

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

February 11, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE PRESIDENT

For what it is worth, in my view Robert Wood's article "When Government Works" is right. It is essentially a corollary to your own thinking. You can't run the country from Washington, and you can't operate the Federal government from the White House.

The tendency to try this is deep running. It is built into most of our political science, e.g., Richard Neustadt's Presidential Power. (Wood, before going to Washington as an Undersecretary of HUD, would have propounded almost the opposite view.) As he points out now, this view has been the standard fare of all commissions on government organization since Louis Brownlow's Presidential Committee on Administrative Management of the 1930's. The Heineman Commission under Johnson followed this line, as has the Ash Commission. (I don't wish to be acerbic, but any respectable graduate student could have predicted that the Ash group would come up with an "Office of Executive Management" and could have described its proposed functions in more or less accurate detail.)

A good example of this tendency is to be seen in the White House staff this past year. We began holding morning staff meetings in January 1969 in the Roosevelt Room, at which time we all sat comfortably around one table. Slowly the table filled up. Then more rapidly seats started being placed behind the table seats. Eventually we ended up sitting Camp-Fire-Girl style in a great circle in the room, with no table. Haldeman and Ehrlichman realized this was ridiculous, and last Fall you reorganized us.

But you did not put us out of business. There were for a while four, and are now three cabinet officers on your staff. There are project managers and assistants to supervise departmental programs

in detail. The great bulk -- or so would be my impression -- of proposals you send to the Congress originate here, and not in the departments.

Your White House staff is nothing so bad in this respect as was Johnson's, where there was a paranoiac concern about what the Departments were "up to." Wood's article reflects this. Califano made his life miserable. An unending sequence of aborted programs (such as the new-town-in-town program of which Fort Lincoln is the local disaster) were thought up in the White House and pushed onto Departmental staffs that simply wouldn't or couldn't carry them out. (For that matter, Wood was brought to Washington by the White House to plan the Model Cities program in secret. The Secretary of HUD, or such is my firm understanding, did not know about Model Cities until shortly before it was announced. Wood then went over to HUD to carry it forward.)

I was on hand for Bundy's Godkin lectures, and listened carefully. At the time I thought he was right in his argument that cabinet officers need not be antagonists of the President, representing their departments' interest groups, but rather that they could be "Presidential outposts" that carry forward Presidential policy and initiatives in the areas they represent.

In my view, the main program responsibility, that is to say operations concern, of the White House staff should be limited to a half dozen areas to which you really wish to assign priority. You cannot have fifty priority issues. As Wood says, the first half dozen times a White House staffer calls to say that the President really cares about thus or such, he is heard. But after a while it gets too familiar. The iron law of priorities is that they tend to dissolve. Hence the need to keep the number small, and to stay with them until something happens.

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Wood makes several points I would call to your attention.

First. The middle echelon civil service is the key to effective government. Moreover, "a disturbingly large number of career professionals have become seriously undisciplined." (I wrote about this in my little book Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding.) Inevitably, as operations are directed from the top, policy gets made at the bottom. This was so under Johnson, when the recruits of the 1960's were at least nominally sympathetic to the administration. It is almost certainly doubly true today, when many of those persons probably regard the administration with disrespect and antagonism.

As far as I can see, nobody is paying any attention to this. The Civil Service Commission is pathetic. A condition for which we are at least in part responsible. In the meantime, Wood is right: the problem with much professional bureaucratic behavior today is that it is unprofessional and unbureaucratic.

I seriously think this needs to be attended to. I tried to interest the Ash Commission, but they couldn't wait to reorganize the Executive Office of the Presidency. I have been trying to put together a set of proposals for your consideration by way of a message to Congress, and will have them in two weeks or so. But they don't exactly thrill me.

Second. Almost all serious issues are inter-departmental. If they are to be faced the system of "lead agency" needs to be made to work, and their needs to be a reward for cooperation. This is indisputable, and you have responded to it very well, I should have thought. The Urban Affairs Council, and the others, institutionalizes this recognition of the inter-connection of all agencies and issues.

