

Office of Emergency
Planning

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Wini - send a
copy of this to Bill
Collins at home and
John, then file under
Office of Emergency
Planning

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I want you to see a little memorandum on the Office of Emergency Planning which Vincent Rock prepared. It has been obvious to me for a long time that this Agency ought to be either abolished or thoroughly reorganized. It may make some sense to abolish it as an independent agency. I am passing the memorandum on for your files in the event the issue should come up.

MMK

Enclosure

OEP--OFFICE OF EMPTY PROMISE

The President ought to take a hard look at his Office of Emergency Planning in the Executive Office of the President. Dedicated men may come to a dead end. This has happened to the career staff of OEP.

OEP was created in 1961 but its roots in predecessor agencies go back to World War II. One of the great undertakings of the early stages of the war was the conversion of our civilian capability to military production. The process was accompanied by confusion and a great deal of wasted effort. Eventually it was accomplished, and the war production effort of American industry was outstanding.

Ferdinand Eberstadt and James Forrestal, who were involved in the wartime build-up, were acutely aware of the lack of pre-war planning for placing the nation on a war footing. After the war they were among the leading architects of the National Security Act of 1947. Under the Act all military activities were drawn together in the new Department of Defense. The National Security Council was created as a means of coordinating foreign policy and military policy. Finally, the National Security Resources Board was created to coordinate mobilization planning.

The NSRB was the first of several predecessor agencies of the present Office of Emergency Planning. In its early years the NSRB was engaged in the codification of World War II experience. The agency did what the military services have often been accused of doing. It planned to mobilize for the next war with the concepts of the last war. One result was the acquisition in the first postwar decade of a stockpile of strategic materials which now serves no clear purpose. *\$ 7 billion*

The United States in both the first and second world wars relied on the European allies for time to mobilize and on the oceans for protection during the interval. NSRB planning assumed time for mobilization would again be available. Equally critical for its fate, the focus was mainly on general war. Limited war such as actually developed in Korea was not within its span of attention.

Senator Symington became the head of NSRB shortly before the outbreak of fighting in Korea. He tried, unsuccessfully, to turn the organization around and

use it to direct the war effort. When the Chinese came into the Korean conflict, President Truman decided to set NSRB aside and created the Office of Defense Mobilization.

The ODM, with a staff of less than one hundred, directed the non-military aspects of the Korean effort. NSRB remained moribund during the period. After the truce in Korea, NSRB along with other elements of the industrial control agencies was assimilated into a new Office of Defense Mobilization.

The new ODM took up mobilization planning where NSRB left off. While taking account of the limited war contingency, planning continued on the World War II mobilization model.

Meanwhile the Soviet Union had acquired nuclear capabilities. On both sides the stock of nuclear weapons continued to grow. Long-range bombers capable of delivering the weapons in a few hours came into being. The United States could no longer count on having time to mobilize. The final blow to World War II strategic and mobilization concepts arrived with the inter-continental ballistic missiles. Time for action was cut to no more than a half hour, and probably not more than a few minutes. Radically new concepts of readiness were required to face this contingency.

The response of ODM was to move in the direction of the activities of the Federal Civil Defense Administration, which had been set up as an independent agency during the Korean conflict. Emphasis was placed on decentralized self help, phantom organization charts, and technical advice. The convergence in the functions of the two organizations resulted in their being combined in 1958. From 1958 until 1961 the emphasis of the combined organization was overwhelmingly on civil defense.

In 1961 the civil defense function was transferred to the Department of Defense. This was the result of a growing recognition that protection of our people was an integral part of the mission of DOD. So far as civil defense was feasible or desirable it belonged, in peacetime at least, within the department.

With departure of civil defense, the new name given the planning elements left behind was the Office of Emergency Planning. The OEP was charged with overall

emergency planning coordination for the government. The strategic dilemma remained. What kind of planning is possible for a thermonuclear exchange? In the face of this question, OEP has continued to rework the mass of paper plans and arrangements which have accumulated over the years. A part of the staff has also kept its mind off the problem by tending to odd tasks having to do with materials, tariffs, and other matters which are rarely of Presidential importance. Disaster relief, another function of the office, is largely the job of the Department of Defense.

For almost twenty years NSRB-ODM-OCDDM-OEP have been engaged in mobilization planning. In each of these years millions of dollars have been spent on the process. The relevance of all this activity to problems the nation now faces or is likely to face in the future is hard to perceive.

The planning of OEP and all its predecessors has looked backward to models of World War II and later Korea rather than being concerned with the present and the future. While formally the plans look to distant contingencies, they have never been able to fully cope with the implications of rapidly advancing science and technology.

Effective planning has been vitiated by two misconceptions. First, is the idea that detailed civilian planning for mobilization is useful in the nuclear age. Second, is a view of planning which sets it apart from the ongoing developments in the nation and the world.

The concept of mobilization planning imbedded in the National Security Act of 1947 was derived from the World War II experience. By the mid-fifties nuclear weapons had made it almost wholly obsolete. No enemy will wait for mobilization when they have the power to do vast damage to the society at once. Moreover, the weapons in hand make mobilization in the old sense unnecessary. In a broken back war the economy must be mobilized, but under such radically different conditions that paper plans would be useless. Nor did elaborate alert exercises now discontinued prove more fruitful.

Plans with no effect on the ongoing processes of change and growth are without value. Indeed, if present plans have any effect, it is probably harmful. They lull people into believing there is a plan of action for dealing with a nuclear contingency when in fact no meaningful action in accordance with the paper plans can be taken.

Planning in the nuclear age must be an integral part of Presidential decision making. It should be viewed not as a separate activity but as an integral element of all. Planning is no more than a systematic way of helping the decision maker to take into account, to appreciate, a broader range of considerations as he acts.

The President and the nation need planning, but of a far different kind than that provided by OEP. The survival and progress of the society depends on what we do about automation, scientific and technical education, research and development, metropolitan development, new world enterprises, and many other things. Planning for these problems is essential at the Presidential level. Piles of paper plans are useless.

OEP is at a dead end. Its 300 employees serve no useful purpose of major national and presidential significance. Yet its existence helps to preclude the necessary growth of vitally important capability in the Office of Science and Technology, the Space Council, the Council of Economic Advisors, the Bureau of the Budget, and other areas of the Executive Office from which the President urgently needs additional planning assistance. Yes indeed, the time is long overdue for a hard look at OEP.



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