

ORGANIZATION AND REORGANIZATION
AS MANIFESTATION OF PUBLIC POLICY:
NATIONAL SECURITY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

by

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(ABSTRACT)

This dissertation discusses the administrative mechanisms used to execute the president's federal inter-agency program for national security emergency preparedness (NSEP). The research examines NSEP organizational history starting with its formal creation in 1933, and focusing on its most recent structure, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (during the 1978-1990 period). The dissertation explores formal organizations as manifestations of public policy. The critical events of recent NSEP history resulting in the redefinition of the public policy are the focus of this case study. The findings are: (1) that reorganization has been a significant aspect of NSEP history; (2) that the formal and informal relationship of an organization and its leadership with the White House

constitute a critical aspect of organizational design; (3) that the task of coordination is a murky one rife with hazards; and (4) that the effectiveness of a reorganization can be undermined by its implementation.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----|
| ABSTRACT..... | ii |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS..... | iii |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS..... | v |
| I. INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY..... | 1 |
| A. Introduction..... | 1 |
| 1. The Proposition..... | 2 |
| 2. Research Terminology..... | 3 |
| 3. National Security Emergency Preparedness (NSEP) Over Time..... | 6 |
| 4. Research Scope..... | 7 |
| 5. Relevance of Topic..... | 8 |
| 6. Prior Research on NSEP..... | 9 |
| a. Independent Coordinating Agencies... | 10 |
| b. Case Studies..... | 11 |
| B. Research Methodology..... | 14 |
| 1. Introduction..... | 14 |
| 2. Use of Case Study Methodology..... | 15 |
| 3. Phase I..... | 17 |
| 4. Phase II..... | 21 |
| 5. Phase III..... | 28 |
| 6. Phase IV..... | 30 |
| C. Dissertation Structure..... | 30 |
| II. REORGANIZATION AS A REFORM STRATEGY: THEORY AND PRACTICE..... | 32 |
| A. Federal Reorganization as a Framework for the FEMA Reorganization of 1978..... | 32 |
| B. The Practice of Federal Reorganization..... | 34 |
| 1. The Keep Commission..... | 35 |
| 2. The Taft Commission..... | 36 |
| 3. The Brownlow Committee..... | 37 |
| 4. The First Hoover Commission..... | 39 |
| 5. The Second Hoover Commission and the President's Committee on Government Organization..... | 41 |
| 6. The Kennedy and Johnson Approaches..... | 42 |
| 7. The Ash Council..... | 44 |
| 8. The Carter Approach..... | 46 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| C. Orthodox Theory of Administrative Organization..... | 46 |
| D. A Wider Perspective on Orthodox Administrative Theory..... | 50 |
| 1. On the Principles..... | 50 |
| 2. On the Alleged Effectiveness of Reorganization..... | 54 |
| E. A Synthesis of Reasons to Reorganize..... | 56 |
| 1. Five Reasons Drawn from Orthodox Administrative Theory..... | 58 |
| 2. Six Reasons Drawn from the <i>Realpolitik</i> ... | 60 |
| F. The Legacy of the Reorganization Literature... | 62 |
| III. NSEP: THE FOUNDATION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE MECHANISMS FOR NATIONAL SECURITY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT..... | 64 |
| A. Scope..... | 64 |
| B. Overview..... | 66 |
| C. The Early Years..... | 69 |
| D. The Roosevelt Administration: The National Resources Planning Board and the Office of Emergency Management..... | 76 |
| 1. The National Resources Planning Board.... | 77 |
| 2. The Office of Emergency Management..... | 80 |
| E. The Roosevelt Administration: The National Security Resources Board..... | 87 |
| F. The Truman Administration: The Office of Defense Mobilization..... | 93 |
| G. The Eisenhower Administration: A Reconstituted Office of Defense Mobilization..... | 96 |
| H. The Eisenhower Administration: The Office of Defense and Civilian Mobilization..... | 99 |
| 1. The Duplication Issue | 103 |
| 2. The Bureaucratic Control Issue | 105 |
| a. Placement in the Executive Office--Discussion..... | 106 |
| b. Contemplation of a Department--Discussion..... | 109 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| 3. The Political Issue..... | 111 |
| I. The Kennedy Administration: The Office of Emergency Planning..... | 113 |
| J. The Nixon Administration: The Office of Emergency Preparedness..... | 117 |
| K. Summary..... | 125 |
| IV. NSEP: THE CARTER REORGANIZATION..... | 129 |
| A. Legacy of the Early Years..... | 129 |
| B. New Administration--New Agenda..... | 130 |
| C. Executive Branch Discussion of President's Reorganization Project (PRP) Draft Proposal..... | 135 |
| 1. Organizational Design Issues..... | 135 |
| 2. Scope Issues..... | 143 |
| a. Department of Defense (DOD)..... | 143 |
| b. General Services Administration (GSA)..... | 148 |
| c. Department of Commerce (DOC) and Interest Groups..... | 149 |
| d. Department of Treasury..... | 154 |
| e. National Security Council (NSC)..... | 156 |
| f. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Interest Groups..... | 157 |
| 3. Stakeholders Varied in Views of the PRP Effort..... | 160 |
| D. The PRP's Proposal..... | 160 |
| E. The President's Submission to the Congress.... | 168 |
| F. Concerns from Outside the Executive Branch.... | 171 |
| G. Critical Issues Argued Between the Executive and Legislative Branches..... | 179 |
| 1. Organizational Design: The Choice of the Independent Agency..... | 180 |
| 2. The White House Relationship: Visibility..... | 184 |
| H. Approval of Reorganization Plan No. 3 of 1978..... | 186 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| I. Implications of the Reorganization..... | 190 |
| V. FINDINGS PART I: ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN ISSUES... | 192 |
| A. The Basic Design..... | 192 |
| 1. Choice of Independent Agency Structure... | 192 |
| 2. Key Informant Perspectives on the Vision..... | 195 |
| B. The White House Relationship..... | 203 |
| 1. Formal White House Support..... | 203 |
| 2. The Emergency Management Council..... | 203 |
| 3. Emergency Mobilization Preparedness Board..... | 209 |
| 4. Proposed Emergency Management Authority..... | 224 |
| 5. Senior Interagency Group..... | 232 |
| 6. Policy Coordinating Committee..... | 237 |
| 7. Summary of Effects of Vertical Organizational Design..... | 242 |
| C. Interagency Coordination Role: Fantasy or Fact?..... | 243 |
| 1. The Concept..... | 246 |
| 2. The Definition..... | 247 |
| 3. Orthodox Administrative Theory and Realpolitik..... | 250 |
| 4. Ways to Coordinate..... | 253 |
| 5. Weaknesses of Coordination as a Design Facet..... | 255 |
| 6. Research Findings on NSEP-related Interagency Coordination..... | 255 |
| a. FEMA's Coordination Responsibilities..... | 255 |
| b. Emergency Management Council..... | 260 |
| c. Emergency Mobilization Preparedness Board..... | 260 |
| d. Senior Interagency Group..... | 263 |
| e. National System for Emergency Coordination and its NSEP Equivalent..... | 268 |
| f. Policy Coordinating Committee..... | 269 |
| 7. NSEP-related Interagency Coordination: Perhaps a "Philosopher's Stone" After All..... | 273 |

| | | |
|------|--|-----|
| VI. | FINDINGS PART II: IMPLEMENTATION AS THE MISSING LINK..... | 277 |
| | A. The Task of Implementation..... | 277 |
| | B. Importance of Follow-through..... | 279 |
| | C. Pre-determined Administrative Arrangements.... | 284 |
| | 1. Non-Career Personnel..... | 285 |
| | 2. Career Personnel..... | 287 |
| | 3. Administrative Processes..... | 288 |
| | 4. Physical Space..... | 291 |
| | D. Personal Access to White House During Implementation..... | 294 |
| | E. Did FEMA Want Too Much? Or Was the Problem Structural?..... | 303 |
| | F. Conclusion..... | 305 |
| VII. | CONCLUSION: THERE IS NO INTEREST IN BASEBALL IN DECEMBER..... | 308 |
| | A. NSEP Reorganization: Recurring Trap for the Unwary..... | 309 |
| | B. White House Institutional and Personal Support..... | 314 |
| | C. Coordination: "The Philosopher's Stone"..... | 316 |
| | D. Implementation: "The Missing Link"..... | 319 |
| | E. Thoughts on Further Research..... | 320 |
| | F. Concluding Remarks..... | 321 |
| | LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS..... | 323 |
| | BIBLIOGRAPHY..... | 325 |
| | VITA..... | 357 |

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

| | | |
|-----------|---|-----|
| Figure 1. | NSEP Emergency Organizations..... | 68 |
| Figure 2. | NSEP Emergency Organization Typology..... | 127 |

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In times of emergency, especially national security emergency, the president of the United States becomes the center of a federal response as the American public looks for cohesive and definitive leadership. Overwhelming centripetal force moves toward the center of the Executive Office of the President as the president makes the federal response part of the national agenda and as the public, press, and federal establishment defer to the responsibility and authority of the president. In the nation's experience, government reorganization and special new coordinating organizations are inevitable in times of crisis. The reconfigured federal structure becomes especially important with the need to effectively mobilize national resources and to galvanize the will of the nation, whether to help the recovery of those affected or to prosecute a conflict.

The American people and the federal establishment generally have accepted the guidance of central government during times of crisis. Over-all direction, supervision, coordination, and control during such periods constrain the tendency of each department and agency, and each program

within those departments and agencies, to drive toward specific organizational objectives. For this reason, mechanisms for direction, supervision, coordination, and control generally conflict with department and agency self-defined or clearly mandated purposes.

The Proposition

This dissertation explores the administrative apparatus used to execute the president's inter-departmental/inter-agency program for national security emergency preparedness (NSEP).¹ In particular, the research examines NSEP history prior to the decision to reorganize the administrative mechanism in 1978, and the implications of certain NSEP public policy decisions (between 1978 and 1990) for effective program management. The three areas of major interest for public administration concern the White House support for the new institution, the murky mission of coordination, and the implementation of the reorganization.

¹Subsequent references to the term "national security emergency preparedness" will be noted as "NSEP." Note that the only official definition of NSEP is one that is defined in its own terms: "A national security emergency is any occurrence, including natural disaster, military attack, technological emergency, or other emergency, that seriously degrades or seriously threatens the national security of the United States." This definition is contained in Executive Order 12656 of November 18, 1988, "Assignment of Emergency Preparedness Responsibilities," 3 CFR, 1988 Comp., p. 585.

Research Terminology

Several specific terms are used repeatedly in this dissertation. Since they commonly may not be used or understood outside the realm of emergency management, it is useful to present them and establish a common understanding of their use in this document. Some terms can be introduced only briefly, receiving considerably more attention in later sections of the dissertation. The first of these is "reorganization." As used in this document, reorganization refers to the reordering of the bureaucratic organization to accomplish a specific mission. "Authority" and "authorities" refer to the legal powers specifically vested in an organization or the ability to command attention when the command can be linked to specific legal powers. "Emergency management" pertains to the preparation for, mitigation of the effects of, and response to the full range of fast-moving, high-risk events that seriously threaten the national well-being. "National security emergencies" are a sub-set of the broader range of events or threatened events thought of as emergencies.

Critical to the context of this research is an understanding of the full scope of NSEP. NSEP is preparation for nuclear attack, mobilization for conventional war, resource shortages, and natural and

technological catastrophes (including, perhaps, a nuclear meltdown, or a California earthquake that destroys satellite down-links and sole-source defense industries in Silicon Valley). Over the years, NSEP has been defined to include: the development of plans, systems, and capabilities for the support of military endeavors, physical protection of industry, continuity of government, emergency management of resources, and the stabilization of the economy. NSEP encompasses the non-military aspects of national defense preparedness and is an implied responsibility of the president within Article II of the Constitution of the United States.

NSEP is grounded in the fundamental principle that government provides for the security of the nation, its values, its people, and its social, economic, and political structures.² Historically, the execution of this responsibility has been through organizations created by the executive branch rather than through organizations created by the legislative branch of the government. The

²"...Because it is impossible to foresee or to define the extent and variety of national exigencies, and the correspondent extent and variety of the means which may be necessary to satisfy them. The circumstances that endanger the safety of nations are infinite; and for this reason no constitutional shackles can wisely be imposed on the power to which the care of it is committed." [The Federalist No. 23, (Jacob E. Cooke ed. 1961).]

Constitution of the United States sets up no administrative organization for the government--it vests executive power in the president and requires that the president assure the faithful execution of the laws.

The term "national security emergency preparedness" was not commonly used until the 1980's. However, the term is descriptive of the area of national policy that finds its contemporary origins in the remedial preparedness efforts resulting from World War I. NSEP became a serious federal government effort during the economic and national defense crises of the 1930's and 1940's. During that period, it was managed at the highest level of government--the White House. While not organizationally trouble-free, it was seen as the critical partner of the military, intelligence, and diplomatic functions in providing for the national defense.

"Centrifugal" and "centripetal" are used throughout the document to characterize the relationship of the White House and the administrative mechanism for NSEP.

"Centrifugal" is used for the periods during which the administrative mechanism was pushed away from the central axis of White House power and prestige. "Centripetal" is used for the periods during which it was pulled toward the White House center. The periods of weak (centrifugal) and strong (centripetal) attraction toward the White House

center are useful for understanding the absence or prominence of emergency management on the national policy agenda, and hence, its importance and visibility.

NSEP Over Time

Over the years, the responsibility for NSEP program execution was shifted downward in the federal administrative establishment. Specifically, in the 1970's, the placement of the key planning organization shifted from the Executive Office of the President to placement within sub-tiers of departments and agencies. In 1978, the responsibilities for assuring national security emergency preparedness were combined and placed in a small independent agency, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, reporting to the president.³

There has been no consensus on an optimal position for the organizational placement of national security emergency management. Its effectiveness and prerogatives largely are influenced by the federal departments and agencies--organizations which guard their own interests and have their own priorities. In peacetime, the Department of Defense is a major proponent, particularly in the NSEP

³ Subsequent references to the term "Federal Emergency Management Agency" will be noted as "FEMA."

aspects of defense production. This is entirely consistent with the broader Department of Defense mission.

However, the domestic departments and agencies with primarily peacetime missions and constituencies also share responsibility for the emergency management of the nation's resources (industrial production, raw materials, fiscal and monetary policy, labor force, energy resources, telecommunications resources, and transportation resources). The execution of their responsibilities for emergency management competes with the execution of their other primary missions and with their preparations for contingencies that are more likely than national security emergencies. This environment and the relationship of FEMA and the White House are intertwined in this study of the administration of NSEP through FEMA.

Research Scope

This dissertation encompasses the period from 1933 through early 1990, with particular attention to the FEMA period, that began with Carter's Reorganization Plan No. 3 of 1978. The organizational focus of this research is FEMA because FEMA was charged with national security emergency management responsibility during that period. In the course of research documentation, discussion will touch upon the difficulties inherent in placing responsibility for

interdepartmental coordination within a small independent federal agency.

The dissertation specifically examines the critical events of the past decade that relate to the administrative history of NSEP. These critical events are considered within the framework of themes of reorganization and the implementation of a public policy decision--the integration of federal emergency management functions. At a broad level, this research effort sheds light on the use of an independent agency to discharge presidential-level responsibilities. The relevant literature is in the fields of governmental reorganizations and the management of NSEP.

Relevance of Topic

NSEP is a major function of the national government. This major function of government--emergency management--has been in what amounts to a constant state of flux since World War II. There were at least fifteen organizational changes in the years between 1945 and 1978.⁴ While some of these changes were minor, the fact remains that the large number of organizational changes indicates that domestic NSEP is

⁴The years during which organizational change took place are as follows: 1945, 1947, 1948, 1950, 1953, 1955, 1958, 1961, 1964, 1968, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, and 1978.

either the trophy of bureaucratic competition, or the victim of bureaucratic juggling.

This study is significant at this time because the relevant public policy decisions of 1978 have not been documented in the literature. The dissertation also contributes to the field of study surrounding the use of federal independent agencies for coordinating interagency programs. At this time, the area of NSEP organization theory may be described through the words of Peri Arnold in reference to federal organization: ". . . our maps are wrong and our theory is weak."⁵ This concept of inadequate theoretical and practical maps becomes significant to the research because the FEMA organization would exhibit potentially avoidable design weaknesses.

Prior Research on NSEP

Very little has been written since World War II on why and how the federal government prepares for domestic national security emergencies. There is a significant amount of literature on the management of natural and technological disasters and on organizational factors related to them. However, the magnitude and nature of

⁵Peri E. Arnold, "Reorganization and Politics: A Reflection on the Adequacy of Administrative Theory," Public Administration Review 34 (1974):205-211.

national security emergency management and the exercise of extraordinary authorities clearly separate national security emergency management from domestic disaster management.

Commentaries on preparedness organizations created since the 1930's are limited. The richest accounts are those provided by the public administration academicians who worked in the federal government during World War II. They document the validity or lack of validity of the "principles of administration." Critical analyses generally are missing. This dissertation uses the NSEP, general management, and federal government organizational literature that is available and pertinent in examining the visions of the public policy decision and the eventual organizational realities of the 1978-1990 period.

Independent Coordinating Agencies. The most extensive treatment of the general subject of executive branch independent agencies and interdepartmental cooperation and competition is offered by Seidman and Gilmour, Szanton, and Moe.⁶ Significant literature exists on the general subject

⁶Harold Seidman and Robert Gilmour, Politics, Position and Power (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Peter Szanton, Federal Reorganization (Chatham, New Jersey: Chatham House Publishers, 1981); and Ronald Moe, "The Federal Executive Establishment Evaluation and Trends," 1980, prepared for the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs by the Congressional Research Service.

of reorganization and organization theory. This literature will be used to inform the study on the use of the independent agency organization as a coordination mechanism for the execution of the presidential responsibilities. The various presidential and other commissions on federal organization will be incorporated only selectively because they generally omit NSEP functions in their discussions. The documents supporting President Carter's Reorganization Plan No. 3 of 1978 provide the basis for understanding the substance of the NSEP function in government. Additional government literature, such as the executive orders and national security directives of the 1978-1990 period, while not explaining the theory, document the national policy and will be used.

Case Studies. While contemporary case studies address the general area of the political economy of organizations, they offer little in methodology or substance to an understanding of the institutional history of independent coordinating agencies. There are general theoretical works in the areas of reorganization, coordination, and independent agencies. However, there are few case studies. Only a few private sector organizations (for example, hospitals, research laboratories, and universities) possess management systems

and culture relevant to the study of government reorganization.⁷

The case study literature of the emergency organizations of World War II and basic management literature relating to principles of coordination are far more useful than the more contemporary case studies of non-emergency organizations. Earlier literature on domestic NSEP and government organization was produced primarily by the academicians who served the federal government during World War II. Such documentation offers insight into the nature of the problem of managing the nation's resources during national emergencies. This literature conveys lessons for the concept of emergency organization for preparedness, as well as for response.

John Millett, a member of Luther Gulick's staff of the National Resources Planning Board in World War II, analyzed the National Resource Planning Board of the early 1940's.⁸ Herman Somers' discussion of the Office of War Mobilization and Reconversion provides an excellent

⁷Frederick C. Mosher, Governmental Reorganizations: Cases and Commentary (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1967). (Hereafter cited as Mosher, Governmental Reorganizations.)

⁸John Millett, The Process and Organization of Government Planning (New York: Columbia University Press, 1947).

discussion of World War II formal and informal coordination by agreement, infiltration, liaison, amalgamation, operating agency, and subject area.⁹ Leonard D. White's 1942 Defense and War Administration Supplement to his classic text on public administration also should be added to the list of wartime recorders.¹⁰ The work of Grant McConnell, who captured the history of the Federal Security Agency, and many others who wrote of their wartime experiences provides useful grounding and history for the discussion of the NSEP policies and organizations of the last decade. According to Luther Gulick, their study of the World War II experience was designed to explore the extent to which the generally accepted theories and "principles" of administration were verified under the stress and strains of war management. They sought practical administrative lessons from the wartime experiments.¹¹

⁹Herman M. Somers, Presidential Agency, the Office of War Mobilization and Reconversion (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950), pp. 42-46, 138-172.

¹⁰Leonard D. White, Defense and War Administration Supplement to Introduction to the Study of Public Administration (New York: MacMillan Company, 1942), pp. 599-619.

¹¹Luther Gulick, Administrative Reflections from World War II (University, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1948).

Credible documentation from World War I and World War II reveals that there were wars within wars as organizations pursued their natural and traditional roles. For example, Secretary of War Stimson noted that, not only were there tremendous resource clashes within the War Department, there also were clashes between military authorities and the guardians of civilian economic interests as each forwarded their opposing goals. Possibly the most telling statement on organization is that of Seidman and Gilmour. In their words, "the ideal of a . . . frictionless organization structure is a dangerous illusion."¹²

Research Methodology

Introduction

This is a historical case study using documentary sources elaborated upon by interviews with key informants. The case study documents the critical events in the administrative history of the new independent agency--the agency created to coordinate a major national responsibility of the president. This agency--FEMA--is an administrative mechanism that bears the focus of much of this study. The

¹²Harold Seidman and Robert Gilmour, Politics, Position and Power (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 15. (Hereafter cited as Seidman and Gilmour, Politics, Position and Power.)

research protocol identified the critical events that shaped the evolution of the NSEP administrative mechanism and national policy. Data were collected from documents, and from individuals who participated in or observed the events of the 1978-1990 period in NSEP.

The rationale for examining multiple events is that the shift in national policy cannot be tagged to one easily identifiable landmark event. It is better captured in an analysis of the discrete events, processes and documents that, taken together, inform the larger issue. This research records more than facts and views. It searches for the events related to the implementation and evolution of the vision of NSEP management.

Use of Case Study Methodology

The administrative mechanism (FEMA) was explored and described using a participant observer methodology within a case study design. The case study is appropriate in a study such as this which investigates a contemporary phenomena within the real-life context, when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and when multiple sources of evidence are used.¹³ The case study

¹³Robert K. Yin, Case Study Research: Design and Methods (Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications, 1989), p. 23. (Hereafter cited as Yin, Case Study Research.)

methodology was selected over other methods (such as standardized experiments and surveys) because it offers an opportunity to investigate the holistic characteristics of complex organizational and governmental processes that are not as amenable to investigation by other techniques. Yin argues that "the case study is preferred in examining contemporary events."¹⁴ As noted by Hugh Heclo in commenting on the study of executive power, the power of the president is best understood by studying his organizations.¹⁵

The establishment of validity has been problematic with case studies. For example, just because certain events or characteristics occurred in the studied situation, there is not necessarily a basis for suggesting that those findings can be generalized to other situations. However, as environmental forces affected FEMA, so might they affect those other independent agencies in some way. Numerous studies document the effects of environmental forces and complex environments on policy-making and organizations.

The use of credentialed expert reviewers and the insistence on corroborating documents and interviews, together with the retention of records, have ensured that

¹⁴Yin, Case Study Research, p. 23.

¹⁵Hugh Heclo, Studying the Presidency: A Report to the Ford Foundation, August 1977, p. 6.

this case study met the test of reliability. Phase I of this case study formulated specific areas of investigation, collected historical data and informally discussed the organizational history with FEMA's middle and senior-level managers and retirees; it identified candidate key events and candidate key informants.

Phase II incorporated interviews with key informants to identify the critical events and validate initial information and documentation. Phase III filled in gaps in documentation, clarified discrepancies, analyzed the data, and drafted the dissertation. Phase IV synthesized all phases of the research process and incorporated theory with findings in a manner consistent with the dissertation format.

Phase I

This dissertation reviews oral and written information in order to compare the reorganization vision of 1978 with the resultant administrative mechanism for NSEP that evolved from it. It records and analyzes key events identified through the research process, rather than simply reconstructing random events from available documents. The research relies on coupling the study of administrative records with systematic interviewing of the key individuals who observed or played a role in the recent history of NSEP

policy and its administration. Key informant methodology was appropriate for gaining insight into events in which the key informant participated. In the clamor for a more empirical method of measuring administrative phenomena, there is no known substitute for the historical method in the hands of a capable participant recorder/generalizer.¹⁶ Many elements essential to understanding the administrative process have not been recorded in official records. It is from key informants that such information, not normally shared, can be solicited, analyzed, and documented. One of the best ways to learn anything is to ask someone who knows something about it.

Participant observation provided both opportunities and research problems in this study. The most distinctive opportunity was the access to key officials and documents that otherwise would be less accessible or unaccessible to a researcher from outside the organization. Yin notes that such a perspective can be invaluable in producing an accurate portrayal of a case study phenomenon.¹⁷ The major problem of participant observation is potential bias. However, after weighing the benefits and costs of the

¹⁶Herbert Emmerich, "Purpose into Mission," Public Administration Review 8 (1948):211-214.

¹⁷Yin, Case Study Research, p. 92-94.

participant observer approach, the benefits far exceeded the costs in this study, especially since the study design incorporated measures to minimize the risk of bias (as described in the discussion of the Phases II and III of the research methodology).

The researcher had access to documents and the key officials of the 1978-1990 time period. This access complemented an understanding of the processes gained from the researcher's accepted professional position within the subject independent agency. The researcher's position within the organization provided invaluable access to, and understanding of, the individuals and documents that influenced the early years of the organization. Informal discussions with FEMA officials were held in order to provide background information on the written records, better ground the researcher, and identify the critical events and critical variables for in-depth investigation in the interview process.

The initial sources of evidence were documentary. Specifically, the documents included the following:

1. Historical documents relating to the organizational history of emergency organizations
2. Federal government reorganization documents that provided the rationale for the 1978 reorganization

3. FEMA executive orders, implementation documents, and other relevant documents that presented the vision for the organization

4. Executive branch studies and reports that analyzed emergency organization effectiveness

5. Studies and reports on organization produced outside the executive branch (for example, by the General Accounting Office (GAO), Congressional Research Service (CRS), National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA), and the Brookings Institution)

6. White House policy documents describing the NSEP management role for FEMA

7. Management literature on coordination and public administration literature on the principles of management

8. FEMA policy and implementation documents, studies, memoranda, letters, and other materials related to the NSEP management role

9. Department and agency letters and memoranda related to the NSEP management role

Data collection followed a general plan of searching out background on the key events of the 1978-1990 period in NSEP and response policy and FEMA's manifestation of that policy. Analysis of the documents focused on the

assumptions of NSEP management expressed within the documents.

Phase II

Identification of the critical events and understanding and corroboration of the written records required background information from management officials and critical observers of the process. Multiple methods were used to improve the researcher's understanding and analysis of the organization and thereby the validity of the research. The protocol called for obtaining corroborating evidence for each document and interview source. The intent was to use multiple sources to support each theme and event but also for the two forms of sources (written and oral) to contribute to the depth of understanding of each critical event.

Attention was paid to other points of view and to alternative interpretations of documents. This countered the possibility of promoting a single view on a subject. Alternative interpretations were anticipated, knowing that human beings are likely to perceive and interpret the critical events of the decade differently. Interviews targeted the "elite" or "specialized" group of individuals called "key informants." Key informants were individuals who, because of their position, were assumed to have been

involved in the key events. The special knowledge and experience they were likely to have distinguished them from other sources. All key informants were knowledgeable on at least some part of NSEP history. In setting the scope of the research, a decision was made to rely on written (rather than oral) documentation of congressional perspectives. And while the perspectives of non-NSEP FEMA stakeholders were of interest in understanding the larger picture of FEMA history, they were not focused on in the interview process.

The specialized interview differed from the standard survey interview method in at least four ways. First, the number of subjects was more limited. Rather than interview many subjects selected in a sample designed to guarantee a statistically acceptable level of accuracy in describing a population of some kind, the subjects were selected because of the position they had held or because of their experiences. Second, the questions asked in each interview were not necessarily the same and differed in significant ways depending on the varying positions and experiences of each participant. Topics and details were likely to focus on what the subject believed was significant. Third, areas to be probed were not predefined; they differed in number and content from key informant to key informant. Fourth, the interviewer adjusted the interview to help the

respondent if it appeared that a question was not understood correctly.

Interviews were requested by telephone with an explanation of the purpose of the interview and an estimate of the duration (60 minutes). Note-taking was in the form of a "contact summary form" format adapted from Miles and Huberman.¹⁸ The contact summary form elements included the following:

1. Source
2. Key Event Being Discussed
3. Date/Time/Place Data
4. Basic Questions and Identification of Critical Events
5. Additional Questions/Replies Section
6. Follow-on References
7. Summary Remarks Section

In interviews not focused on a specific critical event, questions more generally targeted the history of the agency and the NSEP function.

Questions for each open-ended interview are outlined below. They provided the sense of order for the interview and assured that no important matter was overlooked.

¹⁸Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman, Qualitative Data Analysis: A Sourcebook of New Methods (Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications, 1984), pp. 50-55.

1. Describe the envisioned FEMA NSEP program/authorities of 1978.
2. Describe the significant events of the decade that are related to the envisioned FEMA NSEP management.
3. What led up to them?
4. Describe the influences.
5. What do you recall as the goals of the reorganization strategy?
6. Was the envisioned 1978 program the same as the program at the time of (during or following) the critical event(s)?
7. Describe the interactions of FEMA officials with White House officials.
8. Is there something I should have asked that I didn't?

In successfully researching the case study sources, five common skills generally are needed.¹⁹ These include: question-asking, listening, adaptiveness and flexibility, grasp of issues, and lack of bias. This research design required the utilization of these skills in order to maximize the benefit from each source and improve the validity and value of the research effort. The pattern of questions and the open-ended flexibility of the protocol

¹⁹Yin, Case Study Research, pp. 61-65.

were designed to provide information on how and why events occurred so that, in aggregate, events could be corroborated and conclusions could be drawn. A "follow-on question" technique was used to probe promising avenues of inquiry.

Taping can assure the greatest amount of accurate and detailed information. However, in this case, tapes were not used because they potentially are inhibiting and distracting. Notes were taken during the interview (rather than after it) to minimize loss of details and areas of discussion. Marginal notes were made during and after the interviews reflecting the atmosphere of the interview, notes to pursue, cross-allusions, the researcher's own feelings or thoughts, reactions, insights, and elaboration or clarifications of comments. Marginal notes were noted in double parentheses to distinguish them from key informant contributions.

Spradley identifies four kinds of field notes: a verbatim account, an expanded account recorded after each session, a field journal, and a provisional running record of analysis and interpretation.²⁰ The last was the most appropriate for this case study. While it was not

²⁰J. Spradley, The Ethnographic Interview (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1979).

published, it established the evolution of the researcher's thinking.

Some key informants discussed certain events at length, reflecting on them in depth; some dwelt not at all on related events often cited by others. Some dwelt on context and the political aspects of the events. Others reflected an obvious depth of understanding of the organizational principles behind certain of the critical events. Overall, based on the preliminary investigation and interviews, the critical events most often identified were: the establishment of FEMA, the establishment of the Emergency Mobilization Preparedness Board, the attempted publication of draft Federal Preparedness Circular 6, the issuance of the William French Smith letter in 1984, and the issuance of National Security Decision Directive 188, Executive Order 12656, and National Security Directive 1.

The interview data, stored by source, were coded to systematize the analysis. The first tier of the coding system was by event (as the events were identified through the interview process). The second tier of coding was by themes related to the events, that is, department and agency reactions to the coordination process, and White House sponsorship of the agency NSEP program. Information that was legally or ethically out of bounds (for example,

information concerning legal cases, criminal investigations, and so on) was not used in the analysis.

The interviews were completed with experts who were part of the process between 1978 and 1990 or were serious students of the process. The candidate list provided with the prospectus was followed closely. According to the protocol, at least four commentaries on each event were recorded. Forty-six key informants were interviewed in individual meetings. They included 27 of the 32 listed in the prospectus. The omissions were due to: one individual having left the country; one who declined to be interviewed; two who could not be reached; and one who was determined by the author to be unnecessary due to adequate coverage of his area of expertise. The interviews were done on a non-attribution basis with no names affixed to data used in the text of the dissertation. The list of key informants is included as part of the bibliography.

Copies of the major documents and interview notes were collected and retained for two purposes. One is for replicability of this research effort; the other is to provide a research base for further research. As suggested by Miles and Huberman, case study notes and contact summary forms supplement the raw documents for validation of the

research.²¹ The documents will be retained in a form for efficient retrieval for a period of five years after completion of the dissertation.

Phase III

This phase of the research protocol included assembling the findings, assimilating and interpreting them, and transforming them into a clear discussion that communicates their significance. In other words, the data became converted into information. The case study notes and the contact summary form are available to substantiate the analysis leading to the conclusions of the research. The documentation includes citations for formal documents, staff papers, and interview sources. These citations enhance the credibility of the study and provide a solid basis for later study and reference by others.

The evidence assembled as a result of the research was linked to the study's propositions; that is, the data highlight the critical events in the nation's management of NSEP between 1978 and 1990. Phase III of the research was used to review the data collected and to fill in gaps in the documentation. Revisiting selected informants was not necessary. With the completion of the research, the data

²¹Miles and Huberman, Qualitative Data Analysis, p. 244.

were analyzed and the draft dissertation was produced. By this point, the written records were validated by the interviews and multiple interviews on each subject produced a valid commentary on each event.

Prominent themes emerged from the examination and analysis of the written record and the supporting oral history. These themes were important to the changed vision of the responsibilities of FEMA as it made its first steps. The resulting analysis provides information on the use of the independent agency as a mechanism for the discharge of a presidential function.

In this research effort, the data analysis tracked the discoverable critical events in the 1979-1990 time period that related to NSEP at the federal level. The events have been discussed separately within their three dominant themes: White House sponsorship, the task of coordination, and the implementation of the reorganization. Within each event, the focus of the analysis reflected the key policy decisions, department and agency reactions, and the White House interface. The tiered coding system used with the interview documentation guided this analysis. To the extent that theories on independent agencies and environmental influences pertain, they appear in the

discussion to promote an understanding of the events and provide a basis for understanding similar situations.

