White House complex during Clinton Administration

In addition, a facility request form shows that, on January 24, 2001, an employee asked for "electrical services" in her offices, and specifically asked for someone to "organize all loose wires." Facility Request No. 56662.

Now on p. 58.

75. PAGE 56. We believe that the GAO has again underreported the observations of phones with missing labels. Based on conservative estimates and calculations, 5 (not 4) staff members (2 White House employees, 2 OA employees, and 1 OVP employee) recalled observing in specific offices or rooms *at least 112-133* telephones that had no labels

[18] Each line reports an observation by one person.

identifying the telephone numbers (not "99 to 108"). A table setting forth our data appears above in Specific Comment No. 24.

Oddly, in calculating the number of missing labels in the OVP's second floor offices, the GAO states (at fn. 36) that it "included a range of 62 to 82," even though the GAO concedes that the "EOP indicated that there were 82 telephones in that office suite in January 2001." Why then would the GAO use a range of 62 to 82, particularly since we provided the GAO with an OA document that shows, as a conservative estimate, 82 telephones were in that suite?

In addition to the 112-133 missing labels where the observers identified specific rooms or offices, an employee with over 30 years of service in the White House told the GAO that he personally saw "more than 20" phones with missing labels; an OA manager who has worked at the White House since 1971 said that there were "many instances of missing labels on the phones"; and a third person (a new employee who coordinated telephone services during the first month of the Administration) said that the labels on the "majority of the phones" – or "roughly 85 percent" of the phones – in the EEOB and the White House had been removed or contained incorrect numbers. If the GAO is willing to include the OA telephone services coordinator's personal observation that "she . . . observed 18 telephones that were missing number labels," we believe the observations of these other telephone and facility officials should also be included, and described accurately, in the report.

The GAO says that the new employee who coordinated telephone services during the first month of the Administration "estimated that 85 percent of the telephones in the EEOB and the White House [or approximately 594 telephones] were missing identifying templates *or did not ring at the correct numbers*." She actually said that she found that labels on the "majority of the phones" – or "roughly 85 percent" of the phones – in the EEOB and the White House had been removed *or contained incorrect numbers.*

The GAO also downplays a critical fact about the missing phone labels. An employee who worked as White House Director of Telephone Services for 29 years told the GAO that "[c]ertain [telephone] labels were replaced early on Jan. 20 – before noon," but the labels were found "missing again later that day." In our view, this fact shows that no innocent explanation exists for at least some of the missing labels; their removal was an intentional act, apparently by members of the former Administration.

Now on p. 58.

76. **PAGE 57**. We believe that the GAO has underreported the number of telephones that were forwarded and reforwarded to ring at different telephones throughout and between the EEOB and West Wing. As set forth in the table (*see* Specific Comment No. 26), seven White House staff reported that roughly 100 telephones were forwarded to ring at other numbers.

We do not understand why the GAO treats the observations of the employee who coordinated telephone services during the first month of the Administration differently from the other observers. As the GAO concedes, this employee's sole responsibility

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during the first month of the administration was to address telecommunications problems and, in particular, to work as the "middleman" between the incoming staff who reported the problems and the telephone contractors and personnel who repaired them. This employee told the GAO that she "tried to go into every physical space" in the West Wing and the EEOB "to survey phones." Thus, her observations are as competent, if not more competent, than the other observations are. *See* Government Auditing Standard 6.54(f) ("Testimonial evidence obtained from an individual who . . . has complete knowledge about the area is more competent than testimonial evidence obtained from an individual who . . . has only partial knowledge about an area.").

Finally, the GAO fails to mention that this employee told the GAO that the Chief of Staff's phone was forwarded to ring in a closet. This is, in our view, another important (but omitted) fact because it shows that the phones were not forwarded for legitimate business purposes.

Now on p. 59.

77. **PAGE 57.** In reporting on telephones that were unplugged and/or piled up, the GAO fails to state *25 or more offices in the EEOB* had phones piled up or unplugged. Nor does the GAO explain that one of the observers was an employee who has supervised White House telephone services for more than 30 years. Given his more than 30 years of experience managing telephone services in the White House complex, this individual's observation is particularly noteworthy. In addition, since this individual identified the unplugged phones as an example of the vandalism, damage, or pranks that he observed while surveying the EEOB on January 19 and the early morning of January 20, it is clear that the phones were not unplugged by the telephone services personnel or by the cleaning staff, who had not yet entered these rooms. We believe that this information is important and, in its absence, the report is incomplete. *See* Government Auditing Standard 7.51 ("Being complete requires that the report contain all information needed to satisfy the audit objectives, promote an adequate and correct understanding of the matters reported, and meet the report content requirement.").

The information is particularly important because the GAO states on page 63 that "[t]he former manager of an office where an EOP employee told us he observed telephones that were unplugged said that no one in that office unplugged them" and "[a] former Clinton administration employee in another office where EOP staff told us they observed telephones that were piled up said that there were extra telephones in that office that did not work and had never been discarded." Since the GAO never mentions that there were observations of unplugged and piled phones in 25 or more offices, the reader does not know that the comments of the former Clinton administration employees, even if true, explain what happened in only 2 of 25 (or more) offices. Thus, the reader has no basis for placing the comments of the former employees in context, nor for understanding that the former employees apparently have no explanation for the remaining observations.

Now on p. 59.

78. **PAGE 57.** In one of its more dramatic understatements, the GAO writes: "Two EOP staff said that they found telephones that were not working." Again, because of the GAO's failure to include important details, it has dramatically downplayed the extent of the problems observed. For instance, an individual who is employed by the OA and

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worked here during the Clinton Administration told the GAO that there was "*no working phone on south side of building*." Since there are a minimum of 26 offices on the south side of the first floor of the EEOB, each of which would contain *at least* one phone – and likely many more than that – the problem with non-working phones was extensive.

Now on pp. 61-62.

79. **PAGE 58.** The GAO writes: "The EOP provided documentation summarizing telephone service orders closed from January 20, 2001, through February 20, 2001, containing 29 service orders that mention labels; 6 of the 29 service orders were for work in offices where telephone labels were observed missing. All of the 29 service orders mentioning labels were part of orders for other telephone services. In discussing these documents, the OA telephone service coordinator said that the requests for labels did not necessarily mean that the telephones had been missing labels with telephone numbers. She said that a new label might have been needed for a new service, such as having two lines ring at one telephone." With all due respect, that statement is false.

- *First*, the GAO *never* "discuss[ed]" the closed order list with the OA telephone services coordinator. The GAO never showed her the document, nor expressly discussed its contents with her. While the GAO did ask her whether a request to label a telephone *always* meant that the label was missing (and she rightly said that it did not), the GAO did not ask her about the document, any particular order on that list, or the labeling that occurred during the first few days of the Administration.

- *Second*, the GAO's suggestion that something *other than* missing labels precipitated the request for new labels might be plausible if the GAO has nothing to consider except the closed order list. But that is not the case. Here, the GAO concedes that there were observations of *more than 100 missing labels* during the first days of the Administration. Under those undisputed circumstances, it is beyond doubt that the requests to "PLACE BUTTON LABEL[S] ON SET" were to replace the missing labels.

- *Third*, the closed order list does more than "mention labels." If the GAO provided adequate detail in its report, the reader would learn that the document shows, for example:

  - On Monday, January 22, 2001, a telephone tech was asked by the OVP because the phones "NEED BTN [button] LABELS, TECH TO LABEL SETS." The tech billed "4HRS" (4 hours) on this order. TSR No. 01010195.

  - On January 31, 2001, a tech was called to Room 273 of the OVP because, among other things, the phones "NEED BTN [button] LABELS TYPED, PLACED." The tech billed "2HRS" on this order.

  - On February 5, 2001, a tech was called to Room 200 because the phones "NEED LABELS PLACED ON SETS." The tech billed "2HRS" on this order.

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- On February 9, 2001, a tech was asked to "REPROGRAM [phone] IN ROOM 276 EEOB, [and] PLACE BUTTON LABEL ON SET." The tech billed "1HR" on this order.

- Also on February 9, a tech was asked to "REPRGRM [phone] in RM 279 EEOB, . . . [and] PLACE LABEL ON SET." The tech billed "30MINS" to this order.

- On January 29, 2001, a tech was called to Room 18 to, among other things, "REPLACE LABEL." The tech billed "1HR" to this order.

- On February 8, 2001, a tech was asked to "REPRGM RM 148 . . . NEED LABEL PLACE." The tech billed "30MINS" to this order.

- On January 30, 2001, a tech was called to Room 113 because the occupants "NEED LABEL PLACED ON SET BY TECH." The tech billed "1HR."

- On February 3, 2001, a tech was called to Room 100 to "PLACE BTN [button] LABEL." The tech billed "1HR."

- In *six* separate service orders on February 3, 2001, a tech was asked to "REPROGRAM" phones in the Room 100 suite and "TO PLACE LABEL ON SET." TSR No. 1020330; *see also* TSR Nos. 1020325 ("NEED LABELS PLACED ON SET"), 1020328 ("NEED BTN LABELS"), 1020329 ("NEED LABELS"), 1020331 ("NEED LABELS PLACED ON SET"), 1020340 ("NEED LABELS PLACED ON SET"). The tech billed "1HR" on each service order.

- On February 5, 2001, a tech was told that the occupants of Room 135 "NEED LABEL PLACED ON SET." The tech billed "1HR" for this order.

- Also on February 5, 2001, a tech was asked to "REPROGRAM SET [in] ROOM 137" and "PLACE LABEL ON SET." The tech billed "2HRS."

- On February 3, 2001, someone in Room 131 asked a tech to "PLACE LABEL ON SET." The tech billed "1HR."

- In a separate service request on February 3, 2001, a tech was asked to "REPROGRAM IN ROOM 137 EEOB" and "PLACE LABELS ON SET." The tech billed "1HR."

- On February 3, 2001, a tech was told that the occupants of Room 154 "NEED BUTTON LABEL," among other things. The tech billed "1HR" to this order.

- On February 5, 2001, a tech was told that "LABELS ALSO NEEDED" in a Presidential Personnel Office. The tech billed "1HR" for this order.

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- On February 3, 2001, a tech was asked to "REPROGRAM [a phone] IN RM 131" and "PLACE LABEL ON SET." The tech billed "1HR."

- On February 2, 2001, a tech was asked to "REPROGRAM IN ROOM 184 EEOB" and "PLACE LABEL ON SET." The tech billed "1HR."

- On February 8, 2001, a tech was told that the occupants of Room 87 "NEED LABELS PLACED ON SET." The tech billed "1HR" on this order.

- *Fourth*, the GAO was provided – but ignores – many of the individual work orders (so-called Telecommunications Service Requests (TSRs)) that are summarized on the closed order list. The TSRs are important because they provide additional information about the need to label the telephones and because, in some cases, they identify additional requests to place labels on telephones that are not referenced on the closed order list. A sampling shows:

  - TSR No. 01010183: "NEED Button labels typed. Tech to label sets."

  - TSR No. 01010184: "Room[s] 274, 272, 284, & 286. Program phones . . . NEED Button labels typed. Need tech to place labels on sets."

  - TSR No. 01010185: "Room[s] 272 & 276. Program phones . . . NEED Button labels typed & placed on sets."

  - TSR No. 01010195: "Reprogram sets in Room 263, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269 and 271. NEED labels placed on each set."

  - TSR No. 01010206: Among other things, "NEED TECH TO PLACE BUTTON LABELS" on sets in Room 270.

  - TSR No. 01010306: Among other things, "Replace labels on all phones that removed" in Room 18.

  - TSR No. 01020463: "Need label placed on set" in Room 148.

  - TSR No. 01010342: "NEED Label placed on set" in Room 100.

  - Similarly the TSRs indicate, in some cases, where a staff member has reported a phone that is not ringing when the number on the phone is dialed – that is, it has been forwarded. TSR No. 01020225, for example, says line "does not ring on set 6-7453."

  - Finally, TSRs exist for work – "including . . . relabeling" – performed on January 20 and 21, where individual work orders were often not completed. TSR No. 01010382 shows that, on Saturday, January 20, 2001, the techs worked 114 hours, at $113.88 per hour (time and a half), for a total of $12,982.32. On Sunday,

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January 21, 2001, the techs worked 78.5 hours, at $151.84 (double time), for a total $11,919.44.

Now on p. 60.

80. **PAGES 58-59.** The GAO has failed in its discussion of obscene and inappropriate voicemail greetings to include important information – information needed to promote "an adequate and correct understanding of the matters reported." Government Auditing Standard 7.51. The GAO fails to explain, for example, that the "[t]wo EOP employees" who heard the obscene voicemail messages were the White House Director of Telephone Services and the OA's Associate Director for Facilities Management, who together began touring offices and checking phones in the EEOB at approximately 1 a.m. on January 20. The first of these individuals estimated that he listened to "roughly 30 greetings," approximately 10 of which (or one-third) were "inappropriate." Of the 10 inappropriate messages, "approximately 5 or 6" (or roughly half) "were vulgar." (He also said that the White House telephone operators notified him that there were "obscene messages" on some of the voice-mail greetings.) This employee told the GAO that, after encountering this high ratio of inappropriate and vulgar messages, and *because of these messages*, a decision was made to take the entire system down. He also explained that he erased some messages around 1 a.m. on January 20, and *they were re-recorded later that day*. These are, in our view, important facts regarding the extent of the problem and the consequences thereof – namely, no one had voice-mail service for the first days and weeks of the Administration.

Now on pp. 61-62.

81. **PAGES 60-61.** The GAO's section on the "costs" associated with telephone problems is both inaccurate and incomplete. Based on extremely conservative estimates and straightforward documentation, the government incurred *at least* $6020 just replacing removed labels and rerouting the forwarded telephones. The evidence shows:

- *First*, the GAO received, *but fails to mention*, a blanket work order and bill for work – including "relabeling" work – performed on Saturday, January 20, 2001. The techs billed 114 hours at a rate of $113.88 per hour for each hour or fraction of an hour spent on a particular job. Consequently, if technicians spent only ten percent of their time relabeling phones and correcting forwarded telephones on Saturday (a conservative estimate given that there were between 112 and 133 specifically identified missing labels and roughly 100 forwarded phones), that means it cost the taxpayer $1,298 for one day's work replacing the removed labels and fixing the forwarded phones.

- *Second*, and similarly, the GAO acknowledges that it received a work order and bill for work – including "replacing labels on telephones" – performed on Sunday, January 21, 2001. But the GAO fails to estimate any costs associated with that work. The bill shows that the techs worked 78.5 hours that day at a rate of $151.84 per hour for each hour or fraction of an hour spent on a particular job. That means that, if technicians again spent only ten percent of their time relabeling phones and correcting forwarded telephones, the taxpayer incurred an additional cost of $1,192 for that day's work replacing the removed labels and fixing the forwarded phones.

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- *Third*, the GAO fails to estimate the costs associated with replacing labels even where it was provided both individual work orders and a summary of orders that specifically identify the relabeling work performed and the amount of time spent on the job. Specifically, we provided the GAO with a document entitled "Orders Closed 1/20/01 Thru 2/20/01" that lists many orders (some of which are highlighted above) where a tech was asked to place one or more labels on telephone sets. For each of those orders, a "T&M" charge (time and materials) is identified in terms of hours and minutes. Those charges can be computed in dollars by multiplying the total number of hours of T&M charged times $75.92.[19] We do not understand why the GAO failed to perform this simple exercise, particularly given its willingness to provide cost estimates in the context of missing and damaged W keys. Had the GAO done the calculation, the reader would know that approximately $2201.68 was spent to replace labels on telephone sets, as set forth below:

  - On Monday, January 22, 2001, a telephone tech was asked by the OVP to "PROGRM PHNS PER MATT, NEED BTN [button] LABELS, TECH TO LABEL SETS." The tech billed "4HRS" (4 hours) on this order, for an estimated total cost of $303.68. TSR No. 01010183.

  - On January 31, 2001, a tech was called to Room 273 of the OVP because, among other things, the phones "NEED BTN [button] LABELS TYPED, PLACED." The tech billed "2HRS" on this order, for an estimated total cost of $151.84. TSR No. 01010386.

  - On February 5, 2001, a tech was called to Room 200 because the phones "NEED LABELS PLACED ON SETS." The tech billed "2HRS" on this order, for an estimated total cost of $151.84. TSR No. 01020071.

  - On February 9, 2001, a tech was asked to "REPROGRAM [phone] IN ROOM 276 EEOB, [and] PLACE BUTTON LABEL ON SET." The tech billed "1HR" on this order, for an estimated total cost of $75.92. TSR No. 01020225

  - On January 29, 2001, a tech was called to Room 18 to, among other things, "REPLACE LABEL." The tech billed "1HR" to this order, for an estimated total cost of $75.92. TSR No. 01010306.

[19] The White House Director of Telephone Services, and the on-site manager for AT&T, told the GAO that "the government pays only for the techs' 'chargeable time.'" If there is no work to do, the government incurs no cost. The White House Director of Telephone Services explained further that therefore costs would have been incurred in repairing labels because of incremental increases in the "work time" – *i.e.*, chargeable time. The AT&T manager also added that there is a minimum of one hour for each call (at a cost of $75.92 during normal hours), even if the work takes only 10 minutes to perform. Were there any doubt, it would have been eliminated by the documents the GAO received on closed telephone service orders and trouble tickets. Both documents clearly show that AT&T charges for time and materials (T&M) "AT REG. AND OT RATES," and each service order shows the amount of "T&M" attributed to that order.

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- On January 30, 2001, a tech was called to Room 113 because the occupants "NEED LABEL PLACED ON SET BY TECH." The tech billed "1HR" to this order, for an estimated total cost of $75.92. TSR No. 01010342.

- On February 3, 2001, a tech was called to Room 100 to "PLACE BTN [button] LABEL." The tech billed "1HR," for an estimated total cost of $75.92. TSR No. 01020154.

- Also on February 3, 2001, a tech was called to Room 100 because the occupants "NEED BTN LABELS FOR SET." The tech billed "1 HR," for an estimated total cost of $75.92. TSR No. 01020156.

- In six additional and separate service orders on February 3, 2001, a tech was asked to "REPROGRAM" phones in the Room 100 suite and "TO PLACE LABEL ON SET." TSR No. 1020330; *see also* TSR Nos. 1020325 ("NEED LABELS PLACED ON SET"), 1020328 ("NEED BTN LABELS"), 1020329 ("NEED LABELS"), 1020331 ("NEED LABELS PLACED ON SET"), 1020340 ("NEED LABELS PLACED ON SET"). The tech billed "1HR" on each of the six service orders, for an estimated total cost of $455.52.

- On February 5, 2001, a tech was told that the occupants of Room 135 "NEED LABEL PLACED ON SET." The tech billed "1HR" for this order," for an estimated total cost of $75.92. TSR No. 01020075.

- On February 3, 2001, a tech was asked to "REPROGRAM SET [in] ROOM 137" and "PLACE LABEL ON SET." The tech billed "2HRS," for an estimated total cost of $151.84. TSR No. 01020099.

- On February 3, 2001, someone in Room 131 asked a tech to "PLACE LABEL ON SET." The tech billed "1HR," for an estimated total cost of $75.92. TSR No. 01020055.

