

function effectively within an existing department or agency, nor can it develop a meaningful role as a new agency at simply an equivalent hierarchical level.

(7) On the organization chart of the Executive Branch, the only box above Departments and Agencies and below the President is the Executive Office of the President—a congeries of staff offices and assistants.

(8) But assigning OEO to EOP with a staff function only would be tantamount to making an already overburdened President the only effective line officer for the Anti-Poverty Program as a whole.

(9) Giving OEO line responsibility of its own, and additional funding responsibilities for programs carried out through traditional departments and agencies, is the only way to insure OEO sufficient status and power to give it a chance of success in the implementation and coordination of an over all anti-poverty strategy.

(10) Therefore, the principle of using EOP for Presidential staff functions only will in this case be violated in the interest of achieving an overarching goal in a field dominated by traditional, complex, multi-departmental jurisdictions and vested interests.

If these were in fact the considerations which led the President and the Congress to establish OEO in the Executive Office of the President, I see nothing in the present or in the immediate future to suggest that this initial reasoning was wrong or that its subsequent effects should be rescinded. The conditions operating in 1964 are still with us. To redistribute OEO functions to old line departments and agencies would be to cure diseases of the extremities by lopping off the head. This makes no sense to me: If anything, OEO needs more power rather than less. The problems of inter-departmental program coordination are real and they are difficult. But surely they are not solved by reducing or abolishing the only instruments of central perspective and influence which the Executive Branch possesses.

It is possible that a first rate study and analysis of the Executive Office of the President is needed, and that the name, title, and functions of OEO should be adjusted to conform to a new pattern of administrative organization within EOP. (Why, for example, should the Office of the Secretary of Defense be so much better equipped with staff and with cross-cutting Assistant Secretaries than the Executive Office of the President of the United States?) But to abolish OEO and to scatter its functions among cabinet departments and independent agencies would be to turn the "war on poverty" into a series of unrelated and potentially chaotic skirmishes. The administrative diseases of the modern nation-states are not cured by a reversion to feudalism. Thrust and creativity and energy are not promoted by assigning new and bold tasks to already preoccupied officials in traditional agencies.

Coordinating the Great Society programs is a troublesome problem. I would only argue that it is not to be accomplished by dismantling the few coordinating and innovating mechanisms which presently exist.

I cannot refrain from one postscript. This letter is being written after a week of ghetto riots throughout the nation. Rioting is simply one of the ugly faces of poverty and discrimination. Some Congressmen seem satisfied with cries for law and order. But law and order are the effects as well as the causes of domestic tranquility. There are four basic cures for urban riots: environmental decency, education, employment, and the dignity that comes from a sense of at least a minimum income combined with a sense of equal rights and equal opportunity.

As I understand it, the administration's anti-poverty and compensatory education programs are aimed at most of these basic issues. I am convinced that the nation needs to do more—especially in guaranteeing a minimum income paid without the indignity of welfare investigations.

But it seems to me ironical in the extreme that Congress should be considering the administrative dismantling of OEO at this particular moment of natural pathology.

With warm personal regards.

Sincerely,

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Dean and President,
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