Phase IV

In Phase IV, additional document research was conducted and the final dissertation prepared. It then was reviewed by three cognizant individuals for obvious discrepancies with the history of FEMA as they knew it. Since the researcher was privy to information they might not have known, their task was to review the document and challenge statements that seemed unlikely. There were no serious discrepancies and clarifications were made where needed.

Dissertation Structure

This dissertation has seven chapters. Chapter II covers the heritage of federal reorganization and its legacy for the 1978 reorganization efforts. Chapters III and IV trace the grounding events in the federal organizational history of the administrative mechanisms assigned the NSEP task. Chapter V highlights the organizational design facet of the reorganization strategy, with discussion at some length of the formal institutional support for FEMA. The same chapter explores the critical events of the 1980's that are related to interagency coordination. Chapter VI reveals

an assessment of the difficulties in implementation of public policy and key informant views of the FEMA experience. Chapter VII is a summary of the findings of the study and reflects the prescription of the key informants for improvement in the administrative mechanism for NSEP.

In summary, the dissertation captures and studies the public policy decision to reorganize the administrative mechanism designed to deliver NSEP to the nation between 1978 and 1990. It examines the experiential legacy of the years up to 1978, the relevant literature of the same period, the stakeholder perspectives of 1978, and the implications of agency design and implementation for its subsequent success.

CHAPTER II

REORGANIZATION AS A REFORM STRATEGY: THEORY AND PRACTICE

Federal Reorganization as the Framework for the FEMA Reorganization of 1978

Each reorganization has been an attempt to write a better prescription for guiding government administration. Manifesting a wide range of variations--both major or minor --the process of reorganization has crossed the entire spectrum of federal activities. In order to grasp the complexities of this process, the term "reorganization" is used in the sense of the intentional re-ordering of an entity into a more coherent administrative mechanism. It means that the public policy and program becomes defined in terms of an administrative structure. It generally is believed that, by changing the administrative structure of a function, one can produce a change in the quality or nature of the corresponding program. Yet, at the same time, Acheson cautions that:

Organization--or reorganization in government, can often be a trap for the unwary. The relationships involved in the division of labor and responsibility are far more subtle and complex than the little boxes which the graph-drawers put on paper with

their perpendicular and horizontal connective lines.¹

This chapter presents the theoretical maps for reorganization. In his reflections on administrative theory, Peri Arnold suggests that these maps are poor and that reorganization theory is weak.² However, both the maps and the theory are the result of the best in public administration thinking of this century. It is through an examination of these maps and theory that one we can understand better the foundations of the changing administrative mechanisms for national security emergency preparedness (NSEP) and for the particular design and implementation issues of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

This chapter also discusses the most relevant federal experience with major reorganization efforts. This chapter includes a discussion of orthodox administrative theory on reorganization and *realpolitik*, that is, the principles that have evolved from the reality of

¹Dean Acheson, "Thoughts about Thoughts in High Places," The New York Times Magazine, October 11, 1959.

²Peri Arnold, "Reorganization and Politics: A Reflection on the Adequacy of Administrative Theory," Public Administration Review, 34 (1974):205-211 (hereafter cited as Arnold, "Reorganization and Politics").

reorganizing within a political environment.³ In the later examination of the FEMA reorganization, the themes of organizational design and implementation will reflect orthodox administrative theory and the *realpolitik*. There is no apparent root cause for FEMA's difficulties. This chapter reminds one that efficient and effective organization design is not achieved by formula. Reorganization is a complex task; successful reorganization is even more complex.

The Practice of Federal Reorganization

Most presidents since 1912 have launched major efforts to reorganize the administrative machinery of the federal government. Yet, the record of implementing major reorganization strategies is bleak--characterized by a general lack of support, follow-through, and success.⁴

³According to The Dorsey Dictionary of American Government and Politics, "realpolitik" is a German word, now absorbed into English, meaning realist politics. The term is applied to politics premised on practical factors. The term is used extensively in the James G. March and Johan P. Olsen text, Rediscovering Institutions: The Organizational Basis of Politics (New York: The Free Press, 1989), juxtaposed to the orthodox principles in the theory of administration. Hereafter, the March and Olsen text is referred to as March and Olsen, Rediscovering Institutions.

⁴Arnold, "Reorganization and Politics," p. 206. In March and Olsen, Rediscovering Institutions, pp. 86-88, the authors also note that what has been proposed has been regularly defeated or abandoned.

Thus, in discussing reorganization, it is useful to separate federal reorganization studies from actual federal reorganizations.⁵ This distinction is made to a limited degree in this chapter but becomes of greater importance in the Chapter IV discussion of the Carter administration's reorganization study *vis-à-vis* its actual reorganization plan for FEMA.

It also is useful to separate federal reorganization studies based on their source. Some originate in the legislative branch, while others emerge from the executive branch, either as public commissions or as internal executive branch studies. A comprehensive treatment of all federal reorganization is not relevant to this dissertation. Major executive branch studies are presented only insofar as they provide some appropriate grounding for understanding the orientation of the 1977 President's Reorganization Project (PRP) and the subsequent reorganization of FEMA.

⁵Milton Musicus takes note in "Reappraising Reorganization" that a reorganization study has value of its own, even if not implemented. Even unimplemented, it becomes a resource document for later reformers.

The Keep Commission

Early executive reorganization efforts include the 1905 Keep Commission under President Theodore Roosevelt. The commission was charged with studying the economy and efficiency of the organization and operation of federal departments and agencies. Essential to this was a clear orientation toward budget control. The Keep Commission was an instrument of the president, serving as the model for later use by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) staff. While the Keep Commission left no institutional legacy in the Executive Office, it did establish the important precedent that the legislative branch did not have exclusive responsibility for studying and improving the efficiency of operations in the executive branch.⁶ The recommendations of the Keep Commission separated administration from politics and maintained that administration was the domain of the president. It was in this tradition that the frequent adjustments to the administrative mechanisms within the executive branch have been accomplished by the president.

⁶Harvey C. Mansfield, "Reorganizing the Federal Executive Branch: Limits of Institutionalization," Law and Contemporary Problems 35 (1970):488. (Hereafter referred to as Mansfield, "Reorganizing the Federal Executive Branch.")

The Taft Commission

The Keep Commission was followed by the 1910-1913 Taft Commission on Economy and Efficiency. This commission was chaired by Frederick Cleveland and included Frank Goodnow and W.F. Willoughby. This commission went beyond the financial and business practice aspects of the executive branch to recommend functional grouping of like organizations, that is, departmentalization. The analogy that served the reformers best was the large business corporation. The president was to play the role of chief executive officer, to the congressional board of directors. In essence, this supported developing a strong position for presidential power and authority over the administration of government. Consistent with this vision, a few years later (in the 1930's), specific administrative responsibilities (NSEP, budget, and human resource management) were added to the position of the president. They further enhanced a strong chief executive role for the president.

The Brownlow Committee

By 1936, it was politically and administratively clear that the significant growth in the executive branch as seen under the New Deal had to be controlled. To this end, President Franklin D. Roosevelt established the 1936-1939 President's Committee on Administrative Management (Brownlow

Committee). The Brownlow Committee culminated three decades of reform thinking.⁷ It proclaimed a change in doctrine. The narrow reorganization objectives of efficiency and economy gave way to the broader rationale of strengthening the president's capacity to marshal and wield the resources of the executive branch.

The Brownlow Committee is particularly significant in terms of its recommendations: creating the Executive Office of the President;⁸ transferring the budget from the Department of the Treasury to the president; establishing emergency preparedness as a formal function of the president's immediate office; and promoting the major reorganization of executive departments and agencies.⁹ The latter had the effect of curbing some of the more independent-minded agencies, melding some organizations, and creating some new organizations. The committee's report was not well received by the congress, primarily for partisan

⁷Jack H. Knott and Gary J. Miller, Reforming Bureaucracy: The Politics of Institutional Choice (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1987), pp. 88-89. (Hereafter cited as Knott and Miller, Reforming Bureaucracy.)

⁸Hereafter referred to as the Executive Office.

⁹Emergency management had been within the implied powers of the President under the Constitution. This formal statement of the responsibility established its legitimacy and importance of the function.

and philosophical reasons. The congress saw it as another political maneuver to shift power to the president and thereby expand the president's policy powers.¹⁰

Conservatives were suspicious of any institutionalization of liberal programs. They preferred a return to pre-New Deal limits on the presidency. And many interest groups saw the Committee's recommendations as a threat to their influence.

While the 1937 report was ill-fated for ideological, political and tactical reasons, a renewed but watered-down version of it was accepted just two years later when President Roosevelt's popularity was higher. Under the Reorganization Act of 1939, the law granted the president the right to submit reorganization proposals to congress subject to majority veto in both houses of congress. Through this procedure, the president secured the new Executive Office,¹¹ six presidential assistants, and more budget control.

¹⁰President Roosevelt had recently run afoul of the Republicans and others suspicious of presidential power when he proposed a shift in the composition of the Supreme Court.

¹¹This included the National Resources Planning Board and the Office of Emergency Management, both organizations of exceptional significance to NSEP.

The First Hoover Commission

A step was made toward bipartisan support for executive reorganization with Democrat President Truman's establishment in 1949 of the Commission of the Organization of the Executive Branch of Government. The commission was headed by former Republican President Herbert Hoover, and later known as the First Hoover Commission. This commission professed the orthodox administrative principles (e.g. simplicity of structure, unity of purpose, and clear line of executive authority).¹² However, a major contribution was in this commission's reinforcement of bipartisan agreement on the merit of expansive powers and control for the president.¹³ Ultimately, the Reorganization Act of 1949 provided President Truman with the basis for thirty-five reorganization plans, over and above specific reorganization plans considered as separate legislation.¹⁴

¹²Lester M. Salamon provides an incisive discussion in "The Goals of Reorganization." The article appeared in Administration and Society 12 (1981):471-500. (Hereafter cited as Salamon, "Goals of Reorganization.")

¹³Peri Arnold, "The First Hoover Commission and the Managerial Presidency," Journal of Politics 38 (1976):48-50.

¹⁴Congress maintained control over the departments by withholding certain types of reorganization authority from the Reorganization Act. Separate legislation was necessary, thus Congress contained presidential reorganization activities. One legislative action was the Truman-era National Security Act of 1947. It reorganized the national security advisory system at the highest level, requiring the coordination of the military, domestic industrial

The election of President Eisenhower and the return of Republican majorities in both houses of congress brought the rebirth of ideas on reorganization. However, the subsequent shortage of actual reorganization plans was in sharp contrast to the plethora of such plans under President Truman.¹⁵ While ideas for policy and structure reorganization were provided, few corresponding reorganization strategies actually were submitted to the congress between 1955 and 1960; possibly as a result of the Democratic majority and waning interest on the part of the president.¹⁶

The Second Hoover Commission and The President's Committee on Government Organization

The Eisenhower administration actually began its thinking on reorganization early and used two separate advisory bodies. First, there was the 1953-1955 Commission

mobilization preparedness, diplomacy, and intelligence systems. An executive action, on the other hand, was President Truman's establishment of the Office of Defense Mobilization in 1950. He justified this reorganization action on the state of national emergency.

¹⁵Truman's record may be at least partially attributed to the national security emergency conditions during his administration.

¹⁶While minor in terms of Federal reorganizations, President Eisenhower's 1958 reorganization, which combined civil defense into the rest of national security emergency preparedness, was important from the NSEP perspective.

on the Organization of the Executive Branch (later known as the Second Hoover Commission). It did not fare well and was criticized as a rehashing of the unsuccessful proposals of the First Hoover Commission.

Simultaneous with the Second Hoover Commission was the President's Advisory Committee on Government Organization. President Eisenhower established this committee with his first executive order and named Nelson Rockefeller, Arthur Flemming, and his brother, Milton Eisenhower, as members. The committee used a report developed at Temple University and based on the First Hoover Commission's unfinished agenda. The report recommendations included reconstituting the Executive Office into a White House Office, a National Security Council (not including mobilization), a small Office of Mobilization (absorbing the policy aspects of the Office of Defense Mobilization and a revitalized National Security Resources Board), an Office of Economic Advisors, an Office of Budget, and an Office of Personnel. It operated for the entire first term (1953-1957) and finally wound down during President Eisenhower's second term.¹⁷

¹⁷Mansfield, "Reorganizing the Federal Executive Branch," :489.

The Kennedy and Johnson Approaches

Mansfield reports that President Kennedy turned to his network of informal advisors for reorganization advice.¹⁸ His reorganization plans for the regulatory agencies--empowering commission chairs--met with strong opposition which were similar to the opposition to the reports from the First and Second Hoover Commissions and even the Brownlow Committee. On a more positive side, President Kennedy's reorganization efforts in 1961 moved operational civil defense emergency preparedness to the Department of Defense and brought the balance of emergency preparedness close within the centripetal force of the White House. This marked a high point for national security emergency preparedness and was possibly exceeded only by the creation of the Office for Emergency Management under President Franklin D. Roosevelt and the creation of the National Security Resources Board under President Truman.

President Johnson used informal advisors for general reorganizations and committees for specific reorganizations. According to Mansfield, he improved on his two predecessor's reorganization records by sending congress seventeen plans

¹⁸Ibid.

in five years and seeing sixteen of them sustained.¹⁹ Among his advisory devices, he used the President's Commission on Postal Organization (Kappel Commission) for a reorganization of the postal service, the services of Harvard Dean Don Price for devising his agenda and creating a strategy for using the 1965 renewal of the Reorganization Act, and the Task Force on Government Organization (Heineman Committee) for reports on some of the more intractable problems of the Great Society.

The Ash Council

By 1969, President Nixon concluded that the problems with operations needed to be countered with increased presidential control of the departments and agencies. To this end, he used informal advisors and established the Advisory Council on Executive Reorganization. He appointed Roy L. Ash, then president of Litton Industries, as its chair. The Council's members came from outside of government and received staff assistance from the Bureau of the Budget (now OMB). They were given a direct line to the president.

The Ash Council followed standard administrative principles. It grouped organizations with similar

¹⁹Ibid.

functional areas, limited span of control, assured direct lines of authority, accepted the policy/administration dichotomy (by now well-established in theory and practice as *passé*), and supported continued administrative strength for the presidency. The council's proposals followed the chief executive officer model from industry. To the consternation of department secretaries who were displaced several rungs down the ladder of access, President Nixon built in significant structural changes and created five assistant presidents.²⁰ The most significant proposals involving departmental realignment and regulatory change were not adopted.²¹

Some of the Ash Council's recommendations did find their way into reorganization plans. The Domestic Policy Council was set up to provide interdepartmental coordination on domestic issues, a companion to the legislated National Security Council (NSC); the Bureau of the Budget became OMB;

²⁰The positions of assistant presidents were undone when the Watergate affair revealed that the kind of coordination they offered also created isolation and lack of accountability.

²¹These included: reducing the cabinet departments to four--Natural Resources, Human Resources, Community Development, and Economic Development; substituting three single administrators for five of the regulatory commissions; and establishing a fifteen-member administrative court for regulatory appeals.

the Environmental Protection Agency was set up with enforcement powers; and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration was set up as a research arm of the Department of Commerce. As will be discussed in Chapter III, President Nixon also was responsible for the removal of NSEP non-policy functions from the White House. This represented a low point in the organizational history of NSEP.

The Carter Approach

President Carter professed much the same organizational philosophy regarding control, efficiency, and effectiveness that had been presented by the Ash Council and had been subscribed to over the years by executive branch reformers. Despite this, both the Nixon and Carter reorganization strategies resulted in more, not fewer, agencies, and more agencies being placed outside of direct accountability.²² Since the Carter reorganization plans, which included the reorganization of FEMA, were not entirely in accordance with standard administrative principles, one must broaden the base on which it is examined. FEMA's

²²Harold Seidman and Robert Gilmour, Politics, Position and Power (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 118, citing Ronald Moe, a specialist in American government. Hereafter, this source is cited as Seidman and Gilmour, Politics, Position and Power.

organizational design and implementation will appear differently as one shifts between the lens of orthodox administrative theory and the lens of the *realpolitik*.

Orthodox Theory of Administrative Reorganization

The orthodox theory of administrative reorganization is grounded in the belief that economy and efficiency are governing values and that proper restructuring of organizations will lead to better economy and efficiency. The American origins of this thinking are found in the reform movements targeted at federal, state, and local governments of the late nineteenth century.²³ During that period, the reformers took on the cause of combatting the excesses and corruption that prevailed at all levels of government.

The Progressive reform movement at the turn of the century formally promoted the notions of accountability, control and efficiency in government and gave birth to what is known as orthodox administrative theory. This theory continues in the literature, rhetoric, and experiences related to reorganization. Knott and Miller argue that thinking advanced by Luther Gulick has been refined over the

²³Knott and Miller, Reforming Bureaucracy; Ronald C. Moe, "Executive Branch Reorganization: An Overview," Washington, D.C.: Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, Committee Print, 1978.

years into what the literature has accepted as some basic principles of organization.²⁴ Luther Gulick's POSDCORB, an acronym that condensed his version of the responsibilities of the executive (planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, and budgeting), is an example of earlier thinking in orthodox administrative theory.

Much has been written on orthodoxy by its proponents and critics.²⁵ The subject of orthodox theory in administrative reorganization is important because, as philosopher Paul Diesing noted, "decision structures are the source of all decisions."²⁶ This makes reorganization a powerful tool of the executive, whether wielded for substantive or tactical reasons.

One finds that, despite the years of discussion of and challenges to its validity, the rhetoric of orthodox administrative theory consistently and routinely appears in the documentation of federal reorganization. The principles have become the most readily understood, acceptable, and

²⁴It is likely they also would credit others, such as: Woodrow Wilson, Frank Goodnow, Chester Barnard, Charles Merriam, F. W. Willoughby, Marshall Dimock, and Lyndall Urwick.

²⁵Other perspectives on the orthodox principles are discussed later in this chapter.

²⁶Aaron Wildavsky, The Politics of the Budgetary Process (Boston: Little, Brown, 1964), p. 253.

comprehensive set of guidelines available to the president and the congress for resolving organizational and structural issues within the executive branch of government.²⁷ The principles are discussed in detail and promoted in public administration and political science literature, especially the literature of the first four decades of this century.

The early writers wrote the rules regarding economy and efficiency. Their thinking is reflected in the principles of which they wrote. Those principles include the familiar span of control, chain of command, unity of command, coordination, specialization, delegation, grouping similar functions, administration by rules, accountability, responsibility, elimination of duplication and overlap, and better execution of the law.²⁸ Despite the assessments that reorganization often does not result in major savings,²⁹

²⁷Seidman and Gilmour, Politics, Position and Power, p. 9.

²⁸Herbert A. Simon, "The Proverbs of Administration." Public Administration Review. 6 (1946) 53-67. Simon discusses the principles and their proponents, referring primarily to Luther Gulick and his work. An excellent statement of the principles is contained in "Notes on a Theory of Organization" prepared by Luther Gulick for his and Luther Urwick's jointly edited volume. Papers on the Science of Administration (Chicago: Augustus M. Kelley Publishers, 1937).

²⁹ A. N. Holcombe, "Administrative Reorganization in the Federal Government," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 95 (1921):242-251; Peyton Hurt, "Who Should Reorganize the National Administration?" American Political Science Review, 26 (1932):1082-1098;

attempts at federal reorganization commonly are expected to result in, and have continued to be marked by, claims of economy and efficiency.³⁰ The emergency management organization of 1978 was no exception.

A Wider Perspective on Orthodox Theory

On the Principles

The assumption that federal organizations exist as logical and functional divisions of government has been suggested as the prime fallacy of reorganization. The contrasting perspective bearing a strong following is that federal organizations exist in separate galaxies, each working within its own system of power relationships, engaged in political struggle, and surviving only through

Charles Merriam and L.F. Schmeckebier, Reorganization of the National Government, (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 1939); Don K. Price, "1984 and Beyond: Social Engineering or Political Values?" American Public Administration: Past, Present, Future, ed. Frederick C. Mosher (University: University of Alabama Press, 1975), p. 73.

³⁰Joseph Harris, "Wartime Currents and Peacetime Trends," American Political Science Review, 40 (1946):1137-1154; Charles Aiken and Lewis Koenig, "The Hoover Commission: A Symposium," American Political Science Review 43 (1949):933-940; W.E. Pemberton, Bureaucratic Politics: Executive Reorganization During the Truman Administration (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1979).

the support of its constituency.³¹ From this perspective, organizations can be understood and improved upon only when considered within the political environment.

Orthodox administrative theory's competing perspectives begin with the observation that reorganization is motivated by many factors, only two of which are economy and efficiency. This perspective is based on the belief that reorganization is not neutral. It always serves someone's purposes and, in all likelihood, shifts the balance of power. Reorganization also serves, at an emotional level, as a code word symbolizing a general frustration with bureaucracy. When President Carter promised to bring the "horrible bureaucratic mess" under control and restore sound principles of organization and management, he was appealing to the American electorate.³²

Other motivations for reorganization are entwined with the political environment and include: a president in crisis who needs to show leadership, a beleaguered congress or president satisfying interest groups, and a congress that molds government programs to its own purposes. All these

³¹Norton Long, "Power and Administration," Public Administration Review, 9 (1949):257-264; Seidman and Gilmour, Politics, Position and Power; Arnold, "Reorganization and Politics."

³²Seidman and Gilmour, Politics, Position and Power, p. 112.

motivations go beyond the fairly mechanistic suggestions of orthodox administrative theory.

March and Olsen noted that "the history of administrative reorganization in the twentieth century is a history of rhetoric," either oriented toward the principles of orthodox administrative theory or toward the *realpolitik*.³³ They advance the argument that the *realpolitik* litany of politics, interests, conflict, bargaining, and power are just as valid as the orthodox administrative litany of span of control, chain of command, unity of command, coordination, specialization, and the rest.

In March and Olsen's discussion of the literature of reorganization, they argue that the rhetoric of *realpolitik* is the counterpoint to orthodox administrative theory.³⁴ Their argument is that reorganization necessarily reflects the heterogeneous values, beliefs, and interests present in the environment. They summon a massive amount of literature

³³James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, Rediscovering Institutions (New York: Free Press, 1983) p. 74; and James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, "Organizing Political Life: What Administrative Reorganization Tells Us About Government," American Political Science Review, 77 (1983): 281. The article is the basis for Chapter 5 of the book. Hereafter, the book will be cited as March and Olsen, Rediscovering Institutions.

³⁴Ibid.

to support their assumption that the *realpolitik* competes with orthodox administrative theory. They propose several arguments: that adherence to the principle of unitary control is beyond the capability of the individual manager; that the dangers of too powerful an executive are real; that good government is more than good administration; that the formal organization is incidental to proper administrative control; and that congressional and interest group involvement is a pre-condition to a good organization.

Other analysts have taken issue with the principles of orthodox administrative theory, suggesting that they are too ideal and too mechanical.³⁵ They maintain that the tension between and among the principles of administrative

³⁵Illustrative arguments appear in: Lester Salamon, "The Goals of Reorganization," Administration and Society 12 (1981):471-500; James Fesler, "Administrative Literature and the Second Hoover Commission Reports," American Political Science Review 51 (1957):135-157; R. Polenberg, Reorganizing Roosevelt's Government: The Controversy Over Executive Reorganization: 1936-1939 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1966) (hereafter cited as Polenberg, Roosevelt's Government); Seidman and Gilmour, Politics, Position and Power; Rufus Miles, "Considerations for a President Bent on Reorganization," Public Administration Review 37 (1977):155-162 (hereafter cited as Miles, "Considerations"); Harvey Mansfield, "Federal Executive Reorganization: Thirty Years of Experience," Public Administration Review 29 (1969):322-345 (hereafter cited as Mansfield, "Federal Executive Reorganization"); Herbert Kaufman, "Reflections on Administrative Reorganization," Setting National Priorities: The 1978 Budget, ed. J.A. Pechman (Washington, D.C.:Brookings, 1977).

orthodoxy has even perpetuated inefficient and uneconomic organizations.

In practice, President Franklin Roosevelt's use of duplication and overlap raised the challenge for orthodox administrative theory to model status. Further, the conservative Heritage Foundation, at least as recently as 1984, asserted that duplication and overlap are good because they create "conflict and competition which in turn produces information which is useful to the political executive in controlling policy implementation."³⁶

On the Alleged Effectiveness of Reorganization

More than 50 years ago, President Franklin D. Roosevelt said: "we have got to get over the notion that the purpose of reorganization is economy."³⁷ Savings generally are far smaller than commonly acknowledged; and efficiency is far more difficult to gauge than reorganization proponents would have one believe. It is argued that savings really are more dependent on ultimate program changes than on the actual reorganization. Trade-offs, such

³⁶Stuart M. Butler, Michael Senner, and W. Bruce Weinrod, Mandate for Leadership II, Continuing the Conservative Revolution (Washington, D.C.: The Heritage Foundation, 1984), p. 531.

³⁷1937 statement cited by Polenbergl in Roosevelt's Government, pp. 7-8.

as increases in costs of coordination, may outweigh the gains in efficiency.³⁸ March and Olsen find that efficiencies are rarely achieved with reorganization; responsiveness is no better; and that accountability and control continue to be elusive.³⁹ Reorganization has a record of "problems identified, but not solved, of promises made but not kept."⁴⁰ Partial changes not responsive to the organizational problem often are chosen to avoid coalesced opposition.⁴¹

Further, Salamon argues that there are basic obstacles to the goals of reorganization.⁴² He suggests, for instance, that there has been no clear articulation of a relationship between reorganization and improved organizational effectiveness. Effectiveness continues as an

³⁸A. Downs, Inside Bureaucracy (Boston: Little, Brown, 1967), p. 271.

³⁹James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, "Organizing Political Life: What Administrative Reorganization Tells Us About Government," American Political Science Review 77 (1983):281-296.

⁴⁰Bert Lance, "Foreword," Federal Reorganization: The Executive Branch, ed. T.G. Fain (New York: Bowker, 1977), p. ix.

⁴¹March and Olsen, Rediscovering Institutions, p. 77; Seidman and Gilmour, Politics, Position, and Power, p. 87; Peter Szanton, Federal Reorganization: What Have We Learned? (New Jersey: Chatham House Publishers, Inc., 1981), p. 120.

⁴²Salamon, "The Goals of Reorganization," :471-500.

abstract principle, hard to demonstrate and easy to challenge. Since reorganization is seen as a field in its own right, separate from substantive policy, it has been divorced from the reformation of substantive policy.

A Synthesis of Reasons to Reorganize

It is no wonder that the "playing field" of federal reorganization is as "muddy" as the nation repeatedly has found it. The simple models are inadequate and one is inclined to accept the concept that all reorganization efforts must be of their own formula. Following this thought, highly contextual combinations of people, opportunities, problems, political attention, good thinking, and solutions are needed to present appropriate reorganization proposals.⁴³

Looked at broadly within a political environment, reorganization can be designed by a mix of the most often appearing principles--both from orthodox administrative theory and the *realpolitik*. Since the reasons for reorganization may include both substantive reasons and tactical methods and can serve both reformer and analyst as a shopping list, the most frequently noted have been isolated from the literature.

⁴³March and Olsen, Rediscovering Institutions, pp. 80-84.

The literature, including the versions of the Reorganization Act, abounds in common reasons for reorganization.⁴⁴ Mosher's outline of these motivations includes four categories: (1) motivations related to changing policy and program; (2) those intended to improve administrative effectiveness; (3) those directed specifically to personnel problems; and (4) those intended to respond to outside pressures.⁴⁵ Harold Seidman cites nine reasons to reorganize.⁴⁶ Rufus Miles cites eight.⁴⁷ Harvey Mansfield cites nine.⁴⁸ Alan Dean cites fifteen propositions.⁴⁹ Salamon says there are so many that he needs

⁴⁴Commonly encountered reasons for reorganization at the Federal level can be found in Peter Szanton, ed., Federal Reorganization: What Have We Learned? (New Jersey: Chatham House Publishers, Inc. 1981), pp. ix, 2-16; and Beryl A. Radin and Willis D. Hawley, The Politics of Federal Reorganization, (New York: Pergamon Press. 1988), pp. 37-50; and Seidman and Gilmour, Politics, Position, and Power, pp. 3-28, 112-118.

⁴⁵Frederick C. Mosher, Governmental Reorganizations, pp. 497-500.

⁴⁶Seidman and Gilmour, Politics, Position, and Power, pp. 25-28.

⁴⁷Miles, "Considerations," pp. 155-159.

⁴⁸Mansfield, "Federal Executive Reorganization," pp. 333-334.

⁴⁹Alan L. Dean, "General Propositions of Organizational Design," Federal Reorganization: What Have We Learned? ed. Peter Szanton (Chatham, New Jersey: Chatham House Publishers, Inc., 1981), pp. 134-154.

a typology to sort them.⁵⁰ Overall, the reasons for reorganizing fall into two streams, either following the traditional orthodox administrative theory or the *realpolitik*. Within each stream, the reasons are related closely. A short note on each of eleven reasons (five from orthodox administrative theory and six from *realpolitik* theory) follows.

Five Reasons Drawn from Orthodox Administrative Theory

The first reason is better execution of the law. For a nation based on law, this first reason for reorganization generally is unassailable. The FEMA reorganization proposal claimed better execution of the intent of emergency preparedness legislation.

The second is improved efficiency and economy, that is, reduced costs, minimization of duplication and overlap, and economies of scale. Over the years, efficiency and economy have been a common and commanding reason. Efficiency and economy appear measurable, are easy to support, and serve as potent political symbols.⁵¹ OMB demands efficiency and economy by "custom, culture, and

⁵⁰Salamon, "Goals of Reorganization," p. 479.

⁵¹Salamon, "Goals of Reorganization," p. 480.

role."⁵² Additionally, the congress expects to see it. The FEMA proposal was presented as a reduction of duplication and as achievement of economies of scale in emergency management.

The third is improved program effectiveness by bringing separate but logically related programs under more unified direction for the common good. Along the lines of the First Hoover Commission's dictum of placing related functions "cheek-by-jowl," state and local supporters of the FEMA reorganization urged the combination. They argued that the dispersal of emergency management in multiple agencies worked to the disadvantage of the state and local governments who often had but one office to deal with the multitude of federal programs and their varying requirements.

The fourth is the simplification of the federal establishment. President Carter and other presidents had criticized the large number of federal organizations and promised to reduce the number, to streamline the system, and to make it more responsive to the citizenry.

The fifth, and possibly the most elusive goal, is the improvement of policy integration by placing competitive

⁵²Seidman and Gilmour, Politics, Position and Power, p. 12.

interests within a single organization or subjecting them to processes of coordination. The emergency management programs at the federal level did not perceive themselves as competing with each other. There was competition, however, between emergency management programs in each of the federal departments and agencies and the primary programs of those organizations. That policy integration was neither addressed nor solved by the FEMA reorganization.⁵³

Six Reasons Drawn from the Realpolitik

The first is to shake up the organization, thereby demonstrating the decisiveness and control of the new executive. This allows new leadership to make a permanent mark on the organization that will remain after the executive leaves. The Carter administration proclaimed a reorganization agenda and pursued it as both a process and program goal.

The second is to symbolize priorities by giving them clear organizational embodiment. Positioning an organization with representation at top levels, visibility, access, and a secure institutional niche support the viability of the program and set its political advantage or

⁵³Delegate agency funding was discussed in the reorganization process but was dropped. Delegate agency funding is a system of directly funding one agency and having that agency task and fund others.

disadvantage. Placement affects congressional venue, access to critical decision channels, attention to pet projects, the quality of essential communications, program safety, agency image, budget prospects, and recruitment of high caliber personnel. Supporters of the FEMA establishment debated how its position was best symbolized, that is, whether FEMA should be an independent agency or a part of another organization.

The third is to effect the personal philosophies of the president, whether structural or programmatic. A president's personal and political party orientation can create an agenda for reorganization.

The fourth reason is to expedite problem solution on an *ad hoc* basis. Reorganization can be driven by the need for an immediate solution to a problem, either real or perceived. It can serve broad political purposes, be politically expedient, and respond to congressional pressure. An example can be found in the World War II experience. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, while espousing agreement with the Brownlow Committee recommendation to reduce the number of agencies outside the departmental structures, created numerous new agencies on an *ad hoc* basis to solve wartime emergency problems.

The fifth reason of the *realpolitik* is oriented toward personnel--getting rid of executives, attracting a higher caliber of personnel, and establishing positions and organizations for political or personal friends. This type of reorganization may be temporary and is less likely to be on the formal list of approved reorganization rationales.

The sixth reason is reorganizing by default. Included in that group one finds reorganization proposals made just because they are noncontroversial. A president in need of demonstrating an administrative reform record will search for a weak constituency, a function that does not demand attention, and a function within which others will defer. High-cost reorganizations are distasteful to political actors. Reorganization gestures of a low-stakes type can serve the political actors well, alienating none and projecting an appearance of activity. The FEMA reorganization carried this benefit.

The Legacy of the Reorganization Literature

Actual reorganization has only a moderately successful history. The perennial search for centralized control of policy and power always is studied, less often is written into plans, and even less often is seen in successful implementation. This has led Peri Arnold to his

argument that the reorganization maps are wrong and reorganization theory is weak.⁵⁴

The significant amount of literature illustrating the inadequacy of the principles of orthodox administrative theory has not changed significantly the thinking in federal government reorganization proposals. There is a mix of thinking but, overwhelmingly, the adherence to the rhetoric of orthodox administrative theory in federal reorganization has held over the century.

The organizational design implications of not acknowledging and using the theory of the *realpolitik* have affected the execution of the NSEP responsibilities of the president. Examined with the lens of orthodox administrative theory and the lens of the *realpolitik*, the FEMA creation reveals critical design and implementation issues that affected its ability to fulfill its NSEP responsibilities. Since the 1978 reorganization of FEMA was only the culmination of NSEP administrative history, the next two chapters review NSEP lineage. The chapters provide a framework for better understanding FEMA design and implementation difficulties.