- In a separate service request on February 3, 2001, a tech was asked to "REPROGRAM IN ROOM 137 EEOB" and "PLACE LABELS ON SET." The tech billed "1HR," for an estimated total cost of $75.92. TSR No. 01020168.

- On February 3, 2001, a tech was told that the occupants of Room 154 "NEED BUTTON LABEL," among other things. The tech billed "1HR" to this order," for an estimated total cost of $75.92. TSR No. 01020327.

- On February 5, 2001, a tech was told that "LABELS ALSO NEEDED" in a Presidential Personnel Office. The tech billed "1HR" for this order," for an estimated total cost of $75.92. TSR No. 01020360.

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- On February 3, 2001, a tech was asked to "REPROGRAM [a phone] IN RM 131" and "PLACE LABEL ON SET." The tech billed "1HR," for an estimated total cost of $75.92. TSR No. 01020363.

- On February 2, 2001, a tech was asked to "REPROGRAM IN ROOM 184 EEOB" and "PLACE LABEL ON SET." The tech billed "1HR," for an estimated total cost of $75.92. TSR No. 01020132.

- On February 8, 2001, a tech was told that the occupants of Room 87 "NEED LABELS PLACED ON SET." The tech billed "1HR" on this order, for an estimated total cost of $75.92. TSR No. 01020160.

- *Fourth*, and even more perplexing, the GAO ignores the AT&T invoices ("Activity Reports") and individual works orders (TSRS) that we provided that show the *actual* charges incurred on particular orders. We have not attempted in preparing these comments to review all such invoices, but a sampling shows $1,328.60 in charges in addition to those listed above:

  - TSR No. 01010184 (request to "program phones" and "place labels on sets" in Rooms 272, 274, 284, and 286): $341.64.

  - TSR No. 01010185 (request to program phones and place labels on sets in Rooms 272 and 276): $341.64.

  - TSR No. 01010195 (request for, among other things, labels for sets in Rooms 263, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, and 271): $341.64.

  - TSR No. 01010206 (request for, among other things, "tech to place button labels"): $303.68.

- *Fifth,* the GAO also can and should estimate, based on this data, how much it would cost to replace labels on 112-133 telephones (or, at least, on the 99 to 108 that the GAO concedes were observed missing) by estimating how much was charged per telephone and extrapolating that amount to account for the total number of missing labels.

- *Sixth*, the GAO suggests that it is unable to provide any estimate on the costs to repair the damaged phones because "the extent to which the service order that mentioned labels involved missing labels was not clear and all of the service order involving labels were part of order for other service." That is incorrect.

  - As we explained to the GAO, when a System Analyst (SA) performs work that does not require a technician to be dispatched to the office (*e.g.*, reprogramming a phone), there is no separate charge. If work requires a tech dispatch (*e.g.*, replacing a label), then there is a minimum charge of $75.92 for each hour or portion of an hour ($113.88 on Saturdays and $151.84 on Sundays), even if it

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takes only minutes to perform the work. Therefore, for service orders that requested, for example, both a telephone to be reprogrammed and its label to be replaced, the *entire charge* is attributable to replacing the label. This is clear from the AT&T billing invoices (or "Activity Reports") that show that the cost associated with the work orders is for "LABOR CHARGES FOR EQUIP. MOVES/CHGS," and not for reprogramming expenses.

- In addition, for the service orders where the minimum charge of $75.92 was assessed, it is immaterial whether work in addition to replacing the label was performed; a charge of $75.92 would have been incurred for replacing the label(s) regardless of whether other work was performed within that first hour.

- Finally, the closed order list and the service orders do far more than "mention[] labels." *See* Specific Comment No. 79.

Now on p. 63.

82. **PAGE 62 n.42.** A footnote reads: "The director of GSA's White House service center said that there were 'any number' of reasons why problems could have been observed with telephone and computer wires besides having people cut them deliberately. He said, for example, that the cleaning staff could have hit the wires with the vacuum cleaners or computer staff could have been working with the wires." This statement would be relevant only if the cut and pulled wires were observed *after* the cleaning staff and the computer staff had entered the offices. But, in this case, the two staff members who reported the cords pulled from the walls observed the damage during the early morning hours of January 20, *before* any cleaning staff had entered the rooms and *before* the computer staff entered the rooms to archive computer data. Unfortunately, the readers of the GAO's report would not know this important fact – and therefore may have been misled by the GAO's footnote – because the GAO fails to include that detail in its report.

Now on p. 65.

83. **PAGE 64.** The GAO reports that "[the former senior advisor for presidential transition] also said that it would have been technically possible to erase voice mail greetings for most departing EOP staff without also deleting greetings for staff who did not leave at the end of the administration." We believe that, to present a fair and balanced report, the GAO must explain here that two current OA staff members – both of whom served during the Clinton Administration – disagree with the former senior adviser. One of the OA staff members, who has worked at the White House since 1971 and who worked closely with the former senior adviser and the transition team, told the GAO that a proposal to delete all voicemail greetings at the end of the Clinton Administration "was discussed," but they had decided not to do it "because it would have erased the greetings of all staff members," including the roughly 1,700 staff members who were not vacating the building. This OA employee further explained that it was his "'call' not to go ahead with the proposal," although the staff which included the former senior adviser was "aware of the decision." OA's Telephone Service Coordinator, likewise told the GAO that, until November 2001, the EOP's phone system did not have the capability to erase voicemails *en masse*; she explained that it was not until November 2001 that the EOP both had purchased the software and had performed upgrades to the switch that were necessary to allow voicemails to be deleted on other than a manual basis.

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Now on p. 65.

84. **PAGE 64.** The GAO continues with the former senior adviser's comments: "This former official also said that some telephones were forwarded to other numbers for business purposes at the end of the Clinton administration. He said, for example, that some of the remaining staff forwarded their calls to locations where they could be reached when no one was available to handle their calls at the former offices." This explanation may sound plausible until you learn *how and where* the phones were forwarded. The Chief of Staff's telephone, for example, was forwarded *to a closet*. There could hardly be a legitimate "business purpose" for that. Yet, because the GAO has not provided the reader with details, like this one, about the current staff's observations, the reader does not have the facts to judge for herself the credibility of the former staffs' explanations. These omissions, in our view, result in a report that is woefully incomplete, and, as a consequence, a report that is arguably misleading and lacking in objectivity. *See* Government Auditing Standard 7.57 ("Objectivity requires that the presentation of the entire report be balanced in content and tone. A report's credibility is significantly enhanced when it presents evidence in an unbiased manner so that readers can be persuaded by the facts.").

Now on p. 66.

85. **PAGE 65.** The heading of the next section of the report reads "Fax Machines," even though the GAO discusses in that section damaged and tampered with fax machines, printers, and copiers. We believe that the heading should be revised to accurately reflect the content of the section.

Now on p. 66.

86. **PAGE 65.** The GAO is mistaken when it reports "*one* EOP official told us that he had seen *12 fax machines* with the telephone lines switched and another fax machine that was disconnected." Our notes shows that *two* employees told the GAO that they had observed fax machines that were "switched." An employee of the OA with over 30 years' service in the White House told the GAO that he saw "*at least a dozen* switched fax lines," and a different employee (who has almost 30 years' service) said that he too saw "faxes switched between offices." Thus, the GAO's sentence should read: "One OA employee and one White House employee told us that, during the night of January 19, they saw at least 12 to 14 switched fax lines."

Now on p. 66.

87. **PAGE 65.** The GAO reports on observations that "5 copy machines, printers, and copiers . . . did not work." But the GAO fails to include the details that show that it was not simply a case of an innocently broken machine. For instance, one individual told the GAO that the repairman who fixed the broken copy machine found a pornographic or inappropriate message when he pulled out the copier's paper drawer and that the repairman told the individual that he thought the paper drawers had been "intentionally realigned" so that the paper supply would jam.

Now on p. 66.

88. **PAGES 65 and 66.** The GAO states that "[t]wo EOP staff said they observed fax machines moved to areas where they did not appear to belong." This is another example where we think that the GAO should simply report what the staff member said – and not recharacterize it. One employee said that she saw some fax machines *sitting in the middle of the floor, unplugged*. In our opinion, unplugged fax machines do not "belong"

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in the middle of the floor and thus the GAO's characterization that the fax machines were moved to areas "where they did not *appear to belong*" is overly charitable. Moreover, even if the GAO disagrees and believe that a fax machine *could* belong in the middle of the floor, that is a judgment that the reader should be allowed to make.

More important, by recharacterizing the observation, the GAO deprives the reader of the facts that he or she needs to judge the relevance and credibility of the comments made by former staff members. On page 66, the GAO reports that "[t]he former director of an office where fax machines were moved to areas other than where they had been installed said that a fax machine may have been pulled around a corner, but it was not done as a prank." But this explanation does not answer the charge: that multiple fax machines were placed in the middle of the floor, unplugged. Unfortunately, the reader would not know that because the GAO fails to provide the details needed to have a complete and accurate understanding of the matters reported.

Now on p. 66.

89. **PAGE 65.** The GAO fails to mention in its discussion of fax machines than an employee told the GAO that all printers and fax machines that she observed had been emptied of paper.

90. **PAGE 67.** The heading of the next section is "trash," which the GAO apparently equates with the statement on the June 2001 that the "offices were left in a state of general trashing." As noted above, in today's parlance, saying an office was "generally trashed" is not the same as saying it had "trash" in it. *See* General Comment No. 3. The existence of trash in offices was not, in our view, the problem; the problem was that many offices were trashed – and, as the observers told the GAO, it appeared that it was deliberately left in that condition. The GAO therefore should, in our view, revise its heading to read "Trashing of Offices."

91. **PAGE 67.** The GAO reports that "[t]wenty-two EOP staff and 1 GSA employee told us that they saw offices that were messy, disheveled, or dirty or contained trash and personal belongings left behind in specific offices or rooms." With all due respect, it is a gross understatement to say that the GAO was told that the "offices . . . were messy, disheveled, or dirty." We asked the GAO to accurately report what it was told, and not to recharacterize it. Had the GAO done so in this case, the reader would have learned about the following observations, among others:

"TRASHED" OFFICES (not including observations of damaged and overturned furniture or signs)	
Location	**Observation[20]**
91	Plant dumped in the middle of the floor *
100 and 102	Two pencil sharpeners thrown against wall: in Room 100, mark on wall where hit, shavings on floor, and broken sharpener lay on ground; in Room 102, shavings on floor and broken sharpener lay on ground (observed by two persons)
100-104	files and papers everywhere on the floor – not just overflowing trash cans
	"trash everywhere"
128B, 128C, 128D, and 128E	file drawers and desk drawers pulled out and the contents dumped on floor
128C	office was "trashed" and had a "malodorous stench"; all furniture piled in the corner
158 and 160A	"extremely trashed"; "out of the ordinary"; because of smell, all of the curtains and the carpeting had to be immediately replaced
160, 162, 164	Office was "filthy"; had to replace all furniture except one table and desk
170 or 172	Very dirty; "more than wear and tear"
173	"lots of trash"; small pieces of office equipment stacked one on top of another
177-189	"lots" of beer bottles and beer cans
	Offices "trashed out," even after GSA had been through once; "sizeable" holes in the walls
183	Beer cans thrown on top of 10-foot high filing cabinets and stuffed animal and a shoe lodged in the rafters
	Contents of large file cabinet units (measuring approx. 10' x 6' x 10') appeared to have been dumped on floor
1st floor EEOB	"extremely filthy"**
OVP	Lots of trash on the floors, food in desk drawers, pizza boxes in corner office, desks moved against doors
	"trashed"; supplies dumped on floor; "looked like people threw everything"
286	Soil spread across carpet

[20] The comments in this table were, collectively, reported by 23 separate individuals. Unless otherwise indicated, each line reports an observation by one person.

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330	Looked like office was "deliberately made to look like someone was communicating a message"; things in the desk dumped on top of desks; lamps were on chairs; pictures stacked on floor so you could not enter the room; etc.; "looked like when someone trashes a dorm room" ****
330 and 380	"clutter and mess over and beyond what you'd expect"; "would not have expected this under ordinary circumstances" ****
NSC offices	in 25% of the spaces vacated in NSC (30-40 rooms), saw "something that [he] didn't expect." *E.g.,* someone had spread holes from a hole punch all over the floor; a desk lamp was placed on a chair in the middle of the office; "papers strewn everywhere" *****
NSC offices	Trash was "dumped everywhere"; pictures were pulled off the walls, leaving holes*
Not identified	"most of the rooms were trashed" and "filthy" °
	Binders thrown everywhere and piles of paper
	"very unclean; trash strewn about; refrigerators full of mold." °°
	"tons and tons of trash"; binders piled over a copier; old food boxes
	"trash was everywhere"; "filth"; food and trash in desks – pizza, sandwiches, tuna fish, chips
	Offices were "trashed"; supplies and garbage all over; drawers open and on the floors °°°
	Lots of beer and wine bottles ***
	Looked like there were a "large number of people who deliberately trashed the place"
	"amount of trash was beyond the norm" for transitions °°°°
	Empty wine and beer bottles

*Employee of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board; worked here during the Clinton Administration
**GSA employee; worked here during the Clinton Administration
*** GSA employee; worked here during the Clinton Administration
****NSC employee; worked here during the Clinton Administration
*****NSC employee; worked here during the Clinton Administration
°OA employee; worked here during the Clinton Administration
°°OA employee; worked here during the Clinton Administration
°°° OA employee; worked here during the Clinton Administration
°°°° OA employee; worked here during the Clinton Administration

92. **PAGES 67-68.** The GAO's list of facility request forms that document the condition of the offices is incomplete. The documents that were provided include:

- A January 30, 2001, facility request form shows that Cabinet Affairs asked for someone to clean the carpet, furniture, and drapes in Rooms 160, 162, and 164. GSA charged $2,905.70 for that service. Facility Request No. 56713.

- A January 30, 2001, facility request form shows that an employee asked for the following services in the Advance suite reads: "Walls/moldings need patching and paint. . . . 1 – Need carpet vacuumed – is awful! 2 – Furniture cleaned and drawers

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need vacuuming out. 3 – Drapery needs cleaning or replacement." Facility Request No. 56990.

- A January 25, 2001, facility request form shows that an employee asked that GSA clean the carpet, furniture, and drapes in Room 160A. Facility Request No. 56662.

- A February 17, 2001, facility request form shows that an employee asked for a "prof[essional] cleaning" in Rooms 154, 156, 157, 159, 160½ (or 160A). For that service, GSA charged $1,150.00. Facility Request No. 58355.

- A February 21, 2001, facility request form shows a request to clean the carpet in the former First Lady's suite (Rooms 100-104). Facility Request No. 58369.

Now on pp. 69-70.

93. **PAGE 70.** Although the GAO reports that "[t]he OA director said that the offices were in 'pretty good shape' by the evening of January 22," the GAO has refused, despite our request, to include others' observations on how long it took to get the offices in shape. Had the GAO done so, the reader would learn:

- The GAO asked the Director of White House Telephone Services when things were corrected, and was told that most things were cleaned up within 2 weeks, but "all the mess" was "not squared away until February."

- In response to the GAO's question regarding how long it took to get problems fixed, the on-site manager for AT&T explained that the problems "lasted at least a month."

- When the GAO asked an OA staff member with over 30 years' experience at the White House when the place was "cleaned up," he responded that "just the cleaning" was done "3 to 5 days" after January 20th.

- When the GAO asked an employee how long did it take to get the phones operational, she answered "[a]bout a week and a half. Three or 4 days to get people a working phone. To get people phone numbers took a week and a half."

- An employee told the GAO it took approximately "3 weeks" before things were "back to standard."

94. **PAGE 70.** The GAO states that "The OA associate director for facilities management said that about 20 offices were vacant before January 20. He said that it took 3 to 4 days after January 20 to complete the cleaning." That is not what this individual said.

- He said that there was "some list of offices that could have been cleaned before the 20th," and the list was given to a GSA manager. He further explained that there were "not a lot of offices on the list" – "maybe 20."

- He also said that it took "3 to 5 days" to complete "just the cleaning."

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95. **PAGE 70.** The GAO also misquotes the same individual when it writes: "This official said that he saw some a limited amount of trash that appeared to have been left intentionally." The GAO asked this individual, "Was there intentional trashing?" And he responded yes, a "limited amount." Therefore again the GAO has mistakenly equated "trash" that was left behind with the "trashing" of offices.

96. **PAGE 70.** We believe that the GAO has again misquoted this individual when it reports that "[h]e also said that it would have taken an 'astronomical' amount of resources to have cleaned all of the offices by Monday, January 22." Rather, he said that they "could not have had enough people to clean it by the 22nd because [the offices were] dirtier than past transitions." Indeed, when the GAO asked him expressly, "Is it legitimate to think people could start working on Sunday," January 21, he replied, "yes, in my opinion, people should leave their offices in an orderly fashion." He explained that it was "realistic" to expect offices to be cleaned by Monday night, January 21.

Now on p. 70.

97. **PAGES 70-71.** Again the GAO improperly redefines the observations to simply a discussion of excessive "trash." But the observations were not so limited. The GAO reports that "[a White House management office employee] said that what he observed was probably a combination of some trash having been dumped intentionally and an accumulation built up over the years." We believe this employee's statement was far more direct and covered more than just "trash." The GAO asked whether the condition of the offices – which included, among other things, "filth" and trash, was "intentional or neglect," and the employee responded, "a combination."

Now on p. 70.

98. **PAGES 71 and 72.** In addition, the GAO should add similar statements by an employee who has worked at the White House since 1998, a second employee who has observed five prior transitions, a third employee (a Bush Administration official), and others who likewise told the GAO that it appeared that the offices were "intentionally" or "deliberately" trashed. The first of these individuals said that the NSC office was "deliberately made to look like someone was communicating a message." The second said that it looked like there were a "large number of people who deliberately trashed the place." And the Bush Administration official said the conditions he observed were "more than wear and tear." The fact that many observers concluded that the acts were intentional is important, because, if many people reached the same conclusion, it is more likely that the conclusion was correct and a reader will perceive the conclusion to be correct. In addition, since the GAO reports on page 72 that, "none of the 67 former Clinton Administration staff we interviewed who worked in the White House complex at end of the administration said that trash was left behind intentionally as a prank or act of vandalism," it is only appropriate that the GAO also report that many current staff members – including staff who worked for the Clinton Administration – believe otherwise.

99. **PAGE 71.** The GAO's discussion of the costs associated with cleaning the "trashed" offices is incomplete.

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- The GAO fails to mention the January 30, 2001, facility request form (No. 56713) which shows that Cabinet Affairs asked for someone to clean the carpet, furniture, and drapes in Rooms 160, 162, and 164. GSA charged $2,905.70 for that service. As the GAO acknowledged earlier in its report (at page 12), this request involved an office that a White House Office "employee said was 'filthy' and worn and dirty furniture." That same employee, as well as others from her office, also told the GAO about significant damage to furniture in those offices, including a desk drawer with its drawer-fronts removed, chairs without legs, and a chair with its entire back broken off.

