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Biden's whirlwind final days as vice president had aides scrambling to close his White House office

В останні бурхливі дні Байдена на посаді віце-президента помічники намагалися закрити його офіс у Білому домі

Розміщення секретних документів поруч із «особистими та політичними паперами» в адміністрації президента США Д. Байдена принаймні свідчить про те, що процес зберігання записів пішов не так. За словами однієї людини, знайомої зі знахідкою, це була папка з позначкою «VP Personal», яка містила один із секретних документів, який вперше виявив у листопаді минулого року адвокат Д. Байдена, що поклато початок ланцюжку подій. За словами цієї особи, серед предметів часів, коли Д. Байден був віце-президентом, є 10 секретних документів, включаючи меморандуми розвідки США та матеріали для брифінгів, які стосувалися питань України, Ірану та Сполученого Королівства. Була також записка від Д. Байдена президенту Бараку Обамі, а також дві записки, які готують Д. Байдена до телефонної розмови – одна з британським прем'єр-міністром, інша – з Дональдом Туском, колишнім прем'єр-міністром Польщі, який був президентом Європейської ради. Ради з 2014-2019 рр. Незрозуміло, яка частина цього матеріалу залишається чутливою.

<https://edition.cnn.com/2023/01/12/politics/biden-documents-final-days-vice-president-aides-scramble/index.html>

The early days of 2017 were a whirlwind for Vice President [Joe Biden](#): swearing in a new Congress, a surprise Medal of Freedom, a speech at Davos and one final trip to Ukraine.

Partly to wrap up his policy portfolios, partly to tout his accomplishments, and partly to occupy himself following the death of his son a year earlier, Biden thrust himself into work in a final sprint to mark what then appeared to be the end of a four-decade run at the highest levels of government.

As Biden was busy keeping busy, however, his office was shutting down. Aides scrambled to pack up his workspaces in the West Wing, the Eisenhower Executive Office Building and at his official residence, the Naval Observatory.

Those competing objectives – to use his office until the final minutes even as it was obliged to shut down – made for a muddled and hurried process that left aides packing boxes of documents and papers late into the night, even as more material kept arriving.

Exactly how a [small batch of classified documents](#) ended up in boxes of Biden's personal effects remains an open question. The White House and the now-president's lawyers have refused to say who, precisely, packed and moved the material. Those questions are now central to a special counsel investigation into Biden's handling of classified material after leaving the White House in 2017.

At a minimum, however, the placement of the secret documents alongside "personal and political papers" reveals a records retention process gone awry. It was a manilla folder marked "VP personal" that contained one of the classified documents that was first discovered last November by the Biden attorney setting off the chain of events, according to one person familiar with the find.

Among the items from Biden's time as vice president are 10 classified documents including US intelligence memorandums and briefing materials that covered topics including Ukraine, Iran and the United Kingdom, according to that person.

There was also a memo from Biden to President Barack Obama, as well as two briefing memos preparing Biden for phone calls – one with the British prime minister, the other with Donald Tusk, the former prime minister of Poland who served as president of the European Council from 2014-2019. It's unclear how much of this material remains sensitive.

Former aides and others familiar with the process of Biden's transition out of government service describe a serious effort to follow the law made difficult by an unusually active final stretch.

"That made the process very disjointed – not because people weren't capable, but because it wasn't some straight line out of the White House," a source with direct knowledge of the process said. "The day-to-day almost accelerated in those final days. Throughout, people were trying to ensure he still had what he needed, while also trying to pack in moments he wasn't there."

The packing was carried out by members of Biden's staff, including lower-level aides and assistants who were provided boxes to store the vice president's things.