⁵⁴Arnold, "Reorganization and Politics," pp. 205-211.

CHAPTER III

NSEP: THE FOUNDATION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE MECHANISMS FOR NATIONAL SECURITY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Scope

This chapter reviews the early history of FEMA's predecessor national security emergency preparedness (NSEP) organizations. The chapter focus is on the coordination functions and national visibility of the NSEP organizations. A historical review is necessary for understanding the FEMA reorganization of 1978. This approach is consistent with Mosher's argument that understanding a single reorganization effort requires an understanding of the organization's prior history.¹ The 1978 reorganization issues were not new. They included design issues such as the conflicts over the scope and authority of the emergency organizations, the frequently identified lack of coordination within the federal establishment, and the suggestion that organizations failed or succeeded due to the level of White House support and visibility.

The history of FEMA's predecessor NSEP organizations is important because this historical experience may have

¹Frederick C. Mosher, Governmental Reorganizations p. 486.

informed the rhetoric and the formal documents establishing FEMA. The historic problems of predecessor organizations emerged once again in the form of a disjunction between FEMA's formal chartering documents and the practical implementation of the organization. FEMA authority was challenged by the departments and agencies, coordination was not well-defined, and FEMA was relegated to the outside ring of White House policy and operations.

This chapter includes the non-military national security emergency organizations that operated at the level closest to the president. It spans the period from the centralization of emergency management during Roosevelt's New Deal through the decentralization of the emergency management function during the Nixon administration. Discussions of civil defense and disaster management organizations emerge only where important to the context of NSEP. The discussion of the temporary war mobilization organizations of World War II (WWII) and the Korean War are considered only at the capstone level within the executive branch.²

²Deliberately absent from discussion is detail on the multitude of temporary war mobilization organizations that marked the years of WWII and the Korean War. Their individual histories are interesting but not of a level of significance for this dissertation.

Overview

The origins of NSEP organizations are found in the long recognized need for a strong leadership role in national security emergencies involving military and non-military defense and foreign policy. This leadership role increased in strength from World War I (WWI) to WWII and continued through the wake of the Korean Conflict. The strongest of the NSEP organizations included the Office of Emergency Management (OEM), the numerous WWII wartime emergency organizations, the post-WWII National Security Resources Board (NSRB), and the Korean Conflict era's Office of Defense Mobilization (ODM).

From the late 1930's up until 1978, a series of changes took place within the national security emergency management structure. Various functions were moved among the departments and agencies and the White House. Figure 1 (below) illustrates the recurring pattern of reorganization and the shifting organizational bases during this time period. This chart captures the succession of organizations and responsibilities from one domain to another. The advent of each ensuing organizational entity established new organizational positions, revised organizational status, and established a new set of bureaucratic rules for emergency management.

This succession of organizations, each bearing baggage of the past, ultimately led to the creation of FEMA. FEMA's fragmented lineage is clear on this chart of its organizational history.³ This entire chapter is a detailed exposition of Figure 1. For ease of reference, the narrative of this chapter follows the order of the chart.

Despite their peripheral relationship for most of the NSEP history, the chart includes civil defense and disaster management. They are included because they ultimately became part of the 1978 reorganization.

³Charts depicting the organizational history of emergency management are frequently used in discussions of the origins of national security emergency preparedness. Figure 1 is a composite of the author's research and amended earlier work by the General Accounting Office in 1983, the U.S. Congress Joint Committee on Defense Production in 1977, miscellaneous informal charts, and most recently, David McLoughlin in Public Administration Review 45 (January 1985):167.

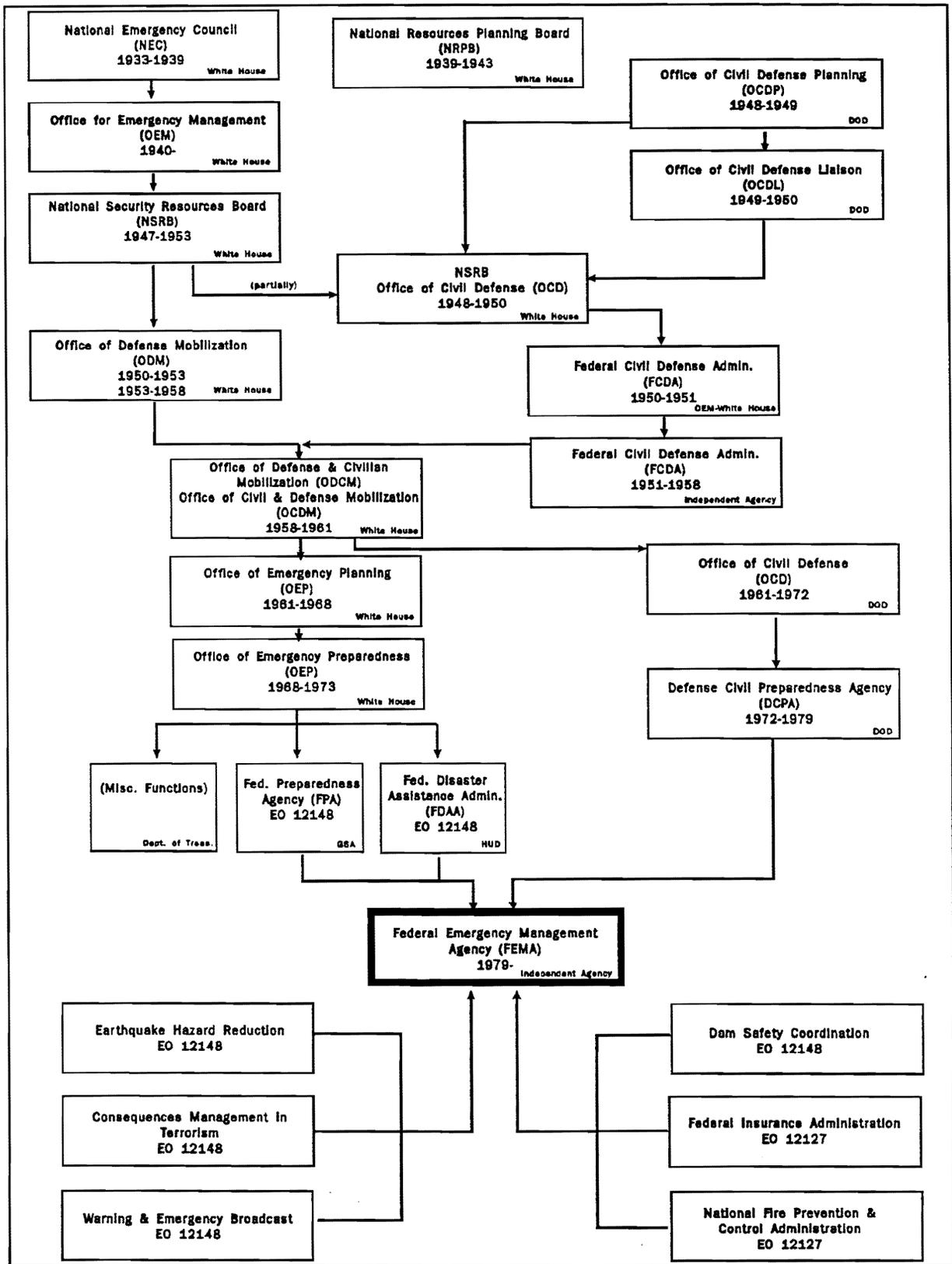


Figure 1: NSEP EMERGENCY ORGANIZATIONS

The Early Years

WWI brought the nation face-to-face with its first major international responsibility. However, only with time came the realization that national mobilization had to go beyond the mustering of troops and include the effective management of the nation's industrial resources. The historical assessments of the relevant attempts at coordination of the national response suggested that the response was neither quick nor efficient. Consequently, the military defense leadership resolved that the nation needed better preparedness and a more effective response organization for the next national emergency.

At the time, White House interest in emergency management was bifurcated into the economy and war preparedness. These were two distinct communities of interest that eventually were united when it was realized that overseas warfighting was inescapably linked with domestic economy, trade, and industrial production. Both areas were regulated by two major influences of the American political system: a very strong aversion to the concentration of power, and the inescapable necessity of political support. NSEP would be governed through the years by these twin principles of aversion to the concentration of power and the inescapable necessity of political support.

The depression emergency of 1929 led to Executive Order 6433A of November 17, 1933. It led to the creation of the National Emergency Council (NEC), a specialized coordinating agency. The depression emergency, like the WWI emergency, emphasized the need for effective coordination, liaison, and direction, especially in view of the rapid multiplication of unrelated New Deal agencies. It included representatives of the departments and the most important recovery agencies. For a brief time, the NEC served as an important executive branch coordinating agency. Besides federal level coordination, the NEC venture coordinated the New Deal activities in the states. It was organized on a state-by-state basis, in part because one of the NEC's functions was to serve as a liaison agency between federal and state officials.⁴

The NEC had 290 employees. Its director, Donald Richberg, was glorified and criticized by the newspapers as an "assistant president." This was an exaggeration, but it aroused the jealousy of officials who had direct contact with the president and who feared working through an

⁴This liaison function is one that survived through the years and was strongly supported in the 1978 FEMA reorganization.

intermediary.⁵ *Realpolitik* difficulties such as this contributed to its demise. The NEC lasted until June 30, 1939. On July 1, 1939, almost all of its functions became part of the Executive Office of the President.⁶

The scope of the NEC's economic stabilization role was more limited than the scope of many of its successors. However, its focus on the functions of emergency preparedness and coordination establish it as a "kindred" organization to organizations such as civil defense and resource mobilization that were more oriented toward national security. The NEC is included here as a model of a centripetal period in White House interest in emergency management. Its position in the White House and participation in the national agenda established it as an ideal for its successor organizations. The clarity of its mission and scope, its support by the White House, and the survival of its functions under the scrutiny of the President's Committee on Administrative Management (Brownlow

⁵Leonard White, Introduction to the Study of Public Administration (New York: MacMillan Company, 1939), p. 103.

⁶Except in quoted material, the "Executive Office of the President" is hereafter referred to as the "Executive Office."

Committee) mark it as a high point in White House interest in emergency management.⁷

Emergency mobilization plans between WWI and WWII proposed other, more military, response organizations. The 1939 revision to the Industrial Mobilization Plan proposed a War Resources Administration that, in the name of the president, would control and coordinate the economic activities of the nation, meet the requirements of the civilian population, and supply the war. All economic functions which must be exercised in time of war are interrelated and interdependent. It is therefore highly important that one major emergency agency be created to coordinate the performance of these functions⁸

However, the proposed organization was doomed in three ways. First, it was poorly received on the civilian side of government; the plan was a military one, devised by military organizations to meet military resource requirements. Second, the proposed organization put large corporations in charge of the economy, a strategy antithetical to the Democratic party platform. Third, the

⁷Another being the period of the Office of Emergency Preparedness in the early 1970's (before its disestablishment) as it dealt with the unfolding energy crisis.

⁸U.S. War Department, Industrial Mobilization Plan, Revision of 1939 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1939), p. 11.

proposed organization was anathema to the president who was suspicious of anyone having so much concentrated power over the economy. For many reasons, including deference to the isolationist factions of the nation, the congress defeated the proposed bills that would put the plan into effect automatically upon declaration of an emergency.

In a counter action, the president successfully proposed establishing a War Resources Board (WRB)--an advisory body rather than an operational organization of government--directed by Assistant Secretary of War Louis Johnson, who was then Acting Secretary of War. The president believed that this was the best compromise because it showed national leadership, yet avoided the potential concentration of power that was unacceptable to him. The purpose of the WRB was to review the Industrial Mobilization Plan and to advise the Army and Navy Munitions Board on policies concerning the mobilization of the nation's economic resources.

Disagreement emerged over whether the Board was a temporary construction or whether it would become an executive agency of the government with broad powers similar to those of the old War Industries Board of years earlier. Just as the WRB was undermined by lack of clarity in its construction, so too would lack of consensus on basic

organizational characteristics like mission, scope, and authority, haunt its successor organizations over the decades.

The WRB was comprised of a chair and six members, all luminaries of the time. The chair was Edward R. Stettinius, Jr. the 39 year old chairman of U.S. Steel Corporation. The members were Karl T. Compton, president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Walter S. Gifford, president of American Telephone & Telegraph Company; Harold G. Moulton, president of the Brookings Institution; John Lee Pratt, a director of General Motors Corporation; Brig. General Robert E. Wood, board chair of Sears, Roebuck & Company; and John M. Hancock, who had been in charge of Navy purchasing in WWI.

The board suggested that the powers of the president could be administered in any of three ways; the same options that were behind much of the thinking of later years on organizational design for emergency management. The first option was the creation of a "super-agency" that would have almost complete control of the nation's economic life. The second option was further delegation of power to the existing peacetime organizations. The third option was the creation of a limited number of temporary agencies, each exercising a delegated war power. This third option

provided for agencies' coordination among themselves, upholding departmental territories, and leaving the president only the problem of issue resolution when they could not agree.

The board emphatically endorsed the third option. In their judgment, coordination offered the only effective means of converting American industry to the purposes of a war. The board advised both against centralizing power in a new super-agency and against delegating additional war powers to existing peacetime agencies. The board completed its work on November 24, 1939, noting that the nation was not engaged in any war for which further services might be needed.⁹

The experiences of the NEC, the Industrial Mobilization Plan(s), and the War Resources Board options provide perspective for this study of emergency management in several ways. These experiences demonstrate the recognition of the importance of emergency management, but they also show that administrative mechanisms can be foiled by those organizations fearing the mechanisms' concentrated

⁹Civilian Production Administration, Bureau of Demobilization, Industrial Mobilization for War: History of the War Production Board and Predecessor Agencies 1940-1945, by James W. Fesler (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1947), pp. 6-11.

power and access to the president.¹⁰ This emerged in the course of the research as a critical problem that was not solved by the Carter reorganization of 1978.

**The Roosevelt Administration: National
Resources Planning Board and
Office of Emergency Management**

The establishment of the Executive Office in 1939 stands as one of the notable achievements in the history of the office of the president. The creation of a central staff office equipped the president for the first time with tools commensurate to his task. The concept of the Executive Office allowed for a limited number of low-profile assistants to the president to help coordinate federal functions and serve as liaison within the federal establishment. Two Executive Office organizations from this time period are instructive for emergency management; particularly the National Resources Planning Board (NRPB), an economic advisory body, and the more broadly based Office of Emergency Management (OEM).

¹⁰Recall the earlier WRB discussion that noted the importance of reducing the fear of concentrated power and of stressing the importance of political support.

The National Resources Planning Board

The NRPB was authorized as an advisory arm of the president and an administrative unit within the Executive Office. This was brought about in Executive Order 8248 of September 8, 1939 (the same executive order that authorized the Office of Emergency Management). The NRPB found its origins in the New Deal agencies, specifically in the Public Works Administration of 1933, and is one of the national planning agencies that appeared prior to the 1940's. Several incarnations took place before this entity was established with the NRPB name in 1939. With its focus on the economy, it was consistent in scope with the NEC of earlier in the decade.

The NRPB was set up as a long-range planning instrument to collect data and to advise on economic conditions. It was an agency for exploring desirable public policies and urging government action in meeting social needs. It is included in this discussion because, with the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939, it was increasingly influential in emergency planning. The NRPB provided resource data to the war agencies and conducted academic studies in war-related areas.

As a clearinghouse for planning interests, the NRPB function was intended to be advisory in nature and included

no power to command."¹¹ The NRPB members often met with the president and records show 70 such meetings between 1939 and 1943. The NRPB was criticized for escaping reality by its insistence on long-range planning at a time when it could have recommended policies and action for the real emergencies. These emergencies included the recession of 1937 and the relocation of defense industries in 1940-1941.

More importantly, the NRPB received neither regular nor ample funding through the congress; congress remained ever suspicious of government intervention in the economy. In the tradition of the free market, congress feared that planning the nation's social and economic life was inimical to the American traditions of freedom and liberty, as well as plainly antithetical to the free competitive system.

As the NRPB floundered for lack of funding, observers offered ample advice for saving the entity. Since that advice holds as much truth for the well-being of other organizations, some of the advice is included here. For instance, it was suggested that the leadership of the NRPB needed to participate in the daily routine of the president, to be a fixture; the NRPB staff needed to work in the White

¹¹John D. Millett, The Process and Organization of Government Planning, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1947) pp. 39-43; and Charles E. Merriam, "The National Resources Planning Board," Public Administration Review 1 (1940-1941):116-121.

House proper; a permanent official of the organization needed to have standing equal to that of the president's budget director; the NRPB needed the president's personal support in appropriations requests; and the organization needed to cease issuing reports under its own name and issued them instead under the aegis of the White House, with the apparent sacrifice of fame balanced by an increase in protection and influence.

To end the story of the NRPB, its role had been limited to an advisory role; it ultimately was drawn from the White House sphere by the centrifugal forces of the national bureaucracy. The NRPB finally was abolished on August 31, 1943.¹² However, no sooner was it abolished than Brownlow noted that ". . . already it becomes apparent that the function must be restored to the executive branch."¹³

¹²Harold H. Roth, "The Executive Office of the President: A Study of its Development with Emphasis on the Period 1939-1953" (Ph.D. dissertation, American University, 1959), p. 249.

¹³Louis Brownlow, "Reconversion of the Federal Administrative Machinery from War to Peace," Public Administration Review 4 (1944):309-326.

The Office of Emergency Management

The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) was positioned in the White House. It thereby provided a critically needed "tent" structure for the fast changing needs and emerging emergency organizations during the period prior to WWII. Most of the individual emergency wartime agencies created by the president within the OEM eventually received specific congressional sanction through appropriations; however, OEM's structure provided an executive branch organizational model for the establishment and administration of the emergency wartime agencies.

The OEM was established by Administrative order of May 25, 1940¹⁴ based on authorization contained in Section I(6) of Executive Order 8248 of September 8, 1939 (the same executive order that authorized the NRPB). The executive order stated that there should be "in the event of a national emergency, or threat of national emergency, such office for emergency management as the President shall determine." The OEM was the framework within which most of the civilian war agencies were established. It was through the OEM that the president could coordinate and, when he

¹⁴U.S. President, Administrative Order, "Establishing the Office for Emergency Management in the Executive Office of the President and Prescribing Regulations Governing its Activities," 5 Federal Register 2109, 25 May 1940.

wished, personally direct the work of agencies engaged in emergency activities.¹⁵ It was headed by the liaison officer for emergency management, who also served as an administrative assistant to the president and as secretary to the National Defense Advisory Commission.

The OEM organization was not well received within the bureaucratic system. This response prompted another administrative order on January 7, 1941 that revitalized the OEM as the over-all coordinating emergency organization and further defined the functions of the OEM.¹⁶ That order included the following functions:

(a) To advise and assist the President in the discharge of extraordinary responsibilities imposed upon him by any emergency arising out of war, the threat of war, imminence of war, flood, drought, or other condition threatening the public peace and safety.

(b) To serve as a division of the Executive Office of the President, with such subdivisions as required, through which the President, during any emergency, may coordinate and supervise and, in appropriate cases, direct the activities of agencies, public or private, in relation thereto.

(c) To serve as a channel of communication between such agencies and the President concerning emergency

¹⁵William H. McReynolds, "The Office of Emergency Management," Public Administration Review I (1941):131-137. As the first Director of OEM, McReynolds, wrote that the OEM was designed to relieve the President from having to direct the temporary agencies.

¹⁶"Further Defining the Status and Functions of the Office of Emergency Management," A.O. of January 7, 1941. 6 Federal Register 192.

activities, to keep the President currently advised concerning additional measures that should be taken, and to assist in the preparation of recommendations for any necessary legislation.

(d) To provide and maintain liaison during any such emergency with other divisions of the Executive Office of the President and with such other agencies, public or private, for the purpose of bringing about maximum utilization and coordination of their services and facilities.

(e) To advise and assist the President with respect to any measures that may be needed to facilitate a restoration of normal administrative relations and to ameliorate the consequences of the emergency.

(f) To perform such other duties and functions with respect to any such emergency and the President may from time to time direct.

Other provisions of the administrative order prescribed that the "work and activities" of certain designated and other to-be-designated agencies should be "coordinated in and through the Office for Emergency Management under the direction and supervision of the President."¹⁷

This administrative order appeared to convey a powerful mandate. But power on paper does not necessarily translate to power in practice. For this reason, it is

¹⁷A number of emergency defense agencies were established in or coordinated through the OEM. By the middle of 1941, these included the Office of Production Management, Office of Civil Defense, Defense Communications Board, Office of Facts and Figures, Office of Defense Health and Welfare Services, Division of Housing Coordination, Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, Office of Lend-Lease Administration, National War Labor Board, Office of Price Administration, and Office of Defense Transportation.

valuable to examine the effectiveness of the organization.

In his study of the Executive Office, Harold Roth noted serious deficiencies still evident in OEM after the recharged administrative order.¹⁸ The rapid growth of government and the stresses of war management undermined the stability of the organization. OEM's central administrative services, which served its constituent agencies, were severely criticized as ineffective. To satisfy the critics, the Division of Information and the Division of Central Administrative Services were terminated in favor of decentralized administration within the individual agencies.

Roth found the OEM was even less effective in the function of over-all direction. While he refrains from reflecting unkindly on William H. McReynolds, a senior White House staff member and first director of the OEM, Roth cites a 1941 view that the "emergency defense program needs a powerful and energetic director working directly under the President...[OEM] is not that organization now."¹⁹

¹⁸Roth, "The Executive Office of the President," pp. 285-300.

¹⁹Republic National Committee Research Division, "The Organization of the National Defense Program," (Washington, D.C.:1941) mimeograph, p. 16. This document is located in the library of the National Defense University, Fort McNair, Washington, D.C.

The Republican National Research Committee found that the important war agencies were collected within the structure of a coordinating agency, but that no real coordination was provided.²⁰ As the defense program accelerated, disagreements multiplied. Denunciations and counter-accusations exploded in the media as agency officials, each intent on his own part of the program and resentful of overlapping and encroachment "went public." The spectacle of internecine strife raised questions on the choice of administrative mechanism for emergency management. The failure of the OEM was commonly known. Amidst all of this, the congress threatened to impose a statutory system for organizing the emergency wartime effort.²¹

From OEM's perspective, its mission may have been impossible. OEM was overwhelmed with the details of the economy. The director found that he was dealing with many "czars" armed with executive orders vesting them with powers, many of which undermined his own OEM powers. Besides this concern over power and jurisdiction, debates

²⁰Republican National Committee Research Division, "The Roosevelt Administration at War with Itself," (Washington, D.C.:1944) mimeograph, 39 pp. This document is located in the library of the National Defense University, Fort McNair, Washington, D.C.

²¹It was not until the National Security Act of 1947 that a such a statutory body was created.

raged over OEM's very mission. Was it a clearing center or a control center? Did it issue recommendations or directions? Its general lack of prestige positioned it as a target for continuing criticism and bureaucratic travail. Not surprisingly, considering the mood, the departments and agencies were reluctant to release information to the OEM. Without strong presidential backing, OEM was left to depend on voluntary cooperation from organizations that felt challenged by it. This was a formula for failure from which later emergency management organizations also were to suffer.

The seeming failure of the organization during the stress of the WWII emergency was not politically acceptable to the president. Accordingly, the president answered his critics with Executive Order 9347 of May 27, 1943, establishing a powerful Office of War Mobilization (OWM) within OEM. The OWM served as the top-level agency to unify direction and centralize control of the emergency wartime mobilization effort. Its domain was both natural and industrial resources for both military and civilian needs. Its director was James F. Byrnes, a man of established reputation and credibility. He held the status of an assistant resident and served as director throughout the existence of the OWM.

On October 3, 1944 OWM became the Office of War Mobilization and Reconversion (OWMR). In addition to the OWM functions, it was responsible for formulating plans for the transition from war to peace and for removing wartime economic controls. The organization was renamed in late 1946 and finally was abolished on June 1, 1947. While OWM and OWMR were created under the framework headed by the OEM, both operated longer into the 1940's than did OEM.

On November 3, 1943 the last director of OEM resigned and no successor was named. Curiously, the OEM appears never to have been terminated. The 1989/1990 edition of the United States Government Manual shows the OEM as "inactive." The OEM's scope was potentially as wide as it needed to be, certainly broader than the scope of any emergency management organization until its time. Its responsibility to coordinate and provide liaison was powerful and authoritative. In summary, the crisis of WWII drew the OEM/OWM to the White House inner circle. This seemed to some to present a model of centripetal force that temporarily drew the national security and disaster aspects of emergency management into the White House center of symbolic power and prestige. However, not all viewed the OEM/OWM model as effective.

**The Roosevelt Administration: The National
Security Resources Board**

It was just four years later, in the wake of more scathing criticism of inadequate coordination of national security interests in the prosecution of WWII, that the congress mandated by statute the creation of other emergency coordination bodies within the Executive Office.² The National Security Council (NSC) was to assure coordination among the areas of defense, diplomacy, intelligence, and civilian industrial production and resources. The National Security Resources Board (NSRB) was to assure internal coordination of civilian industrial production and resources. Congress intended for these bodies to accomplish a coordination of emergency management that had eluded the nation during WWII.

Written in 1931 and regularly revised (in 1933, 1936, and 1939), the Industrial Mobilization Plan was developed under the auspices of the military establishment. However, it hardly was studied, let alone used, by the civilian community as a basis for action for WWII mobilization activities or organization. Civilian government and private sector thinking at the time was that mobilization planning was a civilian responsibility needing

²National Security Act of 1947.

civilian thinking and strategic planning. The post-WWII answer was to place a civilian agency within the framework of the president's immediate office to close the gap between civilian resources policy and diplomatic, intelligence, and military policies.

The National Security Act of 1947 provided the basic statutory grounding for NSEP and established the NSRB as the highest level domestic emergency organization with a statutory basis. The statute created the administrative framework through which adequate preparedness was to be achieved in peacetime. The statute unified the military services and set up the NSC, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the NSRB.

The government took a far-reaching step in providing an integrated and effective structure for national security with the creation of the NSC and the NSRB. The two agencies were set up as interlocking bodies at the presidential level to help the president in achieving unity of purpose on the national security front. Together, the diplomatic, military, intelligence, and civilian facets of national security were integrated.

The NSRB had a civilian chair with membership from designated departments and agencies of the federal government. The NSRB included the Departments of Defense,

State, Treasury, Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, and Labor (and others the president might designate). It had four working groups that could become the nucleus of a war production board. Their subject areas encompassed production, transportation and storage, human resource utilization, and economic management. By 1949, the NSRB had a staff which numbered 350 people.

The statute charged the NSRB to advise the president about the coordination of military, industrial, and civilian factors for an emergency mobilization, including:

1. policies concerning industrial and civilian mobilization;
2. programs for the effective use in time of war of the nation's natural and industrial resources for military and civilian needs, for the maintenance and stabilization of the civilian economy in time of war, and for the adjustment of the economy to war needs and conditions;
3. policies for unifying, in time of war, the activities of federal agencies and departments engaged in or concerned with production procurement, distribution, or transportation of military or civilian supplies, materials, and products;

4. the relationship between potential supplies of and potential requirements for manpower, resources, and productive facilities in time of war;

5. policies for establishing adequate reserves of strategic and critical materials; and

6. the strategic relocation of industries, services, government, and economic activities, the continuous operation of which is essential to the nation's security.

Reminiscent of earlier emergency management organizational designs and as a model for later emergency organizations, the NSRB was directed by the National Security Act to "utilize to the maximum extent the facilities and resources of the departments and agencies of the Government." The NSRB chair was a member of the NSC.²³

The NSRB eventually found itself plagued by confusion and conflict over its mission. Did the statute strictly confine the NSRB's responsibilities to advising the president? Or did the role for the NSRB include not only the preparation of plans and programs for national

²³By 1949, the NSC structure was such that the President would chair the NSC and that the members would be the Vice President, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense and the Chair of the NSRB. The President had authority from the statute to add more members (and has amended the membership over the intervening years).

mobilization, but the inheritance of WWII emergency powers and the maintenance of a skeletal organization for making emergency plans operative when necessary? This conflict first became public in 1948; the chair of the NSRB proposed adding language to the draft Selective Service Act requiring the director of the Selective Service to follow NSRB policy determinations. President Truman denied this request, stating that granting NSRB executive powers would dilute its advisory capabilities and that such authority in statute would restrict future presidential flexibility.

In the spring of 1948, the president's mission for the NSRB and its staff arm was to advise. Nevertheless, the NSRB pressed for an operational role. An organizational chart approved in May of 1948 showed that the functional divisions of the NSRB constituted the nuclei of war management offices.²⁴ At the same time, a package of proposals submitted to President Truman suggested the submission of standby legislation to congress providing that:

The legislative history of the National Security Act, past experience, and the preponderance of opinion of leading authorities in this field indicate the advisability of designating the National Security Resources Board, subject to the

²⁴Executive Office of the President, A Case Study in Peacetime Mobilization Planning - The National Security Resources Board, 1947-1953, by Harry B. Yoshpe, (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1953), p. 30.

President, as the governmental agency charged with the integrating and coordinating functions (of federal activities for war preparedness).²⁵

Again, President Truman disapproved this proposal. He reiterated his view that the NSRB should focus on long-term plans, on advising the president on national security implications of federal actions, and the rest of the responsibilities of the statute. The NSRB tried again to amend its role during a briefing to the president on December 10, 1948. For unspecified reasons, the chairman of the NSRB resigned on December 15, 1948, five days after that briefing.

The NSRB continued as an advisory organization, albeit with continuing confusion over its role *vis-à-vis* the Office of Defense Mobilization (ODM), which was created in 1950.²⁶ In 1951, the NSRB address still was the Executive Office Building. A June 1951 document published by the U.S. National Archives, The Handbook: Emergency Defense

²⁵Ibid., p. 26.

²⁶The NSRB also initiated the creation of the Federal Civil Defense Administration in 1950, as the first peacetime agency with statutory responsibility for programs to protect the nation's human resources in the event of an attack. FCDA was originally created within OEM; subsequently, it was established as an independent agency by the Federal Civil Defense Act of 1950 (64 Stat. 1245; 50 U.S.C. App. 2251).

Activities, listed eight officers of the NSRB, along with supporting staff.

The experience of the NSRB and its staff arm was that of another emergency management organization influenced by the centripetal forces of White House. There was significant interest in emergency management in the wake of WWII, yet the powers of the organization were tempered. The organization was denied the super-agency status and executive power that were allowed OEM/OWM during the period of the WWII emergency.

**The Truman Administration: Office of
Defense Mobilization**

The Korean War emergency required more powerful and direct management of the nation's resources. Initially, President Truman intended to accomplish mobilization within the existing structure of the government, with the chair of the NSRB providing overall coordination.²⁷ He changed his

²⁷In his memoirs in 1956, President Truman related that the NSC met on December 14, 1950 to discuss the political, military, and economic implications of the Korean situation. He wanted to assure that military production requirements would be met, but also realized that the civilian population had to support the program. He knew that rationing and similar strict controls would not be popular. The situation was complicated by the demands of some newspapers and politicians who wanted a crash program of armament and a dramatic mobilization of the entire nation such as one would have in a time of total war. He opposed the clamor for full mobilization. Harry S. Truman, Memoirs: Volume Two Years of Trial and Hope, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co.,

mind once hostilities began in Korea in 1950. At that point he found it necessary to establish an active operational and coordinating organization (rather than a planning organization) for the direction of national mobilization effort.²⁸ Accordingly, on December 16, 1950, he proclaimed the existence of a national emergency, declaring that "the increasing menace of the forces of Communist aggression requires that the national defense of the United States be strengthened as speedily as possible." That same day, President Truman created the Office of Defense Mobilization (ODM) and authorized the director "to direct, control and coordinate all mobilization activities of the Executive Branch of the Government including but not limited to production, procurement, manpower stabilization and transport activities."²⁹

The ODM was at the top of an organizational pyramid for directing economic, resources, and production control measures. ODM enlarged its role beyond planning for another

Inc. 1956).

²⁸Executive Office of the President, A Case Study in Peace-time Mobilization Planning, The National Security Resources Board 1947-1953, by Harry B. Yoshpe (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 30 April 1953), p. 144.

²⁹Rodolfo A. Correa, "The Organization for Defense Mobilization," The Federal Bar Journal XIII (September 1952): pp. 2-3.

WWII. It identified the problems that might arise in the event of an attack on the continental United States or the extension of the Korean Conflict to other areas, particularly Europe. The NSRB retained its original advisory and planning functions. NSRB's efforts were directed primarily toward assuring the availability of critical materials, reducing the vulnerability of the civil mobilization base, and planning for the continuity of essential government activities in the event of an attack on the United States.

The provisions of the Defense Production Act of 1950 established a system of priorities and allocations for materials and facilities, provision for the requisitioning thereof, financial assistance for expansion of productive capacity and supply, price and wage stabilization, provisions for the settlement of labor disputes, and controls over credit. By these measures, the government was able to facilitate the production of goods and services necessary for national security and other purposes.³⁰ The

³⁰The extensions of the Defense Production Act have lapsed intermittently in recent years. It lapsed during 1990-1991; it then was extended for a few months twice in 1991; several key informants anticipated its re-enactment. Of the basic seven areas of authority, the only ones expected are the priorities and allocations authority, the expansion of productive capacity and supply authority, and some general provisions. The more dramatic authorities, e.g. condemnation, price and wage stabilization, credit control and labor dispute settlement authorities, were

ODM's focus was operational, including emergency direction, control, and coordination. As was the case during WWII and in this case as a result of the Korean Conflict, the emergency management organization was drawn into another centripetal period in White House interest in emergency management. The OEM/OWM and the ODM, both wartime organizations, were similar in operational and directive roles. They differed from the less powerful and ill-defined advisory and coordinative organizations of peace time.