- The GAO could – but did not – determine how much time and money was actually spent paying the cleaning staff and how much time and money should reasonably have been spent (based on the amounts spent during past transitions or estimates provided by administrative staff). The difference in those amounts would provide a rough estimate of the costs attributable to the poor condition of the offices. We already know that the costs exceeded what was expected because the OA manager responsible for facilities management told the GAO that there was "lots of money that was spent that shouldn't have to be spent."

- Nor did the GAO include in its estimate of costs *all* of the facility request forms that show that the new staff had to request that carpets, furniture, and draperies be cleaned. While in some cases, the GSA pays for the costs associated with such cleaning (and hence no dollar amount appears on the form), actual costs exist and presumably could be estimated.

- If the GAO is unwilling to estimate these costs, we believe that it should at least say that additional costs exist, and that the GAO did not attempt to quantify them. And again, the problem was far more than simply "excessive trash that needed to be discarded," as the GAO reports.

Now on p. 71.

100. **PAGE 72.** Although the GAO is willing to report that [f]ormer Clinton administration staff generally said the amount of trash that was observed during the transition was what could be expected when staff move out of office space after 8 years," the GAO fails to mention that one employee, who also served during the Clinton Administration, told the GAO that what she observed "*was way beyond* what you'd expect to see in a large move"; she was "surprised" and "embarrassed" by the condition of the offices on Inaugural weekend; and she knew that the same offices were in pretty good shape during the weeks and months before the transition.

Now on p. 71.

101. **PAGE 72.** The GAO states that "[o]ne former employee who worked in an administrative office said that she did not observe much cleaning of offices before January 20, and she believed that GSA did not have enough supervisors and decision makers to oversee the cleaning." We previously told GAO that, if the report was going to include this comment, it should also state (either here or elsewhere in the report) how many cleaning staff were on duty and the hours they worked. Without that information,

we believe the reader has no basis for evaluating the comments made by the former staff. The GAO apparently refuses to provide this important information.

Now on p.71.

102. **PAGE 72.** The report states that "[t]he administrative head of another office said that he asked 25 professional staff to help clean the office before he left." The GAO told us that this former employee is referring to a specific office within the Office of Management and Budget ("OMB"). No one alleged that this particular office – or any office in OMB – was left dirty. Therefore this comment is irrelevant, and we believe the GAO misleads the reader by including it in its report since the GAO does explain that the comment does not rebut or relate to any observation of a current staff member. The GAO has again failed to include the facts needed for the reader to have a complete and accurate understanding of the matters reported.

Now on pp. 71-72.

103. **PAGES 72-73.** The GAO writes:

> In a letter sent to us in January 2002, the former director of the Office of Management and Administration and the former senior advisor for presidential transition said that, for months before the transition, they had been assured that additional cleaning crews would be detailed to the White House complex to assist GSA cleaning crews during the final week of the administration. However, the former officials said that they did not observe any cleaning crews during the evening of January 19 or the morning of January 20.

- Again, we believe that if the GAO is going to include this criticism of the cleaning staff, it must also provide the reader with an estimate – based on the GAO's review of the GSA's work and payroll records (records that the GAO already has) – of the number of cleaning staff and contractors who worked that weekend and the numbers of hours worked. Otherwise, the reader has no means of evaluating the comment – either its credibility or its relevance.

Now on p. 72.

104. **PAGE 73.** The GAO reports that "[t]he office manager for the office where an EOP employee told us that it appeared that a pencil sharpener was thrown against the wall and that pencil shavings were on the floor said the sharpener in that office did not work and may have been placed on the floor with other items to be removed."

- The employee told the GAO that *two* pencil sharpeners were found broken and on the floor along with shavings. In addition, with respect to one of the two sharpeners, there was a distinct mark where the pencil sharpener struck the wall. The comment of the former office manager thus does not rebut the employee's observations.

Now on p. 73.

105. **PAGE 75.** The GAO writes:

> Six EOP staff reported observing writing on the wall of a stall in a men's restroom that was derogatory to President Bush. In addition, two EOP staff and one GSA employee said that they observed messages written on

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an office wall. Two of those three employees said that the writing was on a writing board that could be erased. Two other White House employees said that they saw pen and pencil marks on walls, but no written words.

A few comments:

- The graffiti in the men's restroom was vulgar, in addition to being derogatory to the President. It said, "What W did to democracy, you are about to do in here." It was an act that was plainly intentional and, given its content, the GAO could reasonably conclude that it was written shortly before the transition.

- The writing on the wall in the Scheduling Office, while not profane in nature, said something like "Republicans, don't get comfortable, we'll be back," thus again indicating that it was written shortly before the transition and by a member of the outgoing staff. One of the three observers who saw the room shortly after noon on January 20, told the GAO that he was certain that the writing was directly on the wall.

- The GAO's final sentence – that "[t]wo other White House employees said that they saw pen and pencil marks on walls, but no written words" – does not, in our view, adequately describe what the GAO was told. These were not observations of a stray pen mark, as the sentence suggests. Rather, one White House employee said that *an entire wall* in one office was covered in lines that appeared at a distance to be cracks. That observation was confirmed by an OA employee, who said that she too had heard that someone had etched a wall like marble. A second White House employee said that a wall in or near Room 158 was covered in pencil and pen marks, which she described as "slasher marks" and "beyond normal" wear and tear.

Now on p. 74.

106. **PAGES 75-76.** We believe that the GAO has downplayed the number of the signs, the number of locations where they were observed, and their content.

While in some cases such signs are easily removed and, in a few cases, were probably meant as a joke, we believe the GAO should describe the signs more fully and with greater detail for at least three reasons. *First*, the number, tone, and location of the signs may indicate the mindset of certain former staff members in offices where other damage was found. *Second*, these details allow the reader to compare the 2001 transition and prior transitions. Notably, the GAO has included considerable detail about the number and content of signs found by former members of the Clinton Administration during the 1993 transition. Yet the same level of detail is lacking when the GAO discusses the 2001 transition. *Third*, and similarly, if the report is going to include a former staff member's comment that the signs were "harmless" (Report at 76) or not "obscene" (Report at 75), we believe that the GAO should provide the signs' contents, or how the observer described the signs (*e.g.* "vulgar"), so that the reader can decide whether the characterizations are accurate.

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We also believe that stickers that were permanently affixed to government property (copiers and cabinets) are not the same as prank signs or messages that were simply taped on a wall or placed in copy machines and printers. Yet the GAO treats these things as equivalent.

The tables below detail the number, location, and content of some of the signs that were observed:

SIGNS AFFIXED TO FURNITURE AND OTHER GOVERNMENT PROPERTY	
Location	**Observation**[21]
191	Sticker affixed to filing cabinet that reads "jail to the thief"; shown to GAO
197	Key broken off in file cabinet with Gore bumper sticker with the words "Bush Sucks" stuck to the inside of the cabinet (observed by two persons)
West Wing – outside COS and VP offices	Gore bumper sticker stuck to the bottom of paper tray in the copier

SIGNS AND MESSAGES (not including signs affixed to property)	
Location	**Observation**[22]
West Wing – Vice President's Office	"Vulgar words" on white board**
West Wing	Sign comparing President Bush to a chimpanzee found "in a number of printers"; "laced" throughout the reams of paper ***
West Wing – Vice President's Reception Area	Three copies of the same sign taped to wall (observed by two persons)**, ****
	15-20 copies of the same sign laced throughout ream of paper in fax machine and copier (observed by two persons)
West Wing – First Floor	Same sign shuffled throughout the paper tray in copy machine outside the Chief of Staff's office
West Wing	20-30 copies of same sign interspersed throughout ream of paper in printer in office that is adjacent to the Oval Office
East Wing	8" x 10" color piece of paper that said "see you in four, Al Gore" in drawer of the copy machine
EEOB – room not identified	Same President Bush/chimpanzee sign found in a printer**

[21] The comments in this table were, collectively, reported by 4 separate individuals. Unless otherwise indicated, each line reports an observation by one person.
[22] The comments in this table were, collectively, reported by 28 separate individuals. Unless otherwise indicated, each line reports an observation by one person.

Obscenity deleted by GAO.

EEOB – basement	In location where people "dumped" supplies, a sign read "Gifts for the New President" (Head Telephone Operator*****)
EEOB – 87	Sign taped to a desk of a mock MasterCard ad that includes a picture of President Bush and reads, "NEW BONG: $50, COCAINE HABIT: $300, FINDING OUT THAT THE GOOD-OLD-BOY NETWORK CAN STILL RIG AN ELECTION IN THE DEEP SOUTH: PRICELESS. For the rest of us there's honesty." The GAO was provided with a copy of this sign.
EEOB – 100-104	T-shirt with tongue sticking out draped over chair **
EEOB – 128	Sign that read "just laugh" taped to the wall
	Signs
EEOB – 160-164	"Inappropriate" message in printer or fax tray
	"Quite a few signs"
EEOB – 160	Picture of former First Lady taped to cabinet
EEOB – 162	Photo in safe that had the word "chad" spelled out in paper punch holes (observed by two persons)
EEOB – 177-189	Signs
	Notes in the desk drawers
EEOB – 192	Sign addressed to and disparaging of "Bush staffer" on wall
	Sign of a mock *Time* magazine cover that read "WE'RE ******" on wall (observed by five persons)
EEOB – 197B	Desk drawer had 2 Gore/Leiberman stickers displayed inside
EEOB – 2d floor	Picture of Bush with something drawn on it on the 2d floor*
EEOB – 3d floor library	Sign reading "VP's cardiac unit" (observed by two persons) °,°°
EEOB – 4th floor	Pictures of President Clinton and notes about President Bush "were everywhere"+
EEOB	Signs inserted into office nameplates, including signs outside of the former First Lady's Office (Room 100-104), the OMB, and the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (observed by four persons) °°, °°°, ++)

*GSA employee, worked in the White House complex during Clinton Administration
**OA employee, worked in the White House complex during Clinton Administration
*** OA employee, worked in the White House complex during Clinton Administration
**** OA employee, worked in the White House complex during Clinton Administration
***** OA employee, worked in the White House complex during Clinton Administration
° OA employee, worked in the White House complex during Clinton Administration
°°OA employee, worked in the White House complex during Clinton Administration
°°° OA employee, worked in the White House complex during Clinton Administration
+GSA employee, worked in the White House complex during Clinton Administration
++ GSA employee, worked in the White House complex during Clinton Administration

Now on p. 75.

107. **PAGE 77.** It is not accurate, in our view, for the GAO to say that the statement that trucks were needed to recover new and usable supplies "generally was not corroborated." OA's Associate Director for the General Services Division told the GAO that, because the excess supplies had been "dumped" in the basement hall and were piling up down there – leaving "much of it unusable" – he instructed his staff to take the supplies to the

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off-site warehouse where the staff could re-sort the supplies and salvage what was still reusable. As the GAO itself reports, eight truckloads were needed to recover these new and usable supplies from the basement. Had these trucks not been dispatched, all of the supplies (instead of just of portion) would have been rendered unusable. Thus the statement in the June 2001 list was "corroborated."

Now on p. 76.

108. **PAGE 78.** Two employees (not one) told the GAO that they had found classified materials left unsecured in multiple locations. An employee with more than 30 years of service in the White House complex told the GAO that he found classified materials in an unlocked safe during the night of January 19, when he toured the offices. In addition, a GSA employee said she found "classified information" in "quite a few rooms." It is understandable if the Director of Records Management did not find these documents himself, since he toured offices looking for documents for less than two-and-one-half hours before his attention was diverted to the West Wing at approximately 2:30 a.m. on January 20.

Also, as the GAO notes, a White House employee reported that he found a selection of sensitive documents, including some pardon-related materials and some fundraising materials, in the Counsel's Office in the EEOB. It is not surprising that the Director of Records Management did not find these documents since the occupants of the Counsel's Office did not depart their offices until long after he stopped checking rooms in the EEOB at approximately 2:30 a.m.

Now on p. 77.

109. **PAGE 80.** Appendix II addresses the condition of the White House complex during previous presidential transitions and compares that to the 2001 transition, where the GAO states that an "EOP employee showed us writing inside a desk that was dated January 1993." The writing in the desk is neither profane nor disparaging of the incoming President or his administration. It reads: "Take care of this place. We will be back in four (4) years! (1/93)."

Now on pp. 77-78.

110. **PAGE 81.** The GAO has included only some of the statements made by current staff members about past transitions. The GAO, for instance, fails to mention that several employees, including longtime staff members, said that the 2001 transition was "worse" (and not only with respect to the amount of trash) than what they had seen during past transitions. Omitted statements include the following:

- After an individual employed at the White House since 1973 described problems found with the phones, the GAO asked, "Is this sort of thing unusual?" This employee responded yes, "this was unusual"; "every administration has pranks," but this was "worse."

- When the GAO asked the same individual whether it looked like the prior occupants had "purposely trashed the place," he replied that it was "not sloppiness, it looked like one big party" had been there and that he "never remembers seeing anything like this before."

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- The same employee told the GAO explicitly that the offices "shined" during the Reagan Administration and that, when President George H.W. Bush left office, "[he] never encountered any problems with telephones"; perhaps "unplugging of phones, but that was it."

- An individual who observed the transitions from Nixon to Ford, Ford to Carter, Reagan to Bush, Bush to Clinton, and Clinton to Bush, said that he had "never seen anything like it" and had "never seen this building [the EEOB] in such bad condition."

- Another individual, an OA employee for roughly 17 years, said that the trash was worse this time than in prior transitions; in addition, he told the GAO that the condition in which the building was left "was a bit juvenile" and suggested the prior occupants were "not cognizant of responsibilities of people coming behind [them]."

- A GSA manager told the GAO that there were "far more" personal belongings left behind during the 2001 transition than during the 1989 transition.

- In addition to telling the GAO that the offices were "dirtier than past transitions," an OA employee with more than 30 years of service said that the amount of trash "was beyond the norm."

- A Bush Administration official, who was in charge of the transition out of government in 1992, told the GAO that he personally took a tour of four floors of the OEOB and West Wing on January 20, 1993, and he saw "nothing comparable" to what he saw during this transition. He twice told the GAO that the damage during this transition was "more than [he]'d seen in other transitions."

- An OA employee who has worked in the complex for 23 years and observed seeing problems during the 2001 transition, told the GAO that she "didn't notice anything at all" during Bush-to-Clinton transition; nor did she recall anything when the Carter Administration left office.

Now on p. 78.

111. **PAGE 82.** The GAO continues:

> The OA associate director for facilities management said that every transition had had a problem with missing historic doorknobs. Similarly, the director of GSA's White House service center said that doorknobs are favorite souvenirs of departing staff. The telephone service director said that telephone cords were unplugged and office signs were missing in previous transitions and that unplugging telephones is a "standard prank."

- The GAO fails to mention that the GSA director has observed only two transitions – the 2001 transition and the 1989 transition. He said that he had only *heard* that

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doorknobs went missing during the 1989 transition; he did not observe anything himself.

- The Director of White House Telephone Services did not say that office signs were missing *in previous transitions*. He recalled that occurring in one prior transition. He recalled that, when the Carter Administration left office, "door signs were missing and cords unplugged."

Now on p. 78.

112. **PAGE 82.** The GAO states that "[t]he director of GSA's White House service center during the 2001 transition said that the condition of the office space during the 2001 transition was the same as what he observed during the 1989 transition." But the GSA employee observed little in the way of pranks, damage, or vandalism during the 2001 transition; saying that he "saw much the same thing" during the 1989 transition means that he claims not to have observed much in either transition.

Now on pp. 78-79.

113. **PAGE 82.** The GAO's reference to what the GSA Acting Administrator said in his March 2, 2001, letter may be misleading to the reader. The GSA's letter references only "the condition of the *real property*" – and not the telephones, the computers, the furniture, the office signs, etc., which were the focus of the damage, vandalism, and pranks that occurred during the 2001 transition.

Now on p. 79.

114. **PAGE 83.** The GAO reports that "[s]even former employees . . . said that computers were not operational or were missing hard drives at the beginning of the Clinton administration. Two of those employees said it took 1 to 2 weeks for the computers to work." The GAO was told that computers were not working and hard drives were missing because the prior Bush Administration was required to remove the hard drives in connection with a case captioned *Armstrong v. Bush.* The GAO obliquely refers to the case in footnote 64, but a reader will not understand the relevance without further explanation.

Now on p. 79.

115. **PAGE 83.** The GAO reports that "[t]wo former employees said that telephones were piled on the floors or were disconnected. (One of those former employees said she was told that staff would receive new telephones.)" An employee with over 30 years of service told the GAO that, when the Clinton Administration came into office, he was instructed to "get[] rid of [the] Republican phone system." This would explain why the former employees found phones disconnected and were "told that staff would receive new telephones."

Now on p. 79.

116. **PAGE 83.** We again note the GAO's willingness to include a characterization by a former staff member who says that damage "appeared to have been . . . intentional[]," but the GAO omitted from its report similar statements made by members of the current staff. For example,

- The White House telephone services coordinator told the GAO that the missing phone labels "must have been intentional."

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- An employee who has worked at the White House since 1998 told the GAO that the rooms he observed were "deliberately made to look like someone was communicating a message."
- A former White House manager told the GAO that some of conditions he saw looked "intentional."
- An individual who has observed five prior transitions said the offices looked like a "[l]arge number of people . . . deliberately trashed the place."
- A current employee told the GAO that the desk drawers were clearly damaged intentionally and not just wear and tear.
- An employee who worked at the White House from 1999-2001 told the GAO that "it was intentional, not accidental" with respect to the damage he observed in dozens of rooms.
- A Bush Administration official who has participated in a prior transition told the GAO that the conditions he observed were "more than wear and tear."
- A current employee said that the broken key in the file cabinet looked "deliberate" to him.
- An OA employee responsible for facilities management said that some of the damage was the result of "intentional trashing."
- An employee with over 30 years of service in the White House said it looked like the prior occupants had "purposely trashed the place."

Now on pp. 79-80.

117. **PAGE 84.** The GAO writes:

> One former employee who started working at the White House in January 1993 and left in January 2001 said that the officers were messier in January 1993 compared with January 2001. Another former employee said that on January 20, 1993, his office contained leftover food and that the walls needed repainting. A third former employee said the offices were still not cleaned by the afternoon of January 21, 1993. Another former employee said that there were 'dusty and dirty' typewriters on desks.
>
> Three former staff said they saw a total of at least six Bush bumper stickers in different offices, on cubicle walls, in a desk, on a telephone. One former employee said she saw one to two photocopies of political cartoons left in a copy machine, a bottle of aspirin with a prank note inside a desk, a large banner on the balcony of the EEOB, and a tarp for a tent left behind.

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- Again, we note that the same level of detail – for precisely the same sort of allegations – is lacking when GAO describes observations made during the 2001 transition. By not including this information for the 2001 transition, the GAO has failed, in our view, to include all information needed to satisfy the audit objective to compare the 2001 transition with past transitions. *See* Government Auditing Standard 7.50 and 7.51 ("The report should be complete. . . . Being complete requires that the report contain all information to satisfy the audit objectives, promote an adequate and correct understanding of the matters reported, and meet the report content requirements. It also means including appropriate background information.").

Now on p. 80.

