

tions of purposes to be served, of existing political and administrative reality, and of the probable consequences of changing what presently exists.

Those who would scotch OEO on the grounds that it violates principles of good administration are as guilty of rationalization and speciousness as those who would defend it on the grounds of *a priori* administrative principles. Each side may think it is talking about principles of administration. In reality it is talking politics, even though administrative consequences are involved.

My strong preference would be to leave OEO where it is—at least for the time being. My judgment stems from the assumption that the reason OEO was placed initially in the Executive office of the President was that that is where the President and the Congress believed it belonged.

My hunch is that their appraisal of reality in 1964 was something as follows:

(1) Federal anti-poverty programs have been around in one form or another at least since the New Deal. They are lodged in a score of federal departments and agencies, notably HEW, HUD, Labor, Agriculture, Commerce, and Interior.

(2) These programs have been fragmented, and whatever their segmental successes, they have failed to accomplish the basic goal of abolishing intractable pockets of poverty in the United States.

(3) It is almost impossible for one line department or agency to accept direction and coordination by another line department or agency at the same level of command.

(4) Coordination of programs across departmental lines by informal or formal interagency committees is cumbersome at best, and, where long-standing and deep programmatic commitments exist within participating agencies, interagency committees often manufacture and exacerbate rather than temper and de-fuse administrative tensions.

(5) A total "war on poverty" needs a top staff which can operate through many traditional or stepped up programs in existing departments and agencies, but which can relate these several activities to an overarching objective.

(6) Such a top staff, for reasons suggested in (3) and (4) above, cannot 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 department and agencies would be to cure diseases of the extremities by looping 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