**The Eisenhower Administration: A Reconstituted
Office of Defense Mobilization**³¹

In 1953, President Eisenhower combined the ODM with the NSRB (the holder of the statutory responsibilities for mobilization and for stockpiling of strategic and critical materials).³² Additional responsibilities of the revitalized ODM included procurement under the Buy American Act of 1933, imports affecting national security under the Trade Agreements Extension Act of 1955, advice to the president on government telecommunications activities through the

curtailed during the 1950's.

³¹The Office of Defense Mobilization was created by Reorganization Plan No. 3 of 1953, 67 Stat. 634.

³²Under the provisions of the National Security Act of 1947 and the Strategic and Critical Materials Act of 1946.

Communications Act of 1934, and acquisition of material for supplemental stockpiles under the Agricultural Trade Development Assistance Act of 1954. This new and strengthened organization was responsible for all short-range and long-range preparedness and was placed under the direction of the long-time public administrator Arthur Flemming.

This ODM united the former ODM and the NSRB in one agency. This new organization was positioned to exercise strong leadership in national mobilization efforts, both current defense activities and readiness for any future national emergency. The director directed, controlled, and coordinated all defense mobilization activities of the executive branch on behalf of the president. This included, but was not limited to, production, manpower, stabilization, stockpiling, and transportation activities. The director administered an executive reserve training program and advised the president on matters related to mobilization, including trade agreements affecting national security, telecommunications, strategic relocation of industries, and major disasters affecting national defense. The operating activities were, to the fullest extent possible, distributed among existing government departments and agencies. As of

January 1, 1958, the ODM was located in the Executive Office and had 254 full-time employees.

But all was not well with the ODM. ODM authorities were in disarray. The ODM derived its status and functions from the statutory NSRB, from presidential delegations under the Defense Production Act of 1950 and from a few other statutes and transfers of splintered statutory functions.

The ODM's longevity was limited. Conflicts with the Federal Civil Defense Administration (FCDA), its planning rather than operational focus, and its inability to summon attention to the importance of emergency management led to its disestablishment. Even so, this period marked a continuation of White House interest in emergency management. As a reborn reaction to national security "limited-theater" occurrences (such as the closing of the Suez Canal in 1956), deteriorating East-West relationships, and the launching of Sputnik in October 1957, the Eisenhower administration concluded that emergency management needed additional national focus. Thus was born the Office of Defense and Civilian Mobilization, an organizational and political attempt to provide mobilization readiness for nuclear conflict.

**The Eisenhower Administration: The Office of
Defense and Civilian Mobilization**

Reorganization Plan No.1 of 1958 transferred to the president the functions vested in the ODM and the FCDA, and consolidated the ODM and the FCDA into a new agency, the Office of Defense and Civilian Mobilization (ODCM).³³ ³⁴ The ODCM was promoted by the president as a device to improve and strengthen federal organization for preparing and mobilizing the nation for the full range of non-military national security activities (including economic stabilization, resources management, and civil defense).³⁵ Generally, it was unopposed by the House Subcommittee because "plain facts of life suggest that civil defense is

³³Reorganization Plan No.1 of 1958, 72 Stat. 1799.

³⁴The reorganization transferred to the president functions vested in ODM and FCDA; abolished those agencies; authorized the president to delegate functions; created a new agency in the Executive Office; staffed it with a director, deputy director, and other high-level assistants; made the new director a member of the NSC; and transferred the Civil Defense Advisory Council to the new agency.

³⁵U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Government Operations, Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Government Operations, 85th Cong., 2d sess., May 6 and 7, 1958, p. 325.

in so low a state that nothing could make it worse and something could make it better."³⁶

Organization manuals of the period have been helpful in constructing the missions of the various emergency organizations. The 1958 edition of the Defense Mobilization Organization directory stated that the director, on behalf of the president, coordinated all mobilization activities of the executive branch of the government. As with the predecessors, this included receiving resources availability information, determining the total national requirements in specific resources, services, and productive capacity under various emergency conditions, and directing the allocation of the resources. The director also was charged with directing and coordinating planning and readiness measures for non-military national defense. The organization was to operate with the principle of making maximum use of federal, state, and local government agencies in planning mobilization activities and in the development of plans for non-military defense. Except for stand-by organizations for information control, censorship, transport controls, and

³⁶Executive Office of the President, Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization, Reorganization Plan No. 1 of 1958 Legislative History, (undated) p. 22, citing Report No. 1874, House of Representatives, 85th Cong., 2d sess, June 12, 1958.

economic stabilization, ODCM/OCDM³⁷ delegated its responsibility for preparedness and response to other federal departments and agencies. The organization defined its role toward state and local governments as one of giving guidance and financial assistance.

The reorganization was to provide greater "effectiveness and efficiency"³⁸ in dealing with the perceived inseparable jobs of civil defense and defense mobilization.³⁹ The new organization was to provide the machinery for eliminating confusion in those programs and for achieving a higher state of readiness for national emergencies. These intentions will be familiar when raised in the next chapter's discussions on the 1978 unification of the, by then, dispersed emergency management functions.

By way of preparation, the then Bureau of the Budget (now the Office of Management and Budget), the ODM, and the

³⁷Just a few months into its new life, the ODCM's name (a name arrived at after much debate) was changed to the Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization (OCDM). This was accomplished with Executive Order 10782 of September 6, 1958, "Amending Executive Order No. 10773 of July 1, 1958, Relating to Civil and Defense Mobilization."

³⁸U.S. Congress, House. Committee on Government Operations, Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Government Operations, 85th Cong., 2d sess. May 6 and 7, 1958.

³⁹FCDA also coordinated the Federal Government's disaster relief activities under Executive Order 10427 of January 16, 1953.

FCDA hired McKinsey & Co. as a management consulting firm to study the problem more specifically and to develop a reorganization strategy.⁴⁰ The resulting report was in two volumes, one in December 1957, the next in March 1958. The president's proposed reorganization contained several key elements that are related here in some detail because the consolidation logic relates to similar consolidation logic found in the reorganization effort that established FEMA twenty years later.

The reorganization was recommended for organizational, bureaucratic control, and political reasons. Not only had rapid advances in military science resulted in serious overlap between the FCDA and the ODM in carrying out the central planning and coordination programs, the coming of nuclear weapons and missile delivery had eradicated the distinction between defense mobilization and civil defense.⁴¹ In addition, the reorganization was based on the belief that central functions should be vested in no one other than the president; these central functions transcended the

⁴⁰An excellent discussion is contained in a summary document entitled Reorganization Plan No. 1 of 1958: Legislative History. The undated document was published by the Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization in the Executive Office of the President.

⁴¹This is the duplication issue discussed below.

responsibility of any single department or agency.⁴² And finally, the states and localities needed clear and uniform national guidance on emergency management, an area of perceived shortcoming.⁴³

The three major issues of the 1958 reorganization--duplication, bureaucratic control and political--are discussed in the following pages. These are discussed in detail because an understanding of the 1958 reorganization is critical for understanding the reasons for and the thrust of the 1978 reorganization. Both of these reorganization efforts were driven by arguments to eliminate duplication, to increase the national importance of emergency management, and to bring order to the function of emergency management. In both the 1958 and 1978 cases, the reorganization arguments paralleled each other and resulted in the unification of dispersed emergency functions. A significant difference was that the 1958 reorganization placed the emergency management functions within the White House. This is in contrast to the 1978 reorganization which placed the functions in an independent agency.

⁴²This is the bureaucratic control issue discussed below.

⁴³This is the political issue discussed below.

The Duplication Issue

The first reason given for the 1958 reorganization was organizational efficiency and effectiveness. The McKinsey report drew heavily on the 1956 civil defense hearings concerning the overlap of functions between ODM and FCDA. The authors concluded that:

in most areas of nonmilitary defense planning, confusion or duplication exists among the organizations involved in that planning. No precise and accepted definition indicates who shall be responsible for essential activities in the event of an attack. In total, this nation lacks the organizational arrangements needed for developing a consistent, well-defined program for surviving and recovering from a massive nuclear attack.⁴⁴

The reorganization was to eliminate the dual, and at times conflicting, sources of planning and coordination of non-military defense preparedness efforts. Some areas of duplication were developing and testing emergency plans, planning for the mobilization and utilization of resources, planning for the continuity of government, and coordinating the defense activities of the other federal departments and agencies. Both ODM and FCDA were delegating responsibilities to the departments and agencies--ODM accomplishing this directly and FCDA, through the president. ODM assignments were to be financed by the recipient agency's own budget; FCDA assignments were accompanied by

⁴⁴McKinsey report, vol. 1, ch. 1, pp. 2-4.

modest allocations appropriated to the administrator of the FCDA. Each had separate interagency coordinating boards. The reorganization would bring into being an agency that would be capable of looking at emergency management in its totality. It was argued that the time the president was spending on coordinating the overlapping agencies should be spent on dealing with the major policy issues of the field.

The Bureaucratic Control Issue

The second reason that made the 1958 reorganization necessary involved management control and organizational prestige. The transfer of functions to the president was designed to co-opt the major departments and agencies and bring about the cooperation of state and local governments. Since such an aim went far beyond the scope of any single department or agency, placement of the functions with the president seemed the best course.⁴⁵ The consolidation was intended as a clear statement to all that central leadership in the area of emergency management was important and would continue to be a direct responsibility of the president. The director would succeed the heads of ODM and FCDA and

⁴⁵Executive Office of the President, Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization, Reorganization Plan No.1 of 1958: Legislative History. Undated.

be a statutory member of the NSC. The consolidation also provided the president with a single staff agency for assisting in planning and directing the entire range of activities in this "extremely complex and crucial program area."⁴⁶

Placement in the Executive Office--Discussion. The placement of the new emergency management organization in the Executive Office symbolized the intended high status.⁴⁷ In the Executive Office, the new organization would possess the status appropriate to its central policy and coordination functions. By being in the Executive Office and having some budget authority, the director of the ODCM/OCDM was in a stronger position than his predecessors to assist and advise the president, to deal with the heads of the departments and agencies, and to deal with state officials. This closeness to the president was intended to enhance the organization's ability to direct, coordinate, and stimulate the emergency management efforts throughout the nation.

The authors of the McKinsey report predicated the report's recommendation to place the function in the

⁴⁶Ibid. p. 11.

⁴⁷ODM had been located in the Executive Office and FCDA had statutory independent agency status.

Executive Office on the assumption that policy guidance, direction, and coordination would be forthcoming by or in the name of the president, and that the operational functions would be placed in other agencies suited to performing them. The advantages of organizational placement in the Executive Office are outlined here because of their relevance to later events; specifically, the later 1978 decision not to place the emergency management function in the Executive Office was cited as a critical design flaw of the 1978 reorganization. The advantages cited in 1957-1958 include the following:

1. There would be greater assurance that plans for the entire non-military defense job would be integrated and consistent
2. The location would give greater stature to those charged with supervising the federal departments and agencies performing assigned functions
3. Attention would be focused on the importance of the function, with greater public awareness forthcoming
4. Policy guidance and direction from a single source would reduce confusion resulting from dual and sometimes conflicting assignments to federal departments and agencies and establish the importance of the delegated assignments

5. Maximum use would be made of existing departments and agencies; a simpler framework would be created for expediting policy formulation and settling questions, thus promoting the development of realistic plans and giving greater assurance that federal departments and agencies would be prepared to perform effectively in emergencies

6. The president would retain flexibility to change delegations and modify the organizational structure to meet new needs in emergencies

The McKinsey report discussed only two disadvantages in adopting its recommendation. First, as a proponent for civil defense, the agency might not be able to serve effectively in resolving conflicting claims between the civil and military sectors for critical resources. Could it be both claimant and adjudicator? Might not an independent adjudicator be better assigned the function?⁴⁶ Second, the new agency would be charged with functions not traditionally done within the Executive Office, such as informing the

⁴⁶Responding to this first point, the authors of the report argued that it was not practicable to maintain independent adjudication machinery over a long period and that departments and agencies could do most of their own adjudication.

public and training state and local civil defense leaders.⁴⁹ These functions would involve direct relations with state and local officials and maintenance of a substantial field staff.⁵⁰

Contemplation of a Department--Discussion. The McKinsey report had presented another alternative to the placement of the function in the Executive Office.⁵¹ The report also cited the advantages for giving emergency management a departmental status. Those advantages included: greater acceptance of the need for the function; greater prestige of the function in the eyes of the public and among other federal agencies; increased employee morale; settlement of

⁴⁹Responding to this second point, the report noted that the function of keeping the public informed of the nature of the threat to national security is appropriate to the Executive Office (not to a subordinate organization) and that during WWII emergency agencies in the Executive Office discharged comparable responsibilities without adverse results.

⁵⁰ODM employees in January 1, 1958 totalled 254. FCDA employees on March 31, 1958 totalled 1,278. Thus, while not all were geographically co-located, the size of the emergency management contingent assigned to the Executive Office increased five-fold.

⁵¹Placement in the Executive Office retained strong support over the years and appeared in the 1978 discussions as a serious alternative to enhancing emergency preparedness. The 1978 arguments favoring it were not successful.

the debate over Cabinet status for the function; and more likely financial support.

At the same time, the report argued that departmental status was not appropriate, because the residual policy in the White House and the new department would overlap, older co-equal departments would not readily accept monitoring and direction by the new department, and the new department would face challenges in making assignments to the departments and agencies.

Further, since departmental status would tend to freeze the organizational structure (because of legislative control), the president's ability to modify organizational arrangements for quick adaptation to emergency conditions would be diminished. Departmental status had significant congressional support because it gave prestige to the civil defense effort which was a program benefiting the states. Congress viewed civil defense as a permanent and important function, equally as permanent and important as its counterpart military defense organizations which already had departmental status. Civil defense also was seen as needing departmental status in order to attract the best scientific, engineering, and administrative talent needed to solve complex, new problems of the post-WWII era.

In the late 1950's, departmental status was seen as a reasonable, albeit doomed, alternative. The report recommended against departmental status and Robert E. Merriam, Assistant director of the then Bureau of the Budget, testified in opposition to departmental status in hearings on H.R. 2125 in February and March 1957.

The Political Issue

The third reason the organization was necessary was political. The reorganization stimulated suspicion and caution on Capitol Hill. First, members were interested in the state and local funding programs. In addition, they questioned the use of the Reorganization Act of 1949, as amended, to transfer the functions of an independent statutory agency (FCDA) to the president.⁵² The related issues were that the reorganization would bestow on the president continuing reorganization authority over non-military defense programs without congressional review. That offered the president the opportunity to exercise executive privilege with respect to the non-military defense programs.

⁵²The Civil Defense Advisory Council created by the Federal Civil Defense Act of 1950, together with its functions, was transferred to the ODCM to serve as a link between state and local agencies and the federal government. Members included governors, mayors and private citizens.

Critical members also suggested that nominally placing the authority with the president, while really vesting it in what might be mediocre staff personnel, was not an effective solution for the ODM/FCDA overlap and status problems. They also were skeptical that the Executive Office could accommodate operating and field personnel. To the end, the civil defense supporters favored placing the function at a departmental level. They closed with the warning that the members of the congress would be following closely the developments resulting from the reorganization. The ODCM/OCDM's scope was broader than its predecessors. It incorporated civil defense with the traditional areas of national security. The focus was more operational than some of ODCM/OCDM's predecessors and included direction, funding, and allocation authorities in addition to the now traditional advisory and coordination roles. It was created during a period of heightened national security awareness. The Korean War had ended and the Cold War was gaining more attention. The reorganization brought about increased visibility and White House endorsement, placing emergency management on the national agenda.

Despite the analysis and effort of 1958, the unification of emergency management did not last. On July

20, 1961, Executive Order 10952 transferred OCDM's civil defense program to the Department of Defense .⁵³ ⁵⁴

**The Kennedy Administration: The Office of
Emergency Planning**

At the same time that the operational aspects of the civil defense program were transferred to the Department of Defense, Reorganization Plan No. 1 of 1958 was further amended.⁵⁵ By deleting the "Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization" and inserting the "Office of Emergency Planning" in the statute, all references in any other statute to the OCDM then became references to the new Office of Emergency Planning (OEP). If there were "good old days" in emergency management, these were the last. WWII was still a recent memory, staff still had wartime public administration experience, and people believed in civil defense. Best of all for emergency planners, there was a perceived threat. Soviet space exploration and the Cuban Missile Crisis promoted the visibility and acceptability of NSEP.

⁵³Executive Order 10952 of July 20, 1961, "Assigning civil defense responsibilities to the Secretary of Defense and others." 26 Federal Register 6577.

⁵⁴In 1964 it was moved to the Department of the Army.

⁵⁵September 22, 1961; Public Law 87-296, 75 Stat. 630.

OEP responsibilities were described in Executive Order 11051 of September 27, 1962. According to that document, the director assisted and advised the president in coordinating and determining policy for all emergency management activities of the government. Many of the operational responsibilities of the ODCM/OCDM were not apparent in the new OEP. While it retained some operating program responsibilities, it appeared more as a true arm of the president.

The preparedness activities included developing and planning the emergency use of resources such as manpower, materials, industrial capacity, transportation, and communications; civil defense policy; planning the emergency organization of the government; preparing for the stabilization of the civilian economy in an emergency; and planning for rehabilitation after an attack. The OEP was charged with developing plans, conducting programs, and coordinating the preparedness for the continuity of federal, state, and local government under emergency conditions. As in the mission statements of the predecessors, it also furnished guidance to state and local governments in the development of resource management plans.

An operational description of the organization published in the 1962 edition of the Defense Mobilization

Organization Directory describes additional functions.⁵⁶ It states that the director assisted the president in coordinating all national resources mobilization planning activities. Responsibilities included making continuing analyses of the probable effects of various emergency conditions on the mobilization base, preparing for the sufficiency of the mobilization base under all emergency conditions, and planning an emergency structure for the allocation of resources. The organization also was charged with recommending the issuance of executive orders that assigned emergency planning and mobilization responsibilities to federal departments and agencies. Further, the organization was charged with guiding state and local governments in the development of their plans for the management of resources, mobilization, and the continuity of essential civilian government.

In October of 1962, the Interagency Emergency Preparedness Committee was established as the principal mechanism for coordinating emergency management planning throughout the executive branch. Much like its predecessors

⁵⁶This directory was an early version of the United States Government Manual that is now published by the Office of the Federal Registrar of the National Archives and Records Administration. The early directories furnished mission information, as well as staffing arrangements, addresses and phone numbers.

and successors, it was to assist and advise the director of the emergency management organization, in this case the OEP, in the coordination and stimulation of emergency preparedness among the federal departments and agencies. The December 1962 edition of the Defense Mobilization Organization Directory listed thirty-three department and agency members and nine observers of the Interagency Emergency Preparedness Committee.⁵⁷

While it was without the operational aspects of the civil defense program, the OEP's scope still included non-military national security and disaster management. It continued its NSC membership and guidance, coordination, planning, and resource adjudication functions. The OEP's authority over a portion of the budgets of the federal departments and agencies and its placement in the Executive Office marked a continuation of White House interest in emergency management.⁵⁸

⁵⁷The director of OEP also chaired an Executive Stockpile Committee to review policies for the stockpiling of critical and strategic materials. Members were the Secretaries of State, Defense, Interior, Commerce, and Labor; the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency; and the Administrator of the General Services Administration.

⁵⁸This is noted elsewhere as "delegate agency funding."

**The Nixon Administration: The Office of
Emergency Preparedness**

In 1973, the OEP--renamed the Office of Emergency Preparedness (OEP)--was abolished and all of its functions were transferred to the president.⁵⁹ Officially, its removal was part of an effort to streamline the size of the Executive Office, to reorient the Executive Office as a staff for top policy formulation and remove operational functions. But its troubles started earlier.⁶⁰

Both Presidents Kennedy and Johnson were displeased with the OEP director's presence at NSC meetings as a statutory member, and President Kennedy's Executive Committee of the NSC excluded the OEP director from membership. By the early 1970's, the White House staff wanted to banish the formidable director, General George Lincoln, and the whole organization as a form of retribution for an energy report it produced.⁶¹ The controversial report on energy--an area which OEP counted among its responsibil-

⁵⁹Sections 1 and 3(a) of Reorganization Plan No. 1 of 1973 (38 Federal Register 9579). The transfer of functions was implemented by Executive Order 11725 of July 1, 1973.

⁶⁰Non-attribution interviews; Harold Seidman, Politics, Position, and Power (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 215; and Steward Alsop, The Center (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), pp. 271-272, 275-278.

⁶¹Non-attribution interviews.

ities--suggested the need for energy controls. This displeased the inner White House staff, and in particular, John Ehrlichman, Assistant to the President for Domestic Affairs.⁶²

Moreover, internecine strife contributed to OEP's passing. A case in point was OEP's loss of face when OEP Director Lincoln criticized HUD's Secretary Romney for HUD's poor performance in providing housing in the aftermath of Hurricane Agnes in 1972. Coupled with OEP's own poor performance in responding to Hurricane Agnes, this provided a justification for a new administrative mechanism for emergency response. Related to all of this was the lack of a specific national security threat in the early 1970's and a lack of relevance for war planners. In combination, these factors set the stage for the abolishment action taken by President Nixon.

OEP could not look for strength elsewhere in the bureaucracy. Because it did not administer programs that affected private or governmental interests in a significant way; it lacked the pressure group support that might have been useful for extending its life. Its elite planning, policy, and coordination mission had prevented its gaining strong pressure group support from either within or outside

⁶²Non-attribution interviews.

government. As it was, OEP was dependent on the president for political support and existed at the pleasure of the president. Thus, with the loss of presidential support, it was abolished "without a whimper."⁶

In addition to abolishing OEP and removing direct representation for emergency management in the White House, the reorganization effort abolished the Civil Defense Advisory Council, terminated the OEP director's membership on the NSC, transferred program responsibilities to other organizations, transferred some policy guidance responsibilities to the NSC, returned emergency authorities from OEP to the president, and reassigned emergency coordination functions (to the extent that they were to be done) to the Executive Office. Those functions would be done in the Executive Office under the supervision of the assistant to the president in charge of executive management. As part of the reorganization, the president also terminated the "delegate agency funding" concept, by which the central emergency management organization had effective control over at least a portion of the emergency preparedness budget of the departments and agencies that supported the national effort.

⁶Peter Woll, American Bureaucracy, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1977), p. 69.

The liaison responsibilities with the state governors were assigned to the White House Office of Intergovernmental Relations. Policy guidance (to the extent that it would be given) for the continuity of government, resource mobilization and national security stockpile was given to the NSC. Adjustments to the strategic stockpile were to be coordinated with the Council on Economic Policy. The Departments of the Treasury and HUD and GSA acquired the remaining programs of the OEP. Departments and agencies retained their usual operational responsibilities within their resource areas.⁶⁴

The Department of the Treasury (TREAS) was assigned OEP's import investigations. That included investigations that might impair the national security, such as those taken under section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962. The Oil Policy Committee, which regulated fuel oil imports, continued as a function but the director of OEP was replaced as chair by the deputy secretary of the Treasury. This move was viewed approvingly by some on Capitol Hill because it was seen as increasing administrative responsiveness to the regular New England winter fuel shortages. The restrictions

⁶⁴This material is drawn from Reorganization Plan No. 1 of 1973, the Senate Staff Report on Emergency Preparedness of March 1973, and other chronicles of the 1973 Nixon reorganization efforts.

on oil imports (promoted by OEP under a national security rationale) had resulted in unpopular higher oil prices and rationing.⁶⁵

HUD was assigned the federal disaster assistance program. GSA was assigned the programs for the continuity of government, defense production and mobilization, priorities and allocations, and stockpiling.⁶⁶ GSA also acquired the OEP role of interagency coordination of emergency situations resulting from critical disruptions to essential services and supplies, for example, energy shortages due to disruptions in distribution systems.

Major organizational dysfunctions resulted from this 1973 reorganization.⁶⁷ Specifically, the changes:

1. submerged all emergency management activities in larger departments and agencies with competing priorities;

⁶⁵U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Government Operations, "Reorganization Plan No. 1 of 1973, Hearings before subcommittee on Reorganization, Research, and International Organizations," 93rd Cong., 1st sess., 1973. pp. 2-16.

⁶⁶In 1975, GSA's Office of Preparedness became the Federal Preparedness Agency.

⁶⁷An excellent discussion of the reorganization is found in Civil Preparedness Review: Parts I and II, a report by the Joint Committee on Defense Production. February and April 1977. Joint Committee Print. See especially Part I, pp. 5-15.

2. effectively removed all central review and control over the entire range of emergency management programs and budgets;

3. fragmented the capability for coordinating emergency management efforts among federal, state, local, and private agencies;

4. removed from the NSC the only voice speaking specifically on behalf of protecting citizens and their property against loss and attack;

5. reduced the prominence and authority of the remaining emergency management agencies, thus making even more difficult their role in coordination and in obtaining resources;

6. created a group of competing and often overlapping emergency management agencies with an attendant increase in overhead costs and a potential for conflict for jurisdictional authority and bureaucratic power; and

7. imposed on the president and the Executive Office emergency authorities and responsibilities that were unlikely to receive adequate advance attention and, thus, be susceptible to precisely the kind of *ad hoc* treatment that emergency preparedness traditionally was designed to avoid.

Thus, the situation that led to the 1958 consolidation reorganization was recreated by the purposeful reorganization effort of 1973. Essentially, the effect of this reorganization was to impair the ability of the White House to coordinate emergency preparedness, response, and recovery. A further outgrowth of the 1973 decentralization was that each of the national organizations maintained duplicate regional offices that separately interacted with individual state and local governments.

The Joint Committee on Defense Production, chaired by Senator William Proxmire, expressed serious concern over the state of the nation's emergency preparedness both in a Joint Committee Report and a subsequent legislative proposal. The Joint Committee Report concluded that the increasingly complex, technology-dependent, industrial economy was making Americans ever more vulnerable to the effects of disasters and emergencies over which they had little or no control. Further, the Joint Committee found that there was an increased level of planning at the state level that was not being matched at the federal level; that the federal programs were largely uncoordinated and diffused through at least twenty-five departments and agencies; and that the 1973 reorganization left federal emergency management programs without adequate visibility, without

meaningful access to programmatic and budget decision-makers, and without central budget and program planning. The Joint Committee found a situation in need of rectification.

By 1978, the GAO concluded that problems in continuity of government planning could jeopardize the nation's survival and recovery in a national emergency.⁶⁸ The GAO cited inadequate direction, emphasis, and coordination. There were no plans for quickly identifying major bottlenecks to resource allocation nor for allocating resources between the military and civilian sectors; interagency coordination groups rarely met; and agreements were often outdated and ineffective. The GAO recommended that the congress should enact legislation that would reestablish central control over the emergency preparedness budgets of departments and agencies (that is, the former "delegate agency funding"). The situation was ripe for the reformers of the Carter administration and the stage was set for a plea for better coordination.

⁶⁸General Accounting Office. Continuity of the Federal Government in a Critical National Emergency--A Neglected Necessity. Washington, D.C.: GAO, April 27, 1978. Document #LCD-78-409.

Summary

This chapter suggests that the choice of an administrative mechanism to administer emergency management responsibilities of the president has experienced continual problems. The same series of public policy questions was raised repeatedly. This is consistent with Mosher's findings that the tensions underlying reorganization usually have been in existence for some time, that most reorganization efforts only partly reduce the tensions, and that the tensions lead to subsequent reorganizations strategies.⁶⁹ The fact that emergency management was revisited repeatedly and was the source of so much disagreement suggests that the answers to the familiar questions were not sufficient.

As a complement to Figure 1, Figure 2 correlates each NSEP organization with its place in time and its scope, focus, and tether to the White House source of power. This largely interpretive matrix demonstrates the shifting sands on which NSEP was based in the years between 1933 and 1978. Over time, NSEP administrative mechanisms lost responsibility for economic emergencies, generally were assigned more of a guiding role, and, in the past eighteen

⁶⁹Mosher, Government Reorganizations, pp.487-492 and 500-502.

years, drifted from the White House area of immediate interest.

| WORLD EVENT | EMERGENCY ORGANIZATION | SCOPE | METHOD | WHITE HOUSE FORCE FIELD |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|--|-------------------------|
| New Deal | National Emergency Council (NEC) | -economy | -advice -coordination -liaison -planning | Centripetal |
| WWII | National Resources Planning Board (NRPB) | -economy | -advice -coordination -liaison -planning | Centrifugal |
| | Office of Emergency Management (OEM) | -all emergencies | -advice -coordination -liaison -central services -management vehicle (as needed) -planning | Centripetal |
| | National Security Resources Board (NSRB) (statutory) | -economy and mobilization of industrial production of national resources -stockpiling of strategic and critical materials | -advice -coordination -planning -nucleus of management vehicle -NSC membership (was denied operational role) | Centripetal |
| | Office of Defense Mobilization (ODM) 1950-1958 | -economy -mobilization of industrial production and national resources -continuity of government -stockpiling added in 1953 -trade agreements -emergencies affecting national defense | -advice -coordination -liaison -direction and control of all mobilization activities -planning -NSC membership | Centripetal |
| Korean Conflict | Office of Defense and Civil Mobilization / Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization (ODCM/OCDM) | -as for ODM -civil defense | -advice; coordination -direction of emergency management efforts on behalf of President -planning -adjudication of national resources -directing nonmilitary defense of Nation -NSC membership -guide and financially assist State and local governments | Centripetal |
| COLD WAR Nuclear Weapon Development | Office of Emergency Planning / Office of Emergency Preparedness (OEP) | -all emergencies (less operational aspects of civil defense) | -advice; coordination -policy determination -planning -guidance to State and local governments -adjudication of national resources -NSC membership | Centripetal |
| | Decentralized Period | --- | --- | Centrifugal |
| | Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) | -all emergencies (less economy; including consequences of terrorism) | -advice; coordination -policy determination (removed in 1985) -planning -guide and evaluate departments and agencies -guidance to State and local governments | Centrifugal |

Figure 2:NSEP EMERGENCY ORGANIZATION TYPOLOGY (1933-1990)

In each case, the new organizations designed to carry out the president's emergency management responsibilities were confounded by design issues, especially the lack of agreement on the role of coordination. A distinct pattern of an aversion to the concentration of power manifested itself in jurisdictional disputes and debate over the acceptable amount of central review and direction. Finally, the level of political support demonstrated by the respective presidents established the relative importance and status of the emergency management function in government.

Facing the same public policy questions of what falls within the scope of emergency management, what the optimal organization design might be, and what the appropriate level amount of White House support should be, President Carter offered yet another organizational solution to the old questions. His answer was an independent agency called FEMA. The background of the 1978 reorganization is the topic of the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

NSEP: THE CARTER REORGANIZATION

Legacy of the Early Years

With President Carter's election, the opportunity to reorganize was about to be exercised again. The reorganization of emergency management functions between 1939 and 1978 provided the Carter administration with ample opportunity to study the permutations of the federal administrative mechanisms associated with emergency management. Over the years, there were three basic design factors that influenced reorganization strategies. First, no "right" answer had emerged in response to questions about the appropriate scope of emergency management; second, the times and prevalent views on the relative concentration of power determined the extent of the authority of the administrative mechanisms; and, third, the status of the function in the federal community was dependent on whether the White House interest in emergency management was centrifugal or centripetal. These same three basic design factors were critical in the reorganization efforts of 1978. With rich models provided by four decades of federal emergency management history, the Carter administration embarked on its own permutation of the subject.

This chapter details the purpose and vision of the 1978 reorganization, thereby providing a baseline for understanding the evolved NSEP administrative mechanism a decade later. Although at times seemingly repetitive, the discussion presents the staff proposals, stakeholder interests, the Carter administration's position, and the challenging perspective of those outside the executive branch. Included are the specific arguments on design elements that were important to the administrative mechanism for national security emergency preparedness (NSEP).

New Administration-New Agenda

President Carter came into office in January of 1977 determined to reorganize what his administration considered a monstrous federal government. His platform was to make government work better--more efficiently, more responsively, more openly, and more compassionately. For his purposes, the rhetoric of orthodox principles of reorganization and the rhetoric of political realism did not preclude each other. While operating within a field that did not approach anything like a "science" of organization, the tenets of the Carter reorganization suggested that the orthodox principles of reorganization remained very much alive as the driving rationale for federal reorganization. Not only was President Carter ready to reorganize, the federal

administrative mechanism for emergency management was ripe to be reorganized. There was agreement even on Capitol Hill, among the state governors, and in the emergency management agencies that the array of emergency management administrative mechanisms needed reorganizing.¹ Such a reorganization would not require political capital. Best of all, it would be easy to do; major laws did not need to be changed and there were no significant constituent groups to interfere.² If ever there were "a honey of a program," in the sense of political stakes, emergency management was it.³

While it was suggested by some key informants that the Carter administration may have put more emphasis on it than was warranted, the national emergency management program was in disarray and in need of attention. Those favoring reorganization pointed to the absence of a single locus providing oversight, coordination, priority-setting, or planning as symptomatic of the disarray. Critics perceived a long list of weaknesses in the emergency

¹According to several sources, it was thought that a reorganization would have been mandated by congressional action if President Carter had not proceeded.

²The field of emergency management has only a few constituent groups, among them state civil defense planners and fire personnel. Their influence, while felt, was not outcome-determinative.

³Non-attribution interview.

management organization. Among those weaknesses, they identified inefficiencies, duplication of federal efforts, a lack of top-level attention for emergency programs, inadequate focus on the politically sensitive problem of gaining state support for nuclear attack preparedness, and inadequate preparation for the mobilization of industry and resource management.⁴ The major concern centered on the inevitable conflicts in authority and inefficient federal response.