118. **PAGES 84-85.** The GAO was able to find only one news report that mentions the condition of the White House complex during previous transitions. The GAO claims that "the *Washingtonian* magazine indicated that incoming Reagan administration staff had some complaints about the condition of the EEOB that were similar to observations made by EOP staff in 2001." The Reagan administration staff complaints were, according to the article, finding memoranda taped to the walls; lampshades torn by paperclips hung on them to hold messages; a refrigerator with thick mold; and a large coffee stain on a sofa outside the vice president's office. These allegations are hardly "similar," as the GAO maintains, to what was found in 2001 transition. By analogizing the circumstances, the GAO trivializes what was observed in 2001.

Part III: Comments on Recommendations

Now on pp. 81-82.

119. **PAGES 86-87.** Although Appendix III is entitled "Steps to Help Prevent Damage to Government Property during Future Presidential Transitions," the draft report does not actually contain any "steps" or recommendations in this section. It simply discusses the check-out process used during the Clinton Administration and the procedures followed on Capitol Hill when offices are vacated.

120. The GAO fails to include anywhere in its report two of the factors that OA officials, who have been through many transitions, identified as contributing to the problems found in the January 2001 transition.

First, an employee who has worked at the White House for over 30 years told the GAO that he felt "hampered" in doing his job because he was "not allowed to have any contact with the incoming Administration." He indicated that, in the past, he was allowed to confer with incoming staff regarding their telephone needs and expectations; but this was not permitted during the 2001 transition. Likewise, an employee who has observed five prior transitions told the GAO that this transition was unusual because, for other transitions, there was a transition team from the new Administration on-site in the complex. This time, the person said, the incoming administration did not get access to the space until three days before the Inauguration and did not get "legacy books" – books that explain how things work within the complex and within particular offices – until after the Inauguration.

Second, a number of longtime employees told the GAO that problems could have been averted or remedied sooner if members of the Clinton Administration had vacated their offices earlier. By way of example, one OA manager recalled seeing a woman simply watching television in her office; precisely at noon, she turned her TV off and left. Documents that we provided the GAO show that 325 passes of White House Office employees were terminated on January 19 and January 20, 2001.

We believe that the points made by these employees are valid ones, and deserve to be addressed in the GAO report.

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GAO's Response to the White House Comments

GAO's response to the White House's specific comments follow. We have grouped the comments in the categories listed below.

Underreporting of Observations

The White House said that we had underreported the number of observations in various categories, including the signs and messages, computer keyboards, missing items, furniture, offices with trash, telephones, writing on walls, and classified documents.

Signs and Messages

In comment 8, the White House said it believed that we had substantially underreported the number of signs and messages observed in the letter portion of the report. However, as indicated in the results section, the letter portion of the report only contains observations made in specific locations, and additional observations that staff identified by floor or building, but not by room or office, are provided in appendix I. Moreover, we reported some observations of signs and messages differently from the White House. For example, we reported observations of writing in desks in the section regarding furniture-related problems. In addition, we reported two observations that the White House included in the category of signs and messages (observations of paper hole punches arranged on a floor to spell a word and a T-shirt draped over a chair with a picture of a tongue sticking out) in a different category relating to observations of trash and personal items left behind. We also added to our count two Gore stickers that staff told us were found in a file cabinet, which we had not included in our draft report.

The White House also said in comments 9 and 106 that we should have reported the specific content of all of the signs and messages. We addressed these comments in the White House's general comments about the amount of detail provided.

In comment 23, the White House said that writing was found on the walls of four rooms, rather than two rooms, as the report indicated. The statement concerning writing on the walls in the letter portion of our report summarized additional details provided in appendix I. Further, by "writing," the report referred to observations of actual words written on walls. As explained in appendix I, other staff observed pen and pencil marks on the walls of two other rooms, but no words. For the purposes of clarification, we revised the statement to indicate that staff observed writing "(words)" on the walls of two offices.

The White House said in comments 68 and 87 that we failed to include the statement of an EOP employee who told us about statements made by a repairman, who while fixing a broken copy machine, said that he found a pornographic or inappropriate message when he pulled out the copier's paper drawer. We did not include the repairman's statement because we did not include information people relayed to us from third parties, which is generally not regarded as competent evidence.

Keyboards

The White House disagreed with the range of keyboards that were observed with missing or damaged "W" keys in comments 10 and 51. We previously explained how we calculated the range of observations in response to the White House's general comment regarding the number of observations reported.

In comment 54, the White House also said that we did not report that the Office of Administration (OA) associate director for information systems and technology saw some glued-down space bars. Although we modified our report, we note that this official first told us that the problem was inoperable space bars and subsequently said it was glued down space bars.

In comment 55, the White House said that we underreported the number of "W" keys taped or glued to walls; that we failed to mention that other staff reported that they found "W" keys sitting next to keyboards and computers; and that an additional employee saw piles of keyboards or computers or a computer monitor overturned that we did not report. Our range of "W" keys taped or glued to walls differed from what the White House had indicated in its comments. Further, the White House counted a least two keys when people said they saw "some" keys taped or glued to walls, but did not specify a number. However, we did not estimate numbers in those cases and disclosed that in the report. We did not report the observations of "W" keys sitting next to keyboards or on computers because we believed that reporting the number of keys glued or taped to walls provided sufficient detail to support the observation of keyboards with missing or damaged keys. We revised the report to indicate that five, rather than four, employees observed piles of keyboards or computers or a computer monitor overturned.

In comment 56, the White House said that we did not consider the statement of the OA branch chief for program management and strategic planning in the information systems and technology division. The White House pointed out that, on one of the branch chief's last deliveries of

broken items to the temporary workroom, someone had told her that the count of damaged keyboards was up to 150. We did consider her statement. Our report contained a statement attributed to the branch chief that 150 keyboards had to be replaced.

The White House also said that, by contrast, we provided more details regarding the observations made by the OA associate director for information systems and technology, but had omitted the fact that this official said that she was not focused on the keyboards during the transition, but that she personally saw only about 10 keyboards with missing "W" keys, a concentration of keyboards with missing "W" keys in certain offices, and some keyboards with glued-down space bars, and that she was very upset at the condition in which some of the keyboards were left. In addition, the White House said that during our second interview with the OA associate director for information systems and technology, we had asked this official to estimate the number of keyboards with missing "W" keys without reminding her that we had asked her the same question during our first interview with her.

To address the White House's comments, we added to the report statements contained in our interview record with the OA associate director for information systems and technology indicating that she said that she was not focused on the keyboards during the transition, but that she saw about 10 keyboards with missing "W" keys, some with glued-down space bars, and a lot of keyboards that were "filthy." We also added, on the basis of our interview record, that she believed that more of the keyboards with problems were found in the offices of the first lady and vice president than in other offices. However, contrary to the White House's assertion, our record regarding the follow-up interview with this official indicated that we did remind her about her earlier statement about the number of keyboards with missing "W" keys when we asked her that question again. As indicated in the report, we asked to conduct a follow-up interview with this official after obtaining an estimate from the branch chief for program management and strategic planning in the information and technology section that about 150 keyboards had to be replaced because of missing or damaged "W" keys.

Also in comment 56, the White House said that we did not report what the OA associate director for information systems and technology said the contract employee who packed the keyboards told her regarding the number of damaged keyboards. However, we did not include observations people relayed to us from third parties. Further, the contract employee's

statements that she provided to us during an interview were provided in the report. The White House also noted that we did not meet with the branch chief, but interviewed her by telephone; we made the appropriate change. Finally, the White House said that we had misquoted the OA associate director for information systems and technology when we indicated that she said that of the 100 keyboards that had to be replaced, about one-third to one-half would have been replaced anyway because of their age. The White House said that this official told us that one-third to one-half of the keyboards would have been replaced if they had not been changed out in 4 to 8 years. Although our interview records indicated that this official said that one-third to one-half of the keyboards would have been replaced anyway, they did not indicate that she also said "if they had not been changed out in 4 to 8 years" as the White House indicated, so we did not change the report.

In comment 57, the White House said that, regarding the 12 boxes of computer equipment that were discarded, we should have explained that the contract employee personally packed some of the boxes; and that for those, she filled the boxes with keyboards and then used excessed speakers, cords, and soundcards to fill in gaps and ensure that the keyboards would not shift in the box. We did not believe these details to be relevant.

Missing Items

The White House said in comments 19 and 44 that 11 to 13 doorknobs were observed missing, compared to the 10 to 11 contained in the report. Our total differed from the White House's because (1) the White House counted 0 to 2 missing doorknobs in its range when an Executive Office of the President (EOP) employee said a doorknob was missing in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building (EEOB) but did not specify any location (room, office, or floor); however, we did not include it to prevent possible double counting of missing doorknobs where specific locations were identified; and (2) the White House counted two missing doorknobs when an EOP employee said that a doorknob was missing on a certain floor of the EEOB, but did not identify the room. However, because we did not know whether a doorknob was missing on both sides of the door in that case, we used a range of one to two. (Although this employee did not specify the room or office where the doorknob was observed missing, we counted this because it was on a floor of the EEOB where no other doorknobs were observed missing.)

In comment 41, the White House noted that four of the six EOP staff who told us that they observed a total of 5 to 11 missing office signs were OA employees and worked in the White House complex during the Clinton administration, and that the fifth employee who worked for the White House Office also served during the Clinton administration. We did not believe these details were needed and did not revise the report in response to this comment because we generally did not differentiate among staff who had worked in the White House complex before or after January 20, 2001, in reporting the observations. Also in comment 41, the White House said that one of the employees told us that a former Clinton administration employee told her that he also observed two missing brackets on the morning of January 20. However, we did not report this statement because we did not include observations people relayed to us from a third party. Nonetheless, we also interviewed that former Clinton administration employee, who said that he noticed that some office name signs were missing, but could not recall how many. He also said that he did not see any metal frames for the signs that were missing.

In comment 22, the White House asked that we quote from a facility request form that asked GSA to "put doorknob on" an interoffice door. In addition, in comment 45, the White House said that we should state that the recollection of a General Services Administration (GSA) planner/estimator regarding this repair is inconsistent with the request form and the recollections of at least three current staff members. The statement contained in the letter portion of the report summarized information provided in more detail in appendix I, where the facility request form was quoted directly. However, we revised the statement contained in the letter portion of the report to quote from the form. Regarding the White House's request that we state that a GSA employee's recollection is inconsistent with the facility request form and the recollections of at least three current staff members, the report indicated an EOP employee told us that he had observed two pairs of missing doorknobs in this office. Because no other EOP staff told us that they observed missing doorknobs in this office, including the employee who prepared the request, (who did not request to be interviewed by us) we did not include the statements contained in the White House's comments. Further, in the White House's table of missing doorknobs provided in comment 19, the White House only provided the account of one person who observed missing doorknobs in that office.

The White House also said in comments 22 and 45 that, if we include a statement by a GSA planner/estimator that he received no written facility requests made to GSA for replacing office signs, medallions, or doorknobs

during the transition, we should cite facility requests to "put…on" a doorknob and for "replacement of frames & medallions," dated February 7 and April 19, 2001. The February 7 request was contained in the report. In response to the White House's comments 22, 43, and 45, we added the April 19 request, even though it was prepared 3 months after the transition. The White House also said we should report statements made by two OA officials and a White House Office employee about missing building fixtures. However, we did not believe these additional comments were essential, and one of the statements was information that was relayed to us from a third party, so we did not include them.

The White House also said in comments 20 and 46 that the report should have included an additional television remote control that was observed missing. Our interview notes indicated that one employee initially told us that five or six remotes were missing in a certain office, but later in the interview said that five were missing, which we had used in our draft report in reporting the total number of remote controls observed missing by all EOP staff. However, in response to the White House's comments, we changed the number that she observed to five or six.

The White House also said in comment 46 that we should note that one of the observers had worked in that office during the Clinton administration, which we added because we believed it could be relevant to the observation. However, we did not discuss the two observations of missing television remotes separately, as the White House suggested, because we did not believe the additional detail would add any essential information.

Furniture

The White House said in comments 14 and 59 that we underreported the number of reports of damaged furniture and the number of observers. We did not underreport this information. Our lists of furniture-related problems that were observed were substantially the same as the list that the White House provided in its comments. However, we broke out observations of furniture-related problems into various subcategories, such as broken furniture, furniture with damaged locks, chairs with torn fabric, and desks with burns and scratches.

In comments 16 and 66, the White House said that the report failed to include a January 29, 2001, facility request form that documented a request to obtain a key to a file cabinet that was locked in an office where an EOP employee said he had observed damaged furniture. The report had cited a January 25, 2001, facility request made by the same employee to gain

access to a locked file cabinet in the same room that was cited in the January 29 request. However, in response to the White House's request, we added the January 29 request to the report, even though it did not indicate any additional problems were reported.

The White House said in comments 17 and 62 that we underreported the number of pieces of furniture that were observed overturned. We compared our interview records to the information provided by the White House and found that our records of the interviews differed from the White House's account of the interviews in some cases. In one case, when we interviewed an official, he mentioned various pieces of furniture that he had observed overturned, but when he provided a tour of that office to show what he had seen, he did not mention all of the pieces of furniture. We added three additional pieces of furniture to reflect the statement he made during the interview. However, we did not add, as the White House did, observations of furniture in locations that staff could not recall because they could have duplicated ones reported observed in specific locations.

In comment 64, the White House disputed a GSA official's statement that furniture could be overturned for a variety of reasons, such as to reach electrical or computer connections. We obtained this comment directly from GSA on April 30, 2002, and GSA did not raise any objection to it in its comments on our draft report. It is important to note, however, that this statement was a generic possible explanation that did not relate to a specific observation.

The White House said in comments 18 and 65 that our description of observations of a sticky substance that was found on desks was inaccurate and incomplete, and it also provided further details. We believe that the report generally provided a sufficient level of detail regarding these observations. However, to address the White House's comments, we added more information about these observations in appendix I.

In comment 29, the White House disagreed that the observations of damaged furniture differed from the June 2001 list in terms of total numbers and extent of damage. In our discussion of furniture-related observations in the letter portion of the report, we summarized the extent of damage that staff said they observed regarding broken furniture and stated that no information was provided that identified which offices some of the broken furniture came from or exactly when the damage occurred. Further, no one reported actually observing furniture being intentionally

damaged, and no definitive evidence was provided regarding whether the damage was intentional. Consequently, we were unable to conclude whether the furniture in six offices was intentionally damaged severely enough to require complete refurbishment or destruction, as indicated in the June 2001 list.

In comment 61, the White House said that we mistakenly reported that five staff said they observed writing inside drawers of five desks and that we were shown writing in four of those five desks. Instead, the White House said, five staff observed writing in or on six desks, that not all of the writing was inside drawers, and that we observed writing in five of the six desks. However, the White House included a sticker on a desk that we had counted in another category of observations (signs and written messages). The report indicated that we had observed that sticker.

Finally, the White House said in comment 72 that we were wrong in saying that, during the first of two interviews we held with an EOP employee, she said that her observations, which included desks with burn marks and scratches, pertained to a particular office, rather than a suite of offices. The White House also pointed out that we were taken into the two offices that she was referring to. However, our record of this interview indicated that her observations pertained to a particular office and that she repeatedly referred to the previous occupant of that specific office. Further, when we toured the office suite in question, she did not stop to discuss furniture in an adjacent reception area as well. In any event, we reported that in a follow-up interview with this employee, she said that her observations pertained to two rooms in an office suite.

Offices with Trash

In comment 4, the White House said that the statement "[m]ultiple people said that …they observed (1) many offices that were messy, disheveled, or contained excessive trash or personal items" was an understatement and provided other observations that were made in the office space, such as "W" keys glued to the walls and overturned furniture. This statement was a part of a summary paragraph of certain observations regarding trash and personal items that were left behind; other types of observations that the White House mentioned are contained elsewhere in the report.

In comment 12, the White House said that the report's description of the seven photographs that were taken of offices in the EEOB on January 21, 2001, was incomplete. The description of the photographs provided in the

letter portion of the report summarized a more detailed description of the photographs that is provided in appendix I.

In comments 13 and 92, the White House said that our list of facility request forms in appendix II that document the condition of the offices was incomplete. It cited two facility request forms dated January 30 and others dated January 25, February 17, and February 21. One of the January 30 request forms was already cited in the report, and we added the other one. We also added the January 25 request form to the report, which requested cleaning services in the same room as the February 17 request and was in the report. We did not include the February 21 facility request form because it was unclear whether the request for carpet cleaning necessarily corroborated reports of pencil shavings, paper, and files on the floor, which were made during the first days of the administration. The request was made a month after the observations were made and we did not know whether cleaning was needed as a result of the observations that were made during the first days of the administration or some other reason.

In comment 13, the White House said that, in describing one of the January 30 facility request forms, our description of the condition of the office where work was requested was incomplete. The White House noted that staff also told us about significant damage to furniture in that office suite, including a desk drawer with its drawer fronts removed, chairs without legs, and a chair with its entire back broken off. However, we did not mention those additional observations with respect to the facility request form because the form did not corroborate them. With respect to furniture, the January 30 request form that the White House cited in comment 13 only requested furniture cleaning. The additional observations that the White House referred to actually pertain to a different office for which another January 30 facility request was made. However, that January 30 request form also did not corroborate observations of broken furniture. With respect to furniture, that form only indicated that furniture cleaning was requested.

In comment 90, with regard to the section heading "trash," the White House said that we apparently equated a statement in the June 2001 list that offices were left in a state of general trashing, which is not the same as saying that they had trash in them. The White House said that we should revise our "trash" section heading to "trashing of offices." Although some portion of the observations reported in this section could have been "trashing," i.e., vandalism, many of them were only observations of trash and personal items left behind. Further, although the White House

included in the June 2001 list "glass top smashed and on the floor" under the category of "offices were left in a state of general trashing," we reported observations of broken glass desk tops in the section of appendix I regarding furniture. Therefore, we did not change the section heading to "Trashing of Offices," but to "Trash and Related Observations."

In comment 91, the White House said that we had made a gross understatement by indicating staff had observed offices that were messy, dirty, and disheveled. The White House asked that we accurately report what we were told, rather than recharacterize it, and provided a table providing statements that staff had made regarding "trashed" offices. We believe that we already reported a sufficient amount of information about these types of observations. First, we reported the total number of people who observed offices that were messy, disheveled, dirty, or containing trash or personal items left behind (a broader category that the White House indicated in its comments) in specific rooms or offices, on certain floors, or in locations they could not recall. Second, we provided several examples of how offices were described. Third, we reported related observations in several related categories, such as food left in refrigerators; furniture, carpet, or drapes that were dirty; contents of desk drawers or filing cabinets dumped on floors; pencil sharpener shavings and paper hole punches on the floor, as well as several singular observations. Fourth, we reported detailed observations about trash made by the OA associate director for facilities management and a White House management office employee. Fifth, we described photographs of messy offices that the White House provided. As in several other comments, the counsel to the president asked that we expand our reporting of certain problems by providing selected additional details. However, our goal was to be objective and not only provide additional details that supported a single perspective.

In comment 97, the White House said that we improperly redefined the observations to simply a discussion of excessive trash, when the observations were not limited to such. The White House cited a statement contained in the report made by a White House management office employee who told us what he observed was probably a combination of some trash having been dumped intentionally and an accumulation built up over the years. However, the White House said that this employee's statement was far more direct and covered more than just trash. According to the White House, when we asked this employee whether the condition of the offices, which included, among other things, filth and trash, was intentional or a result of neglect, he responded that it was a combination.