For the past 13 months we have regularly held Undersecretary Meetings here in the White House to follow up on UAC decisions, and generally to work out interdepartmental treaties. I think the effort has been fairly successful. I would suggest, however, that this subject needs your attention: i.e., the matter of rewarding cooperation, and discouraging the opposite.

HUD is a case in point. The Governor is tough, combative, and wonderful. But things tend to be a one-way street with him. Our Undersecretaries Committee has managed to get other departments to pledge resources for Model Cities. But I would be hard pressed to point to a reverse flow.

Nor is HUD that responsive to White House interests. Romney insists that only he be dealt with, which is kind of silly. It leads to his being overburdened. (Thus last Thursday, following our UAC meeting, slightly hurt he asked John Ehrlichman where that "National Urban Policy" had come from, claiming he'd not seen it. I am sure this is so. But I sent copies to him for comment on June 17, and again on October 31.) Also, he has not been notably open on the subject of inherited programs. Urban renewal and Model Cities are really going forward as if nothing had happened. More discouraging to me, in matters where your personal prestige is on the line, I just don't see the fire-in-the-belly that is needed. For example, Seventh Street in Washington, D. C. is still pretty much the moldering ruin you visited January 31 a year ago. It seems to me it was in the power of HUD to get the obscene mess cleaned up in a year's time. Similarly, Fort Lincoln lays fallow: nothing has happened in a year. The day will come when you will be charged with the responsibility. (I don't say what should be done with Fort Lincoln, only that the administration must make a decision.)

Third. Regional office effectiveness is essential. Wood acknowledges that you established common boundaries and head-quarter cities, something previous administrations have not had the stomach to try. But there is so much to be done to improve the quality of regional staffs, and their performance generally. There have to be some rewards, and there have to be some punishments, and I fear they have to come from you. Also, we need some inventions here. Perhaps a regional representative of the President with the rank of Undersecretary.

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I don't want this to get too long. Especially as I am not entirely clear just what points you wanted comment upon.

One parting note: The Wood article is from the Winter issue of The Public Interest. This is a journal I helped to found, and with which I remain active. We have a fairly special view of the world, which fits closely with yours. (You may recall the article by Peter Drucker which I sent you in January 1969.) We also have 9000 subscribers. Including, I gather, the Secretary of HUD.

Daniel P. Moynihan

Attachment

When government works

ROBERT WOOD

We are short of talent, short of people, thin on experience, thinner on patience. . . . We are overworked, overburdened, overweight and, on many things, overly anxious. . . . Increasingly, ours is a society slipping out of phase. In sector after sector—from the delivery of medical services to the delivery of the daily mail—we are barely able to do what we are doing, with no assurance how long we can continue.

Horace Busby, *Detroit address, Nov. 14, 1968*

By popular consensus and professional diagnosis, the Achilles heel of American government today is government itself. Conflicts in parties, interest groups, philosophies; apathetic or alienated popular attitudes, limits on available resources—all these don't prevent us from feeding the hungry, reforming the welfare system, discouraging the overthrow of democratic governments abroad. Bureaucracies do. Organized public efforts do.

According to current commentary, bureaucracies sink their own ships, design and build needless highways, and, to repeat the most fashionable cliché, "destroy more homes than they build" in urban renewal. They also always seem to perpetuate themselves, to multiply, and to demand increasing taxes—in total effect they keep the country in a mess.

The contrary facts about bureaucratic life do not appear to alter this national judgment. From 1953 to 1967, for example, federal purchases of goods and services dropped from 15 per cent to 11.4 per cent of the GNP, and the number of federal civilian employees remained the same as a percentage of the work force. Yet people continue to believe that government grows and grows. Cases of clearly understaffed and underfunded government agencies are

ignored. The Department of Housing and Urban Development, for instance, tripled in program outlays between 1965 and 1969, but its work force rose by less than 9 per cent. At the end of this period, its total manpower was in the same relative position it had been at the start—500 fewer employees than the FBI and 500 more than the Bureau of Indian Affairs—and yet it was described by a leading journalist as "burgeoning."

