

THE DOMESTIC POLICY COUNCIL (DPC)Mission and Role

There does not now exist, at any point in the structure of government, an organized and well staffed group of men charged with advising the President on total domestic policy. The DPC will fill that need. It will develop new initiatives, like the recent welfare proposal; analyze agency initiatives, like the recent tax reform package; and consider policy changes in existing programs, e.g., whether Social Security benefits should be tied to living costs.

In proposing alternative courses of action for the President, the DPC will undertake four activities. First, the DPC will develop forecasts and other data to help define national goals and objectives. Second, it will synthesize policy alternatives into consistent domestic programs that will balance the President's priorities and agency requests against available resources. Third, it will serve as a central point for rapid response to Presidential needs for domestic policy advice on immediately pressing issues. Fourth, it will consider the policy implications of ongoing programs and propose revised policy as needed. As an example of the latter, the policy underlying the Job Corps with its attendant program and organizational difficulties, would undoubtedly have been reviewed by the DPC.

The DPC will provide a mechanism for the Administration's top executives to focus collectively on domestic policies and on their own relationships in developing those policies. It will be a vital link between the agencies and the President--disseminating the President's philosophy to the agencies and communicating agency positions to the President.

Structure and Staffing

The President (and in his absence, the Vice President) will serve as Chairman of the DPC. Formally, there will be eleven Council members: the Vice President, the Secretaries of nine Cabinet departments (all but State, Defense, and Post Office), and the Director of OEO as long as he retains Cabinet rank. The Council's staff will be headed by an Executive Director who, we believe, should also be the Assistant to the President for Domestic Affairs.

The President may convene meetings of the whole or any part of the Council membership. At such meetings, he may decide also to invite selected executives of the EOP, non-member agency heads, or others. In discussing a truth-in-lending issue, for example, the President might include, among others, Treasury, Commerce, HEW, CEA, and FTC.

The President will use Council meetings as he sees fit: sometimes as a forum for discussion, sometimes as a means of disseminating his decisions, sometimes to weave diverse views into a workable consensus.

The Executive Director of the DPC will be a Level II to be appointed without Senate approval. He will direct and organize a staff of some 40 professionals, most of whom will be assigned to analyze specific matters of current interest to the President. Sections of the staff could specialize in such areas as environmental quality, urban affairs, and human resources. A small segment of the staff--about ten professionals--might conduct research on long-range economic and social trends to help clarify national goals and objectives. This staff element provides a research tool not currently available. Another small group, perhaps five professionals, could insure that the DPC is appropriately involved in budget allocation and review.

Much of the Council's work will be accomplished by program committees to be established by the President through the Executive Director. We use "program committees" as a generic term for a variety of working groups. In practice, these committees can be task forces, planning groups, statutory offices, advisory councils, or commissions. They can be established with varying degrees of formality, and can deal with broad program areas like urban affairs and environmental quality or with narrower ones like drug abuse or prison reform. The Committees will be supported by DPC staff, supplemented when needed by agency experts.

The membership of these committees can include representation from within the Federal government, from outside it, or both. Their staffs, coordinated and monitored by the DPC's Executive Director,

can call upon experts within and outside the Executive Branch. The committee device, with adequate staffing and coordination, will provide the generative mechanism for readying policy proposals for Presidential review. As needs change, committees will be formed, modified, and terminated.

For a further description of the DPC, see Appendix 3.

Important Changes

While building on relationships that exist informally between the White House Staff, agency officials, and outside groups, the DPC embodies three innovations:

1. It asserts executive leadership over program development permitting an integration of policy with resources.
2. It institutionalizes an adequate Presidential-level staff to research program proposals and do long-range planning.
3. It brings the President's top officials into flexible, working bodies to focus on broad domestic issues and instills a shared sense of overall goals.

These innovations will enable the President to make better program decisions in the light of resource constraints and will remove the confusion of purpose which arises from ambiguity in assigning responsibility for policy development.