According to key informants, the emergency organizations of the 1960's and 1970's served as "political dumping grounds" and "islands of 'neer-do-wells'" that inspired neither respect among the departments and agencies nor interest at the top of the executive or legislative branches.⁵ One key informant recalled that Senator Proxmire called the OEP "the gold-plated rest home for retired generals and admirals."⁶ For those who thought that emergency management needed rehabilitation, its

⁴For example, the conflict over population data in the Three Mile Island area at the time of the nuclear plant radiation plume was an immediate demonstration of the lack of data and lack of coordination that provided persuasive arguments in the White House in favor of the consolidation of the emergency management agencies.

⁵Non-attribution interviews.

⁶Non-attribution interview.

reorganization and restoration to prominence would have been a major achievement. In their view, reorganization would have corrected the perceived damage done to NSEP by the 1973 dissolution of the OEP. The dissolution of OEP had splintered emergency policy, planning, and operational authorities at the national and regional levels among DOD's Defense Civil Preparedness Agency (DCPA), GSA's Federal Preparedness Agency (FPA) and HUD's Federal Disaster Assistance Agency (FDAA). Finally, the reorganization of emergency management would help fulfill President Carter's pledge of increased efficiency in government.

Setting the stage in February of 1977, the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB's) Harrison Wellford, on behalf of President Carter and OMB Director Bert Lance, requested that congress appropriate resources for the reorganization project. These included a supplemental budget of \$1.6 million dollars and 62 full-time staff for the OMB reorganization project. Wellford explained that Lance would lead the reorganization effort and that he, Wellford, would assume a new full-time position as Executive Associate Director for Reorganization and Management. The bureaucratic capability for conducting reorganization studies was, by President Carter's term, firmly established in OMB. OMB had the authority, the policy guidance, the

staff expertise, and dominance in the related area of budget. Thus, OMB was a logical choice for incorporating the best thought and for generating the reorganization studies.

Wellford identified three procedural errors of past reorganization efforts that the Carter reorganization effort would avoid. To this end, he averred that reorganization plans would be developed in coordination with interested parties; that reorganization efforts would be focused at the level where government meets the people; and that plans would be developed by federal staff having ongoing responsibility for implementation of the reorganization strategy.⁷

Bowing to a mixture of the orthodox principles and political rhetoric, the reorganization was undertaken to make government work more efficiently, responsively, openly, and compassionately. This approach was to be incremental, over a period of four years. Thus, on August 25, 1977, President Carter directed the President's Reorganization Project (PRP) to study the federal emergency preparedness and response programs. An informal, voluntary, advisory

⁷An excellent discussion of the Carter administration's reorganization of the Department of Education is found in The Politics of Federal Reorganization by Beryl Radin and Willis Hawley (New York: Pergamon Press, 1988).

committee on Capitol Hill supported the reorganization effort, as did other supporters in the states.

Executive Branch Discussion of PRP Draft Proposal

Organizational Design Issues

While there was seeming consensus on the need to reorganize, there were differences in beliefs of *how* to reorganize. The last months of 1977 and the first months of 1978 elicited "in-house" discussion within the executive branch and among interest groups that provided a flavor of the complexity of federal reorganization.

Each of the stakeholders was concerned in its own way with the tradeoffs of combining the various emergency preparedness and response programs.⁸ A rearranged system meant that the competition for funds would be framed differently; it potentially meant new funding for state and local government disaster preparedness and mitigation; and it articulated strategic statements regarding national priorities. The stakeholders within the executive branch

⁸As used in this section, the term "stakeholders" refers to the executive branch and interest group organizations concerned with emergency planning, budget, fire, disaster response, insurance, and hazard mitigation. Legislative branch interests are discussed in a later section of this chapter. Legislative branch interests were most visible in hearings leading up to the reorganization and during the hearings on the president's proposal. Congressional interest continued, but was less visible, while the PRP was completing its study and recommendations.

establishment needed to come to terms with that rearranged system prior to its being subjected to congressional examination. The first reorganization draft of the PRP staff elicited a significant response.

The conservers were wary of the reorganization of the emergency programs. This reorganization was seen by some as a blatant effort by the states to open the federal purse for disaster preparedness and response. In addition to those in the legislative branch who strongly advocated a control of the dollars, Randy Jayne's (representing OMB's National Security Division) specific comments suggested that the states' support was motivated by hopes of a sharp increase in the direct federal funding of disaster preparedness.⁹

The stakeholders also disagreed on the very nature of emergencies and emergency coordination. Some believed that emergency work was common at its core; others believed that the different types of emergencies were radically disparate at their core. The over-riding theory was that planning and preparation for a natural or technological disaster had much in common with the planning and preparation for a national security emergency. It was

⁹Office of Management and Budget, Memorandum from Randy Jayne to Peter Szanton dated February 14, 1978 regarding the PRP study of federal emergency preparedness reorganization.

believed that uniting the programs would eliminate the complaints about duplication and "stovepipes" perceived by emergency planners in the states.¹⁰ The thread tying the package together was emergency management (mitigation of, preparation for, response to, and recovery from emergencies). Critics saw this linking thread as slim. They saw irreconcilable differences among the cultures, environmental assumptions, and clients of the parent organizations.¹¹

Some offered their thoughts on organizational location and the challenge of the reorganization. For example:

The problem of a federal non-departmental level agency coordinating the activities of other federal departments is a serious one and deserves more discussion than given in the memo. It has been my experience that management by lead agency, i.e., coordination among equals by an equal, is one of the toughest - if not impossible - ways to do business in the federal government. Re-channeling of other agency resources as part of the lead agency role

¹⁰The term "stovepipes" was the often repeated reference by key informants to the perception that FEMA programs were not integrated. Each program reflected a "stovepipe" structure, i.e., a straight up and down channel with the upper level of authority. Each program was perceived as operating independently of its sister programs.

¹¹Non-attribution interview: "The programs were dissimilar, intersecting only at margins and holding disparate assumptions at their core."

rarely works unless there is an intrusion of WH/OMB backing to the lead agency.¹²

Structural considerations and the relationship of the new organization to other federal institutions flavored many of the comments. The Office of Science and Technology supported the creation of an independent coordination and management agency with linkage to the president through its director.¹³ A similar message was sent by the National Governors' Association (NGA). The NGA stressed:

. . . the necessity for a consolidated agency in your Executive Office with direct access to you or an independent agency reporting to you through your key advisors. To do otherwise would perpetuate current unaccountability.¹⁴

The idea of having a high level emergency preparedness and response body made up of Executive Office officials (i.e., the assistants to the president) was hailed by some as an insurance policy for the new organization. However, not everyone agreed. For example, one commenter

¹²Executive Office of the President, Memorandum from Vincent Puritano to Peter Szanton dated February 28, 1978 regarding the reorganization of federal emergency preparedness and response programs.

¹³Executive Office of the President, Memorandum from Frank Press, Office of Science and Technology, to Peter Szanton dated February 14, 1978 regarding the reorganization of federal emergency preparedness and response programs.

¹⁴National Governors' Association, Letter from Chairman William G. Milliken to the President of the United States dated March 6, 1978 regarding the reorganization of federal emergency preparedness and response programs.

reminded the PRP staff that there was a good possibility that, except in major disasters, any emergency preparedness or response committee would not be active; and, in any event, that it would not maintain the interest of the president's National Security Advisor.¹⁵ He added that inserting an organizational layer between the director of the new organization and the president seemed incongruous with the stated goal of ensuring access to the president.

The same source went on to suggest, however, that if there were to be a high level committee, the director of the new organization should chair it, and the president's National Security Advisor and the Director of OMB should be members of it.¹⁶ To support the status of the director of the new organization, the same source also suggested that the agency director be appointed as a special assistant to the president and attend cabinet meetings.

Not all parties supported an elevated status for the director of the new organization. The Director of OMB was suggested as chair of the proposed high level committee--for

¹⁵Executive Office of the President, Memorandum from Vincent Puritano to Peter Szanton dated February 28, 1979 regarding the reorganization of federal emergency preparedness and response programs.

¹⁶Executive Office of the President, Memorandum from Vincent Puritano to Peter Szanton dated February 28, 1978 regarding the reorganization of federal emergency preparedness and response programs.

budget control reasons.¹⁷ For yet other reasons, the NSC argued that the vice president should chair it.¹⁸ Along the lines of the Puritano comments, the NSC comments proposed that the members should be the president's National Security Advisor and the Assistant to the President for Domestic Affairs.¹⁹ In what might later be seen as a sign of NSC regard/disregard, the NSC comments also proposed that the director of the new agency serve as the executive secretary of the high level committee, rather than its chair.

The NSC objected to making the director of the new organization an *ex officio* member of the NSC because it was assumed that there was little he or she would be able to contribute. The reasoning was based on the NSC's perception of the new organization's emphasis on domestic disaster

¹⁷Council of Economic Advisers, Memorandum from Chairman Charles Schultze to James McIntyre, Office of Management and Budget dated May 16, 1978 regarding the reorganization of Federal emergency preparedness and response programs.

¹⁸National Security Council, Memorandum from Zbigniew Brzezinski, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, to Peter L. Szanton, Associate Director for Organization Studies, OMB, dated February 16, 1978 regarding the reorganization of Federal emergency preparedness and response programs.

¹⁹This was similar (fewer members and the vice president instead of the director of the new agency as its chair) to the recommendation made by President Carter in the Reorganization Plan but ultimately differed from the lower level Emergency Management Council described in the executive order establishing FEMA.

assistance and relative de-emphasis of industrial mobilization and other national security functions. The president's National Security Advisor felt less strongly about attendance at cabinet meetings, but noted that he did not see that the new director would have a lot to contribute there either.²⁰

The organizational location issue arose in a White House survey of interest groups.²¹ While all of the interest groups in the survey informally approved the recommendations of the study, they would split on the question of where to relocate a consolidated agency if it were not to have independent status. The voluntary sector opposed placing the agency within the Department of Defense (DOD); other groups opposed putting it anywhere but in DOD. "In short,

²⁰National Security Council, Memorandum from Zbigniew Brzezinski, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, to Peter L. Szanton, Associate Director for Organization Studies, OMB, dated February 16, 1978 regarding the reorganization of federal emergency preparedness and response programs.

²¹White House, Memorandum from Tom Belford to Peter Szanton dated February 24, 1978 regarding interest group contacts. The survey included the Red Cross, National Governors' Association, United States Civil Defense Council, National Association of State Directors for Disaster Preparedness, National Catholic Disaster Relief Committee, National Association of Counties, National Guard Association, and U.S. Conference of Mayors.

the support for this plan would begin to unravel if the president decides not to recommend an independent agency."²²

While ultimately not part of the administration's proposal, the PRP staff recommendations suggested that the president reinstate the concept of "delegate agency funding" as part of the budget formulation process in order for essential tasks to be specified by the head of the new agency.²³ There was strong support on the PRP staff for "delegate agency funding."²⁴ However, OMB eliminated it from consideration in the approved version of the Reorganization Plan sent to the president because OMB wanted to retain its position as the "funnel of federal funds" and arbiter of programs.²⁵ OMB's action was not surprising, since "delegate agency funding," even for the somewhat small amount of funds involved, entailed a sharing of power (both budget review and funding).

OMB's opposition to consolidated power in emergency management within the Executive Office went back many years.

²²Ibid.

²³"Delegate agency funding" was a funding mechanism used in previous incarnations of emergency management organizations to assure performance of preparedness assignments by Federal agencies.

²⁴Non-attribution interview.

²⁵Non-attribution interview.

This was due largely to the potentially great costs associated with a well-done emergency mitigation and preparedness program. Emergency management had been eclipsed by OMB many years earlier, only shortly after the predecessor organizations of both were established as central and comparable coordinating offices within the Executive Office. Early on, the OMB predecessors established themselves as potent "bread and butter" activities with a close relationship to the president. The emergency management predecessors rarely achieved a similar status.

Scope Issues

Department of Defense (DOD). The PRP staff proposed that the DOD surrender the civil defense program in the reorganization. The PRP staff worked directly with the DCPA, the Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration. PRP records indicate that the PRP staff understood that each of those entities agreed with the removal of the civil defense program from DOD. It was with some surprise, then, that the PRP received separate nonconcurrences from Harold Brown, the Secretary of Defense, and Charles Duncan, the Deputy Secretary of Defense.

Secretary Brown suggested in February of 1978, that "the relation of DCPA and its functions to our strategic posture of deterrence and of essential equivalence makes me unable to concur in the recommendation."²⁶ Further complicating the PRP effort, he went on to say that the report and the analysis underlying that recommendation were flawed. He did not agree with the PRP assumption that a thermonuclear war would be just another, bigger "civil emergency." He argued that DCPA needed to be a part of the DOD because civil defense "needed to be considered in the context of its peacetime effect on perceptions, its deterrent effect, and its possible effect on reducing casualties and in recovery."²⁷ He argued that civil defense was properly a competitor for strategic nuclear program funds and should not be separated in the budget process from active defenses, manned bombers, cruise missiles, intercontinental ballistic missiles, and the other nuclear systems and programs.

DOD's specific arguments for maintaining control over the civil defense programs were to assure: (1)

²⁶Department of Defense, Letter from Secretary of Defense Harold Brown to James T. McIntyre, Director, Office of Management and Budget, dated February 21, 1978 nonconcurring on the report on the reorganization of federal emergency preparedness and response programs.

²⁷Ibid.

appropriate focus on attack preparedness (fearing that disaster preparedness would eclipse civil defense funding and attention); (2) access to intelligence information; (3) civil defense research and development alignment with contemporary weapons technology; and (4) coordination of plans for military manpower and systems in an emergency. The comments of the OMB's National Security Division, signed by Randy Jayne, suggested that moving civil defense outside the DOD would result in even less emphasis for the program than it was getting in DOD.²⁸ He argued that civil defense and disaster preparedness are different and belonged in separate organizations; to him it made more sense to aggregate wartime related preparedness and recovery functions in a single agency within DOD than to extract civil defense programs from DOD.²⁹ His early views were that the reorganization constituted a major budget threat; however, that argument did not appear in his formal February 1978 comments.

The PRP was not impressed by the arguments of the national significance of the civil defense program. Arguments that civil defense was part of overall nation's

²⁸Office of Management and Budget, Memorandum from Randy Jayne to Peter Szanton dated February 14, 1978 regarding the PRP study of federal emergency preparedness reorganization.

²⁹Ibid.

strategic policy and that the transfer to a civilian agency would signal a down-grading of the program did not convince the PRP staff of the wisdom of excluding DCPA from the new combination of emergency organizations. The arguments that war preparedness was inherently different from disaster preparedness was countered by the PRP's noting that there also were many similarities in war and disaster preparedness. The validity of the statement of differences was promoted later by key informants who viewed the combination of emergency organizations as a grouping of unlike items.

It would not be an understatement to say that Secretary Brown's comments were not welcomed at the PRP. An internal memorandum stated:

We do not intend to belabor the argument over the relevance of civil defense to overall U.S. strategic planning, now being studied again by NSC under PRM-32. Indeed our recommendation that DCPA be taken out of DOD arose from some of the same concerns expressed by Secretary Brown. Because of the potential role of civil defense in national strategic policy, we assigned the highest priority to designing an organization which could plan, coordinate and implement an effective U.S. civil defense program³⁰

³⁰Office of Management and Budget, Memorandum from Greg Schneiders to Peter Szanton dated March 1, 1978 regarding the DOD position on the reorganization of federal emergency preparedness and response.

The PRP staff argued that the omission of civil defense from the consolidation would have rendered the reorganization plan ineffectual in meeting the president's reorganization objections and would have been rejected politically. In the view of the PRP staff, nearly all input received by the PRP from congress, state and local leadership, and the private sector endorsed the consolidation of civil defense, federal emergency preparedness and disaster assistance programs in an independent agency. The PRP believed that omitting civil defense would have continued the separation of civil defense policy from program administration and would have maintained the fragmentation of emergency preparedness and response programs which "has been termed an 'uncoordinated monstrosity' by Senator Proxmire and the 'single worst organized functional area of the entire Federal Government' by Senator Percy."³¹ The PRP staff argued (and DOD disputed) that DOD support of DCPA had been criticized in a GAO report in 1977 as "poorly managed and without clear goals and objectives."³² Further, the PRP staff argued that civil defense was a state and local program with which DOD was structurally unable to deal. The PRP's ultimate ammunition

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid.

against excluding civil defense from the reorganization and against agreeing to DOD's request for a delay in the reorganization was to remind those concerned that any delay would result in a congressional action to reorganize emergency management, thus pre-empting executive branch action.

Perhaps most telling of the PRP records is the notation that:

We should be wary of giving Defense total control of resources the President would need in an emergency. The emergency resource allocation and continuity of government functions have always been kept out of Defense as a matter of basic philosophy, and I would anticipate major objections on these grounds were the alternative plan presented.³³

The PRP concession to the DOD position was explicit provision for a high-level DOD liaison office in the new agency.³⁴

General Services Administration (GSA). Another organization within the executive branch that was pleased with the

³³Office of Management and Budget, unsigned and undated memorandum on President's Reorganization Project letterhead from Greg Schneiders to Peter Szanton regarding "Response to NSIA Reorganization Alternative," p. 4.

³⁴Key informants noted later that in terms of "degree of joy" over the reorganization, the DCPA was the most pleased. It was located in the DOD but saw itself as incidental to the defense strategy of the nation. DCPA saw disaster relief operations and funds as a way to glamorize its civil defense program and increase its funding.

reorganization effort was the Federal Preparedness Agency (FPA) of the GSA.³⁵ But it, too, had comments. It urged that the PRP be more explicit on the general scope of federal preparedness. GSA urged that federal preparedness specifically include: national civil emergencies, the non-military aspects of national security, international activities, national preparedness policy and guidance, continuity of government, guiding and evaluating federal plans, damage assessment and recovery, national resource preparedness, industrial mobilization, reducing dependence on foreign supplies, and expansion of domestic production.³⁶

Department of Commerce (DOC) and Interest Groups. The Secretary of Commerce and others protested the very short deadline for providing comments and the lack of consultation in advance of the draft report.³⁷ She also contended that the PRP report reflected a serious misunderstanding of the

³⁵According to key informants, "anything was better than GSA," and the staff was optimistic about the reorganization.

³⁶General Services Administration, Letter from Dalimil Kybil, Acting Director of the Federal Preparedness Agency to Jack Watson, Jr. Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs, dated September 12, 1977 regarding the reorganization of federal emergency preparedness and response programs.

³⁷Department of Commerce, Letter from Juanita M. Kreps, Secretary of Commerce, to James T. McIntyre, OMB, dated February 16, 1978 regarding the reorganization of federal emergency preparedness and response programs.

purpose and operation of the weather service and fire prevention programs. Since in her view, it did not demonstrate any overriding benefit or need for separating these programs from supporting activities which would remain in DOC, she firmly opposed the PRP's recommendations.³⁸

According to an internal OMB memo, Secretary Kreps objected to all three PRP recommendations affecting the DOC.

Her staff has told us that her real concern is not on the specifics, however, but on her perception that Commerce may be dismantled piece meal [sic] without a central guiding concept.³⁹

Secretary Kreps disagreed with the transfer of the National Weather Service (NWS) community preparedness program to the new organization. DOC considered observation, warning, and preparedness as elements of a single natural disaster warning system. Accordingly, the NWS staff assigned to the program had scientific and technical backgrounds in meteorology and hydrology, and spent about one-third of their time in regular observation

³⁸Department of Commerce, Letter from Juanita M. Kreps, Secretary of Commerce, to James T. McIntyre, OMB, dated February 24, 1978 regarding the reorganization of federal emergency preparedness and response programs.

³⁹Office of Management and Budget, Memorandum from Harrison Wellford to "The Director" on "Meeting on Emergency Preparedness with Secretary Kreps." The copy was not dated or signed; however, it carried the date of May 4, 1978 in the distribution information on the carbon copy.

and forecasting in Weather Service Forecast Offices.⁴⁰ DOC warned that the individuals assigned to the program would seek other weather work in DOC rather than transfer to the new emergency organization. The reorganization, as presented by DOC, would result in jeopardizing a good program and might actually result in additional costs because DOC would have to request positions and funds to re-establish the scientific and technical competence in the Weather Service Forecast Offices.

The PRP staff argued that it made no sense to leave weather-related disaster preparedness out of a preparedness agency that consolidated other natural and manmade disaster preparedness programs. The PRP settlement offer was that the reorganization would leave one-quarter of the staff of the Community Disaster Preparedness program in the NWS to concentrate on scientific and technical programs. The PRP also committed not to dismantle the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) piecemeal.⁴¹

⁴⁰Department of Commerce, Letter from Juanita M. Kreps, Secretary of Commerce, to James T. McIntyre, OMB, dated February 24, 1978 regarding the reorganization of federal emergency preparedness and response programs.

⁴¹Office of Management and Budget, Memorandum from Harrison Wellford for "The Director" regarding "Meeting on Emergency Preparedness with Secretary Kreps." The copy of the memorandum was not dated or signed; however, it carried the date of May 4, 1978 in the distribution information on the carbon copy.

DOC also objected to the transfer of the National Fire Prevention and Control Administration (NFPCA), arguing that fires are different from large scale disasters, that fires have little to do with civil preparedness, that the visibility of the program would be diminished, and that a transfer would disrupt the relationship of the NFPCA to the fire research program at DOC's National Bureau of Standards.^{42 43}

PRP staff met with interest groups affected by the proposed reorganization in an attempt to co-opt them. In the case of the fire community it may not have been sufficient. The Joint Council of National Fire Service Organizations was:

. . . appalled by the fact that this Reorganization Project started in late August, yet the first contact of the Joint Council was not made until February 17, 1978--some eight days before the plan was to have been submitted to the President.⁴⁴

⁴²Department of Commerce, Letter from Juanita M. Kreps, Secretary of Commerce, to James T. McIntyre, OMB, dated February 24, 1978 regarding the reorganization of federal emergency preparedness and response programs.

⁴³Office of Management and Budget, Memorandum from Harrison Wellford to "The Director" on "Meeting on Emergency Preparedness with Secretary Kreps." The copy was not dated or signed; however, it carried the date of May 4, 1978 in the distribution information on the carbon copy.

⁴⁴Joint Council of National Fire Service Organizations, "Statement of the Joint Council Concerning Reorganization Proposal," February 24, 1978.

This organization, representing eleven fire associations and two million fire service personnel did not oppose the reorganization, but did express strong concern that the fire programs not be lost in the shuffle of any reorganization. The formal response of the Joint Council of National Fire Service Organizations was that, for lack of definitive information, it was neither for or against the recommendations of the PRP. It raised what it called a "number of serious political, philosophical, and technical questions" and asked that it be directly involved with any further planning efforts related to the fire community.⁴⁵ It also was suggested that the fire program no more belonged in the new agency than did the highway safety function of the Department of Transportation or the mine safety function of the Department of the Interior (neither of which was included in the reorganization).⁴⁶ The White House assessment of the fire program transfer was that it was the only one on which there was any politically significant

⁴⁵Ibid. It is of interest to note that an internal OMB memo of May 4, 1978 (cited above) Harrison Wellford wrote that "the Joint Fire Council has voted unanimously to support transfer."

⁴⁶National League of Cities, Letter from John W. McKay to Nye Stevens, President's Reorganization Project, dated March 1, 1978 regarding the reorganization of federal emergency preparedness and response programs.

constituency (given the nationwide presence of firefighting personnel).⁴⁷

The PRP response was only a commitment to set up a procedure by which the organization's input to implementation planning could be made. Ultimately, the fire program was incorporated in the reorganization proposal forwarded to the president.

Department of Treasury. It appeared at first that the transfer of responsibility for the Trade Expansion Act, Section 232 (import surveillance) would be non-controversial. The responsibility to determine if imports threaten or impair national security was proposed for transfer from the Department of the Treasury (TREAS) to the new independent agency. It appeared at the time that the TREAS had little interest or investment in the program. However, when faced with its potential loss through the reorganization proposal, the TREAS objected to the transfer of responsibility for investigations. It insisted that this provision of the law involved issues relating more to national economic security than to defense security and issues that were deeply intertwined with larger trade issues. The TREAS presented itself as the president's

⁴⁷Ibid.

principal advisor in economic matters and therefore the rightful holder for Section 232 responsibility.

The National Security Advisor argued that although this function had not been exercised frequently, the TREAS was in a much better staffed and informed position to make calculations for judgments under this section. If the new organization were to be centrally concerned with industrial mobilization and military manpower, then it might more properly have a claim on Section 232; but, given the nature of the proposed reorganization, the NSC advised that the new organization not be given this responsibility.⁴⁶ The PRP staff dropped the issue of the transfer entirely.

The National Security Council (NSC). The assignment of responsibility for coordinating the federal response to the consequences of terrorism was an issue in the early discussions of the responsibilities of the new organization. The NSC stated that it should be made very clear that that function included only mitigating the damage that terrorists cause or threaten to cause. While "vulnerability assessment" was a proper task, there is a danger of

⁴⁶National Security Council, Memorandum from Zbigniew Brzezinski, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, to Peter L. Szanton, Associate Director for Organization Studies, OMB, dated February 16, 1978 regarding the reorganization of federal emergency preparedness and response programs.

misunderstanding. Intelligence, threat assessment, capabilities to use force, and incident management were to be specifically excluded. If they were not, the National Security Advisor would have withheld his support of the reorganization.⁴⁹ The PRP limited the new organization's responsibilities for terrorist incidents.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Interest Groups. There was little discussion over the propriety of transferring the disaster assistance program to the new organization. HUD's major point was that if the disaster assistance program were removed, the temporary housing program also was to be removed. There were the usual comments on the disruption of reorganization, but there seemed no programmatic argument against it.

While the transfer of disaster assistance was not controversial, the same cannot be said for the transfer of the flood program. Many environmental and indemnifying groups took issue with the idea of including the National Flood Insurance Program in the new organization.^{50 51} Their

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Natural Resources Defense Council, Citizens Committee on Natural Resources, Isaak Walton League, Environmental Action, Environmental Policy Center, National Wildlife Federation, Sierra Club, National Audubon Society, and American Rivers Conservation Council.

point was that the new agency would be taken over by disaster *relief* activities if it included both hazard *reduction* and disaster *relief* responsibilities.⁵²

There were other perspectives within the executive branch. For example, the Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors warned that the merger of the flood insurance program into an independent disaster-aid agency would invite an expansion of federal insurance underwriting into earthquake, hurricane, and other natural or accidental insurance areas. His reaction was to potential cost, attendant increase in federal regulation over the insurance industry, and the bureaucratic inclination to expand.⁵³ Most vociferous in objecting to the transfer was Secretary Harris of HUD. Suggesting inappropriate selections of organizations for reorganization, she noted that of the nineteen programs considered for inclusion in the proposed

⁵¹Alliance of AMENCC Insurers, letter from Donald Jordan to Greg Schneiders, Director of Special Projects, OMB, dated March 21, 1978 regarding organizational placement of the National Flood Insurance Program. The organization represented over 100 insurance underwriters.

⁵²This point of incompatible matching was argued by the civil defense and disaster programs, by planning and operations programs, and by mitigation and response programs.

⁵³Council of Economic Advisers, Memorandum from Chairman Charles Schultze to James McIntyre, Office of Management and Budget dated May 16, 1978 regarding the reorganization of federal emergency preparedness and response programs.

new agency, only seven ultimately were recommended for transfer; further, she noted that the same arguments that were presented against the transfer of other programs could be used in behalf of those (e.g. HUD's) that were recommended for inclusion.

The project notes that an effort was made to avoid bringing together a 'hodgepodge of responsibilities with important gaps,' but that is precisely what has resulted.⁵⁴

HUD went on to comment that it resented insinuations that the program was not well-managed in HUD and that the reorganization would bring improvement.

The PRP position was that the intention was to result in a comprehensive theme for the new agency as the central locus of hazard reduction/mitigation responsibilities at the federal level. It stood by the inclusion of the program in the new organization but it did edit offending language from the final recommendation to the president.

⁵⁴Department of Housing and Urban Development, Letter from Patricia R. Harris, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, to James T. McIntyre, Director, Office of Management and Budget, on the reorganization of emergency preparedness and response activities, May 1978 (specific date illegible).

Stakeholders Varied in Views of the PRP Effort

Some commended the staff on the effort.⁵⁵ As many more were highly critical. Bill Harsh, OMB's Deputy Associate Director for Natural Resources, commented that the report was a solid, "interesting" piece of work but that agency comments and a list of all programs considered for inclusion in the new organization needed to be included.⁵⁶ On the other hand DOD criticized the PRP recommendations as being poor staff work. The comments of Randy Jayne of OMB's National Security Division did the same.⁵⁷ He suggested that the president was not being provided a solid basis for deciding the issues, that criteria for assessing the organizational options were too abstract, and that the PRP's worked lacked even-handed treatment of alternatives.

The PRP's Proposal

Within this complex and difficult environment, the PRP staff was challenged to mold a reorganization package.

⁵⁵For example, Lynn Daft of the Domestic Policy Staff in a memorandum to Peter Szanton dated February 14, 1978.

⁵⁶Office of Management and Budget, Memorandum from William W. Harsch to Greg Schneiders dated February 14, 1978 regarding "Comments on Draft Memorandum for the President."

⁵⁷Office of Management and Budget, Memorandum from Randy Jayne to Peter Szanton dated February 14, 1978, regarding the reorganization of federal emergency preparedness and response programs.

On April 4, 1978, the results of the PRP study were reported by Greg Schneiders, Director of the President's Federal Emergency Preparedness and Response Reorganization Project that operated within OMB. As expected, the PRP study found disarray in the federal civil structure of mitigating, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from the effects of a major national emergency. The PRP study pinpointed duplication, fragmentation, excessive documentation requirements, submerged importance (as indicated by organizational placement), and vaguely defined requirements for states as major weaknesses. It also found fault in the lack of a recognized structure for dealing with rapidly developing crises, the void in anticipating slowly developing emergencies, and the erosion of national security emergency capabilities.⁵⁸

In developing its organizational design for emergency preparedness and response, the PRP was guided by advice from stakeholders as well as by emergency management doctrine.⁵⁹ Reminiscent of the post-WWII findings and the McKinsey reports, the study recommended that the

⁵⁸These findings bore a strong resemblance to the 1957 and 1958 studies by McKinsey & Co.

⁵⁹Executive Office of the President, Office of Management and Budget, President's Reorganization Project, Federal Emergency Preparedness and Response Historical Survey, February 1978, pp. 69-70.

administrative mechanism agency charged with economic mobilization and other civil emergency preparedness and response functions should be a *civilian* agency. The driving rationale was that the administrative mechanism's responsibilities were civilian, even though they affected both civilian and military needs. Second, the PRP findings indicated that responsibility at the federal level for the full spectrum of civil emergency management should be centralized in a single administrative mechanism for purposes of efficiency. This would avoid duplication, encourage full use of available resources, and promote coordinated planning and programming. Third, the PRP staff proposed that the central agency should have a very close relationship with the president because the functions involved (emergency preparedness and response) were sufficiently vital to command the president's attention. As a corollary to this, a PRP proposal suggested that the central agency avoid involvement in operational functions that could be done better by other organizations.

Drawing from the historical background of emergency reorganization and *realpolitik* rhetoric, the PRP also noted that organizational design alone would not solve all the problems. Implementation factors, such as public support, congressional interest, active presidential direction, and

placing top quality people in key positions, could be more important than any particular organizational design. Even so, the PRP argued that a soundly conceived organization could make an important contribution to improved programs.

In considering the organizational alternatives, the PRP staff settled on criteria that would maximize the new organization's chances for success. The criteria were intended to: reduce fragmentation and potential for policy conflict; increase the organization's ability to enforce policy and to manage crises; increase public recognition of emergency management as a national priority; reduce competition with other departmental functions; and finally, minimize program disruptions and budget implications. To the extent possible, any new organization was to meet program responsibilities more efficiently and not create anticipations leading to increased budget pressures.

Although there was staff disagreement, the PRP study concluded that, of the six alternative designs considered, the one that best satisfied the fundamental principles was the consolidation of DCPA (from DOD), FPA (from GSA), FDAA (from HUD) and the addition of a few other programs from the other departments and agencies.⁶⁰ This consolidation

⁶⁰One non-attribution interview stated that there a was strong, but unsuccessful, argument for returning to the old OEP model of a small White House policy staff with 100 high quality full-time employees, with 3-4 full-time employees in

included all functions then assigned to DCPA, FPA, and FDAA, except the national strategic stockpile disposal, which was to remain in GSA.⁶¹ The FEMA organization encompassed ten programs: civil defense, civil planning for national emergencies, disaster assistance, earthquake hazard reduction, dam safety, warning and emergency broadcast system oversight, response to consequences of terrorism, community disaster preparedness, national flood insurance, and national fire prevention and control.⁶² It combined them into five program offices:

1. Federal Insurance Administration
2. U.S. Fire Administration
3. Plans and Preparedness
4. Disaster Response and Recovery
5. Mitigation and Research
6. Training and Education

They were supplemented by the director's staff offices (Congressional Relations, Equal Opportunity, Regional Coordination, International Affairs, and Public Affairs) and

regional offices to deal with governors.

⁶¹According to key informants, the starting and continuing assumption was that DCPA, FPA, and FDAA would be included in the new agency.

⁶²Other Federal programs were examined for inclusion but the PRP study found that their operations would not be improved by transfer.

the other staff offices (Inspector General, General Counsel, Finance and Administration, Personnel, Program Analysis and Evaluation, and Operations Support). The new agency was to develop, implement, and monitor federal policies and programs to protect the civilian population and preserve national resources and Constitutional government in major emergencies. While it excluded departmental response operations, this unification of emergency programs in one agency signaled another crest for the wave of centralizing emergency programs and a possible shift to a centripetal arrangement of emergency management within the White House force field.⁶³

The total number of personnel recommended for transfer to the new agency through consolidation was approximately 2,400. That included over 200 staff members from the key communications and engineering functions

⁶³The scope of the programs to be covered by the reorganization was a matter without consensus. However, the starting and continuing assumption was that DCPA, FPA, and FDAA would be included in the new agency. In terms of "degree of joy" over the reorganization, the DCPA had the most to gain. It was located in the DOD but saw itself as incidental to the defense strategy of the nation. DCPA saw disaster relief operations and funds as a way to glamorize its civil defense program and increase its funding. Still, Secretary of Defense Harold Brown, for show or for belief, argued strongly against the transfer of DCPA to the new agency. For FPA, "anything was better than GSA," and that staff was optimistic about the transfer of function.

performed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in support of civil defense programs.