In point of fact, the typical characterization of government as inherently sprawling, irredeemably inefficient, masks a deeper, quite different complaint. *It is not so much the inefficiency of bureaucracy we complain about as its efficiency for purposes other than those we feel appropriate.* Viewed strictly in terms of transportation engineering, the American interstate highway program is a monumental achievement. Since 1950, urban renewal has helped preserve or restore the central business district and the municipal tax base in a thousand cities. In recent years, the customs and immigration services have proved themselves more adaptable and effective at the terminals in handling major increases in air passengers than the private air lines.

The real difficulty is that public agencies often achieve goals and carry out objectives that political observers or the public have come to feel are out-of-date, inadequate in scope, or plain wrong. (Alternatively, we feel that the objectives are in fact set internally by the public organizations themselves; hence they are self-serving, not serving us.) The effectiveness with which such ends are pursued merely compounds our frustration.

Put in these terms, the issue is not so much how to make government work, but how to make it work for public purposes. The problem to be solved is not the elimination of "bumbling" but powerful bureaucracy, but rather the clear unambiguous statement of policy goals and effective control over their attainment. A solution will necessarily embrace two major reforms. First, the process of supervision and control must be made more systematic and comprehensive, and the current near-monopoly of oversight by the presidential staff (including both careerists and "in-and-outers") must be broken. Second, the behavior of the permanent career employee needs to be professionalized and made more responsive to changes in the larger political system. In short, what America needs is a better bureaucracy, not less of one; disciplined bureaucracy, not amateurs run riot. Given these two conditions, government works.

The conventional wisdom

According to orthodox analysis, the gap between the goals and performance of American government is due to an absence of

effective executive supervision. The president, it is argued, cannot direct the executive branch for the broader purposes that his administration represents. Instead, the management of key programs is controlled by an informal "triple alliance" of interest group spokesmen, members of Congressional subcommittees, and the civil servant chiefs of bureaus, divisions, or offices. Such alliances, as the analysis runs, are manned by professionals who are conditioned to last out any administration. They are not prone to risk-taking or problem-solving. They go by the book, ignore the citizen, protect their organizations, conserve their programs. The net result is parochial, single-purpose bureaucracy, oblivious to the side effects that are often an affront to the constitutional responsibilities of the system.

From the day he enters office until the day he leaves, every president during the last three decades has had to grapple with these program alliances; every chief executive has had to struggle to retrieve the authority that seems to slip down to the whirlpool of interests below him. The strategy that they and their advisors (from Louis Brownlow to Richard Neustadt through Charles Schultze) have evolved is now well known and widely accepted. It has four parts:

1. Strengthen the institutional presidency—that is, the Executive Office of the President in general and the Bureau of the Budget in particular;
2. Strengthen the supervisory capability of the incumbent president and increase the size and visibility of the White House staff;
3. Reorganize departments and agencies at frequent intervals, reducing their number, tightening the lines of their accountability to the president, and introducing new techniques for evaluating their performance;
4. Whenever important new activities are authorized, ignore established agencies and establish new ones.

The Executive Office has expanded in accordance with this strategy for thirty years following the report of Brownlow's Presidential Committee on Administrative Management. The Bureau of the Budget transferred from Treasury and the Council of Economic Advisors, the Office of Science and Technology, the Office of Emergency Planning have come into being; others, like the National Resources Planning Board, have both come and gone. The Budget Bureau in particular has expanded in authority; its power rests on the premise that it holds an unswerving and nonpartisan loyalty to the presidency as an institution and on the assertion that it possesses a superior perspective and competence by virtue of taking the "big view." Similarly, the White House staff has multiplied from FDR's dozen men with a passion for anonymity to

President Nixon's 120 plus, whose names and faces regularly grace the national weeklies. They provide resources for presidential supervision—but only to the president as a person.

The shuffling and reshuffling of agencies and departments has been a permanent feature of the Washington scene since the Reorganization Act of 1946, although the executive initiative originally provided has been whittled away over the years. In the 1960's, planning-programming-budgeting systems (PPBS), which have built on the accounting and budgeting reforms of the previous decade, have been added to the executive's evaluative airs, and the disposition has continued to create new agencies in the alphabet tradition of the New Deal. The Peace Corps and the Disarmament Agency of John Kennedy and the Office of Economic Opportunity of Lyndon Johnson, attest to the principle that whenever an urgent new program hoves into view, a president wants the vitality of a new organization to accompany it.