Our interview record indicated that this employee said that he saw trash everywhere, but did not know whether the amount of trash left was intentional or was due to a lack of maintenance. He said the "filth" that he found was probably an accumulation from over the years and that some looked like it had been dumped intentionally. He also mentioned that he had found trash in desks and food left behind. We believe that these observations were sufficiently reported and that no additional information needed to be added.

In comment 100, the White House said that we failed to report a statement made by an employee who also served during the Clinton administration who told us that what she observed was way beyond what you would expect to see in a large move, that she was surprised and embarrassed by the condition of the offices during the inaugural weekend, and that she knew that the same offices were in pretty good shape during the weeks and month before the transition. We did not add the statement that the White House suggested because the report already included in appendix II the views of several staff who said that more cleaning was required during the 2001 transition than during previous ones.

Telephones

The White House said in comments 24, 75, and 79 that we underreported the number of telephones observed with missing labels and the number of observers. The report contained a different number of missing telephone labels observed than the White House indicated for several reasons. First, our records of observations differed from the table that the White House provided in its comments in some cases. For example, the White House included the observations of 3 to 5 missing labels by two employees that we did not have in our interview records. One of those two employees did not request to be interviewed by us, and we have no record of obtaining comments from that individual. Our record of interview with the other employee (the telephone service director) did not indicate that he observed any labels missing from that room. The interview record also indicated that he said the telephones with missing labels that he observed were all on the first floor of the EEOB; however, the room that the White House cited was on another floor. Because we were informed that this individual had retired from the EOP since we interviewed him, we were not in a position to resolve this. Second, the White House double counted the number of telephones with missing labels in a certain office, which increased the high end of its total range of missing labels, which we did not do.

Third, when we interviewed the telephone service director, he provided some different information during his interview than he did during a tour he provided to show us where he observed telephones with missing labels. We used the information that he provided during the tour when he provided more specific numbers and locations than he had during the interview. By contrast, the White House appeared to have counted the information that he provided both during the interview and the tour.

Fourth, in its tally, the White House counted at least two missing labels when an individual did not provide a specific number, but said "labels" or "some" were missing, which we did not do in our final count. The total number of missing telephone labels contained in our draft report had included our assignment of one missing label to reflect an instance where the specific number observed was not provided. However, for consistency in reporting all observations when people did not cite the specific number of incidents, we did not estimate the number of telephones with missing labels in this instance and revised our total count by reducing it by one. We also added a footnote explaining that the total range of missing telephone labels does not reflect a number that the telephone service director said he observed in a room, but did not specify how many.

In comment 25, the White House said we did not report how many telephones were unplugged or piled up or how many offices were affected. According to the White House, telephones were piled up or unplugged in 25 or more offices in the EEOB. We do not know how the White House determined this number. According to our records, many of the observations were not precise regarding the locations. In appendix I, we reported that staff observed telephones unplugged or piled up on two floors of the EEOB and in four specific rooms on those floors, but that was the extent to which we could quantify the number of locations. Further, our records indicated that although one official said that he observed seven or eight telephones piled outside an office, the other six employees who said they observed telephones that were unplugged or piled up did not indicate how many they saw.

The White House said in comment 26 that the report failed to mention the telephones that were forwarded and reforwarded throughout the complex during the transition. The White House said that, according to its records, roughly 100 telephones were forwarded to ring at other numbers. These observations were not reported in the letter portion of the report, but they are discussed in appendix I. As indicated in the results section, the observations contained in the letter portion of the report were those made

in specific locations in the main categories, and the employee who said that about 100 telephones had been forwarded to ring at different numbers, with one exception, did not cite the specific locations of those telephones.

The White House said in comments 27 and 74 that the report did not adequately and correctly disclose information about telephone lines that were observed ripped from walls. In comment 27, the White House said that, if we had reported that the people who made the observations did so early in the morning on January 20, the comments made by a former Clinton administration employee who said the cords were probably torn by moving staff would be less credible because the moving staff did not begin work until later in the day. In response to the White House's comments, we added additional information to appendix I about when EOP staff observed cords pulled out of walls. We also revised a statement made by a former Clinton administration employee who said that (1) the cords were probably pulled from walls by moving staff to clarify that the cords she had seen pulled out of walls were not observed around the time of the transition, and (2) she intended to provide a possible explanation on the basis of a previous observation. In comment 74, the White House said that our data on the number of cut and pulled cords is not accurate. Our total number of observations and observers in this category were substantially the same, but reported differently. We reported observations separately of telephone lines ripped or pulled from walls; other types of cords pulled from walls; damaged plugs; and a telephone cord that appeared to have been cut with scissors. In addition, it appeared that the White House counted an observation of a ripped cord that was not made in a specific location, which we did not count.

In comment 75, the White House questioned why a footnote contained in the draft report reported a range of telephones in a certain office. We could not determine the exact number of telephones in that office from the documentation that the White House provided. Accordingly, we changed the number to reflect an estimate provided by the White House. The White House also said that a total of five, not four, staff observed missing labels, which we revised in the report. Also in comment 75, the White House said that our report did not include an observation that telephone labels in one room were replaced "before noon" on January 20 and were missing again later that day. We added that to the report.

The White House also said in comment 75 that, in addition to the number of missing labels that were reported in specific rooms and offices, we should have reported the observations of missing labels by the telephone service

director, who said that he personally saw more than 20 telephones with missing labels; the OA associate director for facilities management, who said that there were many instances of missing labels on telephones; and another employee who said she was the "middleman" between EOP staff and contractors regarding the telephones during the first month of the administration and said that the majority of telephones in the EEOB and the White House (roughly 85 percent) had removed labels or contained incorrect numbers. The telephone service director's recollections regarding the number of telephones he observed with missing labels in specific rooms or offices were included in the total number observed by all staff, and we did not believe it was necessary to break out the number he personally observed missing. Although the OA associate director for facilities management did not indicate how many telephones he observed with missing labels, his observations were made in two offices where others observed specific numbers of missing labels, and the other people's observations are reported in the total. Finally, the observation of the employee who was the "middleman" between EOP staff and contractors regarding the telephones during the first month of the administration was already contained in the report. According to the White House, this employee said that a majority of labels on telephones, or about 85 percent, had been removed "or contained incorrect numbers." Our record of this interview indicated that she said that about 85 percent of the telephones were missing labels "or did not ring at the correct number," so we did not revise the report.

In comment 76, the White House said that we underreported the number of telephones that were forwarded and reforwarded to ring at different numbers throughout and between the EEOB and the West Wing, and indicated that seven White House staff reported that roughly 100 telephones were forwarded to ring at other numbers. Further, the White House said that it did not know why we treated the observations of the employee who coordinated telephones during the first month of the administration differently from the other observers. The White House also questioned why we did not report that this employee told us that the chief of staff's telephone was forwarded to a closet.

We did not underreport the number of reports of telephones that were forwarded and reforwarded. Our count of the number of forwarded telephones was substantially the same as what the White House indicated in its comments. However, we reported the observations made in specific locations separate from the observation made by the employee who coordinated telephones during the first month of the administration. As

explained in our response to comment 26, that employee said that about 100 telephones had been forwarded to ring at different numbers, and with one exception, she did not cite the specific locations of those telephones. Further, according to its comments, the White House counted the observation of an employee who said that the telephone number did not ring if the number on the telephone was dialed. Our record of interview with that employee was different and indicated that his telephone had a number for an extension that was different from his actual telephone number. We did not count that statement as an instance of a forwarded telephone. In addition, as indicated in the report, we had included the observation made by the employee who coordinated telephones during the first month of the administration of a forwarded telephone in a specific location among the 100 telephones that she said were forwarded to other numbers. With respect to the one specific telephone that she cited, our interview records indicated that she told us that the chief of staff's telephone had been forwarded, but did not indicate that it was forwarded to a closet.

The White House said in comment 78 that we had dramatically understated the number of telephones that were not working by failing to report that one EOP employee said that no telephones were working on the south side of the EEOB. Our record of the interview indicated that she told us that, because many telephones were not working in a section of a floor of the EEOB, the switchboard forwarded calls from that area to other offices where telephones were working, and that she walked from office to office delivering telephone messages; we added that to the report to address the White House's comment. However, we did not estimate the number of telephones that were not working in that part of the building and did not know whether they were not working because of an intentional, malicious act.

In comment 80, the White House said that we failed to provide important information regarding the extent of the problem with voice mail messages and the consequences of this problem—that no one had voice mail service for the first days and weeks of the administration. The White House said those facts concerned the reports of obscene voice mail messages that were heard by the telephone service director and the OA associate director for facility management. The White House also said that we should have reported that when these two officials began touring offices and checking telephones in the EEOB at approximately 1:00 a.m. on January 20, the telephone service director listened to about 30 greetings, approximately 10 of which were inappropriate. Further, of those 10 inappropriate messages,

the telephone service director said 5 or 6 were vulgar. In addition, the White House noted that the telephone service director said that White House telephone operators notified him that there were obscene messages on some of the voice mail greetings. The White House said that after encountering the high ratio of inappropriate and vulgar messages, and because of these messages, a decision was made around 1:00 a.m. to take the entire system down. Further, the White House said that the telephone service director explained that he erased some messages around 1:00 a.m. on January 20, and they were rerecorded later that day.

Our interview records indicated the OA associate director for facilities management heard an inappropriate voice mail message, but he did not tell us about hearing obscene voice mail messages. The report had indicated that two EOP employees who helped establish telephone service for new staff, including the telephone service director, said they heard a total of six to seven obscene voice mail messages that were left on telephones in vacated offices. In addition, we had reported that the telephone service director said that inappropriate and vulgar voice mail messages were initially erased on an individual basis, but it was eventually decided to erase all of them. Further, we reported that the OA associate director for facilities management said that so many complaints were received about voice mail that voice mail service was discontinued for a while to clear out the system, and that no one had access to voice mail for at least 5 days and possibly up to 2 weeks. To provide additional detail about when the inappropriate and vulgar voice mail messages were heard, in response to the White House's comments, we added that the telephone service director said that he heard inappropriate and vulgar voice mail messages during the early morning hours of January 20.

We did not report what the telephone service director said he was told by telephone operators about hearing obscene voice mail messages because it was information that was relayed to us from a third party. Further, according to our record of interview with the chief telephone operator, she told us that operators received some calls from staff complaining about not getting their voice mail and that their telephones were not working correctly, but she did not mention complaints about obscene voice mail messages. Finally, regarding the messages that the telephone service director said he erased during the early morning hours of January 20 and were rerecorded later that day, he said that those messages were not inappropriate in nature. Because they were not inappropriate in nature and could have been left for business reasons, we did not believe that this additional information needed to be reported.

Writing on Walls

In comment 105, the White House said that the report's description of two observations of pen and pencil marks on walls, but no words, did not adequately describe what we were told. The White House noted that these were not observations of a stray pen mark, as it said the report suggested. Rather, the White House said, one observation was that an entire wall in an office was covered in lines that at a distance appeared to be cracks. Further, the White House said this observation was confirmed by an OA employee who said that she too had heard that someone had etched a wall like marble. However, the report already indicated, regarding the observation, that the employee who observed it said that there were cracks in the paint, but because the marks washed off, he thought it looked like someone had used a pencil on a wall. Further, because it was information relayed to us from a third party, we did not report what someone had told the OA employee about a wall etched like marble. Regarding the other observation, the White House noted that an employee said that a wall was covered in pen and pencil marks, which she described as slasher marks and beyond normal wear and tear. According to our interview record, this employee said she requested that the walls be repainted in one room because there were pen and pencil marks on them, but no words were written. We did not believe that these additional details were essential and needed to be added to the report.

Classified and Sensitive Documents

The White House said in comment 108 that we failed to include the telephone service director's statement that he found classified documents in a safe during the night of January 19. We added that observation. The White House also noted that it was not surprising that the director of records management did not find sensitive documents in the counsel's office because the occupants of those offices did not depart their offices until after he had checked for documents there. However, his statement related to classified, and not sensitive, documents.

Underreporting of Costs

The White House said that we had underreported or failed to report the costs of various items, including those associated with cleaning, telephones, missing items, keyboards, furniture, and other costs.

Cleaning

In comments 30 and 99, the White House said the report omitted the costs associated with a January 30, 2001, facility request form asking for cleaning

services. GSA provided two copies of this form, both with the same document number. On one copy, cleaning services were requested. No costs were provided on that copy of the form, which indicated that the services were completed on January 31, 2001. The second copy said "making new drapes," and that the work was completed on March 2, 2001, at a cost of $2,906. We attributed the $2,906 cost to the making of new drapes and not cleaning. During our interviews with staff working in this office, no one mentioned observing problems with the drapes in this office.

Also in comment 99, the White House said that we could have, but did not, determine how much time and money was spent paying the cleaning staff and how much should have reasonably been spent on the basis of the amounts spent during past transitions or estimates provided by administrative staff. Further, the White House said that we already knew that the costs exceeded what was expected because the OA associate director for facilities management told us there was "lots of money that was spent that shouldn't have to be spent." Our record of the interview with the OA associate director for facilities management did not indicate that he told us this. He did say that during the last couple of years, Clinton administration staff kept some rooms in a "much less desirable fashion," and the space did not look much different during the transition. He also said more people were working the EEOB during the Clinton administration than during previous administrations. The director of GSA's White House service center similarly said that he did not see any difference in the condition of the rooms during the transition than when he saw them 2 to 3 years before. He said that he did not think the departing Clinton administration staff were being intentionally messy on January 20 and that they had been like that all of the time. He also said that he observed more personal belongings left behind during the 2001 transition than during the 1989 transition, but that the condition of the offices during the 2001 transition was the same as that during the 1989 transition. Accordingly, we did not estimate or include incremental cleaning costs, as the White House suggested.

Telephones

In comments 30 and 81, the White House said that our report was inaccurate and incomplete with regard to the cost of replacing removed labels and rerouting forwarded telephones. It is unclear why the White House said that our report was inaccurate regarding these costs. We did not report any aggregate costs for replacing labels or rerouting forwarded telephones, but cited hourly rates for telephone service work that are the same as those contained in the White House's comments. We also cited the

cost of removing a telephone from an office, which the White House did not dispute.

With respect to the completeness of cost data, we did not report a total cost figure for replacing missing labels or correcting forwarded telephones because we did not believe the documentation provided by the White House was clear and descriptive enough for us to do so. For correcting forwarded telephones, the White House provided one telephone service request that said a telephone line did not ring on a particular set. However, it did not state the cause of the problem, so we did not know whether the cause was forwarding or something else.

Most of the White House's points in comments 30, 79, and 81 addressed the costs associated with replacing missing labels. It said that (1) we should estimate how much it would cost to replace the number of missing labels reported to us as missing, (2) our statement that orders included other services is incorrect and that placing button labels on telephones means replacing missing labels beyond a doubt, (3) we never discussed the closed orders log with OA's telephone services coordinator, and (4) the closed orders log does more than mention labels.

The White House estimated that $6,020 was incurred to replace missing labels and correct forwarded telephones, and said that we had ignored the information it had provided on this issue. As its basis for the $6,020 estimate, the White House cited two blanket work orders and related bills for work that included relabeling telephones on January 20 and 21, 2001. The costs attributed by the White House to replacing labels and correcting forwarded telephones for both of these orders was $2,490. The White House arrived at its $2,490 estimate for relabeling telephones and correcting forwarded numbers, which it considered conservative given the number of missing labels and forwarded telephones, by assuming that technicians spent 10 percent of their time on these two days fixing these two problems. While we do not question that labels were missing or that telephones were forwarded and that the government incurred costs for replacing missing labels or correcting forwarded telephone calls, we have no information on the extent to which technicians spent their time fixing these problems on January 20 or 21, 2001, nor any basis to develop an estimate for this. Furthermore, if technicians replaced the labels reported missing under the blanket work orders as the White House suggests, then it is unclear why there would also be individual work orders to replace those same missing labels.

The White House's support for the remaining $3,530 (of the $6,020 estimate) consisted of items shown on the closed orders log for the period January 20, 2001, through February 20, 2001; individual service requests provided that cite placing labels on telephones; and AT&T invoices. We reviewed this information. In fact, we reviewed it carefully, and our record of interview indicated that we did discuss the closed orders log with the OA telephone services coordinator. We did not believe the closed orders log, the individual service requests, or invoices that the White House provided had enough information for us to definitively conclude that the costs shown were solely for replacing missing labels or provided a sufficient basis to compute an estimate of those costs.

With one exception, neither the closed orders log nor the individual service requests the White House provided specifically cited replacing missing labels that had been removed, and in every case for which we have a telephone repair document, another service was cited along with placing labels on telephones, including the service requests for the one exception referred to above. For example:

- For one service request cited in the White House's comment letter as needing a label placed on a telephone by a technician, the actual service request said: "need line 65240 to ring on my phone 66522. On 66522 add 65240 on button 7 and 8. Need label placed on set by a technician." According to the White House, the charge for this service was $75.92.

- Another service request the White House included in its $6,020 estimate was for, it says, placing labels on sets. The White House said the estimated cost of this work order was $151.84 based on being billed for 2 hours of work. The corresponding entry for this service request on the closed orders log says, "INSTALL (2) 8520 SETS IN RM-200, NEED LABELS PLACED ON SETS." The White House did not provide the individual service order for this repair.

The one service request cited above as an exception, which was dated January 29, 2001, read: "Replace labels on all phones that [sic] removed" along with other services in a room for which the White House said the bill was $75.92. The corresponding entry in the closed orders log for this order was "INSTL NEW# 62926, 65961 / REPLACE LABEL." We do not have any additional information to explain the difference between the individual service request and the log.

A number of service requests that involved placement of labels also involved programming or reprogramming of telephones. For example, the White House cited a work order indicating that labels were needed, among other things, in several rooms at a cost of $341.64, which read: "Disconnect 6-9008 in Room 271 OEOB. Reprogram sets in Rooms 263, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269 and 271. Need labels placed on each set." The requirements portion of the work order indicated "change" and "disconnect." Thus, it is unclear from the information provided, whether labels were needed because (1) they were missing, (2) there was a change in telephone service or functions as a result of the reprogramming that could have affected the labels, or (3) both conditions existed. It is also unclear to us from the information provided by the White House why telephones had to be programmed or reprogrammed if the only problem was a missing label and why 4 hours of work were required solely to place labels on telephones for each of four service requests. In cases where labels were missing, it appears that a new label could have been needed in some cases due to changes in telephone service or functions desired by new occupants, such as adding a new number to a telephone.

Regarding the White House's statement that placing button labels on a set means replacing missing labels, in addition to the above examples, we note our discussion with the OA telephone services coordinator during which she said that service orders mentioning labels listed on the closed orders log do not necessarily mean that telephones were missing labels. We did not discuss each entry with her on the closed orders log that cited labels because it did not appear necessary at the time of our interviews with her, and it was clear that we were discussing the closed orders log. An associate counsel to the president attended our meetings and raised no objection or concern about this issue at the time of the meetings.