In lieu of reinstating membership in the statutory National Security Council (NSC), the PRP study recommended a lesser "consolation prize" of a White House emergency management committee, to be established and chaired by the director of the new agency. The committee was to be responsible for providing policy guidance to the new agency and advising the president in civil emergency situations.⁶⁴ The PRP staff acknowledged that high-level coordination would be important. Competition and duplication were hazards to be avoided. Many other federal agencies had the responsibility of planning for performance of their regular missions under emergency conditions and some agencies had specific emergency response or operational assignments.⁶⁵

⁶⁴"Civil emergency" was defined in Executive Order 12148 as "any accidental, natural, man-caused, or wartime emergency or threat thereof, which causes or may cause substantial injury or harm to the population or substantial damage to or loss of property."

⁶⁵For example, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers with its responsibility for disaster relief, dam safety and flood control; the Small Business Administration with its disaster loans; the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration with weather warnings; the National Bureau of Standards with its earthquake and fire hazard reduction research; and many others. The creation of the Department of Energy in 1974 and Department of Transportation in 1967 naturally lead to important energy and transportation emergency functions being drawn to those two departments.

Further, PRP recommendations described the new agency as being independent, incorporated neither within the Executive Office, nor within another department or agency.⁶⁶ PRP staff believed that placement in the White House was not crucial for the success of the new agency.⁶⁷ The PRP staff also opted not to place the function within the Executive Office because the staff member believed that enlarging the size of the Executive Office was undesirable.⁶⁸

The PRP staff then had to weigh the implications of establishing this new independent agency. Adding to the already long list of independent agencies was not a desirable option for an administration bent on simplification of the executive branch. Yet, it was a desirable option in that an independent agency could insulate the president from criticism in the event of a mishandled emergency. The thinking was that the function should not be too close to the president, lest he suffer by association. In the end, the staff concluded that the agency should, indeed, be independent.

⁶⁶Note the Chapter III discussion of the low prestige associated with independent agency status discussed in the reorganization of 1958.

⁶⁷Note the Chapter III discussion of departmental status associated with the reorganization of 1958.

⁶⁸Note the consistency with the 1973 rationale for moving it out of the Executive Office.

The President's Submission to the Congress

After debate and refinements, President Carter presented the proposed Reorganization Plan No. 3 of 1978 to both the Senate and the House of Representatives in June of 1978. The president presented this proposal as a response to the need for strong leadership, focus, and attention on federal emergency management. The proposal described centralized emergency authorities and functions under one high-level official directly responsible to the president. This confirmed that emergency preparedness and response were important executive responsibilities demanding regular attention and emphasis.

The president also attempted to strengthen the authorities of the new agency, and to address criticism over the agency's placement outside of the Executive Office and without membership on the NSC. In so doing, he promised to establish, by executive order, an emergency management committee reporting directly to the president. The emergency management committee was to be chaired by the new agency's director. The proposed membership (a promise unfulfilled) was to include the Assistants to the President

for National Security, Domestic Affairs and Policy, and Intergovernmental Relations, and the Director of OMB.⁶⁹

Proponents of the reorganization proposal felt that the reorganization assured that emergency responsibilities were, whenever possible, extensions of regular federal department and agency missions. A primary task of the new agency was coordination of emergency employment of resources that usually had other uses. This was promoted as more efficient than developing a reserved set of federal skills and capabilities for use only when an emergency threatened.

The administration's testimony was provided by James T. McIntyre, Jr., Director of OMB, accompanied by Harrison Wellford, OMB's Executive Associate Director for Management and Reorganization, and Nye Stevens, the emergency management reorganization's project director. McIntyre noted that the reorganization was an important step in

⁶⁹The function of the emergency management committee was to advise the president on alternative courses of action in national civil emergencies, establish broad policy for the exercise of emergency-related authorities, advise the president on the costs and benefits of alternative policies, improve performance and avoid excessive costs. The committee would oversee expenditures in several ongoing programs which had greatly exceeded funding allocations. (This last reason related to the high rate of expenditures in disaster loan programs conducted by the Department of Agriculture and the Small Business Administration and was to strike a favorably responsive chord with the congress.)

meeting the president's commitment to the American people to simplify the structure and management of federal programs.

OMB's McIntyre pointed out the key deficiencies that motivated the reorganization. They included the frequently cited splintered authorities, duplication in program elements, lack of preparedness, and lack of high-level support. The Carter administration argued the case that reorganization was a matter of fiscal efficiency. This was an often used, and expected, justification for reorganization. McIntyre testified that, in addition to the staff of approximately 2,400, the new agency would have a budget of about \$600 million. He announced that, through consolidation, he was confident that a reduction of staff from 200 to 300 members could be achieved through attrition. Also, budget savings of \$10 to \$15 million annually could be anticipated with no adverse effect on program delivery.⁷⁰

On the management side, OMB's McIntyre testified that the reorganization would improve greatly the management of all functions transferred to the new agency. It would achieve a balance between operational activities and planning and coordinating functions. It would even provide leadership and effective planning and coordination to

⁷⁰Savings were not realized.

programs remaining in other department and agency structures.

Concerns From Outside the Executive Branch

For the most part, this reorganization was being considered in parallel to other legislative initiatives, such as the Proxmire Bill (Senate 1209) to restructure the same programs. The other initiatives were introduced in both houses of the congress and were then pending before committee. It was widely believed that the congress would have enacted a reorganization of emergency management if the president did not.

The most visible and popular of the bills was S. 1209 (the "Percy-Proxmire bill"). It had been drafted by the staff of the Joint Committee on Defense Production. This bill (and its House of Representatives counterparts) provided for a consolidation of FPA, FDAA, and DCPA into a single independent agency with "delegate agency funding" authority over emergency preparedness activities.⁷¹ It also provided for the director to be a permanent member of the NSC and to report to the president through the Domestic Council for other than national security matters.

⁷¹The House counterparts were H.R. 7222, H.R. 8229, H.R. 7253, H.R. 7649, H.R. 8907.

S. 526 (Huddleston) would have abolished FPA, upgraded DCPA in the DOD and given it authority independent of attack preparedness to support natural disaster preparedness. His bill would have reassigned FDAA from HUD to OMB, giving it all disaster relief and assistance responsibilities. The House companion bills were H.R. 3941 and H.R. 5123.

All the bills were generated by the belief in congress that emergency preparedness measures were inadequate, disjointed, duplicative, inefficient, wasteful, and, at times, conflicting. Proxmire noted that there:

are literally dozens of committees, interagency task forces, and study groups all working on Federal preparedness planning. But no one is commanding the ship. No one is coordinating or making overall policy decisions.⁷²

Proxmire, speaking for himself and Senator Percy, faulted the 1973 reorganization for splitting up the emergency preparedness effort into three organizations with essentially non-emergency missions. He maintained that the 1973 reorganization submerged emergency preparedness functions so deep within their new organizations that they were unable to get the attention they needed. That lack of access hampered their effectiveness. Further, he maintained

⁷²William Proxmire, Statement on Federal Emergency Assistance and Preparedness Administration Act of 1977. Congressional Record, April 1, 1977. p. 5326.

that it was ineffective public policy to have the thirty-seven or so departments and agencies with emergency preparedness functions report, for example, to the FPA, an agency without authority "to exercise supervision or dictate uniform policy over this esoteric archipelago of officialdom."⁷³ Proxmire maintained, further, that the 1973 reorganization that resulted in the three-way split of emergency preparedness also confounded state and local agencies in their efforts to work with the federal government.

None of the bills became law. By agreement between the legislative and executive branches, hearings were deferred to give the president time to do his reorganization study. It was with the specter of the passage of the popular Percy-Proxmire bill that the president's reorganization was driven.

It was clear that the 1978 issues that sparked the need for the reorganization bore a strong resemblance to those of earlier reorganization efforts. A cycle had developed in emergency management mechanisms and repetition of issues, especially those of consolidation, coordination, and organizational visibility. This suggests that there may have been one or more systemic organizational problems that

⁷³Ibid., pp. 5327-5328.

had not been remedied in the series of reorganizations going back to the 1930's. Therefore, the proposed 1978 "solution" demanded close examination. It also required the test of time to match President Carter's corrective vision of 1978 with FEMA, the new consolidated emergency management organization.

Senator Edmund Muskie chaired the reorganization hearings of the Senate Subcommittee on Intergovernmental Relations of the Committee on Governmental Affairs. He set the tone for the hearings of the Subcommittee with his opening statement on the emergency preparedness problem, summing up the past and forecasting the future. His remarks reflected the growing consensus that the federal government's emergency programs needed an organizational overhaul.⁷⁴ He acknowledged that this sentiment was not new. Rather, it was the latest manifestation of problems that caused federal emergency organizations to be reorganized and rearranged repeatedly over the years.

With this history in mind, Senator Muskie explicitly refused to speculate on whether the new agency established

⁷⁴According to an internal OMB memorandum dated February 15, 1978 from Terry Straub to Peter Szanton, Senators Muskie and Jackson were supportive of the emergency preparedness reorganization but were concerned about any impact the reorganization might have on environment and natural resource issues.

by the reorganization strategy would fare any better than its predecessors. He described four areas of concern to him. First, the authorities and responsibilities that made up the emergency management agencies were unique in the government and largely the product of hasty reactions to past emergency circumstances. Second, Senator Muskie took note of the perennial emergency management problem that contingency planning goes unattended in the day-to-day crush of other business. Third, he knew that mitigation efforts call for tradeoffs that are unpopular and difficult to rationalize to a population not faced with a specific and certain threat. And finally, he noted national security preparedness was cyclical, depending on the international situation.

Testimony before the Subcommittee came from many quarters, including state emergency planners. Testimony generally endorsed heightened visibility, better coordination of the federal departments and agencies, and Executive Office direction. Other recommendations from the testimony included consolidation of planning for all kinds of civil emergencies, elimination of duplication, and the importance of paying attention to civil defense.⁷⁵

⁷⁵William H. Kincade, Executive Director, Arms Control Association (and formerly staff director of the Joint Committee on Defense Production, that is, the Proxmire Committee) attested to the expected results of the

Representative Frank Horton and others provided a somber view of the reorganization proposal.⁷⁶ He faulted it on its lack of specificity.⁷⁷ Citing General Accounting Office (GAO) studies criticizing a lack of government-wide coordination and control, he noted the absence of anything specific in the proposal to address that problem. He argued that it was critical to understand fully the relationship between the new agency and the other departments of the government.⁷⁸ He also expressed concern that the plan was

reorganization, including a statement:

"Another and related advantage of the President's plan is that it will provide this vital function and responsibility with enough visibility, high level access and organizational authority to get the job done.... I recognize and fully agree with the premise that this new organization is primarily a policy, management and coordination agency" (William H. Kincade testimony, U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on Governmental Affairs, Reorganization Plan No. 3 of 1978, Hearings before the Subcommittee on Intergovernmental Relations. 95th Cong., 2d sess., 1978, pp. 42, 45-47).

⁷⁶U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Government Operations, Reorganization Plan No. 3 of 1978, Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Government Operations, Report Together with Additional and Dissenting Views, 95th Cong., 2d sess., 1978, pp. 18-19.

⁷⁷The president's plan was to issue the specifics at a later date in the form of one or more executive orders. Thus, the congress was writing a blank check that the president would fill in.

⁷⁸This was a concern of tremendous importance that would be better understood in the decade of the 1980's.

skeletal because it did not describe in detail the emergency management committee. He felt that the committee was a key element for the success of the reorganization.

Governor Mike O'Callaghan of Nevada,⁷⁹ chair of the Subcommittee on Disaster Assistance of the National Governors' Association (NGA), spoke in June of 1978 before the Subcommittee on Legislation and National Security of the Committee on Government Operations, U.S. House of Representatives. The NGA had completed a lengthy study of emergency management from the states' point of view. Findings suggested that governors had become increasingly concerned about "the lack of a national policy for the management of . . . emergencies," thereby hampering states' abilities to manage disaster situations.⁸⁰ ⁸¹ Indeed, the NGA and state civil defense officials were the primary instigators of the Carter initiative to consolidate the emergency functions.⁸² As a former state governor, Carter

⁷⁹Governor O'Callaghan was frequently mentioned as a possible first director for FEMA.

⁸⁰Hilary Whittaker, State Comprehensive Emergency Management, (Washington, D.C.: National Governors' Association, 1978), p. xi.

⁸¹To the skeptics among the key informants, the true interest of the States was to create one large pork-barrel from which their programs could be funded.

⁸²Non-attribution interviews.

held a "kinship" to the governors that was a powerful force in this reorganization effort.

Representative Horton and the NGA both endorsed the two elements in the reorganization that would have critical importance in the next few years. These two elements were the authority of the agency and the need for close association with the president. The NGA supported the reorganization but noted that:

It is important that the new agency director have strong powers to coordinate among emergency related services of all federal agencies. In addition, the director should have the authority to direct response activities in the wake of disasters. Without this capability, little will be accomplished by this consolidation

We strongly recommend that the new agency be either in the Office of the President, or be established as a [sic] independent agency, and that its director chair a White House Emergency Management Committee and sit at cabinet meetings and relevant National Security Council meetings. This new agency director must be seen by all federal agency heads as the President's authorized representative in the coordination of emergency-related initiatives.⁸³

⁸³U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Government Operations, Reorganization Plan No. 3 of 1978, Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Government Operations, 95th Cong., 2d sess., 1978, pp. 122-123; NGA's O'Callaghan went on to say that the headquarter's staff should be as small as possible, consistent with providing policy, research, guidance, and the minimum necessary administrative support. On the other hand, regional and field staff who would coordinate with state emergency offices needed to be the strong point. Supplementing the NGA, additional support came from the National Association of State Directors of Disaster Preparedness who lobbied heavily for the reorganization.

The NGA's statement was to take on greater importance as FEMA felt its way in its early years. Previous reorganization efforts had addressed these issues with varying degrees of attention and success, and they received inadequate attention in the 1978 reorganization. Several of the issues were crystallized as the reorganization was argued by the executive and legislative branches.

**Critical Issues Argued Between the Executive
and Legislative Branches**

Two areas of discussion can be highlighted as especially important to the implementation of consolidated emergency management. First, there was discussion on the choice of an independent agency of ill-defined authority outside the White House as the administrative mechanism for emergency management. Second, there was discussion of the visibility of, and relationship of, the new organization within the White House organization. Key informants identified these two factors in interviews, noting that they were reminiscent of the circumstances that had troubled the predecessor organizations.

Organization Design: The Choice of the Independent Agency

Once again, the decision to design an independent agency for emergency management was put into question. When asked why the functions were not consolidated in an existing department, OMB's McIntyre testified that the alternatives had been examined. First, as has been discussed previously, placement in the Executive Office had been rejected because it would almost triple the size of the Executive Office. McIntyre went on to state his belief that the key element was development of essential links to the Executive Office, not placement in the Executive Office. Second, he testified that subordinating coordinative authorities to sub-departmental levels had not worked in the period since the 1973 reorganization. Layering, low-visibility, and inevitable conflicts with other departmental priorities had made this alternative unacceptable. Additionally, subordination within a civil agency would be seen as unacceptable to the defense community because it downgraded attack preparedness functions in favor of the natural disaster activities.

On the other hand, assignment of the functions to the DOD would extend the military influence into civilian matters far more than was acceptable to the civilian community or was then the case. OMB's McIntyre stated that

while the Carter administration resisted recommending independent agency status for some time, it finally concluded that independent agency status really was the most viable route. The plan provided visibility, gave a good coordinating link to the operations agencies, and provided direct accountability to the president.

Representative Horton quizzed the Carter administration representatives further and referred to a GAO report on continuity of government that said a higher profile and strong direction and coordination for FPA were essential. He asked what institutional arrangement was there to provide for strong coordination. The Carter administration replied that the elimination of jurisdictional problems and strong direction and control were the real keys to effective emergency planning. Accordingly, the Carter administration promised to update the executive orders assigning emergency responsibilities to the federal departments and agencies, to clarify agency responsibilities, and to define the coordination role of the new agency.⁸⁴

The Carter administration envisioned that the consolidation of federal programs would permit the single

⁸⁴As discussed in the chapter V discussion of the coordination theme, implementation in this area was generally inadequate.

agency to coordinate the actions of other agencies for all disasters. This was a far better situation than the fragmented structure at that time that provided for different coordinators during peacetime and wartime emergencies. The Carter administration again promised to provide top level attention to coordinated emergency response through an emergency management committee.⁸⁵ The Carter administration was optimistic that, so armed, the director of the new agency, supported by an emergency management committee and the elevated stature of the emergency programs, would be able to reverse the decline in the emergency readiness status of departments and agencies.

Not highlighted in the hearing was the proposal that the director of the new agency was to be an Executive Level II, like the directors of the CIA, OMB, and NASA. This was a significant honor but one that, in a protocol town, pales against Executive Level I department secretaries.

Representative Horton questioned the Carter administration representatives on the GAO recommendation that central control over emergency preparedness budgets of departments and agencies be reestablished, a revisiting of the old "delegate agency funding" issue. The Carter

⁸⁵According to key informants, the committee was to have one meeting. As will be discussed in chapter V, the White House linkage often was cited as of insufficient strength.

administration representatives replied that the PRP staff had considered "delegate agency funding." The virtues of "delegate agency funding" were in its value as a management tool to assure the responsiveness of the departments and agencies to emergency preparedness goals and objectives. In the view of the Carter administration, however, central control by the new agency over the emergency preparedness budgets of the departments and agencies was neither a workable nor desirable management design.⁸⁶

The White House Relationship: Visibility

The acknowledged potential difficulty for a new independent agency in a bureaucratic limbo required the creation of a formal link to the White House to enable White House staff involvement in emergency management. This resulting mechanism was called the Emergency Management

⁸⁶The significance cannot be overstated of the decision to adopt the independent agency organizational structure outside the White House without budget impact on the organizations to be coordinated. An independent agency is outside the direct relationship between the departments and other agencies and the White House. Therefore, it is not in a position to intervene and give credible policy guidance to any department or agency that chooses not to cooperate with its guidance. The role necessarily becomes one of cajoling. The independent agency's influence is dependent on statements from the White House supporting the new agency, its leadership, and the voluntary cooperation of the Federal agencies. In a non-crisis government, White House support is unlikely and, over time, generally is not forthcoming.

Council.⁸⁷ The absence of membership of the director of the new agency on the NSC further supported the need for the emergency management committee device. The emergency management committee was established to provide the promised institutional arrangement for a White House relationship. The committee bears a resemblance to similar organizations of the past; and its eventual failure was cited repeatedly by key informants as a critical event in the evolution of the FEMA mechanism for managing NSEP. This "poor cousin" of the NSC was proffered when the administration decided against promoting the director of the new agency to membership on the NSC (or, some have suggested, against "restoring membership" on the NSC to the emergency management organization).⁸⁸

Senator Muskie made it clear in the reorganization hearings that the emergency management committee was to provide policy control over all federal preparedness and response programs. One example was the Small Business

⁸⁷The documents of 1977/1978 referred to an emergency management committee or an Emergency Management Committee. By July, 1979, the name was formally established as Emergency Management Council in Executive Order 12148. For simplicity, the designation used hereafter, except in quoted material, is "EMC." The final membership was disappointing to the emergency community.

⁸⁸Non-attribution interviews.

Administration (SBA) disaster loan program, which he called a hemorrhage in the federal budget.⁸⁹

. . . If this reorganization plan is approved, we will lean very hard on the emergency planning committee to deal with the very specific list of problems that you [Moscaritolo of Massachusetts testifying for the Lieutenant Governor] have run into and others have run into in implementation of this [disaster] legislation

. . . With respect to postdisaster planning, again I expect to benefit a great deal from the recommendations of the emergency planning committee. Hopefully it will have high visibility--that is why it has been created--and could get the attention of the Congress on this kind of a problem such as funding, for disaster relief, long-term planning, mitigation planning, more than the FDAA could

OMB's McIntyre proposed that the emergency management committee would strengthen the authorities of the new agency. The committee would advise the president on alternative courses of action in national emergencies, establish broad policy for the exercise of emergency-related authorities, and advise the president on the costs and benefits of alternative policies to improve performance and avoid excessive costs. McIntire appeared to agree with

⁸⁹According to one key informant, OMB independently initiated efforts to combine FDAA's and SBA's disaster programs, until it was discovered that almost 66% of SBA's personnel were involved in post-disaster activities from its 1972-1974 disasters, including Tropical Storm Agnes. This ended the discourse since it the combination would have destroyed SBA, an organization endorsed by the Republican administration.

Senator Muskie that the emergency management committee also would be charged with overseeing expenditures in several ongoing programs, such as in disaster loan programs conducted by the Department of Agriculture and the SBA. Senator Huddleston, in the June 1978 reorganization hearings, said that the direct link provided to the White House by the emergency management committee could not help but lend strength and credibility to policy directions developed by the new agency. A few months later he was distressed that a key element of the program, the emergency management committee, was not mentioned in the actual plan.⁹⁰

Approval of the Reorganization Plan No. 3 of 1978

By not disapproving the proposal within the allotted 60 days from date of submission, congress approved Reorganization Plan No. 3 in September 1978. Congress thereby approved the reorganization of emergency management functions. To recapitulate, this action consolidated emergency management functions in an independent agency to be directed by an Executive Level II official, to have access to the president, and to "direct and coordinate" on the president's behalf the emergency mitigation,

⁹⁰It was, however, noted in the briefing materials furnished the committee, and somewhat reformulated, it appeared in Executive Order 12148.

preparedness, response, and recovery activities of the nation.

President Carter had the authority by virtue of his position to relocate most of the emergency management organizations using his presidential authorities. Executive Order 12127, signed on March 31, 1979, declared that the reorganization was effective the following day. However, emergency functions were not described formally in detail until the president issued Executive Order 12148 on July 20, 1979.

Executive Order 12148 gave the Director of FEMA a seemingly broad and controlling charter within which to work. It stated that the Director of FEMA "shall establish federal policies for, and coordinate, all civil defense and civil emergency planning, management, mitigation and assistance functions of Executive agencies."⁹¹ Among other responsibilities, it required the FEMA director periodically to review and evaluate the civil defense and civil emergency functions of the executive branch departments and agencies; to recommend to the president alternative methods of providing federal planning, management, mitigation, and assistance; and to coordinate the preparedness and planning

⁹¹Executive Order 12148 of July 20, 1979, as amended. "Federal emergency management," 44 Federal Register 143, Section 2-101.

to reduce the consequences of major terrorist incidents. Further, Executive Order 12148 directed the FEMA director to provide an annual report to the president for transmission to congress; this report would detail the functions of FEMA and evaluate the state of effectiveness of federal civil defense and civil emergency functions, organizations, resources, and systems. In keeping with past policy, it mandated the use of *existing* organizations, missions, resources, and systems to the maximum extent practicable.

While Executive Order 12148 did not allow the director a seat on the NSC, it did provide for the formal establishment of the Emergency Management Council, chaired by the Director of FEMA, that was charged with advising and assisting the president and the Director of FEMA. According to the executive order only the Director of OMB was designated officially as a member. The remaining members were to be designated by the president.

Executive Order 12148 also amended the 1969 Executive Order 11490, "Assigning Emergency Preparedness Functions to Federal Departments and Agencies." The significant amendments were the new provisions (Section 102(a) of Executive Order 11490) that:

The activities undertaken by the departments and agencies pursuant to this Order, except as provided in Section 3003, shall be in accordance with guidance provided by, and subject to, evaluation by

the Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.⁹²

Section 103 of Executive Order 11490 was amended to read:

The Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) shall determine national preparedness goals and policies for the performance of functions under this Order and coordinate the performance of such functions with the total national preparedness programs.⁹³

Further provisions of Executive Order 12148 affected Executive Order 10421, "Providing for the physical security of facilities important to the national defense."⁹⁴ However, the strongly worded Executive Order 10421 dating back to December 31, 1952, was changed little in substance. According to the amended version of Executive Order 10421, the Director of FEMA "shall supervise and bring into harmonious action the programs and measures" referred to in another part of the executive order.⁹⁵ It went on to say that the Director of FEMA was to "prescribe policies and

⁹²Executive Order 12148 of July 20, 1979, as amended. "Federal emergency management." 44 Federal Register 143, Section 5-214(a).

⁹³Executive Order 12148 of July 20, 1979, as amended. "Federal emergency management." 44 Federal Register 143, Section 5-214(b).

⁹⁴Both Executive Orders 10421 and 11490 were replaced by Executive Order 12656 in 1988.

⁹⁵Executive Order 10421 of December 31, 1952, "Providing for the physical security of facilities important to the national defense," 18 Federal Register 57, Section 3(a).

programs governing the activities of Federal agencies" with respect to the physical security of facilities; develop and promulgate standards of physical security, with the advice and assistance of appropriate federal agencies; assign facilities to federal agencies; and approve or revise security ratings.* The executive order carried other assignments of similar tone, providing further guidance to the FEMA director.

Implications of the Reorganization

The written charter and the related executive orders gave the new agency a clear mandate to determine national goals and policies, to coordinate the functions of emergency management, and to work closely with the president in the assurance of emergency preparedness. However, the difference between the written charter and how it was understood varied from interpreter to interpreter. The understanding of the mandate ranged from its being an overstatement and "a dream to get [us] invited to the game," to its being a purposeful expression of President Carter's

*Executive Order 10421 of December 31, 1952, "Providing for the physical security of facilities important to the national defense." 18 Federal Register 57, Section 3(b)(1).

intent.⁹⁷ It is in this lack of consensus that the debates and disputes over the role of FEMA developed.

The inconsistency between the vision expressed in the written word and the reality of the agency's first decade was clearly identified in the themes identified through the research and interview process. The emerging themes were ones of organizational design and troubled implementation. The 1978 vision of those supporting an incorporation of emergency management within the centripetal force of the White House was not realized. The murky responsibility to "coordinate," and a White House relationship that fell short of the vision expressed in 1978 by the Carter administration and in congressional reorganization hearings were strongly related to the redefinition of the FEMA NSEP role. The discussion in the following chapters is informed by the formal organizational history of emergency management from its beginnings in the White House in 1933, and an understanding of the complexity of the situation in which the new agency was created. This discussion moves forward by drawing on other literature of the field and additional insight of key informants.

⁹⁷Non-attribution interviews.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS PART I: ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN

The Basic Design

Choice of Independent Agency Structure

FEMA's vertical relationship with the White House and the lateral relationships with the departments and agencies resulted in a redefinition of the FEMA role and responsibilities. This chapter reviews the basic design that was intended by the reorganization effort of 1978 and traces the results of that arrangement on the agency.

Seidman argues that different organization types (e.g., executive department, organization within the Executive Office, independent agency, regulatory commission, and so on) can be clearly identified by a specific set of variables.¹ An organization designer can examine variables including status, public acceptance, access to decision-makers, competition for resources, operating flexibility, distribution of power, and public accountability and select the organizational type corresponding most effectively with

¹Harold Seidman, "A Typology of Government" ed. Peter Szanton, Federal Reorganization: What Have We Learned? (Chatham, New Jersey: Chatham House Publishers, 1981) pp. 33-57.

the desired areas of strength. Organizational design then becomes engineered according to an explicit prescription of type, based on analysis of desired strengths.

As illustration, Seidman posits that establishment of an organization within the Executive Office positions that organization with maximum access and influence and helps it establish its own status. Seidman allows that placement itself does not engender power, but poor placement can undermine organizational success. By way of further explanation, he notes that independent agencies run the risk of being isolated within the executive branch structure. Seidman generalizes that, for independent agencies, access to the president and executive branch decision-makers is usually limited, resource competition is often acute, and deference must be paid to departmental organizations. On the other hand, independent agencies are most appropriate in three situations: (1) when very visible response to areas of public concern is needed, (2) when two or more executive departments are involved in a program area, and (3) when one wants to prevent the national program area from being stifled by old-line departments with deeply set habits and cultures.

Lloyd George also identified the inadequacy of old-line departments in responding to emergencies. He remarked

in a speech in the House of Commons in 1916 that it was impossible to wage a war through a "Sanhedrin" and that he, therefore, would be establishing a small war cabinet for policy formation and coordination. His estimate was that coordination and control were too difficult using the then extant organizations of British government. It is well-established in the United States that coordinating organizations under the president are needed to aid the president in exercising the duties of office. This applies and has been accepted for budget, personnel, and, intermittently, emergency management. As Seidman and Gilmour note, congress draws the line at proposals for "supercoordinators" except in wartime.² This leaves peacetime preparedness organizations on a weak foundation.

FEMA's design was not casual. It was debated and decided upon. As discussed in Chapter IV, a purposeful decision was made to place emergency management as an independent agency outside the Executive Office. Emergency management was a candidate for placement within a suitable department but there was no serious discussion of establishing it as a department itself.

²Harold Seidman and Robert Gilmour, Politics, Position and Power (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 240.

The attractiveness of developing an independent agency rested on two convictions: its suitability for handling a cross-government low-profile issue and the appeal of limiting the size of the Executive Office. The obvious weakness was a perceived lack of power over higher status departments; this was overcome in the design by the creation of an Emergency Management Council (EMC) with high level membership and a close relationship with the president. Critics faulted the reorganization effort that embodied all of these actions. Primary among their concerns was the placement of the function outside the Executive Office, thus symbolizing a lack of priority for the function.

Key Informant Perspectives on the Vision

The key informants participating in this research effort provided their views with folklore-type familiarity with the President's Reorganization Project (PRP) and the legislative history. They were not especially versed in the public administration principles underlying federal reorganization. In the questioning on the vision of 1978, therefore, the quest of the research was for an underlying or basic premise for the formation of FEMA. Understanding the reasons behind the public policy decision to unify emergency programs, one can better understand how the mature

organization's redesign of the NSEP program was destined by organizational theory.

Twenty-three key informants commented on the vision for FEMA at its inception. The unifying theme for the FEMA creation was of serving the American public in domestic and national security emergencies, providing critical assistance at all stages of an emergency. The overall view of the key informants was that emergency management, both domestic and national security, is an essential function of government and FEMA was assigned to take on this function. But according to a key informant, "there was no great soul searching about the constituent organizations; the reorganization was 'a given.'"

According to another key informant, "no one thought there would be a new, powerful, or growing role." FEMA was intended to motivate and coordinate departments and agencies into preparing for emergencies. "It was just meant to be more efficient than the previous way of doing business." "It was to be a traffic cop, assuring that other departments and agencies got their jobs done and that nothing fell between the cracks."

FEMA was to be a unification of related programs, not a federation. It was to develop a master plan and get this plan implemented as efficiently as possible. It was to

integrate the emergency management programs of the federal government and be the single point of contact for emergency management. Its first director, John Macy, had wanted to meld its operations like those of the Army staff into operations, plans, logistics, and communications. FEMA was to do a better job than its predecessors had ever done of getting the states involved with full-spectrum emergency management.

For clout, FEMA was to have access to White House working groups. It was to bring issues regarding emergency management into the White House and to present policies needing the president's attention. The director was to be seen as speaking for the president.

The key informants suggested that FEMA had sufficient formal authority to do what needed to be done. The director was to be appointed at the Executive Level II status (the same as the directors of OMB, NASA, and CIA). FEMA was to oversee, monitor and evaluate; it was not to "manage"; and there would be resources. The personal stature of the director was to have substituted for budgetary and other institutional forms of power. FEMA was to "grow and glow."

However, the FEMA vision was not implemented easily. Key informants identified problems apparent from the

beginning. FEMA's problems, according to several of the key informants, can be traced to its basic premise. The 1978 vision ran counter to actual bureaucracy. Bureaucracy upholds territory, *status quo*, and independence. The creation of FEMA as a coordinating agency appeared to challenge those values.

Similarly challenging, the creation of FEMA was a statement that the government should be planning for unpleasant events or "bad things." This planning is counter to the American culture. Planning for them means they might occur. "The American preference is for a spasm reaction and a crash response." Further, the reorganization was creating an agency with a "second level program" that would lobby departments and agencies to take money from "primary programs" to pay for the unlikely events associated with the "secondary program." In a budget-oriented town, this was a formula for neither a "warm-welcome" nor success. FEMA would have needed strong and over-riding support to promote its program.

Combining related functions under a common organizational umbrella, as in the case of FEMA, is no guarantee that coherent policy will result. Inter-departmental coordination problems just become intra-departmental problems. "If coordination were the goal, it

should have been assigned to a small staff having the confidence of the president." But the FEMA job was too big for a small staff. FEMA's size did not balance well with the role of coordinator. The result was the assignment of a coordination function to a body not well suited to it.

A last statement relating to problems with the basic policy of the start-up vision was that FEMA was designed to build from the top down. However, one key informant noted that very little stands that is not built from the bottom up. He observed that FEMA lost its grounding and was left to tread air.

FEMA needed more of a continuing real-world role (e.g. fire and insurance) to establish its relevance. Even so, however, the multiplicity of missions it was assigned proved to be a problem. Day-to-day (operations) work drove out planning and coordination; there was a continuing tension between the coordination role and operations. This combination had produced a conflict of alien cultures.

The reality was that nobody in the White House had time for emergency management. There also was no White House vision or demonstration of support communicated to the agencies. Carter was unwilling to personally back the agency; other promised support did not materialize to the extent that some of the key informants had expected.