In spite of this steady evolution in the instruments of presidential control, the clamor of complaint makes it clear that bureaucracy is not yet bridled. The thirty years war against the triple alliance seems to achieve occasionally a semblance of order within an increasingly complex government. But if one is to judge by the continuing calls for structural reform in the Budget Bureau, or for more power in the White House, then no early end to hostilities is in sight, let alone a victory for the presidential forces. A full generation's experience with bigger and better presidencies has left the situation substantially unchanged. This suggests that there are some operational limitations built into the doctrine of presidential oversight. It also suggests that there may be some flaws in the conventional view of the triple alliance and the flow of bureaucratic power.

A curious inversion

Confusion is created when men try to do too much at the top. In order to know what decisions are being made elsewhere in government, the White House tends either to spend time reviewing programs or to take more and more decisions on itself. The separate responsibilities of the White House, the Executive Office, and the agencies are fudged, and the demarcations of who does what become uncertain. The result is a blurring of the distinction between staff and line, between program and policy. Decisions tend to be reviewed and reviewed; and operational delays increase accordingly.

As this confusion continues, a curious inversion occurs. Operational matters flow to the top—as central staffs become engrossed in subduing outlying bureaucracies—and policy-making emerges at the bottom. At the top minor problems squeeze out major ones,

and individuals lower down the echelons who have the time for reflection and mischief-making take up issues of fundamental philosophical and political significance.

So, suspicious Executive Office staff will compulsively follow the execution of a given contract for program work, say, in establishing urban planning standards, to the dotting of the last "i". At the operating level, program staff can graciously accede to this intervention, using the time thus freed to lobby for a "technical" amendment pending before Congress that gives preference to local governments who employ private planning consultants over those who rely on public planning agencies. At the end of the exercise, the Executive Office has learned a smattering of planning technique; the agency staff has made a major decision in public policy.

The dilemmas of the permanent presidential staff are perhaps best traced in the evolution of the Budget Bureau. Originally, the Bureau exercised control primarily by means of the budget, legislative reports and reviews, and occasional forays into management matters; but over the years it has gradually abandoned these generalized forms of oversight. The pressure of big and deficit-ridden budgets and the expansion of complicated programs, often with sophisticated theoretical and technical components, have increased the propensity of Bureau staff to assume direction of operational matters. Internal Bureau reorganization in 1967 reflected not so much any increased interest in policy-making as a disposition to "run" activities, especially those that were not clearly under the mandate of a single agency. The distinction between staff and line became blurred to the point where in 1968 the Bureau could actually undertake to direct the suballocation of funds below .005 per cent of a departmental budget. Clearly, in these circumstances, personnel preference, not professional knowledge, guides the decision.

The problems among the White House staff are almost as grave. Recruited from outside, likely to be amateurs to government (though not to politics), suspicious of the professional Washington establishment, they deal with both program oversight and politics. To the extent that they subscribe to the doctrine of the triple alliance, their compulsion is to unravel the techniques of the interest groups that surround a program or hover around a department. The result is an overload of concerns, because interest groups and Congressmen tend to take their troubles directly to the White House, filling calendars with vexing political problems full of booby traps in highly technical language. Such problems usually are of little consequence when measured against the major political concerns of the White House, yet they add up to a disproportionate share of White House effort.

By exhausting the available time, the operational proclivities of the Budget Bureau and the Congressional interest group politicking

of White House aides tend to immobilize their overview and directional functions. Too many items handled too quickly under too much pressure multiply the range and detail of the decisions reaching the president himself. There is control in the superficial sense that, somewhere, an Executive Office staff member has grappled with an operational problem. But on matters that require genuine policy attention, control is lacking because time is too short.

Thus, throughout the year 1966-1969, the Budget Bureau staff tried their hand at dividing \$53 million of "open space" funds among inner city and suburban localities, while White House staff requested weekly reports on a housing program with a two year lead time. But in the same period, the Bureau never got around to allocating funds for 12 pilot neighborhood center programs that the president had publicly announced, and the White House never resolved the different definitions of "citizen participation" that were bringing poverty programs to a standstill. To take these steps, apparently, would have endangered central decision-making.