Further, although the OA telephone services coordinator told us that she had records from which she could estimate the total number of telephones with missing labels and the associated costs to replace them, we did not receive this information. While there could have been a misunderstanding between us and the telephone services coordinator on the meaning of the terms on the closed orders log, we believe she clearly understood that we were seeking information about the number of missing labels and the associated costs, and because she said she would provide this information to us, we saw no need to request additional documentation on this issue at that time.

As a related issue, the White House said in comment 81 that it explained to us that there is no separate charge when a system analyst performs work, such as reprogramming a telephone, that does not require a technician to be dispatched to an office. According to the White House, if a technician must go to the office to replace a label, there is a minimum charge for each hour or portion of an hour even if it is only a few minutes to perform the work. The White House did not document this until after we had sent our draft report. While we do not question that situations may have existed in which the only service provided for which a cost was incurred was to replace a missing label, we cannot determine to our satisfaction the extent to which these situations occurred from the documentation provided to us. Given the examples we cited above in which other services besides placing labels on telephones were provided, the extent to which costs were incurred just for replacing missing labels is unclear. The extent to which new labels would have been needed anyway due to changes desired by new office occupants is also unclear.

Further, given the OA telephone services coordinator's statement about the little time needed to replace telephone labels, it is unclear why technicians would have spent 4 hours just placing labels on telephones in some cases where the service order shows the only other service besides placing labels on sets as programming telephones. It is also unclear why a generic or blanket service request to replace missing labels was not prepared if this was the only service needed. It would appear that such an order would have been less costly to the government than preparing individual service orders for individual telephones or offices given that it only takes a short time to place a label on a telephone.

Given all of the questions we have related to the information the White House provided on costs associated with replacing labels, we are not making any estimates of such costs. To do so would require additional details on the work that was done in response to requests for telephone service involving placing labels on telephones. Obtaining this information could have required discussions with the technicians who performed the work, which could have involved additional costs to the government. Given this and the time and effort that would be required by us and White House staff, we did not believe further exploration by us of the costs involved with replacing labels would have been cost beneficial to the taxpayers.

Finally, we modified our report to reflect the White House's comments 79 and 81 that the closed orders log does more than mention labels, as well as

to address comment 30 regarding replacing labels, as we deemed appropriate.

Missing Items

In comment 31, the White House objected to our deducting the value of one doorknob to reflect the statement of a GSA employee who said that a facility request form regarding work in an office where two pairs of doorknobs were observed missing was not done to replace a missing doorknob, but to perform maintenance on a worn-out part. The White House pointed out that the GSA employee's statement is inconsistent with the facility request form and the recollections of at least three current staff members. We discussed the observations regarding these doorknobs in our response to comment 22. Regarding the related cost issue, we recognized the GSA employee's statement in this case because he said that he was responsible for repairing and replacing building fixtures in the EEOB, including doorknobs. The report still included the cost of replacing three of the four doorknobs that were observed missing in this office, totaling $700. The difference in deducting the cost of one doorknob in this case was $100.

In comment 47, the White House said it was untrue when we reported that we did not obtain any information about the possible historic value of the seal that was stolen. The White House pointed out that we were told in writing that the $350 purchase price would not purchase an exact replica of the brass seal that was stolen; that the seal was purchased in the mid-1970s, and is no longer available; and that the $350 would purchase a plastic-type casting. The statement that was included in the report about this historic value was intended to convey that we did not obtain a dollar value associated with the historic value of the seal; we clarified that statement accordingly. In addition, to address the White House's comment, we added the additional details provided.

Keyboards

In comment 58, the White House disagreed with our reporting of costs associated with replacing damaged keyboards for three reasons. First, it said that our estimate of 30 to 64 keyboards that were observed missing was incorrect and should be 58 to 70, using a different counting methodology. It also said that the numbers only represented observations made in specific rooms or offices and do not account for the observations of other EOP staff who told us about additional damaged keyboards, such as the branch chief for program management and strategic planning in the information systems and technology division, who said that 150 keyboards

had to be replaced. We addressed this point in our response to the White House's general comment about the number of observations reported and in our response to comments 10 and 51. We also revised the table in the report to clarify that the range of keyboards pertained to observations made in specific rooms or offices. The statement by the branch chief for program management and strategic planning in the information systems and technology division, who said that 150 keyboards had to be replaced, was already included in the table and apparently overlooked by the White House.

Second, the White House noted that we included an estimate that the OA associate director for information systems and technology provided in February 2002, even though she said that her memory regarding that matter was not as good as when we interviewed her in June 2001. However, this official's statement in June 2001 that 64 damaged keyboards had to be replaced was also included in the table. Because we did not know which figure was correct, we included both statements made during the two interviews.

Third, the White House said that it was not accurate to represent that the OA associate director for information systems and technology said that one-third to one-half of the keyboards may have been replaced every 3 or 4 years because of their age. We addressed this point in comment 56.

Furniture

In comment 69, the White House said that we failed to mention costs attributable to damaged furniture and did not attempt to estimate the costs of replacing furniture that was discarded because it was beyond repair. However, as indicated in the letter portion of the report and appendix I, the OA director told us that no record existed indicating that furniture was deliberately damaged and that no inventory of furniture of the EEOB exists. Further, although in April 2002, an associate counsel to the president provided us with photographs of four pieces of furniture that she indicated were moved to an EOP remote storage facility, no information was provided regarding from which offices these pieces had been taken or when or how the damage occurred.

In comment 69, the White House also said that we had failed to quantify very real costs incurred, such as in having movers remove damaged furniture and return with replacement furniture, having movers make overturned furniture upright, and removing the glue-like substance from desks. We did not believe it would have been cost-effective for us to

attempt to estimate these costs, and our report clearly indicated that we did not attempt to obtain cost information related to all observations reported to us.

Other Costs

In comment 32, the White House said that we failed to quantify certain additional costs that were incurred as a result of damage, such as the time expended by computer staff and contractors to replace damaged keyboards; the time spent on removing "W" keys and prank signs affixed to the walls; and the time spent to clean up trash and dirt that exceeded reasonable amounts or amounts seen in prior transitions. The White House said that it would have been possible for us to have generated a range of estimates, but that we chose not to, resulting in a substantial underreporting of the very real costs associated with the damage, vandalism, and pranks that occurred during the transition.

Although it is possible that we could have estimated some additional costs potentially attributable to intentional acts, we did not believe it would have been cost-effective for us to have done so. For example, we did not believe that our time and resources should have been expended on estimating any possible incremental costs to remove "W" keys and prank signs that were placed on walls, or that any such estimates would likely have been material. Further, we did not have a sufficient basis to conclude that all of the damage that the White House cited, such as broken furniture and copy machines, was caused by intentional acts. Accordingly, we did not provide such costs in our report.

Additional Details and Intentional Acts

The White House said additional details should have been reported about certain observations, such as those relating to telephones, furniture, keyboards, a missing office sign, a copy machine, and writing on walls that would have allowed readers to determine whether incidents were done intentionally and, in some cases, that they were likely done by former Clinton administration staff.

In comment 28, the White House said that, in many cases, the undisputed facts indicated when incidents occurred and who the likely perpetrators were and cited several examples. In particular, the White House took issue with a statement in the report that we were generally unable to determine who was responsible for the incidents that were observed, and said we simply failed to determine who was responsible. For example, the White

House said we did not try to contact the former occupants of offices where messages other than those of "goodwill" were left. Examples that the White House cited regarding telephone labels and furniture are discussed in comments 6 and 15 below. The White House also cited examples regarding the placing of glue on desks; the leaving of prank, inappropriate, and obscene voice mail messages; and the removal of keys from keyboards, which are discussed below.

We agree that the likely perpetrators could be identified from the observations and available information with regard to a few of the observations that were made. For example, because the telephone service director said that a passcode was needed to record voice mail greetings, it was fair to conclude that the previous occupants left the voice mail greetings that were heard. Moreover, we had concluded in the report that the leaving of certain voice mail messages, the placing glue on desks, and the removal of keys from keyboards were done intentionally. However, the White House is incorrect in asserting that we did not try to contact the former occupants of offices where messages other than those of goodwill were left. As explained in our scope and methodology section, we contacted 72 former Clinton administration staff, most of whom had worked in offices where observations were made, including numerous staff who worked in offices where signs and messages were observed and heard, and not only those that were of goodwill. When we contacted them, we described or showed lists of the observations that were made in their former offices and asked for any comments or explanations. However, former Clinton administration staff we contacted did not provide explanations regarding every observation, and we did not contact all former Clinton administration staff because we did not know where they were and because of the level of resources that would have been required. In addition, regarding the reports of obscene or vulgar voice mail messages that were left, specific information was not provided about which telephones those messages were left on, so we could not ask any particular former staff about them. Moreover, it is speculative to suggest that, had we contacted additional former Clinton administration staff, we would have obtained undisputed facts regarding when the incidents occurred and the likely perpetrators.

The White House also said in comment 28 that our report suggested that contract movers and cleaners were responsible for vandalism, damage, and pranks, which it believed to be an insult to the contract personnel. Our report did not state that these contract personnel intentionally caused any damage. However, they were among other individuals in the complex

during the transition besides former Clinton administration staff, which made it more difficult to narrow down people who were possibly responsible, either intentionally or unintentionally, for the problems reported observed. We made a written request to the White House for a list of the number of visitors cleared into the EEOB during the weekend of January 20 and 21, 2001, and their respective organizational affiliations. However, the White House declined to provide that information, indicating that it was available from the individuals responsible for hiring and supervising contractors who may have already provided us with estimates regarding the number of contractors. We were provided with information regarding a certain number of GSA contractors who were in the complex that weekend, but not about other contractor staff, such as those working with computers, or any other visitors to the complex.

In comment 28, the White House cited observations made in the vice president's West Wing office, including an oily glue-like substance smeared on desks; prank signs that were on walls and interspersed in reams of paper in printer trays and copy machines, and vulgar words that were on a white board that were all discovered between midnight on January 19 and noon on January 20. The White House said that it could be reasonably concluded from these observations that the damage occurred shortly before the inauguration and that former Clinton administration staff were the likely perpetrators because it can be presumed that the former office staff did not work under those conditions. However, in certain respects, our interview records differed from what the White House indicated in its comments regarding these observations. Although all three staff told us they observed the glue-like substance and prank signs, none of them said they saw vulgar words written on a white board. One of the employees said that her staff told her that they had seen vulgar words written on a white board there, but we did not interview anyone who personally saw that, and we did not include information people relayed to us from third parties. We would agree that, on the basis of the timing of these observations, they were likely carried out shortly before the inauguration, but in the absence of witnesses or other evidence we are not in a position to conclude who was responsible.

In comment 35, the White House said that our list of incidents that were done intentionally was incomplete and provided several additional cases that it said appeared to have been done deliberately by former Clinton administration staff. Our conclusion that the leaving of signs and written messages was intentional was meant to encompass certain observations that the White House cited in comment 38, including a Gore bumper sticker

stuck to the inside of a copy machine, writing on and in desks, and a sticker in a filing cabinet. Further, our conclusions were not meant to be comprehensive in the same level of detail that the White House indicated, but did include damage to "W" keys, in addition to "W" keys removed from keyboards; "W" keys glued to walls and placed in drawers; the removal of an office sign that was witnessed by an EOP employee; and desk drawers turned over. Finally, we could not conclude, as the White House did, that certain incidents, such as a lamp placed on a chair and pictures and other objects placed in front of doors, were done deliberately by former Clinton administration staff. It seemed equally as likely that they could have been done as part of the moving out process. Further, the White House's statement that most, if not all, printers and fax machines were emptied of paper in vacated offices was not contained in our interview records, and it was not clear whether that would have been done intentionally. Other incidents that the White House listed relating to telephone and furniture are discussed below.

In comments 38 and 68, the White House said that we should report the views of many staff who said that, on the basis of their first-hand observations, damage appeared to have been done intentionally. In our report, we included examples of statements made by some individuals who told us they believed the incidents they observed were done intentionally and some individuals who told us they did not believe what they observed was done intentionally. However, we did not include all statements made by all individuals about views on whether incidents were done intentionally. In any event, without having observed the incidents being carried out, people's views on whether incidents were intentional were speculative in many cases.

Telephones

In comment 6, the White House said that it did not understand why the report indicated that the documentation provided indicated that much telephone service work was done during the transition, but did not directly corroborate allegations of vandalism and pranks regarding the telephones when several staff members reported observing telephones with missing labels.

However, the documentation provided did not show what caused the needed work or that the labels were intentionally removed from offices as acts of vandalism. Further, our conclusion is consistent with the OA director's April 18, 2001, statement that "…repair records do not contain information that would allow someone to determine the cause of damage

that is being repaired." As noted in the report, some former Clinton administration staff said that telephones were missing labels during the Clinton administration, primarily because those telephones were only used for outgoing calls. Although the OA telephone services coordinator said she believed that telephone labels were removed intentionally, she said the documentation regarding telephone service requests that mentioned labels did not necessarily mean that the telephones had been missing labels and that new labels might have been needed for variety of reasons. In comment 28 and 36, the White House noted that, according to the telephone service director, some of the missing telephone labels that were replaced before noon on January 20 were found missing again later that day, which indicated that the removal of at least some of the labels was an intentional act, occurred before January 20, and that outgoing staff were almost certainly responsible. We would agree that, on the basis of the telephone service director's observation on January 20, some telephone labels were intentionally removed. Although these circumstances may suggest that some telephone labels were removed by departing Clinton administration staff, in the absence of any witnesses we were not in a position to conclude who was responsible. No documentation was provided relating specifically to these observations.

The White House also said in comment 6 that staff noted that telephones were left on the floor and that the documentation showed a request for a technician to retrieve a telephone found on the floor of an office. Although this telephone service request corroborated a request to retrieve a telephone in an office where an EOP official observed telephones piled on a floor, we did not conclude that this corroborated an act of vandalism because the request did not indicate why the telephone was left on the floor.

In comment 36, the White House said that we should report the views of many staff who said that, on the basis of their first-hand observations, damage appeared to have been done intentionally, including the OA telephone services coordinator, who said that missing telephone labels must have been intentional. The OA telephone service coordinator's comment was included in the report.

In comment 82, the White House objected to a statement attributed to the director of GSA's White House service center, who said that there were any number of reasons why problems could have been observed with telephone and computer wires besides people having cut them deliberately because, for example, the cleaning staff could have hit the wires with the vacuum

cleaners or computer staff could have been working with the wires. According to the White House, this statement would be relevant only if the cut and pulled wires were observed after the cleaning and computer staff had entered the offices. The White House noted that the two employees who reported the cords pulled from the walls observed the damage in the early morning hours of January 20 before any cleaning staff had entered the rooms and before the computer staff entered the rooms to archive computer data. However, although the cleaning crew for the transition began on January 20 and the archiving of data from computers was taking place in the morning of January 20, other cleaning and computer work undoubtedly was done in offices at some point before January 20. Further, even though the staff made these observations on January 20, we did not know when and how the wires became separated from the walls. In addition, the employee who observed at least 25 cords pulled out of walls, who the White House did not mention in this comment, said that she made her observation on January 22. In addition, the January 24, 2001, GSA facility request that this employee requested did not state that cords were separated from the walls; the request was to "organize all loose wires and make them not so visible."

Furniture

In comments 15 and 36, the White House objected to a statement attributed to former Clinton administration staff who said that some furniture was broken before the transition and could have been the result of wear and tear, and little money was spent on repairs and upkeep during the administration. According to the White House, the statement could not be squared with the circumstances surrounding the reported damage. It also noted in comment 36 that it would be odd behavior for office occupants to have broken chairs through normal wear and tear and leave them unrepaired for some time. Further, the White House provided examples of additional details regarding observations made by EOP staff regarding furniture problems, which it said suggested that the damage was intentionally done by former Clinton administration staff or was done shortly before the inauguration.

As previously explained, we did not obtain comments from former Clinton administration regarding every observation, including all furniture-related problems. Therefore, we agree that the above statement made by former Clinton administration staff does not necessarily apply to all observations of furniture-related problems. With respect to the White House's assertion that it is difficult to believe that office occupants would not remove certain broken furniture, as indicated in the report, the former director of one

office where EOP staff told us they observed pieces of broken furniture said that the office furniture had been in poor shape for some time, but the staff tolerated it. The former director added that they did not want to send the furniture away to be repaired because it was uncertain how long it would take or whether the furniture would be returned. We also note that, in August 2001, we observed a desk in the EEOB with detached drawer fronts that had not been repaired, and the staff in that office said the desk had been in that condition since they arrived in January 2001. Further, although the White House said in comment 15 that the details regarding certain observations suggested that furniture was intentionally damaged by former Clinton administration staff or occurred shortly before the inauguration, we could not make any definitive conclusions about how the damage occurred and who may have been responsible for it on the basis of those details or the statements of some EOP staff who said that it appeared that certain damage had been caused intentionally.

In comments 28 and 36, the White House cited several cases in which it said the undisputed facts indicated when furniture was damaged and the likely perpetrators. Also, in comment 67, the White House said that the overwhelming circumstantial evidence indicates when the damage occurred, whether it was intentional, and who the likely perpetrators were. In comments 15, 28, 36, 60, and 67, the White House described a case involving a key that was observed broken off in a file cabinet, still hanging in the lock by a metal thread, and when the locksmith opened it, a Gore bumper sticker with an anti-Bush statement was prominently displayed inside. According to the White House, the circumstances in this case suggested that the damage occurred not long before the inauguration, was intentional, and was done by a former Clinton administration employee.

Our interview records regarding this incident differed in certain respects from what the White House indicated in its comments. Although the staff said they saw a broken key in the cabinet and one employee said that he found two Gore stickers inside, none of them said they observed an anti-Bush statement prominently displayed inside. One of the employees said that another person told him he saw a Gore sticker with a message that was derogatory about the president written on it. We did not report what the other person had told him because it was information relayed to us from a third party. Further, when we interviewed the person who reportedly observed the anti-Bush statement written on a sticker, he told us about seeing two Gore-Lieberman stickers inside the cabinet, but he did not mention any writing on them. Although we believe that it is likely that political stickers were left in a cabinet around the time of the election, it is

speculative to conclude that the individual who left the sticker inside the cabinet was the same person who broke the key off in the lock, and that the key was intentionally broken off in the lock. Also in comments 28, 36, 60, and 67, the White House cited a similar case about locked desk drawers that, when pried open, contained two pieces of paper with anti-Bush statements. We had already concluded in the report that these written messages were done intentionally.

The White House also cited cases in comments 28 and 67 that it said suggested the damage occurred shortly before the inauguration. In one case, the White House cited the statement of an employee who said that she saw damaged furniture in offices where things looked pretty good weeks or months earlier, which the White House said suggested that damage was done shortly before the inauguration weekend. According to our interview record with this individual, the only observations that she made regarding furniture were of doors on a wall cabinet hanging on only one hinge and upholstered furniture that was filthy, which she attributed to dirt that had built up over time. Although the cabinet doors could have been damaged around the time of the transition, the upholstered furniture probably did not become dirty then. In the other case, the White House said the nature of damage suggests that it occurred shortly before the inauguration because the offices' prior occupants and cleaning staff would not have let the damage remain in the office for long. For example, the White House said that it would be hard to believe that occupants would not fix or remove a bookcase with shards of broken glass inside. While we would agree that we would not expect shards of glass inside a bookcase to remain for long, we did not have any information indicating when the damage occurred, or whether it was done accidentally or intentionally.