The agency had a basic lack of stature and power. It was unable to bring important organizations to the table and, therefore, was unable to coordinate effectively. Even though the director was appointed as an Executive Level II (like OMB, CIA, and NASA) reporting to the president, the fact that the function was vested in an agency instead of a department started it off at a disadvantage. This, coupled with the lack of internal agreement within FEMA on what authority FEMA had, established the agency as a second class citizen in a town where stature and power are critical.

Key informants indicated that the FEMA implementation failed because it was a federation, rather than the intended unification, of functions. Instead of a broad policy type of organization along the model of the earlier Office of Emergency Planning or Office of Emergency Preparedness (with White House location and "delegate agency funding"), it was "a monster with five heads" that did not communicate. Macy's vision of a single agency, a master plan, and a single point of contact, did not materialize.³ Subsequent directors continued to encounter the monster. "FEMA was a batch of former programs, it was not integrated." The inability at the staff level over the

³Federal Emergency Management Agency, "Emergency Management: A National Perspective I," a monograph prepared under contract by Seymour D. Greenstone, June 1989.

interpretation of the mission documents (especially Executive Orders 10421 and 12148), organizational relationships and authorities were symptoms of a specific problem: that the White House had not decided how emergency management should operate.

A GAO management audit in 1983 found that FEMA's management problems stemmed, in large part, from start-up problems during the 1979 reorganization.⁴ It went on to state that the most obvious of the problems was the lack of a "FEMA identity."

Over the years, emergency management programs and employees have been in a state of flux The lack of continuity undoubtedly has had an adverse impact on FEMA's operations and employee attitudes and morale.⁵

Fifteen key informants cited the implementation of the new organization as a critical event affecting FEMA's subsequent performance. The argument that the function needs to be located in the Executive Office was made

⁴General Accounting Office. Management of the Federal Emergency Management Agency--A System Being Developed. Washington, D.C.: General Accounting Office, January 6, 1983. pp. 12-16. The audit found progress in correcting some of the shortcomings found in the 1981 audit but found a need to strengthen overall management systems (specifically: there was no clear statement of mission; goals were poorly defined or missing; planning systems were nonexistent or ineffective; performance reporting was lacking; and program evaluation was extremely limited.)

⁵Ibid., pp. 15-16.

repeatedly. The point, invariably, was that the president's imprimatur was needed. It was not enough that the director would be an Executive Level II. "FEMA was charged with a bastard function--that always takes a back seat."

The fundamental problem that transcended all others was the absence of a philosophy of emergency management that would serve to guide--the lack of a formula. In the view of the key informants, it was for that reason that the questions about the role of FEMA are asked. Emergency management is not recognized as intrinsically important. If there were an accepted unifying theme, it was that one agency would deal with the American people on emergencies, before and after the fact.

The flaw in this theme, as mentioned earlier, was the mixing of two alien cultures, that is, planners and operators. Operational responsibilities drive out planning. While operational roles are more relevant to real world problems, planning responsibilities are viewed as overhead, especially in resource constrained times. The resources needed and the orientations are so distinct and competing that they doom integration. On a cyclical basis over the history of emergency management, one or the other was always on the ascendant slope, while necessarily, the other was on the descendent slope.

The White House Relationship

Formal White House Support

It is well established in the literature and in practice that the appearance and reality of White House sponsorship is important for agency credibility and performance. The designers of the 1978 vision understood this and created a major structural device for providing a vertical link between the new agency and the White House. Their NSEP successors adjusted this structure several times over the period from 1979 through 1990. This section describes the variations on, and the weaknesses of, the vertical link structure. It suggests that, despite the maps and fresh constructs, the structural design for a formalized White House sponsorship of NSEP did not take root and ultimately brought about a redefinition of the FEMA NSEP vision.

The Emergency Management Council

This reorganization rests on several fundamental principles: First, Federal authorities to anticipate, prepare for, and respond to major civil emergencies should be supervised by one official responsible to the President and given attention by other officials at the highest levels.⁶

⁶Reorganization Plan No. 3 of 1978. Message from the President of the United States Transmitting a Reorganization Plan to Improve Federal Emergency Management and Assistance, Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 903 (91 Stat. 30) June 19, 1978. Message and accompanying papers referred to the Committee on

With that justification, President Carter established the Emergency Management Council (EMC) as a symbol of his support for the new emergency management organization, FEMA. The EMC was to be chaired by the FEMA Director and composed of "the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and such others as the President may designate," for the purpose of advising and assisting "the President in the oversight and direction of federal emergency programs and policies" and to "provide guidance to the Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)."⁷ The federal departments and agencies were to cooperate with and assist the EMC.

The EMC was the prototype structure for the vertical relationship with the White House. It was to provide the vehicle for the appearance and reality of White House sponsorship for the agency. This prototype structure was gratifying to those who adhered to the orthodox administrative theories on traditional structure and authority. As noted by a key informant: "a friend in the White House is nice in the short run, but it depends on

Government Operations and ordered to be printed. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington 1978. 95th Congress. 2d session. House Document No. 95-350. p. 2.

⁷Executive Order 12148, "Federal Emergency Management," July 20, 1979, Code of Federal Regulations, Title 3, 1979 Comp., p. 414.

personal credibility. It is better to have a formal organization for access."

The EMC represented a body close to the president, a body that could formulate national policy, and one that would have a significant impact on the use of authorities and on the expenditure of funds. It was designed to provide a strong vertical link between FEMA and the White House. According to a key informant who participated in the process, the EMC structure was to keep FEMA from being a "toothless tiger." Others said it was to "guarantee clout for FEMA" and to provide White House access for emergency management. It was to overcome the problem that FEMA was not of Cabinet status.

It was this portrayal that appealed to the congress in the hearings of 1978. The EMC would bring fiscal restraint in addition to strength and credibility in emergency management. The responsibility for the full spectrum of emergency responsibilities from disaster to war and the fiscal oversight role represented a return to the days when emergency management was a key executive interest.

Yet, there were early signs that all was not well in terms of White House support. The level of the membership was down-graded in a behind-the-scenes move, between the time of approval of Reorganization Plan No. 3 on June 19,

1978 and the time of the Executive order on July 20, 1979. While the chair remained the same, the membership shifted during that year. Previous members were the Assistants to the President for National Security, Domestic Affairs and Policy, and International Affairs, and the Director of the OMB. At the end of the year, only the Director of the OMB remained, along with several unspecified others.

The significance of the shift in stature becomes more apparent in examination of the implementation of the EMC under FEMA's first director. Seventeen key informants spoke of the importance of the EMC's organizational structure and achievements. One, and only one, key informant recalled an early administrative meeting of the EMC. However, an EMC meeting recalled by many key informants was the meeting Director Macy convened in the Indian Treaty Room of the Old Executive Office Building--an excellent and symbolic location for this promoting the appearance of White House sponsorship. The meeting was called to implement the Executive Order 12148 charge to FEMA to use a structure to be known as the EMC. None of the principal invitees attended.⁸

⁸Or in the words of several of the key informants, "nobody came."

The key informants indicated that it was clear by that time that there was no White House support for the EMC and that the group seemed to be but an advisory board to FEMA, not a key policy tool of the president. They also speculated that the Director of OMB did not attend because his attendance would indicate a subordinate relationship to the Director of FEMA, rather than that of a peer. A few "lesser lights" (or, less kindly, "horse-holders") did attend. Ultimately, however, strong White House support was missing at this meeting.

It also was suggested by several of the key informants that the appearance given was that FEMA was "holding court" and that there was no real agenda, especially not an agenda requiring the attention of the Director of the OMB. The meeting concerned the adjudication of a transportation matter between the Department of Commerce (DOC) and the Maritime Administration (then an independent agency under the DOC). As recalled by key informants, the FEMA thinking was that FEMA could adjudicate the disagreement and that, if the parties were dissatisfied, they could appeal to the president. Several informants speculated that FEMA was not sufficiently prepared for a serious adjudication, that FEMA lacked the authority to adjudicate between a parent agency and one of its units,

that the agenda was poor, and that the implementation was poorly thought through. There also was a sense that OMB had a hostile reaction to a strong managerial role for FEMA. The EMC was said to have dissolved on the spot.

It was clear to some key informants that the death of the EMC was inevitable because of a lack of OMB support. Others suggested that had the EMC meeting been successful, it would have led to credibility for itself and FEMA.

Consistent White House support is critical for any organization without a clear legislative mandate. Thus, the theme of an interagency structure linked in some way to the Executive Office did not end with the EMC. The need remained and the search for White House NSEP support continued. It manifested itself repeatedly in other formal structures over the next decade. The formal vertical structures included the creation of the Emergency Mobilization Preparedness Board (EMPB), the proposed Emergency Management Authority, the Senior Interagency Group (SIG), the Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC), and even in the wording of Executive Order 12656. Two informants suggested that the EMC failure became a force for establishing the EMPB and for the abortive attempt to establish the Director of FEMA as the National Emergency

Authority, an office paralleling the Secretary of Defense as the National Command Authority.

The Emergency Mobilization Preparedness Board

Near the end of the Carter administration, an interagency Mobilization Planning Study (MPS) was commissioned by the president to identify the scenarios to be used for emergency planning and the emergency actions that should be considered for those scenarios.⁹ The study effort was endorsed by the National Security Advisor and led by the staff of the National Security Council (NSC).¹⁰ Key informants indicated that the MPS forged the FEMA-White House structural link and was a solid step toward establishing the credibility sought by FEMA in many areas.

The MPS was scuttled just as it was on the verge of setting up an interagency policy oversight organization composed of the Departments of Defense (DOD), State (DOS) and Treasury (TREAS), OMB, and FEMA, with the vice president of the United States as chair. The oversight organization was intended to meet twice per year and was budgeted for \$5 million per year. However, the new Reagan administration

⁹The study group was the result of an action generated and supported by the Federal Preparedness Agency (FPA), a FEMA NSEP predecessor agency.

¹⁰Non-attribution interviews.

decided that it would not be pursued. Thus, the MPS died a quiet death. According to a key informant, while the subject area of the MPS appeared to be a subject area for FEMA, it was "known" in the emergency planning community that FEMA "could not be heir " to the MPS. The unacceptability of FEMA presumably was a carryover from the misfortune of the EMC and the ongoing protocol problem of the status of FEMA Director *vis à vis* the other political appointees with whom he was to deal.¹¹

Kupka *et al* maintain that it was apparent that on its own FEMA was not a capable apparatus for generating a national focus on and solution to the most critical mobilization coordination issues.¹² According to these authors, FEMA was viewed by other departments and agencies as simply another layer of the bureaucracy attempting to infringe on their areas of jurisdiction. It was obvious to department and agency officials that FEMA needed White House leadership and visibility. The vehicle for that visibility and involvement was the Emergency Mobilization Preparedness

¹¹ Although an Executive Level II, the Director of FEMA (as of October 1990) was Number 28(u) in the President's protocol list, that is, after 27 higher level categories, he is 21st (i.e., "u" in category 28). The Director of OMB is Number 9(a).

¹² Stephen G. Kupka, William J. Lambert and Timothy F. McConnell, "Status of Mobilization Planning in the U.S." (Research Report, National Defense University, 1984), p. 19.

Board (EMPB). Kupka et al, drawing on post-World War II analyses, propose that the need for a presidential super-agency to coordinate the tough mobilization coordination issues sprang from the World War I and World War II experiences. In those cases only the president and/or the explicitly designated and vertically connected agency had authority sufficient to sort the conflicting claims and coordinate the activities of the many war agencies and federal departments and agencies.

Several key informants cited the creation of the EMPB, the re-born vertical link with the White House, as a critical event. It was seen as the vehicle for White House NSEP policy guidance. In the eyes of some of the key informants, the EMPB with its senior NSC leadership was the replacement to both the EMC and the MPS.¹³ It represented an arrangement with which the community could live. Some traced the EMPB to the MPS; others indicated that Director Giuffrida was adamant that the EMPB was his own idea.¹⁴

The story of the EMPB can be traced to a dispute between the Department of Defense (Under Secretary of

¹³ One key informant recalled drafting the proposal to shift the MPS action to the EMPB.

¹⁴While the creation of the EMPB was often cited as a critical event, National Security Decision Directive 47, the document formally establishing it, was not cited.

Defense for Policy Fred C. Ikle) and FEMA (Director Louis O. Giuffrida). Both agreed that emergency management had degenerated and that the 1978 reorganization had not worked in demonstrating the importance of emergency management to the national security. The time was ripe for a policy-level device for emergency management coordination. Such a device would symbolize the Reagan administration's commitment to developing a credible and effective capability to harness the mobilization potential of the nation. The structural concept was not easily agreed upon. The DOD suggested a Senior Interagency Group (SIG) with DOD as chair. FEMA wanted a SIG with FEMA as chair. The two officials' vehement disagreement culminated in FEMA's Director going to Counsellor to the President Meese and requesting support. It was said that the compromise was a Meese design to protect FEMA and to bring a semblance of White House authority to emergency management. Both the FEMA Director and Meese believed that if DoD chaired the group, FEMA would have been only a minor player or no player at all.¹⁵

On May 26, 1981, a joint memorandum recommending the new structure, "Interdepartmental Structure for Mobilization Planning", was transmitted from Frank C. Carlucci, Deputy Secretary of Defense and Louis O. Giuffrida, Director of

¹⁵Non-attribution sources.

FEMA, to the Honorable Edwin Meese III, Counsellor to the President. In their joint memorandum, drafted according to the Meese design, Carlucci and Giuffrida suggested that the structure could have been designated either as a mobilization preparedness executive board, or a mobilization SIG, similar to other bodies under the Reagan NSC structure. As directed, they recommended the format of an executive board functioning as an instrument of the NSC. The chair would be the National Security Advisor. Their purpose was to gain and sustain senior level participation throughout the federal government. The negotiated recommendation elevated the level of the interagency group, encompassed the same departments and agencies, and avoided the DOD/FEMA competition. The proposal was processed through the bureaucracy. Then, soon after it was briefed to President Reagan by Director Giuffrida, it was approved by the full cabinet and the president.¹⁶

The EMPB was chartered to develop a "credible and effective capability to harness the mobilization potential of America in support of the armed forces, while meeting the needs of the national economy and other civil emergency preparedness requirements." Its responsibilities included formulating policy and planning guidance, coordinating

¹⁶Information provided by participant in the briefing.

planning, resolving issues, and monitoring progress. Any issues which could not be resolved by the EMPB were to be referred to the NSC for resolution and to the president for decision.

Several key informants indicated that, in the event of an emergency, the EMPB would have played a major role. These informants believed that the EMPB charter would have been revised to include responsibilities for the development of broad national policies and programs for the required national mobilization and for balancing conflicting requests for resources. For the highest priority policy issues occurring in an emergency, the EMPB might have provided a forum for the development of policy advice for the president (similar to the Office of War Mobilization and Reconversion during World War II). For lower level policy issues, it might have rendered decisions and resolved disputes as the agency for the president.¹⁷

¹⁷ In any event, FEMA was not the center of emergency management operations. See Carnes Lord 1988 book. The vice president chaired a Special Situation Group (SSG) for crisis management. A Crisis Pre-Planning Group was established under the chairmanship of the Deputy National Security Advisor to support the higher-level SSG. By the end of 1983, a Crisis Management Center in the Old Executive Office Building became operational. Patterson's 1988 Ring of Power suggests that the White House is pushed to centralize crisis management for several reasons: (1) most crises are unique and cannot be handled by departments; (2) potential for catastrophe from lower-level actions is great; (3) the knowledge that the president bears ultimate responsibility for the outcome; (4) threatened violence is massive; (5) the

In the view of several key informants the EMPB was to be a forum for developing policy for all emergency activities. These informants were very clear about the need to view the EMPB as an independent organization, that it not be seen as a tool of FEMA. FEMA's role was to help coordinate that forum. FEMA was not even to be seen as leading or influencing the EMPB. However, key informants indicated that while the EMPB was not *de jure* part of FEMA, in reality, it clearly seemed a part.

The executive secretariat provided by FEMA supported the chair of the EMPB and coordinated the activities of the twelve working groups.¹⁸ The leadership of the twelve working groups was split among the department and agency members of the EMPB; departments and agencies provided support staff for their respective working groups. The twelve areas and their chairing agencies were as follows:

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 1. Economic Stabilization and Public Finance | TREAS |
| 2. Military Mobilization | DOD |
| 3. Emergency Communication | DOD and DOC |
| 4. Law Enforcement and Public Safety | Department of Justice (DOJ) |

situation is bizarre; (6) there is national media attention with political fallout; and (7) the armed forces could be involved.

¹⁸A 13th working group on barter was added.

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| 5. Food-Agriculture | Department of Agriculture (USDA) |
| 6. Industrial Mobilization | DOC |
| 7. Human Resources | Department of Labor (DOL) |
| 8. Social Services | Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) |
| 9. Health | DHHS |
| 10. Government Operations | FEMA |
| 11. Civil Defense | FEMA |
| 12. Earthquakes | FEMA |

Under the chairmanship of the National Security Advisor, the EMPB had the potential for being the long-sought White House vertical connection for FEMA. The EMPB, especially the EMPB executive secretariat, was put into motion immediately to put together a national policy statement which was issued by the president as National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) 47 on July 22, 1982. This policy statement was developed in just six months and three EMPB meetings--a relatively speedy action in peacetime emergency planning.

NSDD 47 was well-received at FEMA, and getting a White House endorsed statement was perceived as beneficial to FEMA's interests. No key informants identified specific

detractors of the policy statement. However, several key informants indicated that the other departments and agencies did not share FEMA's enthusiasm for the importance of the NSDD. The EMPB proceeded to create a Plan of Action to improve national readiness. The plan had sixty-eight implementation measures and over three hundred milestones.¹⁹ Twenty-three departments and agencies participated in the EMPB under the NSC.²⁰

Setting up the EMPB formalized the Reagan administration's commitment to developing a credible and effective capability to harness the mobilization potential of the nation. During hearings for the 1984 budget on March 15, 1983, Director Giuffrida testified that the EMPB was working well and that he had designated his executive deputy to be its executive secretary.²¹

¹⁹The now unclassified Plan of Action was rarely mentioned in the interviews. There was only one review of it. That review was to the effect that it was improperly excoriated. The key informant stated that its intent, design, and content were good.

²⁰The Departments of Treasury and Commerce were recalcitrant, but after an intervention by National Security Advisor McFarlane they cooperated at least temporarily.

²¹ U.S. Congress, House, Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, Department of Housing and Urban Development -- Independent Agencies Appropriations for 1984. 98th Cong., 1st sess., 1983, p. 47.

Over the course of its four and one-half years, the EMPB met thirteen times, under the chairmanship of a series of National Security Advisors. It was formed under Richard Allen, and it was chaired by his successors William Clark and Robert McFarlane. The meetings were regular, but its agenda was criticized by key informants as not including the serious policy issues of the early 1980's.

On March 20, 1985, in a memorandum to McFarlane, Giuffrida stated that he would disestablish the secretariat, although he would continue to support limited operations through the use of regular FEMA staff. On September 16, 1985, National Security Decision Directive 188, "Government Coordination for National Security Emergency Preparedness," was published. It provided for the replacement of the EMPB and the placement of policy determination squarely with the NSC.

Seventeen of the key informants stated that the creation and/or termination of the EMPB were critical events for FEMA. The creation held great hope that national security emergency management might become part of the national agenda; the passing revisited the frustrating organizational and coordination experiences of the previous decades. One period of great optimism was just prior to its decommissioning when there were hopes that the Director of

FEMA would rise to the position of vice chair. This did not occur.

While some would say that the EMPB was decommissioned because its job was done, there was consensus that this was not the case. According to key informants, the EMPB structure may have been eliminated for any of the following reasons, alone or in combination. Its problems arose from many quarters, including implementation and political pathologies. A summary of the major problems perceived by the key informants follows:

1. While the EMPB was a good idea, its lack of effective implementation caused it to fail. As it became a paper process and too complex a bureaucracy, FEMA became an errand-runner. In the eyes of some, the sizable secretariat had taken on an identity of its own, supplanting the committee structure. Despite the secretariat's size, or perhaps because of it, it fell short in integrating the work of the whole.²

2. The EMPB was seen by some as a non-essential organization because it did not handle any "hot" issues. In general, it avoided hostilities but, in doing so, also avoided the very serious issues of national mobilization.

²The suggestion for limited secretariat support was mentioned in the staffing arrangement for the earlier EMC. There might be a "right number" but none was suggested.

3. Another view was that the EMPB never got past dealing with itself. It never looked at the federal/state/local integration, which in the view of some is the heart of emergency management.

4. The EMPB became a "debating society--nothing productive ever happened." The process tried to include everybody and as a consequence became too diffuse. Some key informants commented that "consensus just doesn't work" and that sometimes you just have to "do it."

5. Cabinet members did not accept that there was a credible transfer of authority from the president to the EMPB and did not want to submit to the dictates of the EMPB. Complicating this basic legitimating problem was overall interagency dissent and irritation with FEMA that led to a perceived alienation of the departments and agencies.

6. The EMPB, as did FEMA, represented preparation for events that, even if of consequence, had low probability. Daily program responsibilities overrode emergency preparedness responsibilities in the departments and agencies.

7. After the first "nicks in the armor," the departments and agencies started trying to neutralize the EMPB and FEMA even more. Some suggested that the EMPB and FEMA were the recipients of "bad shots" (that is, unfair

criticism) and that they did not have the White House institutional support to prevail.

8. FEMA lost the key executive who "pushed the program--who actually cared."

9. When FEMA lost prestige and credibility in the wake of the personal difficulties of Director Giuffrida and interagency tensions, the EMPB suffered.

10. The EMPB was lost in the transition between the Reagan administrations. The national security build-up had lost some of its thrust and importance. There was waning activity in the EMPB.

11. Robert McFarlane, the National Security Advisor and EMPB leader, was not a "believer." A key informant noted that McFarlane's view was that the EMPB meetings had turned into briefings and were not worth the time of senior executives.

12. The mission was to achieve parity with the Soviet Union and to be prepared to respond to the range of resource emergencies. Yet the EMPB found a shortfall in mobilization preparedness that OMB wouldn't or couldn't fund. Since the response would cost money, both OMB and the departments and agencies had no interest in cooperating on meaningful improvements in emergency readiness. The

expectations of mobilization capability proponents was grander than the "billfold" would support.

There were still other contributing reasons cited for the passing of the EMPB. They included reasons that one might commonly find in the literature of orthodox administrative theory or of the *realpolitik*. However, several key informants revealed that the most significant reason was one with *realpolitik* overtones. It was the 1985 meeting set up by Director Giuffrida to debate economic controls.²³ The combination of the hostile debate, the large audience, and being put in the position of having to decide on the matter "infuriated" McFarlane, prompting him to have staff come up with an idea of "what to do about FEMA." According to key informants, the ideas discussed in the Executive Office (both in the NSC and in OMB) included: eliminating FEMA and firing Director Giuffrida, passing the functions to DOD, and leaving FEMA as it was but removing the policy function to the NSC.²⁴ There were no further meetings of the EMPB.

Could the EMPB structure have been saved? Some said "yes." Some said it was the "right model" (i.e., FEMA in

²³This was not a preferred policy by the Republican administration of Ronald Reagan.

²⁴Ultimately, the third was chosen.

support of the NSC program). Had the National Security Advisor been interested in it and used his influence to generate the interest of others, it might have survived, and even thrived. As it was, he had no time for it. There were talented, dedicated members of the EMPB but there also was a suggestion that what was needed would never be realized because it was too hard to do.

One key informant had a markedly negative perspective, distinct from the comments of almost all of the others. He felt strongly that the EMPB was a "cop-out," that FEMA was happy to let it drift, and that the failure of the EMPB can be traced to a lack of leadership at FEMA. His model for what would have saved the EMPB was one of strong FEMA leadership and FEMA "analytic horsepower" that would have developed and marketed national policies.

With the decommissioning of the EMPB structure, the White House withdrew support for FEMA as an independent agency performing the NSEP functions described in the Carter reorganization. Some key informants construed the action as relieving FEMA's misery and as placing policy determination in its proper White House location. The decommissioning was what the National Security Advisor wanted and it did describe better what had come to be the actual situation and power relationships.

Proposed Emergency Management Authority

At about the same time that the EMPB's fortunes were beginning to falter, the Director of FEMA began updating the concept for coordinating the federal response to national security emergencies. Thirteen key informants identified the interagency reaction to the draft proposal as a critical FEMA event that was contemporaneous with the EMPB operation. It was one of several "FEMA in charge" events of 1983 and 1984, but it is the only one that was mentioned frequently by key informants. Though ultimately negated, it is relevant to this dissertation because of its strong overtones of a formal vertical White House relationship for FEMA.

The Government Operations Working Group of the EMPB endorsed the concept of updating all federal emergency guidance through Federal Preparedness Circulars and focused on the need for a review of the federal government emergency response structure. The review was completed during fiscal year 1983, and the working group agreed that recommendations on a new or revised organizational structure should be developed. It was generally agreed that this new or revised emergency structure should be an extension of normal

operations.²⁵

Over the years, numerous multi-agency emergency organizations had been established. It was thought that the existence of all these boards, councils, and groups caused confusion and lacked clearly defined and widely understood functions, responsibilities, and composition. This made questionable their timely and efficient operation in an emergency; they lacked a triggering mechanism to become operational; and they did not have a support element to make them effective if they were operational. Additionally, presidential interest and support was not institutionalized.

Director Giuffrida proposed to remedy the design flaws of earlier response organizations and to fulfill the FEMA charter in Executive Order 12148 by creating an emergency coordination structure. Armed with general agreement from the Government Operations Working Group of the EMPB for him to draft the document, he began his work.²⁶ The draft structure devised was similar to the old wartime agencies in the envisioned closeness of the "emergency czar" and the president, an idea reminiscent of the "assistant

²⁵ According to the Associate Director for National Preparedness (Memorandum dated Jan 11, 1984 addressed to the Director of FEMA, subject of Interagency Mobilization Management Structure Proposal).

²⁶The effort was part of the EMPB Plan of Action.

president" phenomenon of WWII. It was characterized by: (1) an Emergency Management Authority (EMA) to function at the presidential level in a manner similar to the National Command Authority; (2) an emergency management committee chaired by the Director of FEMA and composed of the heads or deputies of selected departments and agencies to facilitate peacetime planning and decide major issues in emergencies; and (3) an interagency emergency coordinating group chaired by a senior FEMA official and composed of the emergency coordinators from the departments and agencies to serve both in peacetime and in emergencies.

On January 31, 1984, Director Giuffrida circulated the draft Federal Preparedness Circular entitled, "Organization and Procedures for Federal Interagency Emergency Management." The draft was not well-received. It laid claim to more territory than FEMA could defend. However, the major problem identified by the key informants was the self-nomination of Director Giuffrida as the Emergency Management Authority.

Several key informants stood by the rationale for the emergency structure saying it made sense; that is, someone will have to be "in charge" in an emergency. The essence of the comments of many key informants was that a

committee response won't work in an emergency when speed and decisiveness are critical.

The May 11, 1984 analysis of the comments showed that the draft was sent to forty-three departments and agencies for comment. A total of thirty departments and agencies submitted comments. Of these, twenty concurred with the draft FPC. However, several of the remaining organizations expressed serious reservations and those organizations included the more prominent players in NSEP, for example, OMB, DOJ, DOC, DHHS, USDA, DOT, NSC, NCS, DOD and GSA.²⁷ The most serious concerns were that: (1) the FPC to be signed by the Director of FEMA was not an appropriate vehicle for such far-reaching, government-wide changes in organizational structure; (2) termination of the EMPB was not consistent with current presidential directives and would signal a reduced commitment to mobilization activity; (3) the membership and functions of the emergency management committee and its relationship to other organizational entities was not sufficiently defined; and, (4) the FPC described a role for FEMA that exceeded FEMA's authorities and would abrogate the statutory responsibilities of the

²⁷NCS stands for the National Communications System, a group of Federal departments and agencies with telecommunications responsibilities. GSA stands for the General Services Administration. The other organizations have been mentioned previously.

heads of federal departments and agencies and their direct lines of authority to the president.

Recollections on the sequence of events vary. In general, though, it was recalled that Director Giuffrida signed a copy of the draft FPC before it was concurred upon by the key departments on the Government Operations Working Group of the EMPB.²⁸ Then, June 22, 1984, Director Giuffrida decided to defer publication.²⁹ He stated that a new draft would be issued for comment by the end of the year. He went on to state that "as this proceeds, I will continue to consult with concerned federal departments and agencies to solicit recommendations on the most appropriate government-wide structure for management of emergencies." He also would "address the feasibility of incorporating emergency planning needs through other channels." Yet, no new draft statement was issued. FEMA's activities in this area of planning became low profile.

Then, in a letter dated August 2, 1984, the Attorney General proposed a "re-evaluation of the Administration's

²⁸Several key informants recalled seeing the signed FPC 6. However, instructions to all parties after the Working Group meeting were to destroy all copies. Only unsigned copies were found in examining the records.

²⁹Letter dated June 22, 1984 from Louis O. Giuffrida to David A. Stockman with copies to forty-two heads of Federal departments and agencies.

desired approach to emergency preparedness and continuity of government programs" and an executive branch policy which:

clarifies the emergency preparedness responsibility of each federal department and agency and articulates the desirable limitations upon the operational and oversight roles of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.³⁰

This letter clearly challenged the concept of an "emergency czar" role for FEMA. The Attorney General stated that FEMA had no authority beyond coordination and included a statement to the effect that FEMA coordination did not include FEMA tasking of the federal departments and agencies. The Attorney General saw the FEMA authority issue as a Constitutional problem, a most serious dilemma for a new agency trying to implement its understanding of the authorities in its chartering Executive Order 12148.

In an attempt to identify its boundaries through exploratory actions, FEMA had run squarely into what was framed as a Constitutional argument from the DOJ.³¹ FEMA was

³⁰ Memorandum dated August 2, 1984 from William French Smith, Attorney General, to Robert C. McFarlane, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs; this was in response to a request for a form and legality review of a draft executive order (EO) revising EO 11490, which dealt with the assignment of emergency preparedness functions to federal departments and agencies.

³¹DOJ challenged the very basis of the policy that underlaid FEMA's national security programs and which was set out in its basic charters (EO 12148 and the Reorganization Act No. 3 of 1978). The problem was serious because the FEMA authorities, in the main, were not specific statutory authorities. Instead, they were derived from

cast in the role of an agency whose charge was to coordinate, consult, and advise.³² No definition of coordination was provided but, according to several key informants, it was presumed by departments and agencies and most FEMA officials to be with minimal power. Key informants saw this as a clear sign of the lack of White House support for the FEMA vision of 1978. FEMA halted NSEP policy development activities relating to FEMA authority.³³

According to key informants, FEMA backed off in the face of the letter from the Attorney General. According to key informants, FEMA staff saw it as a "no-win" situation. At the time, FEMA chose not to spend the capital to gain White House intercession, even if it could be obtained. Other events converging at the time included FEMA's plans for rapid expansion in time of emergency, FEMA's collection

inherent presidential authority and executive orders.

³²Letter from Julius W. Becton, Director of FEMA, to Edwin Meese III, Attorney General, dated January 15, 1986. "We welcome the initiatives of the Senior Interagency Group on National Security Emergency Preparedness I firmly agree with your view that FEMA's role should be to perform NSEP functions not assigned to other Federal agencies and to support those other agencies in implementing policies established via existing executive branch mechanisms."

³³Memorandum from George Jett, FEMA General Counsel, to Bernard A. Maguire, FEMA Associate Director of National Preparedness Programs. Subject: Legal Clearance of FEMA Executive Orders and Federal Agency Guidance (including Federal Preparedness Circulars), dated August 27, 1984.

of intelligence reports and planning for terrorists incidents (to the displeasure of the Federal Bureau of Investigation), FEMA's simulating emergency action responses for the departments in war game exercises, unfavorable articles in the press,³⁴ caustic criticism of some FEMA proposals for civil defense, further FEMA forays in to the area of authorities,³⁵ and the congressional hearings on FEMA

³⁴The prominence of this "sleaze factor" just before the November 1984 elections was especially damaging.

³⁵Letter from Edwin Meese III, Attorney General, to James C. Miller III, Director of the OMB, dated December 13, 1985, citing the August 2, 1984 letter of his predecessor to Robert C. McFarlane, National Security Advisor, on the fundamental issue of whether alternative executive branch management structures and resources should be established for emergency preparedness planning and operations. It suggested that extant policy-making bodies such as the Domestic Policy Council and the National Security Council were well equipped to handle emergency planning and operations utilizing the "organizations, resources, systems, missions, and authorities of the 'several' federal agencies."

leadership and alleged abuses of power.³⁶ All in all, in the words of one key informant, "the game was over in terms of the vision of 1978."

As of 1990, several key informants noted that the draft FPC event in 1984 was something from which FEMA still had not recovered. It damaged relationships with other departments and agencies, leading to department and agency rebellion. Two key informants stated clearly that FEMA was no longer seen as an agency of consequence. By the summer of 1985, FEMA's reputation was at an all-time low.

Senior Interagency Group

As noted in the earlier discussion of the EMPB (above) and as repeatedly noted by the key informants as a critical event in the evolution of FEMA, the EMPB was replaced by an organization structure described in National

³⁶For example, U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Government Operations, Federal Emergency Management Agency's Contracting Abuse, Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Government Operations. 99th Cong., 1st sess., March 27, 28, 29, 1985; U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Science and Technology, Oversight: Federal Emergency Management Agency, Hearings and Meetings of the Subcommittee on Investigations and Oversight of the Committee on Science and Technology. 98th Cong., 2d sess., August 1; October 4, 5, 9, 24; December 12, 1984; and U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Science and Technology, Oversight: Federal Emergency Management Agency, Hearing of the Subcommittee on Investigations and Oversight of the Committee on Science and Technology, 99th Cong., 1st sess., March 4, 1985.