A question of loyalties

To the excessive involvement with operations of presidential staff, and their compulsion to control matters, must be added the further difficulty of their motivations and authority. Budget personnel take the stance that they are isolated from politics in a way that other bureaucrats can never be; that they are loyal to the president, whoever he may be; and, therefore, that they are objective and professional in their judgment. Yet the core of the Bureau's responsibility is the budget; the central issue for the Budget Director each year is whether or not the budget is balanced; and the values that the organization ultimately assumes are bankers' values. When the chips are down, and a deficit or surplus hangs on the level of an agency program, or the resources available to its effective management, the preferences of a budget-maker are predictably financial.

The biases of the White House staff are less predictable. Here the critical factor is whether the views and values expressed are those of the president or of the staff members. A staff member may transmit the wishes of the president in a literal and automatic fashion; or he may anticipate from experience a presidential reaction, so that he can relieve the president's burden and still represent him faithfully. His bias in such cases may lead further from the president's wishes. It is conceivable that, in a notably hazardous occupation, he may seek to establish rapport with other permanent political sectors of the capital. But then miscalculations may occasionally distort outgoing and incoming messages.

It is always difficult to interpret with precision the behavior of men who are close to a source of great power, men whose lives are perpetually under review, and whose power is dependent on their personal standing. One thing, however, is certain: the wider the range of White House involvement, the less credible becomes the notion that the chief executive is always personally concerned. A non-White Houser tends to take at face value the first half-dozen calls from the White House that begin, "The president has asked me to ask you . . ." When the calls multiply, and the phrase repeats, skepticism intrudes on the relationship.

The longer one examines the awesome burdens and limited resources of those who help the president from within his immediate circle, the more skeptical one becomes of a strategy for overseeing government by "running" it from 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. The semiheroic, semihopeless picture has been captured many times in several administrations: dedicated men, of great intelligence and energy, working selflessly through weekends and holidays to master an endlessly increasing array of detail on complex subjects beyond their understanding on which decisions must be made "here" because a resolution elsewhere is not to be trusted. They persevere, taking their stand against "the bureaucrats," pushing programs through against sullen, hidden resistance from the departments. Committees are abolished, agencies rejuggled, staff reviews simplified, new reporting forms introduced, all in the effort to assure that more and more decisions are, or can be, presidential. Yet, in the end, after thirty years, the effort to help the president in making government work has not succeeded. As one veteran White House staffer, McGeorge Bundy, has observed, "The ablest of presidents, with the most brilliant and dedicated of Executive Office staffs, simply cannot do it alone."

Cabinet government?

Who else and what else is needed so that government can work for general, accepted, announced, prescribed, public purposes? How can effective control be maintained without continuing operational build-up in the presidency?

In his 1967 Godkin Lectures, Bundy nominated an obvious resource—the cabinet—and its potential is probably greater than even he acknowledged. As a collective body the cabinet has usually been unwieldy and uncertain and is likely to remain so. The principal common concern of the cabinet is the political survival of the administration, and even this is not always shared. But Bundy's thesis is not a parliamentary one: he would recast the role of cabinet members so as to make them *presidential outposts* within their departmental domains, politically subduing their interest

groups and managerially directing their bureaucracies. His image is that of a secretary "highly autonomous and deeply responsive in relation to the White House," who is continuously the agent of the president but is endowed with great discretion and flexibility.

This secretarial assignment as president's men contrasts sharply with the conventional wisdom of Washington watchers. Until Bundy's lectures, many observers believed that cabinet members were, by reason of the interest groups they were assumed to "represent," natural enemies of the presidency. Yet, in fact, recent secretarial behavior has come closer and closer to the Bundy norm. Appointments made strictly because of ties with interest groups or for reasons of geography grow rarer, as these considerations become less important in presidential politics. The demand increases for effective program performance, and managerial skills are valued higher than partisan symbolism.