In comment 36, the White House said that, with respect to our statement that we did not know whether furniture was broken intentionally, and when and how it occurred, it was not plausible to think the cleaning staff completely broke off the backs and legs of multiple chairs within the same office and then left that furniture in the offices for the new occupants. We did not suggest that the cleaning staff broke furniture. However, we note, as discussed above, that some former Clinton administration staff said that certain pieces of furniture were already broken prior to the inauguration and had not been repaired.

The White House also said in comments 38 and 67 that the nature of some of the damage and the surrounding conditions suggested that it was done intentionally and/or was done shortly before the transition weekend. For

example, the White House cited the observation of an EOP employee who said that her desk drawers clearly had been kicked in and this damage was not just wear and tear. Our interview record with this individual indicated that she observed a desk where the locks on a drawer had been damaged and the drawers could not be opened, but did not indicate that she said the drawers had been kicked in.

In another case cited in comments 36 and 67, the White House cited an observation of two seat cushions slit in an identical manner on apparently new upholstery, indicating that this was not done accidentally. Although it is possible that this observation was of vandalism, it was unknown when and how it occurred and who may have been responsible. No information was available about from which offices these chairs were taken (they were observed in a hallway on January 21), and we did not observe these chairs ourselves to inspect the damage.

Also in comment 36, the White House said that it was not reasonable to conclude that furniture was not overturned unintentionally because most of the witnesses observed overturned furniture before the cleaning staff or new occupants entered the rooms, and it was not plausible to think that cleaning staff would have upended extremely heavy furniture in the manner described. Further, the White House pointed out that two GSA officials said that cleaning staff would not move large pieces of furniture, and none of these things would happen in the normal course of moving out of an office. According to our interview records with these individuals, one GSA official said that while cleaning staff do not normally move furniture to clean offices, furniture could be overturned for a variety of reasons, such as to reach electrical outlets or computer connections. The other GSA official said that he did not see any damage or pranks during the transition and did not mention overturned furniture, according to our interview record. Although we would agree that furniture would be overturned intentionally and that it was unlikely that cleaning staff would have upended extremely heavy furniture in the manner described, some former Clinton administration staff who occupied the former offices where overturned furniture was observed said that it would have been difficult or impossible for them to move certain pieces of furniture. Moreover, the cleaning staff did not enter these offices for the first time on January 20; according to GSA, cleaning is done continuously.

Although we would agree with the White House that it is reasonable to conclude that furniture was overturned intentionally, we do not believe that a sufficient basis existed to conclude, as the White House did in comment

36, that most of the people who observed overturned furniture made their observations before the cleaning staff or new occupants entered the rooms. According to our interview records with the seven staff who observed overturned furniture, none of whom were new occupants of those rooms, two said that they made these observations in the early morning hours of January 20 before the transition cleaning crews arrived; three said that they made those observations during the afternoon of January 20; and the other two did not tell us the time they observed the overturned furniture. Although the descriptions provided by the observers suggested that the offices where overturned furniture was observed had not yet been cleaned, we do not know when particular offices were cleaned on January 20; the time that new occupants entered these offices, or who else may have been in these offices on January 19 and 20. The cleaning crew leader for the EEOB floor where overturned furniture was observed said that the cleaning began at 6:45 a.m. on January 20.

In comment 60, the White House said that it did not recall anyone complaining about missing keys, which would not be considered damage, vandalism, or pranks. Rather, the White House said, the observations pertained to keys that may have been purposefully broken off in the locks or drawers locked intentionally and keys taken or discarded. However, an employee told us that, when he started working in the EEOB on January 20, his desk drawers were locked with no keys available to unlock them and that the movers helped him open the drawers. Other EOP staff told us about broken off or damaged keys in cabinets.

In comment 68, the White House took issue with how we had characterized two employees' statements about whether they believed the damaged furniture they observed was intentionally damaged. In the first instance, the White House said that an employee said that while it was possible that legs on a chair were broken through wear and tear, she thought it was unlikely that a broken chair would be kept in an office in that condition. Our interview record regarding this employee indicated she said that the chair legs could have been broken because of wear and tear and were not necessarily done intentionally in January 2001. In addition, the White House said that we had not included additional statements made by EOP staff who said that the damage, previously discussed in this section, appeared intentional. The White House said an employee told us that her desk drawers were clearly damaged intentionally, and not just by wear and tear, and another employee said that the a broken key in the file cabinet looked deliberate. In the first example, according to our interview record, this employee did not say how the desk drawers were damaged. In the

second example, the employee said the key looked like it had been broken intentionally, but he did not know if it was.

We also note that other people, whom the White House did not cite, said they did not believe that broken furniture was intentionally damaged. For example, the management office director told us that during the first 2 weeks of the Bush administration, she saw a building (the EEOB) filled with furniture that had exceeded its useful life and that a lot of furniture had to be taken out of offices. She said the problems with furniture that she saw, such as broken pieces, were the result of wear and tear and neglect, and not the result of something that she thought was intentional.

Keyboards

In comment 28, the White House said that it is unlikely that Clinton administration staff worked for long without having "W" keys on their keyboards, which suggested that the vandalism occurred shortly before the inauguration. We agree.

Missing Office Sign

In comments 42 and 48, the White House said that we failed to report sufficient detail about an EOP employee who observed a volunteer remove an office sign from a wall in the EEOB. According to the White House, when we reported that an employee said she saw a volunteer remove an office sign outside an office, that the person who removed the sign said that he planned to take a photograph with it, and that the volunteer tried to put the sign back on the wall, it implied that the person intended all along to put the sign back. The White House believes that only when the volunteer was confronted by the EOP employee, did he claim that he planned to take a photograph with it, that he tried to put the sign back, and ultimately did not take it. Further, the White House said that the employee did not believe that the volunteer intended all along to return the sign as our statement suggested.

However, our record of interview did not indicate that this employee told us what she believed the volunteer intended to do with the sign. We also did not know whether this individual planned to take the office sign. We were not provided with the volunteer's name and thus were unable to contact him. Further, we did not speculate, as the White House did, about whether it was only after having been confronted by an employee that he claimed that he wanted to take a photograph with the sign and tried to put it back on the wall.

In comment 48, the White House also said that we failed to mention that an EOP employee said that a former Clinton administration employee told her that he saw that the office sign was missing at some point during the night of January 19. We did not report this statement because it was information relayed to us from a third party. Further, when we interviewed this former Clinton administration employee, he did not say that he observed a sign missing from outside this office.

Copy Machine

In comments 68 and 87, the White House said that we had failed to report a statement made by an employee who said that the repairman who fixed the copy machine found a pornographic or inappropriate message when he pulled out the copier's paper drawer, and that the repairman thought the paper drawers had been intentionally realigned so that the paper supply would jam. We did not include the repairman's statement because it was information relayed to us from a third party.

Writing on Walls

The White House said in comment 105 that graffiti observed in a men's restroom was vulgar, in addition to being derogatory to the president, which was plainly intentional. Given its content, the White House said that we could conclude that it was written shortly before the transition. We agree. Similarly, the White House said that writing observed on an office wall that said something like "Republicans, don't get comfortable, we'll be back," while not profane in nature, also would indicate that it was written shortly before the transition and by a former Clinton administration employee. We agree. As previously mentioned, the report already concluded that written messages were done intentionally.

Statements Made by Former Clinton Administration Staff

In comments 4 and 11, the White House also said that if the report included a statement by former Clinton administration staff that the amount of trash was "what could be expected," it should also include the statements of longtime staff members who said the opposite. This statement was also part of a summary paragraph, and additional comments regarding trash that was observed and comments made by other staff with different views were provided in appendix I.

In comment 5, the White House said that, when we reported that some former Clinton administration staff said that some of the observations were false, it was disappointed that they would make such a reckless statement.

According to the White House, the statement is neither based on nor supported by a single shred of evidence. Further, the White House said that such self-serving accusations like this illustrate why it was important for us to provide the reader with many of the details that we had omitted. For example, the White House said, if the reader is told that a particular observation was made by a staff member who worked in the complex for many years, including the Clinton administration, or that the damage was found in a location where others observed a lot of other damage, then the reader can determine for himself the credibility of the observation.

The statement referenced above was included in part of a summary paragraph, and many additional details regarding the observations are provided throughout the report. Further, we did not make judgments about the credibility of the observations when current and former EOP staff had different explanations and recollections. Regarding the White House's request that we indicate when observations were made by EOP staff who had worked in the White House complex for many years because it would help the reader determine the credibility of the observation, we did not do this because we generally did not have a basis to conclude that EOP staff we interviewed who had worked in the White House complex for many years were more credible than staff who arrived with the Bush administration. On the one hand, one would not necessarily expect Bush administration staff to have positive views of the Clinton administration. On the other hand, EOP staff could have strong views on various administrations. Many of them work at the pleasure of the president, and the associate counsel to the president participated in all of the interviews with EOP staff. We did not speculate about what influence these factors may have had on the people we interviewed. For example, one individual we interviewed who had worked for the EOP under several administrations expressed considerable disagreement during our interview with the Clinton administration's handling of a matter related to his area of responsibility. Although we do not know the extent to which, if any, the individual's views regarding the Clinton administration influenced his conveyance of observations to us, we reported his observations in the same manner as those of incoming Bush administration staff we interviewed.

In comment 49, the White House questioned a comment made by the former director of an office where two pairs of doorknobs were observed missing, that the office had several doors to the hallway that at some time had been made inoperable, and he was not sure whether the interior sides of those doors had doorknobs. According to the White House, even if it were true that the doorknob in the interior side of the door was missing,

that fact would not explain the observation that the door was missing both an interior and exterior doorknob. We only reported what the former director told us and were not suggesting that his comment fully explained the observation.

In comment 70, the White House noted that, regarding the statement by the former manager of an office where at least six pieces of furniture were observed, he provided comments on only two broken chairs (that the arms had become detached a year or two before the transition, that carpenters tried to glue them back, but the glue did not hold). According to the White House, the additional reports of damaged furniture as well as other damage found in the office suite undermine the former manager's innocent explanation for the two chairs. In addition, the White House said that because we were unwilling to specify the locations where damage was found and have not reported more details, readers are unable to assess for themselves the credibility of the former manager's explanation.

The former manager's explanation regarding these two chairs appeared to be plausible because, as we reported, we found two GSA facility requests made by him in 1999 requesting that chairs in that office be repaired. We only reported the comments and explanations that former Clinton administration staff provided on observations made in their respective offices, and did not note, for example, that this former office manager did not comment on the other pieces of broken furniture. Similarly, throughout the report, when we cited an observation made by an EOP employee, we did not point out what that person did not see, even in cases where other people made additional observations in that same location. Further, our record of this interview indicates that the employee who observed the other pieces of broken furniture told us she saw four chairs that had been placed in the hall and that she believed the damage could have occurred due to normal wear and tear and that the chairs were not necessarily broken in January 2001.

In comment 71, the White House questioned the comments of three former staff who had worked in an office where staff told us they found glue or a sticky substance on desks that they were not aware of glue being left on desks. One of those former employees also said that her desk was missing handles when she started working at that desk in 1998, and it was still missing them at them at the end of the administration. The White House said that these statements are inconsistent with the statement of an employee who said that a handle was found inside the desk with more of the oily-glue-like substance on top of it. The White House also said that the

reader is unable to evaluate the credibility of the comments made by the former staff because the report does not say where these desks were located and that various other damage and pranks were found in the same location.

We do not believe the additional details that the White House cited about these observations, which we did not report, would have allowed readers to more fully evaluate the credibility of the statements made by the former Clinton administration staff. For one reason, incidents could have taken place in this location after the former Clinton administration staff we interviewed had left, which they said was between midnight on January 19 and 4:30 a.m. on January 20. Our record of the interview with the employee whom the White House indicated observed a desk handle inside a desk with more of the glue-like substance on top of it did not contain the level of detail that the White House provided in its comments. Our interview record indicated that she observed a desk drawer that had a handle removed and glue that was placed on the bottom of a drawer. Further, as indicated in our discussion regarding comment 28, although all three staff told us they observed the glue-like substance and prank signs in this area, none of them said they saw vulgar words written on a white board. One of the employees said that her staff told her that they had seen vulgar words written on a white board there, but we did not interview anyone who personally saw that, and we did not report information relayed to us from a third party.

In comment 73, the White House said that if we included detailed comments made by former Clinton administration staff about overturned furniture, we should explain that two of the individuals who observed the overturned furniture have worked in the White House complex for 30 and 32 years, respectively, and that they both observed overturned furniture between approximately 1:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. on January 20. Likewise, the White House noted, the director of GSA's White House service center, who served during the Clinton administration, reported seeing overturned furniture. In addition, the White House said that we should report that two other staff said they observed overturned furniture at approximately 12:15 p.m. on January 20.

To address the White House's comment 73 and 36, we added a range of time during which these officials said they observed overturned furniture. However, we did not add, as the White House suggested, that two of the people who observed overturned furniture had worked in the White House for more than 30 years because, except in appendix II, when we discussed

observations regarding past transitions, we did not report how long other people who made observations had worked in the White House complex.

In comment 77, the White House said that we did not report the number of offices in which telephones were observed unplugged or piled up. In addition, the White House said we did not report that the telephone service director was one of the staff who observed telephones that were unplugged or piled up. According to the White House, his observation is particularly noteworthy because he had more than 30 years of experience managing telephone services in the White House complex. Further, the White House said that because the telephone service director observed the unplugged telephones on January 19 and during the early morning of January 20, it is clear that the telephones were not unplugged by the telephone service personnel or by the cleaning staff, who had not yet entered these rooms. Moreover, the White House said that this information is particularly important because of comments provided by former Clinton administration staff who worked in offices where telephones were observed unplugged or piled up. (One of those former staff said that no one in that office unplugged them, and another employee said that there were extra telephones in that office that did not work and had never been discarded.) The White House said that because we had not mentioned that there were observations of unplugged and piled telephones in 25 or more offices, the reader does not know that the comments of the former Clinton administration staff, even if true, explain what happened in only 2 of 25 or more offices. Thus, according to the White House, the reader has no basis for placing the comments of the former staff in context, nor for understanding that the former staff apparently have no explanation for the remaining observations.

We addressed the issue regarding the number of offices in which telephones were observed unplugged or piled up in our response to comment 25 in the section of this appendix pertaining to reporting the number of observations. Regarding the White House's comment about the noteworthiness of the telephone service director's observations, we added to the report that he was one of the staff who made these observations. However, we do not agree that because he made these observations on January 19 and the early morning of January 20, it is clear that the telephones were not unplugged by telephone services personnel or by cleaning staff who had not yet entered these rooms. Although the cleaning crew for the transition started on January 20, according to GSA, cleaning in these offices is continuous. Further, we did not have information regarding when telephone service or other personnel had been in these offices before

the transition. Regarding the White House's assertion that we had deprived readers of information that would place the comments of former Clinton administration staff in context, or help readers understand that the former staff apparently had no explanation for the remaining observations, as previously noted, we did not obtain comments from former Clinton administration staff regarding every observation. Moreover, the fact that certain former Clinton administration staff had no explanations for certain observations does not necessarily mean that they were responsible.

In comment 83, the White House said that we should have reported additional statements made by EOP staff that would counter a statement made by the former senior advisor for presidential transition who said that it would have been technically possible to erase voice mail greetings for most departing staff without also deleting greetings for staff who did not leave at the end of the administration. The White House said that, to present a fair and balanced report, we should have explained that two OA staff, who served during the Clinton administration, disagree with the former senior advisor's statement. According to the White House, they included the OA associate director for facilities management, who worked closely with the former senior advisor and told us that a proposal to delete all voice mail greetings at the end of the Clinton administration was discussed, but they decided not to do it because it would have erased the greetings of all staff, including the 1,700 staff who were not vacating the building. In addition, the White House noted that the OA associate director for facilities management said that it was his decision not to proceed with the proposal, although the former Office of Management and Administration staff, including the former senior advisor, were aware of the decision. Further, the White House said, the OA telephone services coordinator told us that, until November 2001, the EOP's telephone system did not have the capability to erase voice mails all at once. According to the White House, she explained that it was not until November 2001 that the EOP had purchased the software and had performed upgrades to the switch that were necessary to allow voice mails to be deleted on other than a manual basis.

We believe that we provided a sufficient amount of information to reflect the views on this issue that differed with the former senior advisor's statement. Indeed, many of the details that the White House provided in its comments were already reported. In addition to reporting statements made by the telephone service director about erasing voice mail, we reported that the OA associate director for facilities management said that he made the decision not to erase all voice mail messages and greetings at

the end of the administration because doing so would have deleted voice mail for all EOP staff, including staff who did not leave at the end of the administration, and not just for the departing staff. We also reported that the OA telephone services coordinator said that voice mail greetings and messages were not removed on a systemwide basis at the end of the Clinton administration because the EOP had not yet done an equipment upgrade, which was done later. Further, we footnoted the senior advisor's statement to indicate that contrary views on this matter were provided earlier in the report.

In comment 84, the White House questioned a comment made by the former senior advisor for presidential transition who said that regarding reports of telephones that had been forwarded, some telephones were forwarded to other numbers for business purposes at the end of the Clinton administration. He said that some of the remaining staff forwarded their calls to locations where they could be reached when no one was available to handle their calls at their former offices. The White House said that this explanation may sound plausible until one learns how and where the telephones were forwarded and cited, for example, that the chief of staff's telephone was forwarded to a closet. Further, the White House said that, because we have not provided details such as this, the reader does not have the facts to judge the credibility of the statements made by former Clinton administration staff. As noted in our discussion regarding comments 26 and 76, our interview record with the employee who told us that the chief of staff's telephone had been forwarded did not indicate that we were told the telephone was forwarded to a closet. Even if our interview did indicate this, because we did not obtain a comment from former Clinton administration staff on every observation, the former senior advisor's statement did not necessarily address all instances of forwarded calls.

In comment 93, the White House said that, although we reported that the OA director said that the offices were in pretty good shape by the evening of January 22, we had failed to include other people's observations on how long it took to get the offices in shape and provided five examples. However, two of the five additional statements related to telephone service, not trash, and the report had included a statement by the OA associate director for facilities management regarding how long it took to complete the cleaning. We believed that reporting his statement was sufficient.

In comment 98, the White House said that we should have included more statements by EOP staff who said they believed that offices were intentionally or deliberately trashed because we had reported that none of

the 67 former Clinton administration staff we interviewed who worked in the White House complex at the end of the administration said that trash was left intentionally as a prank or act of vandalism. The White House said, for example, that we should have reported an observation by a National Security Council (NSC) employee who said the NSC office was deliberately made to look like someone was communicating a message; the OA director, who said that it looked like there were a large number of people who deliberately trashed the place; and the chief of staff to the president, who said the conditions he observed were more than wear and tear. The White House said that if we had included these statements, it is more likely that the conclusion that these people reached---that what they observed was intentional—is correct. We had already reported the views of the OA associate director for facilities management and a management office employee who said they observed some trash that appeared to have been left intentionally, as well as the observations of other EOP staff who used words such as "extremely filthy" or "trashed out" to describe the conditions they had observed, and that office space contained a "malodorous stench" or looked liked there had been a party. We had also reported observations such as the contents of desk drawers or filing cabinets having been dumped on floors, which were likely to have been done intentionally, but we did not know by whom. However, to address the White House's comments, we added the statements of two other staff cited in its comments.

In comments 101 and 103, the White House said that we should have reported how many cleaning staff were on duty and the number of hours they worked. According to the White House, without that information, the reader has no basis for evaluating (1) comments made by a former Clinton administration employee who worked in an administrative office who said that she did not observe much cleaning of offices before January 20, and that she believed GSA did not have enough supervisors and decision makers to oversee the cleaning; and (2) a statement contained in a letter to us from the former senior advisor for presidential transition and the former deputy assistant to the president for management and administration who said they did not observe any cleaning crews during the evening of January 19 or the morning of January 20. However, we did report the number of GSA and contract staff who cleaned the EEOB during the weekend of January 20 and 21, 2001; when the cleaning began on January 20; the observations of the crew leaders; and the number of hours that the cleaning crew leaders worked on January 20. We believe that this was a sufficient amount of information to report about the cleaning effort. We also reported that, according to the OA associate director for facilities

management, maybe 20 offices were vacant before January 20, and that it took 3 or 4 days after January 20 to complete the cleaning. We attempted to evaluate how many former Clinton administration staff left on January 19 and 20, 2001, which would have helped to determine when the cleaning could have begun. We were provided data indicating when building passes were terminated for EOP staff at the end of the administration, but the White House also informed us that the data were unreliable. We asked the White House to arrange a meeting with an appropriate official to discuss the pass data, but this was not done.

In comment 102, the White House questioned why we included a comment made by the former administrative head of an office who said that he asked 25 professional staff to help clean the office before he left. The White House said this comment was irrelevant because no one alleged that this particular office was left dirty, and that we had misled the reader by including it in the report because we did not explain that it does not rebut or relate to any observation. In contacting former Clinton administration staff, we not only sought any explanations they had regarding the observations, but also asked for their observations regarding the condition of the White House complex during the transition. In this case, although it did not rebut a specific observation about his former office, the former official explained the condition of his office at the end of the administration. (He also said that the EEOB and the West Wing were "filthy" at the end of the administration, but that he did not believe that trash was left as an act of vandalism.) However, for the purposes of clarification, we added to the report that no one told us that this office was dirty.

In comment 104, the White House said that a statement by a former office manager in which an EOP employee said it appeared that a pencil sharpener was thrown against the wall and that pencil shavings were on the floor did not rebut this observation. The former office manager said that a pencil sharpener in that office did not work and may have been placed on the floor with other items to be removed. The White House noted that an employee told us that two pencil sharpeners were found broken and on the floor with shavings. In addition, the White House noted, with respect to one of the two pencil sharpeners, there was a distinct mark on the wall where the pencil sharpener had struck. We recognize that the former manager's comments did not address both pencil sharpeners and the mark on the wall, but they could explain why a pencil sharpener was found on the floor. We only reported what he told us in response to the observation.

In comment 109, the White House noted that the content of the message written inside a desk that was dated January 1993 was neither profane nor disparaging of the incoming president or his administration. The report did not indicate that it was, and we did not describe the specific content of similar messages that were found during the 2001 transition, so we did not revise the report.

In comment 117, the White House said that the descriptions provided by former Clinton administration staff regarding the condition of the White House office space during the 1993 transition in the report contain more detail than the descriptions provided regarding the 2001 transition. We do not believe that the descriptions provided regarding the 1993 transition are more detailed than were provided regarding the 2001 transition. Further, in addressing comment 98, we added the statements of two additional staff who had provided detailed descriptions of the condition of the office space during the 2001 transition.

Past Transitions

In comments 33 and 110, the White House said we failed to report the statements of several staff members who said that the damage was worse in 2001 than during previous transitions. Comment 33 pertained to the letter portion of the report, where we summarized the information provided in appendix II. To address the White House's comments, we added in appendix II the statement of another official who said that the condition of the White House complex was worse in 2001 than previous transitions. We also note that our records of many of those interviews, as well as the quotes the White House provided in its comments, do not necessarily indicate that they were referring to damage observed, but to trash.

The White House also said in comment 118 that, while pranks and damage may have been observed in prior administrations, the reported observations are not the same in number or kind as those observed during the 2001 transition, and we failed to mention this in the report, which hampers the reader from drawing his or her own conclusion. In addition, the White House also said that we seem to overstate the extent of damage reported during previous transitions and did not quantify the number of incidents observed. However, we clearly indicated that only a limited number of people were available to comment on previous transitions. Further, we lacked definitive data that would allow us to compare the extent of damage, vandalism, and pranks during the 2001 transition to past ones, such as records of office inspections. Moreover, although fewer in

number, many of the observations that were made regarding previous transitions were of the same kind that were observed during the 2001 transition, such as missing office signs and doorknobs, a message written inside a desk, prank signs and messages, piles of furniture and equipment, and excessive trash. In addition, observations regarding the 1993 transition included messages carved into desks, which were not observed during the 2001 transition. One significant difference between the 2001 and earlier transitions is that no one reported observing keyboards with missing or damaged keys during previous transitions.

In comment 33, the White House said that, when we reported that piles of equipment were observed (by only one person), we failed to explain that the telephone service director said that he never encountered any problems with the telephones during the 1993 transition, that perhaps some telephones were unplugged, but "that would be it." According to our interview record, this official also said that every transition has some pranks and said that unplugging telephones is a "standard prank." Further, in comment 115, the White House attributed observations of piles of telephones during the 1993 transition to a statement made by the telephone service director who said that he was instructed to get rid of the "Republican phone system," which the White House said apparently resulted in the replacement of all telephones. However, our scope of work did not include reviewing the installation of a new telephone system in the White House complex around the time of the 1993 transition to determine if it could relate to the piles of telephones that were observed at that time.

Also in comment 33, the White House said, with respect to a statement in the draft report that observations regarding previous transitions included missing building fixtures such as office signs and doorknobs, that no other building fixtures besides office signs and doorknobs were observed. Accordingly, we revised the report to indicate that office signs and doorknobs were the only building fixtures reported being observed missing during previous transitions.

The White House also said, regarding a statement that messages were carved into desks, that it is aware of only one observation of a message written inside a desk, which the White House noted, for some reason, we repeated in the sentence in the report that followed. Further, the White House said, there were only three observations of carvings in desks used by staff who served only during the Clinton administration. The observations of three messages carved into desks were made by former Clinton administration staff, as reported in appendix II. The discussion regarding

previous transitions contained in the letter portion of the report combined the observations by current EOP staff and former Clinton administration staff. We mentioned the writing that was seen inside of a desk because we observed it, and it contained a date indicating when it was written. Further, we do not understand why the White House noted that there were only three observations of carvings in desks by people who served "only" during the Clinton administration. Many of the observations that were reported regarding the 2001 transition were by staff who served only during the Bush administration.

In comment 111, the White House said that we failed to mention that the director of GSA's White House service center had observed only two transitions (1989 and 2001), and that he only heard that doorknobs were missing during the 1989 transition, but did not observe them himself. Accordingly, we deleted his statement that doorknobs are favorite souvenirs of departing staff.

Also in comment 111, the White House said that the telephone service director did not say that office signs were missing in previous transitions, but only during one prior transition. According to the White House, he said that when the Carter administration left office, door signs were missing and cords were unplugged. According to our interview record, this official told us that, during previous transitions, telephone cords were unplugged and some door signs were missing. He told us that some problems were found when Carter administration staff left, although he could not recall any specific examples.

In comment 112, the White House noted that the director of GSA's White House service center said that he observed little in the way of damage, vandalism, or pranks during the 2001 transition, so when he said the condition of the office space during the 2001 transition was the same as what he observed during the 1989 transition, this means that he claims not to have observed much in either transition. For the purposes of clarification, we added that he said that he observed little during the 2001 transition in terms of damage, vandalism, or pranks.

In comment 113, the White House said that what the GSA acting administrator said in his March 2, 2001, letter may be misleading because he referred only to real property and not to the telephones, computers, furniture, office signs, etc., that were the focus of the damage, vandalism, and pranks that occurred during the 2001 transition. Some of the observations made by EOP staff, such as holes in walls and missing paint

on walls, did relate to real property. To address the White House's comment, we added a definition of real property.

In comment 116, the White House noted that we included a statement by a former Clinton administration employee who said that the damage that was observed in the 1993 transition was intentional, but did not include similar statements made by EOP staff about the 2001 transition. As noted in our discussion regarding comment 68, we included the statements of some individuals who told us they believed the incidents they observed were done intentionally and some individuals who told us they did not believe what they observed was done intentionally. However, we did not include all statements made by all individuals about views on whether things were done intentionally. In any event, without having observed the incidents being carried out, people's views on whether incidents were intentional or not were speculative.

In comment 118, the White House objected to a statement in the report that, according to the March 1981 issue of the *Washingtonian* magazine, incoming Reagan administration staff had some complaints about the condition of the EEOB that were similar to observations made by EOP staff in 2001. The White House said that the allegations are "hardly" similar to what was found in the 2001 transition and, by analogizing the circumstances, we trivialized what was observed in 2001. Although the *Washingtonian* certainly did not cite as many observations regarding the 1981 transition, the types of observations were indeed similar, such as memoranda taped to walls, pieces of damaged and dirty furniture, and a dirty refrigerator. Further, according to the *Washingtonian*, a visitor to the EEOB in 1981 described the building as being "trashed," which is the same word used by some EOP staff to describe its condition during the 2001 transition.

Other

In comment 2, the White House said that we misidentified the units that comprise the EOP and incorrectly referred to EOP units as agencies. We addressed this comment in the White House's general comment regarding use of the term "EOP."

In comment 21, the White House said that the report should have identified the name of the office where the cellular telephones could not be located and that the report suggested that we had interviewed all of the former employees of the Office of the Vice President, which it said was not true. We did not identify the names of offices in the report unless they were

relevant to the observation or comment. We had no reason to identify the name of this office, nor did the White House explain why we should have. Also in comment 21, the White House said the report suggested that we had interviewed all former employees of the office of the vice president, and that all former staff from that office said they did not take them, which is not true. Accordingly, we clarified the report to indicate that the former occupants of offices during the Clinton administration whom "we interviewed" where items were observed missing said that they did not take them.

In comment 34, the White House said that it had repeatedly told us that some current EOP staff who also worked during the Clinton administration believe that check-out procedures were often not followed at the end of the administration, and that building passes in particular were not turned in. However, as indicated in appendix III, we did not review whether these check-out procedures were followed because it was not within the scope of our review. Further, this information was provided to us orally by an associate counsel to the president, not directly by any EOP staff with responsibilities in this area. Moreover, we referred to a check-out procedure in appendix III as a means of indicating that it did not include an office inspection.

In comment 39, the White House disagreed with the statement that, in the overwhelming majority of cases, one person said that he or she observed an incident in a particular location. According to the White House, in many, if not most, cases, more than one person reported the same incident in the same location. We concluded from a careful review of all of the observations that, although generally more than one person observed the same types of incidents, in the overwhelming majority of cases, only one person said that he or she observed an incident in a particular location.

In comment 40, the White House disagreed with a statement in the report that, in some cases, people said that they observed damage, vandalism, and pranks in the same areas where others said they observed none. The White House said that, without a specific description of the instances where one current staff member recalled seeing something and another expressly disavowed seeing the same thing, it was impossible to know whether the apparent conflict in testimony could be reconciled or whether our statement is factually accurate. The White House also said that the vague statement provided no indication of how many conflicts existed or what types of incidents were involved. Further, the White House cited two examples that it said we had indicated the sentence referred to, and said

the observations and circumstances indicated in those examples were not instances of a direct conflict where one person said he or she observed damage in a location where others observed none.

In the examples the White House said we had referred to, the White House excluded the statements made by former Clinton administration staff and a National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) official who were working in the EEOB in the late morning of January 20. In those comments, people said they did not observe damage, vandalism, and pranks in the late morning of January 20 in the same rooms where others said they had observed them later that afternoon. For example, two former occupants of an office where furniture was observed overturned in the afternoon of January 20 said they left between 10:00 a.m. 11:55 a.m. that day and did not observe any overturned furniture. In another situation, the former senior advisor for presidential transition said that when he was in a certain office after 11:00 a.m. on January 20, he did not see a broken glass top smashed on a floor or files dumped on a floor, which were observed there during the afternoon of January 20. Further, as noted in the report, a NARA official said that, although she did not remember the specific rooms she went to during the morning of January 20, she went to various offices in the EEOB with the former senior advisor for presidential transition around 11:00 a.m. that day and did not see any evidence of damage, vandalism, or pranks. In reporting the comments of former Clinton administration staff regarding these situations, we clarified when the EOP staff made the observations.

In comment 94, the White House said that we did not accurately quote what the OA associate director for facilities management told us about cleaning. We had reported that he said that "about 20" offices were vacant before January 20 and that it took 3 or 4 days after January 20 to complete the cleaning. However, the White House said that this official actually said that there was "some list of offices that could have been cleaned before the 20th," and that the list was given to the director of GSA's White House service center, and that there were "not a lot of offices on the list"—"maybe 20." Although we were not directly quoting this official when we reported that he said "about 20" offices were on the list, our interview record agreed with the White House's comments that he said there were "not a lot" of offices on the list and that "maybe 20" were on it, and we revised the report accordingly. The White House also indicated that this official said that it took "3 to 5 days" to complete "just the cleaning." However, our record indicated that he said that it took 3 or 4 days after January 20 to complete the cleaning, and we did not revise the report in that regard.

In comment 96, the White House said that it believed we had misquoted the OA associate director for facilities management when we indicated he said that it would have taken an "astronomical" amount of resources to have cleaned all of the offices by Monday, January 22. Rather, the White House indicated that he said that they could not have had enough people to clean it by January 22 because the offices were dirtier than in past transitions. The White House also noted that the official said that, in response to a question about whether it was legitimate to think people could start working in the complex on Sunday, January 21, he replied that, yes, in his opinion, people should leave their offices in an orderly fashion. We checked our record of interview with this official and believe that we accurately reported his comments, and we also believe that they are substantially the same as what the White House indicated in this comment. For example, we had reported that this official said that there was more to clean during the 2001 transition than during previous ones and provided the reasons why; he said that, in his opinion, departing staff should have left their offices in a condition so that only vacuuming and dusting would have been needed. Thus, we did not believe that any revisions were needed to the report regarding this comment.

In comment 107, the White House said that it was not accurate for us to indicate that the statement that trucks were needed to recover new and usable supplies generally was not corroborated. According to the White House, the associate director for the general services division told us that because the excess supplies had been dumped in the basement hall and were piling up down there, leaving much of it unusable, he instructed his staff to take the supplies to the off-site warehouse where the staff could re-sort the supplies and salvage what was reusable. The White House also noted that eight truckloads were needed to recover these new and usable supplies from the basement, and had these trucks not been dispatched, all of the supplies, instead of just a portion, would have been rendered unusable; therefore, the statement was corroborated. However, when we interviewed this official, he said that the statement contained in the June 2001 list that six to eight 14-foot trucks were needed to recover new and usable supplies that had been thrown away "bothered" him. He said that nothing usable was thrown away intentionally. Further, although trucks were reportedly used to transport supplies from the EEOB to the warehouse so that they could be sorted and to salvage what could be used, as indicated in the report, the former senior advisor for presidential transition said that the supplies were brought to the basement of the EEOB so that staff could obtain them from there, rather than obtaining them from

the supply center. Therefore, we could not corroborate the portion of the statement in the June 2001 list that supplies had been "thrown away."

In comment 120, the White House said that we failed to report two of the factors that OA officials, who have been through many transitions, identified as contributing to the problems found in the 2001 transition. First, the telephone service director said that he felt hampered in doing his job because he was not allowed to have any contact with the incoming administration. According to the White House, he indicated that, in the past, he was allowed to confer with incoming staff regarding their telephone needs and expectations; but this was not permitted during the 2001 transition. Likewise, the White House said, the OA director said that this transition was unusual because, for other transitions, there was a transition team from the new administration on-site in the complex but, during the 2001 transition, the incoming administration did not get access to the space until 3 days before the inauguration and did not get "legacy books," (books that explain how things work within the complex and within particular offices) until after the inauguration.

We did not evaluate the transition coordination issues that the White House raised in this comment because they were outside the scope of our review. However, former Clinton administration staff did provide some related information. The former senior advisor for presidential transition said that some Bush administration staff were given walk-through of offices in the weeks before January 20, that officials from the president-elect's staff attended several meetings before January 20, and that each office was instructed to prepare briefing books for the incoming Bush staff. Further, the deputy assistant to the president for management and administration said the president-elect's staff were involved in planning the transition and had an unprecedented level of access. Because we did not evaluate these issues, we are not in a position to comment on them.

Also in comment 120, the White House said that a number of longtime employees, such as the OA associate director for facilities management, told us that problems could have been averted or remedied if former Clinton administration staff had vacated their offices earlier. The White House noted that this official said he observed a woman watching television in her office on January 20 and turning it off and leaving precisely at noon. Further, the White House said that 325 passes of White House Office employees were terminated on January 19 and 20, 2001. As indicated in our discussion regarding comments 101 and 103, we attempted to evaluate how many former Clinton administration staff left on January

19 and 20, 2001, which would have helped to determine when the cleaning could have begun. As previously noted, we were provided data indicating when building passes were terminated for EOP staff at the end of the administration, but the White House also informed us that the data were unreliable. We had asked the White House to arrange a meeting with an appropriate official to discuss the pass data, but this was not done.

Changes Made to the Report

We revised the report, as appropriate, to address the White House's comments 1, 3, 7, 37, 50, 52, 53, 63, 85, 86, 88, 89, 95, 114, and 119.

Comments from the General Services Administration

GSA Public Buildings Service

May 13, 2002

Mr. Bernard L. Ungar
Director, Physical Infrastructure Issues
General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Ungar:

Thank you for the opportunity to review draft report GAO-02-360, "The White House: Allegations of Damage During the 2001 Presidential Transition." We have carefully reviewed the draft report.

The General Services Administration (GSA) agrees with the two recommendations the General Accounting Office (GAO) has made with respect to the logistics of future transitions. GSA, as you have indicated in your report, is responsible for the physical structure of the office space in the White House complex, and further, is responsible for operations and maintenance in the office space including, but not limited to, cleaning. During Presidential transitions, we make every effort to meet the very considerable demands that are place on us by virtue of several hundred staff moving out while several hundred are moving in. For this reason, we believe that our ability to carry out our responsibilities in future Presidential transitions will be strengthened by working with the Office of Management and Administration for the White House office to develop procedures for office space inspection and cleaning and office space preparations. Improved communication and scheduling strategies will be an integral part of these procedures, as reflected in your recommendations.

U.S. General Services Administration
1800 F Street, NW
Washington, DC 20405-0002
www.gsa.gov

Thank you again for the opportunity to review the draft report.

Sincerely,

Paul Chistolini

Paul Chistolini
Deputy Commissioner

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