In departmental affairs, broker relationships with interest groups and Congressional committees do not disappear—and they should not be expected to. Agencies will continue to represent the particular perspectives fashioned by their work. What does change is the belief that secretaries will forever be "captured" by the interest groups, unable to rise above them, and that only physical proximity to the president ensures loyalty. Instead, a secretary, trusted as a president's man, often exercises reciprocal impact on both the interests and Congress—persuading, changing, influencing in the name, and for the benefit, of the chief executive. The "triple alliances" are, in fact, not intractable, but subject to redirection and even to neglect, as more massive forms of public appeal become available.

In order to assume this job of operational oversight, a cabinet member needs help just as the presidency did in the thirties. Executive Office support, rather than competition, is one obvious need, and this is in the power of any president to command. More program evaluation and analytical capability at the secretary's level is another; and here the initial impact of PPBS in the Defense Department is indicative of what can be achieved. (Unfortunately, the Budget Bureau preempted that technique in 1966, and its heavy-handed and clumsy application of PPBS discouraged most cabinet departments from developing similar program-policy staffs.)

A third requirement is the establishment of much stronger links between presidential outposts in the departments and the permanent program units. One HUD innovation in this respect was to assign program responsibilities to assistant secretaries, who are themselves presidential appointees. This reform placed a heavy premium on finding assistant secretaries who could absorb new information and direct new enterprises quickly; it also effectively eliminated the

problem of the all-powerful bureau chief. Presidential appointees made the final decisions in major project approvals and presidential appointees dealt with inquiring Congressmen. As a result, the objectives of the president and those of the program were balanced in specific terms, day after day, by officials who came to know their work.

Professionalism and coordination

The extension of presidential authority via the cabinet and the transformation of presidential outposts into command posts are not sufficient reforms. At least three other changes in the present method of public operations are necessary, if the rule of "triple alliances" is to be broken, presidential oversight restored to effective boundaries, and bureaucracies set to work efficiently to achieve the public purposes for which they were established.

1. The outlook of the middle-echelon bureaucracy, especially those who entered the ranks in the 1960's, needs to be recast.
2. More and more programs have to be introduced on a multi-agency basis, not under a single jurisdictional authority.
3. Congress and president need to synchronize their schedules—that is, the legislative and executive aspects of financial and manpower planning have to work together.

An administration can risk sharing operating responsibilities among agencies (rather than continually reshuffling organizations) and decentralizing authority only if commensurate changes take place in the professional administrative establishment. The chief adjustment required here is one of attitude, the development among the career managerial professionals of a responsiveness to program innovation and collaboration so as to ensure that directions initiated by the administration will in fact be executed as conceived. Today, the danger is not so much that administration policy will be carried out grudgingly as that it will be carried out excessively. As a disposition to handle operational detail grows at the top of the executive branch and a disposition to dabble in policy-making infects the lower ranks, the uncertainty of bureaucratic performance increases.

Over the years, the chief criticism leveled at the American civil service has been its parochial professional bias, its orientation toward occupation rather than program. Lacking the British tradition of the generalist administrative class, and building its first positive programs around scientific and engineering activities, the United States government recruits by profession—lawyers, accountants, architects, engineers, appraisers. Such specialized education and occupation encourage bureau and program parochialism, and many career men become insensitive and even resistant to broad policy

activity. Often policy is created almost accidentally at the operational level as a by-product of occupational creativity, since the decision-maker's preoccupation can be with his profession's values, not program objectives. A classic example in recent years was the resignation of two senior administrators when given assignments in the then new rent supplement program—because it “conflicted” with established practices of accountancy.

To this long-standing difficulty, a second liability has been added: conscious policy innovation by the lower echelons, a growing disposition of career executives to continue policy-making rather than to proceed to program execution. The urge has apparently grown among line administrators to inject doses of home-grown philosophy into every operation, asserting that “Congress couldn’t really have meant to proceed this way,” or “the Secretary must have been poorly advised.” Intoxicated by visions of policy formation as advanced in academic seminars, beguiled into believing that participatory administration gives the lowest regional officer the right to rewrite the rulebook unilaterally, a disturbingly large number of career professionals have become seriously undisciplined.

The havoc they have wreaked in the poverty program, in urban and welfare assistance, and in job training, is only now beginning to be appreciated. Perhaps, the most dramatic recent example was the way in which early definitions of citizen participation survived successive reformulation of the Congress and the administration to recast the doctrine and bring city halls and neighborhood groups into collaboration. At the regional level, in office after office, federal administrators never changed the signals.

Before a secretary can truly invest program responsibility in a career officer, that officer's outlook and style have to be genuinely professional. That critical distinction between bending rules (in a specific case) to meet the spirit of a program and changing rules covertly for most cases has to be appreciated. Young career men need to recognize that their legitimate power is never individually acquired, it is delegated. The new spirit of policy activism combined with the old tradition of occupational provincialism is a disaster for effective government.

There are no instant solutions to this problem of outlook, conditioned as it is by the general temper of society. Midcareer training programs, strong disciplinary action, effective information and reporting systems are all good medicines. For the present it is important simply to record that some of the major maladies of American government arise out of its nonbureaucratic behavior rather than an excessive bureaucratic posture. While the popular image of the typical government agency is one of stagnation and resistance to innovation, the present trend is more likely one of action without authorization.

A further necessity is the rapid strengthening of the managerial devices required for improved interagency collaboration. Robert Weaver is fond of observing that nobody likes coordination except the coordinator; and a sizable graveyard of ineffective interagency committees, task forces, and working groups testifies to the wisdom of that remark. It is equally true, however, that the old administrative doctrine of "going it alone," each agency operating its own program in splendid autonomy, is now a prescription for failure.

Like the space program, our domestic programs require a complex assembly of different organizations, different skills, and different programs. In the urban field, for example, a housing program unrelated to an education program unrelated to a job program unrelated to a health program will not get off the ground. Successful community programs contradict every tenet of traditional administration: they are nonnational (i.e., they cannot be applied uniformly across the country, in Seattle as in Atlanta); nonpublic (they must involve private as well as public organizations); and nonagency (HUD cannot help build a neighborhood center without a clear concept of the health or poverty program to be housed there). Collaboration is the essence of modern administration; slippage in collaboration guarantees bureaucratic failures and public indignation.

The attempt to improve interagency collaboration by taking the problems to the presidency is a prime cause for White House overload today. Operational detail and program niceties baffle the well-meaning intervenor. Cabinet-level coordination among the principal agencies is vital in setting policy guidelines and initial agreements. But the principal answers are to be found in the "lead agency" concept, represented in the so-called Convenor Executive Order issued by President Johnson, and in the decentralization of authority to regional offices with uniform boundaries and responsibilities, on which a start was made early in 1969. By placing primary operating responsibility in a single department (there are enough tasks so that each agency can have its day in command) and by placing much greater decision-making power in the field, complex programs dealing with complex problems can be made to move.

There are some qualifications to this counsel. The secretaries or agency heads involved have to be sympathetic to the joint venture and communicative about it. They and their immediate staffs need to make it clear that the combined effort has priority over any single program's success. A secretary's subordinates need to be judged on this capacity to collaborate—and so should the performance of a secretary by a president. "Paranoidal parochialism, evidenced in internecine bureaucratic combat on the part of a Department," as one White House aide has observed, is as dangerous as the doctrine of Executive Office infallibility.

The lead agency concept must also be supported by the president

and the Congress. In addition to making clear that there are enough combined programs to make every major agency a leader sometime, presidential messages should clearly delineate the type of inter-agency cooperation and participation that is necessary and mandated for the new programs involved. There must also be language in the appropriation bill or the report of the Appropriations Committee, or in the legislative history, authorizing the type of cooperation and, most important, commingling the funds.

There is a third series of professional reforms that is required—and this bears again on the area of congressional-executive relations. More energy in Washington is consumed, more frustrations generated, more constraints placed on effective management by apparent conflicts in legislative and executive calendars than by any other single condition. Occasionally out of phase throughout the whole life of the republic, these separate calendars have usually been out of phase during the course of this century, with serious consequences since World War II.

A presidential budget is submitted in January, and most major messages are in shape by spring, while congressional action is rarely forthcoming until late summer or fall. In the interim, matters proceed under continuing resolutions regarding appropriations and manpower freezes. Established routine programs can anticipate these time lags and live with them. But new programs, subject to sudden shifts in workloads or demands for speedy action, are condemned to inauspicious starts, so that their managers are seen to be failures before they have had a chance to act.

Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 was the first genuine program with teeth in it to provide open housing in the American suburbs. It was enacted five days after Dr. King was murdered. Yet, five months after his death a Congressional committee considered—and denied—an appropriation request of \$14 billion for that program. Only the unprecedented resubmission of a supplemental budget by the president and the secretary of HUD, and the stimulation of major political resources in the process, produced a start-up figure of \$2 million of administrative money in October. By statutory mandate, the program had to become operative by December 31st!

Taking management seriously

Building effective government in the United States is not a challenge for which there are simple answers. Giving tasks back to states, localities, and neighborhoods, in the hopes of reducing them to manageable proportions, is not a self-evident solution—not until the resources and motives of these institutions are appraised. Building up presidential staffs, in the expectation that they can think, act, lead, and manage may be necessary but is far from sufficient.

With operations flowing increasingly to the top and policy covertly bootlegged in at the bottom, the dilemma can be resolved only by a systematic series of steps which extends proper presidential oversight throughout the executive branch, encourages operational discretion at the program level, and rewards professional behavior.

The plain fact is that this country has never been serious about establishing a responsible and responsive bureaucracy. Still captivated by the revolutionary effort to tame a king's power; still misquoting Lord Acton, and implying power encourages corruption rather than rectitude; still regarding the delivery and nondelivery of a particularly public service as a scene in a morality play, the American government has relied heavily on the energies and the devotion of the organization amateur. The political lawyer who has suddenly been asked to handle administrative matters in the White House; the academic economist called on to weld together the energies and loyalties of a large number of men; the neighborhood leader introduced into participatory programming; the government engineer or accountant asked to grow into leadership—these have been the executors of our public policy.

This country possesses policies and programs that are clearly capable of remedying many of our paralyzing ills if only they are well-executed; it cannot afford amateurs in administration any longer. We cannot will government away; we cannot endure a second-rate government; we cannot solve problems by rhetorical denunciations. We must at long last take the problem of public management seriously.

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION (Act of October 23, 1962; Section 4369, Title 39, United States Code)

1. Date of Filing: October 1, 1969. 2. Title of Publication: *The Public Interest*. 3. Frequency of Issue: Quarterly. 4. Location of Known Office of Publication: 404 Park Avenue South, New York, N. Y. 10016. 5. Location of the Headquarters of General Business Offices of the Publisher: 404 Park Avenue South, New York, N. Y. 10016. 6. A. Publisher: Warren Demian Manshel, *The Public Interest*, 404 Park Avenue South, New York, N. Y. 10016. B. Editors: Daniel Bell and Irving Kristol, *The Public Interest*, 404 Park Avenue South, New York, N. Y. 10016. C. Managing Editor: None. 7. Owner: National Affairs, Inc. (nonprofit) 404 Park Avenue South, New York, N. Y. 10016. 8. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Per Cent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities: None. 9. Extent and Nature of Circulation. A. Total No. of Copies Printed: Average No. of Copies Each Issue during Preceding 12 Months, 10,000; Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date, 10,000. B. Paid Circulation: (1) Sales through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors and Counter Sales: Average No. Copies Each Issue during Preceding 12 Months, 1,500; Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date, 1,500. (2) Mail Subscriptions: Average No. of Copies Each Issue during Preceding 12 Months, 8,200; Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date, 8,200. C. Total Paid Circulation: Average No. of Copies Each Issue during Preceding 12 Months, 9,700; Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date, 9,700. D. Free Distribution by Mail, Carrier, or Other Means: Average Number of Copies during Preceding 12 Months, 120; Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date, 100. E. Total Distribution: Average Number of Copies Each Issue during Preceding 12 Months, 9,820; Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date, 9,800. F. Office Use, Left-Over, Unaccounted, Spoiled after Printing: Average No. Copies Each Issue during Preceding 12 Months, 180; Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date, 200. G. Total: Average No. Copies Each Issue during Preceding 12 Months, 10,000; Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date, 10,000. I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

Irving Kristol, Editor