Security Decision Directive (NSDD) 188, "Government Coordination for National Security Emergency Preparedness." However, long before NSDD 188 was NSDD 2, dated January 12, 1982. NSDD 2 established the senior interagency structure.³⁷ It created three functionally oriented Senior Interagency Groups (SIGs)--one on foreign policy, one on defense policy, and one on intelligence policy. Subsequent directives and memoranda established an estimated twenty-two additional SIGs and fifty-five interagency groups (IGS) including some groups chaired by the National Security Advisor or members of the NSC staff. IGS, in turn, typically established working groups and task forces to assist in their work.

According to the key informants, NSDD 188 was developed to stipulate an NSC oversight role of FEMA's NSEP activities, to redefine the FEMA mission as a non-policy mission, to terminate the EMPB, and to fit NSEP policy development into the NSC policy development process. It was the result of the evaluation by the White House of three NSEP program alternatives (eliminate FEMA; transfer functions to DOD; or, the chosen alternative, allow FEMA to live but remove NSEP policy responsibilities). The stipulation of the NSC oversight role answered the National

³⁷Recall the earlier dispute between FEMA and DOD, at the creation of the EMPB, over whether the structure should have been a SIG chaired by either FEMA or DOD.

Security Advisor's desire to dispose of an activist FEMA. While it was seen by some key informants as the ultimate chastisement for FEMA, it was seen by others as a fine strategic move to allow FEMA a role in the NSC process and to give FEMA White House sponsorship.³⁸ In this later view, FEMA could serve as the "right hand of the NSC."

The document stated that it is the policy of the United States to have sufficient capabilities at all levels of government to respond to a spectrum of NSEP contingencies, from major natural calamities to hostile attacks on the nation. This national policy included an emergency mobilization preparedness program which was to provide an effective capability to meet defense and essential civilian needs during those emergencies. NSDD 188 went on to describe the policy-making process.

Certain principles were to guide national security emergency policy-making:

1. The NSC was to be the principal forum for consideration of NSEP policy
2. The National Security Advisor, in consultation with regular members of the NSC was responsible for

³⁸One key informant indicated that, while FEMA was eventually "written into" the NSDD, FEMA was not even mentioned in the first draft of NSDD 188. Not only was FEMA not party to the early drafting, it was privy only to a much later draft at the last stages prior to publication.

developing, coordinating, and ensuring implementation of NSEP policy approved by the president; FEMA was to assist in the implementation of this policy through a coordinating role with the other federal departments and agencies

3. The SIG was to be chaired by the National Security Advisor; member agencies were DOD, TREAS, DOJ and OMB

4. The SIG and subordinate working groups (as necessary) were to replace the EMPB

5. FEMA was to be a support agency for NSEP planning, facilitating coordination between the federal government, and state and local governments

6. FEMA was to report to the SIG/IG structure on federal department and agency implementation of NSEP policy

7. Among other duties, the SIG was to establish policy objectives, develop policy options, make recommendations, maintain a National Plan of NSEP initiatives, and oversee the implementation of the goals and principles set forth in NSDD 47

8. While telecommunications is an essential part of emergency management, a decision was made not to incorporate telecommunications into the SIG process and structure; telecommunications was clearly removed from the purview of the NSEP policy program where NSDD 188 cited an earlier

Executive Order 12472, "Assignment of National Security and Emergency Preparedness Telecommunications Functions" and NSDD 97, "National Security Telecommunications Functions" as basis for handling telecommunications through another mechanism

Interagency groups (IGs) were to be established by the National Security Advisor to assist the SIG. A director of NSEP programs was to be appointed from the NSC staff. That person, with FEMA support, would determine meeting schedules, develop option papers, and refer NSEP policy issues with major domestic policy implications to the executive secretary of the Domestic Policy Council.

The implementation of NSDD 188 was charged to a policy-level steering group, chaired by the NSC staff and composed of representatives from the DOD, DOJ, OMB and NSC. That group was to review and recommend approval of rewritten executive orders pertaining to FEMA responsibilities, any needed legislation, and prior NSDDs that had been superseded or that required revision. It was this group which oversaw the revision to Executive Order 11490, re-published as Executive Order 12656 on November 18, 1989.³⁹ IGs

³⁹EO 12656 replaced EO 11490, thus institutionalizing the revised notion of NSEP policy development presented in NSD 188. EO 12656 (November 18, 1989) was published in the Federal Register on November 23, 1988.

established under the NSDD 188 scheme included: Civil Defense, National Mobilization, and Energy Vulnerability. The National Mobilization IG had members drawn from at least thirteen departments and agencies. It was served by a FEMA secretariat and by a steering group chaired by the NSC, with members drawn from DOD, DOJ, TREAS, and OMB. Its subgroups were Resources Preparedness, Economics, and Organizational Implementation.

The SIG/IG arrangement continued through to the end of the Reagan administration. It generated one Executive order and a few memoranda but did not rise to the expectations of those who expected to see strong vertical support by the White House or interest in NSEP.

During the SIG/IG period (1985-1989), FEMA issued no substantive FPCs. FEMA promoted its NSEP initiatives through the SIG/IG mechanism.⁴⁰ Key informants noted no critical events during this period that demonstrated clear White House support for FEMA. In fact, despite the arrival

⁴⁰ During this period, the national security counterpart to the National System for Emergency Coordination for domestic disasters was established by memorandum from National Security Advisor Colin Powell. It decentralized emergency management response to the departments and agencies and defined emergencies by type rather than by a responsible department or agency. This matrix type of organization was deficient. Power and resources were associated only with formal organizations and there were no resources or rewards associated with a matrix emergency preparedness and response structure.

of the Bush administration in January of 1989 and the departure of Director Becton in June of 1989, no new FEMA director was confirmed until August of 1990.

Policy Coordinating Committee

On entering office in January of 1989, the Bush administration concluded that it needed a new organizational structure for the operational aspects of the NSC. Accordingly, within days of assuming office, President Bush issued National Security Directive 1 (NSD 1) to establish the operational structure and process.

In the document, the president stated that the NSC would be the principal forum for consideration of national security policy issues requiring presidential determination. It would be the principal means for coordinating executive branch departments and agencies in the development and implementation of national security policy. The NSC also would advise and assist the president in integrating all aspects of national security policy affecting the United States--domestic, foreign, military, intelligence, and economic. NSEP was not specified in NSD 1, but by later decision was included as an area. This was the last critical event cited by key informants as a structurally important symbol of White House support.

Three NSC sub-groups were established: the NSC Principals Committee (the senior interagency forum for considering policy issues affecting national security), the NSC Deputies Committee (the senior sub-cabinet interagency forum for considering policy issues affecting national security), and the NSC Policy Coordinating Committees (PCC's). PCC's were established to support the senior groups in specific national security subject areas. They were assigned responsibility for identifying and developing policy issues for consideration by the NSC, including preparation of the necessary papers for NSC consideration.

The PCC on Emergency Preparedness and Mobilization Planning (PCC-EP/MP) was added in the fall of 1989 at the behest of FEMA, DOD, DOE, and DOC. Several key informants cited this new attempt for a FEMA-White House relationship as a critical event in FEMA's development.

The PCC-EP/MP was to identify and develop NSEP policy issues and, as derived from NSD 1, to coordinate crisis management activities. The PCC-EP/MP was to be chaired by the director of the FEMA. Its membership was to consist of senior policy officials at the assistant secretary level or equivalent from the following federal departments and agencies: DOS, TREAS, DOD, DOC, DOJ, DHHS,

DOE, DOT, OMB, NSC, and FEMA. In general, designees were from the "administration and management" areas.

Representatives of other departments and agencies with lead responsibilities cited in Executive Order 12656 were to be invited to participate as needed and were to be provided with PCC-EP/MP reports. The PCC was authorized to establish standing and *ad hoc* working groups to address particular areas within the cognizance of the PCC. Working groups were to develop analyses, options, and recommendations for PCC consideration and forwarding, as needed, to the NSC Deputies Committee, thence to the Principals Committee, and finally to the president. The PCC-EP/MP was to meet as required to set priorities, review progress on priority actions, and resolve policy issues, in addition to its planned quarterly informational meetings.⁴¹

Ten key informants who were familiar with the PCC-EP/MP saw its establishment as a critical event. In the

⁴¹However, between its establishment in the fall of 1988 and the spring of 1991, it met only four times. The lack of a Bush administration FEMA Director for the agency was one cause for the absence of activity. Some lower level activity by subgroups and staff was conducted during the period. A major event for the PCC-EP/MP was the signing of Executive Order 12742. This order, spurred by the military conflict Desert Shield/Storm, was to facilitate mobilization, the placing of orders for products and materials related to national security, and priority performance on those orders. The executive order was signed after the research period of this dissertation.

eyes of some it was a positive event; in the eyes of others it was a repetition of a failed organizational design.

Several key informants stated that the PCC offered an opportunity for FEMA to lead the interagency community in NSEP policy development. In their view FEMA's designation as chair of the PCC was a "mild affirmation of the vision" of 1978. It gave FEMA "another chance." It was seen as providing an opportunity for FEMA to meet in a structured way with high level officials to develop policy and to assure vertical support by the White House. It offered the potential for rebirth in the area of NSEP policy--an area of few real advances since the 1960's.

Several also viewed the PCC as the new and sole mechanism for FEMA to use to promote NSEP initiatives. Their perspective was that Executive Order 12148, though still "on the books," could no longer be seen as providing authority for FEMA to approach the White House on policy matters.⁴²

On the negative side, the PCC structure was seen as "not much better than the SIG and IGs." The problem of

⁴²No official record of this interpretation was located. However, there was an implicit intention in NSDD 188 to review and potentially rewrite Executive Order 12148. Executive Order 12148 was, as another senior official stated/key informant states, "still on the books" and a valid authority.

integrating "twenty-six-plus" agencies remains, as does the costly problem of developing a national integrated capability to respond to the full spectrum of national security emergencies.⁴³ Another senior key informant stated that "SIGs and IGs don't work. There is no interest at the NSC." It appeared to some that FEMA is "dropping the ball" again and that the PCC, in order to work, needs "infrastructure, study funds, facilities, staff, hardware, and lawyers." In their view, FEMA had not dedicated assets at a meaningful level. There was a view that the White House Chief of Staff is needed to fill the void in political leadership in NSEP. It also was noted that without membership from the *program* policy level at the departments and agencies, the structure was destined to be weak. One view was that OMB again was giving the guidance based only by cost and that "FEMA is doing only routine things." FEMA was portrayed by these informants as a "coat-holder." This minimalist FEMA NSEP role, however, was entirely consistent with the redefined and intended role described in NSDD 188 in 1985.

⁴³Reference to the twenty-six organizations that are specifically named as having NSEP responsibilities in EO 12656.

Summary of Effects of Vertical Organization Design

The 1978 visions for FEMA to be integrally involved in NSEP policy development did not come into being. The organization structures described in this chapter were designed to assure a close formal link with the White House. This linkage did not occur. And in the course of the decade, the vision of 1978 was redefined. The reasons were many. They included legal restraints, unclear responsibilities, territorial conflicts, and the tendency to maintain the *status quo*. The authority and political importance of the organization structures like the EMC, EMPB, SIG, and PCC were never clearly established by the White House. Nor were the authority and importance accepted by the community of federal departments and agencies. The daily business of the federal government in domestic and foreign programs eclipsed the NSEP program. By the fall of 1990, formal White House support for NSEP as a program of national importance was minimal. The vertical program design issue takes on additional importance when coupled with the strained horizontal relationships of department and agency coordination, described below.

Interagency Coordination Role: Fantasy or Fact

The Concept

A major responsibility assigned to FEMA was the coordination of other departments' and agencies' emergency management programs. As mentioned in earlier chapters of this dissertation, this included preparedness for, mitigation of, response to, and long-term recovery from the effects of natural, accidental, and wartime civil emergencies. This coordination of decentralized functions was a role never well understood, either in the literature or in the American history of emergency management. The key informants interviewed in the process of this research used the term "coordination" differently. Since the coordination responsibility figures prominently in the critical events identified for FEMA, it is important to understand the various perspectives on coordination.

One finds that the orthodox administrative theory and the *realpolitik* have not provided a theoretical or practical map sufficient to assure a common understanding of this basic concept of coordination, a concept critical to the operation of the organization. The lack of consensus on the coordination role is related to the lack of consensus on the word itself. "Probably no word in our administrative terminology . . . raises more difficult problems of

definition."⁴⁴ Seidman and Gilmour elaborate on the concept, saying that the power to coordinate confers no additional legal authority. It merely provides a license to seek harmonious action by whatever means may be available under existing authorities. They note that executive orders often confer broad powers "to facilitate and coordinate" and direct that departments and agencies "coordinate." But without a community of interest and common goal the charge is doomed. If taken seriously, this "boiler-plate" wording derogates from department and agency prerogatives, and therein lies the problem.⁴⁵ Gulick speaks on coordination with an almost poetic battle-cry.

Coordination is the indispensable dynamic principle of effective action. Coordination is not achieved by accident, or by prayer, or by fright, though fear is a great help Coordination must be born in mutual trust and unity of purpose, nurtured in continuous unified planning, and matured in harmonized programming and well-organized routine administration.⁴⁶

The literature suggests that coordination, group effort, teams, task forces, commissions, boards and

⁴⁴Seidman and Gilmour, Politics, Position, and Power, p. 224.

⁴⁵Seidman and Gilmour, Politics, Position and Power, pp. 219-245.

⁴⁶Luther Gulick, Administrative Reflections From World War II (University, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1948), p. 81.

committees share common elements. Coordinating mechanisms can be useful for many reasons. Potentially, they can promote the following:

1. Information exchange
2. Improved morale through participation
3. Improved decision-making as a result of group dynamics
4. Control of personal authority
5. Collective judgments
6. The development of a shared understanding of shared purpose
7. Reconciliation of conflicting interests
8. Protection from passions, prejudices, idiosyncracies, and
9. Predictability of administrative action

Ultimately, coordination is related to, and possibly responsible for, stability and unity in organization; positive features, such as those above, are summoned when the vision of coordination is instituted as an administrative process

However, as early as 1945, Emmerich reminded the world that, while everybody wants coordination on paper,

nobody wants to be coordinated by someone else.⁴⁷ For this reason, he said there is a resistance in established agencies to the work and personnel of emergency coordination bodies. He suggested banning the word because, while he saw the principle of coordination as absolutely essential, the use of the word itself was its handicap.

The Definition

It is clear that the meaning associated with the word "coordination" takes on great importance. It is used either as Gulick used it, with considerable thought and feeling for the subtle nuances of relationships and employment of language, or it is used as a loose and inconsistent catch-all term that says little. Regrettably, it is often used without definition and, therefore, it can mean everything and nothing.

Standard dictionary definitions suggest that coordination means to bring into common action, or perhaps to harmonize in common action or effort. The word is from Latin terminology, meaning "to arrange in order." But the definition does not convey the *realpolitik* process of effecting coordination. Coordination may be effected by persuasion, admonishment, request, or effective direction.

⁴⁷Herbert Emmerich, "Some Notes on Wartime Federal Administration," Public Administration Review 5 (1945):59.

Whatever the motivation, coordination takes a meaning and effect that is anchored in shifting sands, sometimes with authority and sometimes without it. This phenomenon is of direct importance to this dissertation.

Orthodox Administrative Theory and Realpolitik

According to McCurdy, Luther Gulick--representing the best of orthodox administrative theory, and Chester Barnard--representing the best of behavioralist *realpolitik* thought, present at least two basic, yet unreconciled, understandings of coordination.⁴⁸ These two understandings also represent a basic divergence of thought on the function of a coordinating organization. Whether (1) one views the structural approach (with its logical requirements for organization, definition of roles, written rules and a system of authority) as the desired model;⁴⁹ or (2) one views

⁴⁸Howard E. McCurdy, "Coordination," Organization Theory and Management (New York: Marcel Dekker, Inc., 1983), pp. 112-113.

⁴⁹Coordination is prominent in classical organization theory as a *sine qua non* function of management. Dimock wrote that the manager's ability to coordinate is a principal test. He poetically added that the manager ". . . must be like the pianist whose skillful fingers move over the keyboard producing a harmonious combination of chords." (Marshall Dimock, The Executive in Action (New York: Harper & Bros., 1945), pp. 181-182). More contemporarily, Koontz et al wrote that coordination is the essence of management, thereby suggesting that authority is a concomitant of this coordination responsibility. The capacity to reconcile differences and to harmonize goals may demand more than persuasion. [Harold Koontz, Cyril

the *realpolitik* approach (with its voluntary cooperation, attributed authority, and dependence on the consent of those coordinated) as the desired model, what becomes apparent is that neither operates adequately alone. As noted by Schick, coordination is a variegated pursuit, proceeding through formal lines of authority as well as through informal modes of cooperation.⁵⁰ This is clearly demonstrated in the world of emergency management coordination, which has not succeeded with formal organization alone and has not found itself positioned with the prestige, urgent mission, or voluntary cooperation to bring about an effective institutionalized coordination system.

When the coordination agencies fail, analysts tend not to look deep enough for the organic disease. For example, conventional wisdom may fault and try to adjust the mechanism when the problem is related to the *realpolitik*. That is, the fundamental problem may be related to pre-existent conditions that preclude the success of any mechanism, an expectation that a body of peers will relinquish authority, or the designation of an official to

O'Donnell and Heinz Weihrich, Management, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1986), p. 38.]

⁵⁰Allen Schick, "The Coordination Option," Federal Reorganization (Chatham, New Jersey: Chatham House Publishers, 1981), pp. 85-113. (Hereafter cited as Schick, "Coordination.")

have coordinating authority over officials of greater status. To the extent that it results in mutual agreement or a decision on some policy, course of action, or inaction, it inevitably advances some interests at the expense of others. Therefore, representatives to the coordination process generally see their task as representing the interests of their parent organizations, rather than working toward the "common" goal. This bureaucratic reality is rarely acknowledged and in all likelihood is related to the frequent disappointment in coordinative processes. The concept of territorial independence and the system of status are of vital importance to government organizations, their leaders, and their program officials. Any challenge to that system is met with distrust and resistance.

Ways to Coordinate

There is no agreement of the one best method to coordinate interagency efforts. Existing doctrine and experience provide no clear theoretical or practical map but do suggest some organizational routes to coordination. Seidman and Gilmour propose that interagency coordination committees can work if missions are tailored to capabilities, the membership is kept small, procedures and staff are minimal, and the end product is advice to someone

who wants the advice and has the power to decide.⁵¹ These committees may operate by brokering among peers or by working as subordinate to a designated authority figure.

In the brokering among peers model, McReynolds cites just two ways for the president to obtain coordinated efforts.⁵² One would be with the help of a liaison officer with no power for making final decisions and no authority to manage a department or agency. The liaison officer's powers, if they could be called that, would come from the individual's skill in persuading representatives of other organizations to present their views for negotiation. If a settlement could not be negotiated, the liaison officer would gather and analyze information for the president's evaluation and decision. This procedure would not disturb the regular administrative channels. The FEMA experience followed this model except that it was clear to the key informants FEMA was not closely associated with the president and was unlikely to successfully take issues to the White House for resolution.

The second method for obtaining coordination, according to McReynolds, would be by delegating decision-

⁵¹Seidman and Gilmour, Politics, Position and Power, p. 235.

⁵²William H. McReynolds, "The Office of Emergency Management," Public Administration Review 1 (1941):131-137.

making authority from the president. The individual who was delegated the president's authority necessarily needed to act under the president's immediate supervision. In this model, the active operating work of the regular agencies would be transferred to an appropriate Executive Office officer; for a time, immediate responsibility for making decisions regarding a specific emergency function would be brought from the regular organization into the Executive Office. There it would be discharged by an appropriate officer reporting directly to the president. Responsibility for operations in accordance with the decisions would remain with the regular departments or agencies, thus safeguarding the integrity of the regular department or agency. FEMA was not positioned with the confidence and authority of the president to operate by this second model.

In either case, the management textbooks also caution of the design of coordination mechanisms. They advise:

1. not counting on coordinating mechanisms to perform work (since they generally are not able to produce worthwhile products);
2. using coordinating mechanisms sparingly and only when clearly indicated by necessity and by their functional purpose;

3. permitting a level of agreement short of unanimity (to prevent stymied action);
4. allowing members to operate only within their own individual areas of competence;
5. insisting that members possess requisite authority to commit their organizations;
6. insisting on definite agendas and concrete proposals; and
7. insisting that members need to approach the effort as independent intellects, be able to look at the issue as a whole, not regarding their membership as a means of protecting a narrow interest.

In short, coordination mechanisms must be focused, prepared, and capable for the assigned task. It has been suggested that coordination mechanisms rarely meet these criteria.

Weaknesses of Coordination as a Design Facet

Even following the best guidance that theory and practice can offer, coordinative mechanisms have identifiable weaknesses. Some of these weaknesses are so serious and fundamental that they suggest that the propriety of using a coordinating agency to accomplish a function important to the president and the federal government is dubious. As noted elsewhere in this dissertation, merely grouping related functions under a common organizational

umbrella is no guarantee that coherent policy will result.

There is a known reluctance of the members of coordination bodies to place their critical issues in interdepartmental forums. An organization with any other alternatives for dealing with adjudicating authority in a more direct way will opt for that alternative. In addition to being costly in time and money, coordinating bodies are subject to productivity-threatening tyranny by the minority. And there is an established problem with lack of committee ownership and accountability for decisions or actions. Undesirable compromise decisions at the least bold and imaginative level are frequently all that can be agreed upon.

Members also suffer from tendencies toward uniformity. They find that their coordination roles compete for time and attention with primary jobs; and they generally conclude that their ties are to parent agencies, not to the coordinating body.

Others have found that interagency coordinating bodies are criticized as ineffective because subordinate employees are assigned to attend, members champion the biases of their own agencies, some members have only peripheral interests to the committee and, before long,

members lose interest in the work.⁵³ Moreover, it is well-established that group dynamics and political and structural influences can adversely affect cooperative group effort.⁵⁴

In short, some of the weaknesses are potentially fundamental flaws. This constitutes an initial design problem for FEMA, an organization assigned coordination responsibilities from its beginning. As a suitable conclusion to this short section on weaknesses of coordination devices, it is useful to refer to an unflattering characterization of coordination devices offered by former Secretary of Defense Robert Lovett. Lovett offers that they:

are composed of rather lonely, melancholy men who have been assigned a responsibility but haven't the authority to make decisions at their levels, and so they tend to seek their own kind. They thereupon coagulate into a sort of glutinous mass, and suddenly come out as a committee.⁵⁵

⁵³Schick, "Coordination" and S. McKee Rosen, The Combined Boards of the Second World War (New York: Columbia University Press, 1951).

⁵⁴Irving L. Janis, Groupthink (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1982), pp. 7-13.

⁵⁵Seidman and Gilmour, Politics, Position and Power, p. 227.

Research Findings on NSEP-related Interagency Coordination

FEMA's Coordination Responsibilities. FEMA was charged with coordination. According to one informant that coordination assignment was a "cop-out" from the inability or unwillingness of the White House to describe relationships and authorities. "It was the 'best role' on which the PRP could get agreement." Coordination costs less in dollars than operational capability. It means as little or as much as the user of the term wants or the listener/reader wants to understand or accept. Ambiguity is a technique, similar to incrementalism, that permits activity and documentation which, if clearly stated in full, would be stymied by coalesced opposition.

A review of general comments by the key informants on the nature of coordination is worthwhile in providing a frame of reference for the later discussion of the five critical events associated with the coordination role. Eighteen key informants offered thoughts on the FEMA coordination role. Many of their observations reflect phenomena long established in the literature. It is reasonable to suspect that what the key informants reported could have been anticipated before the agency's creation.

Key informants generally agreed that the coordination role had not been well described in formal

documents. In the absence of adequate written guidance, key informants were asked, in the context of the interviews, to define the coordination role of FEMA. Their thoughts, though not uniformly consistent, are reflected in the following statements. Drawing upon orthodox administrative theory and the literal name of the agency, some assumed that the emergency manager, like any other manager, has some authority over the program and people affected by the coordination activities. Others assumed that coordination was something outside line management--perhaps a cajoling process. Thus, some of the suggestions inferred definitive activity, others clearly the opposite.

The significance of the findings is that the key informants are all senior members of the NSEP community with in-depth knowledge of FEMA. Absent written guidance, their beliefs and behavior would guide the definition of the coordination role within the agency and within the larger emergency management community. The display of dramatic differences in their perceptions of the role of coordination is symptomatic of an agency without clear grounding and mission.

One common theme reflected the FEMA coordination role as a minimalist role, with an absence of management prerogatives. "Coordination is a weak term, with no clout

and all the responsibility. Nobody would want the job."
"Nobody wants to be coordinated." "The absence of a [NSEP] mission other than coordination explains the low priority of FEMA in the Federal scheme."

Statements representative of the minimalist role include the following:

Coordination is not taking over. It is not writing orders. A coordinator is not the leader. A coordinator does not make decisions. Coordination means not being directive. A coordinator is a support for getting the job done, not an authority for getting the job done. Coordination does not include inspecting anything, directing anything, or evaluating departments and agencies. Coordination is not policy. A coordinator does not sponsor executive orders or national security decision directives.

One highly-positioned key informant, in particular, had expert knowledge of the 1985 National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) 188 that redefined the FEMA NSEP role. He captured the intent of the NSDD by noting that "Coordination is keeping records, doing tasks under auspices of the NSC, offering expertise on emergency management and setting up classes." Another key informant offered that "Coordination means being executive secretary to interagency group deliberations, thus giving FEMA the right to write on White House stationery."

Continuing the description of the instrumental role, key informants provided many other statements that are worth

documenting here. Representative statements on the FEMA instrumental role follow:

Coordination is what FEMA can bring to the table. It means making sure that the departments and agencies that have the responsibilities do the following: roster response teams, develop plans, practice, and be sure top management understands the importance of emergency preparedness.

Key informants also offered these definitions of coordination: "to facilitate," "to build a team," and "to work toward a common goal."

It means doing what needs to be done. A coordinator is a generalist. It means being proactive, creating an agenda, doing staff work, presenting initiatives, and "schlepping" for the NSC. It means synthesizing views and presenting views with pros and cons without promoting its own point of view. It means getting people together to talk, to come to the same perspective, and to work collegially. It means identifying mutual dependencies, fostering improved communications and identifying problems and issues.

Other key informants suggested a bolder role. They envisioned a role of guiding and, possibly, directing. The "Nation needs coordination authority with clout," either at the cabinet level or from within the White House. "Coordination can be powerful (with the ability to bump heads together and lay out issues) but a cabinet officer is in a better position to do this than is an agency director." One key informant responded that coordination was related to policy and can be defined as "developing policy that all can support." "A policeman-type evaluation role would be nice;

there is no one else to do it; but it can only go as far as the departments and agencies might allow it to go." One key informant commented, and it could have been inferred from comments of others, that with higher level direction the nature and definition of the coordination changes.

Within this framework of coordination, five critical events were identified by thirty-six of the forty-six sources that were interviewed. The critical events generally exemplify the acceptance or non-acceptance of the FEMA coordination role within the NSEP community. Each critical event is discussed by drawing from two perspectives: the written document(s) providing the basis for the critical event, and the interview information relating to the critical event's causes, meaning, and effect.

Emergency Management Council. As noted previously, the establishment of the Emergency Management Council (EMC) was a significant event for FEMA. This was the first attempt to establish FEMA as the interagency coordination organization. The EMC was created as an alternative to re-incorporating emergency management with the White House along the lines of predecessor organizations in the 1940's and 1960's. The EMC experience figured as a critical event in the coordination theme for eighteen of the key informants. Key informants

noted that its single meeting, the lack of a critical agenda, the poor attendance by senior officials, the "lame duck" chair, the "toothless tiger" perception in adjudication issues, and the perceived turf challenge to the Director of OMB, among others, impeded the functioning of the EMC as a serious interagency coordination device.

Emergency Mobilization Preparedness Board. The Emergency Mobilization Preparedness Board (EMPB) was created as an interagency coordination organization, separate from but supported by FEMA. According to some key informants, the EMPB was the successor to the failed full spectrum EMC coordination mechanism; according to others, it was the successor to the NSEP Mobilization Planning Study Group of the NSC. It was set up along the lines of the senior interagency group model used by the NSC and applied to other areas of national security. The EMPB as an NSEP coordination mechanism was cited by twenty-one key informants as a critical event.

The EMPB was convened under the auspices of the NSC, thus acquiring the leadership prestige that FEMA lacked as a coordination organization. According to several key informants, the EMPB was set up because FEMA was unable to exercise its authorities due to its lack of status. Its chartering mechanism, parallel to the senior interagency

group mechanism, and its chairmanship by the National Security Advisor⁵⁶ combined to lay the foundation for a constructive, prestigious coordination organization. Its plan of action, milestones, and correspondence all appeared with the National Security Advisor's imprimatur. It was seen by at least one key informant as a powerful opportunity for improvements in NSEP.

There was no open antagonism in the early days, according to key informants. Several said the EMPB worked well as a coordination organization, identifying and formulating policy issues, and serving as an interagency forum for all emergency activities. By and large, department and agency principles attended the formal meetings the EMPB held during its three-year life. One noted that the EMPB was the "right model" for emergency coordination, that is, FEMA in support of NSC leadership.

Yet, at least one of the EMPB's coordination problems was related to effectiveness. The high financial cost associated with its national Plan of Action (to achieve parity with the Soviet Union) challenged the power and principles of the OMB, a key NSEP agency. In addition to

⁵⁶The NSC chair was necessary to avoid the perception of carryover from EMC and protocol problems. High level department and agency representatives were likely to attend meetings chaired by the National Security Advisor than by the Director of FEMA.

the many reasons for its demise identified earlier in this dissertation, the waning activity of 1984 presaged its end. By that time, it lost the serious interest of its members; and its work became secondary in importance to the primary missions in the member departments and agencies. Other coordination-related reasons for its eventual passing were the sheer size and complexity of the EMPB itself; the departure of key FEMA management staff; and the existence of a large secretariat, which in the views of some became an identity unto itself supplanting the committee structure.

On a political level, it was noted by one senior key informant that the EMPB did not address the most sensitive of issues, deferring to those cabinet members who would not submit to the dictate of an interagency coordination organization. Another found that there had been no credible transfer of authority from the president to the EMPB, its chair, or, particularly, to FEMA. FEMA was not accepted in a leadership role nor in any role that hinted of FEMA policy impact over departments and agencies. Some of the more negative comments put forth by key informants suggested that it was a moribund organization, that it had become a debating society in which nothing productive ever happened, that it was not a good use of the time of the National Security Advisor, and that, as a bottom line, emergency

preparedness was not an important program of government. Others commented that it looked excessively inward and that it was oblivious to coordinating with the broader federal, state and local emergency management communities. When the EMPB slowed operations, there was no other readily identifiable interagency emergency coordination organization. At least some key informants believed that the FEMA organization would fulfill the interagency coordination role, even without the national security advisor presence.

Senior Interagency Group. The coordination role continued as an issue. A letter dated August 2, 1984 documents correspondence from William French Smith, Attorney General, to Robert C. McFarlane, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, about the policy direction of emergency management. The Attorney General proposed a "re-evaluation of the administration's desired approach to emergency preparedness and continuity of government programs." He emphasized the need to establish an executive branch policy which "clarifies the emergency preparedness responsibility of each federal department and agency and articulates the desirable limitations upon the operational and oversight roles of the Federal Emergency Management Agency."

The above proposal resulted in the September 16, 1985 publication of the, then-classified, National Security Decision Directive 188, "Government Coordination for National Security Emergency Preparedness."⁵⁷ That document rewrote the definition of coordination in the NSEP community and was a major summary document of FEMA's early period under the Reagan administration. According to one key informant it reflected the community reaction to and judgment of "what was FEMA?" It was seen by some as an opportunity for significant interagency emergency coordination with White House sponsorship, reminiscent of the early high hopes for the EMPB.

To summarize, using the SIG construct, the NSC would manage policy coordination and FEMA would have the unclear mission of assisting "in the implementation of this policy through a coordinating role with other federal agencies." FEMA was to be a support agency for NSEP planning and for facilitating coordination between federal agencies and state and local governments. According to one key informant who claimed to understand the intended role of coordination, the FEMA's coordination mission was to serve as rapporteur in a forum of departments and agencies addressing problems

⁵⁷It should be noted that Lieutenant General Becton (U.S. Army, Retired) was confirmed as Director of FEMA on November 7, 1985 (serving until June 1989).

in NSEP and sorting through issues needing higher level resolution within the White House. FEMA was not to be a major player.

The SIG was comprised of senior officials of the DoD, TREAS, OMB, DOJ. An NSC focal point was assigned and, added in the final version, a FEMA advisor was assigned. Policy issues in emergency management were to be handled by the SIG, not by FEMA as an agency. This was a drastic reformulation by the Reagan administration of the 1978 vision of FEMA as a policy coordinator who reported directly to the president and received the support of OMB and other departments and agencies.

According to key informants the SIG never was intended to meet formally. Everything (energy issues, mobilization issues, civil defense issues, funding for programs, and so on) was to be processed at the IG level and handled by paperwork above that level. Whether this was to save time, to prevent discussion, to prevent the embarrassment of a meeting to which the principles did not come, or for any other reason was a matter for speculation.

FEMA clearly was out of the NSEP policy business and into the ill-defined NSEP coordination business. The concept cast FEMA in the role of support to more mainline departments and agencies. Coordination as a term was thus

refined. Seventeen key informants cited the SIG/IGs coordination mechanism as among their critical events. Many of those comments had to do with the circumscription of FEMA authority and curbing its role rather than coordination as such. Eighteen key informants identified some aspect of the coordination mechanism as a critical event.

According to some key informants, the SIG/IGs had more potential than accomplishment. The SIG with its IGs potentially might have had more influence than the EMPB as a coordination mechanism. However, according to key informants, there was little coordination and each department did what it pleased. There was no direction or coordination from the White House. With it came an ascendancy of decentralization without coordination. FEMA's identity became that of a "community instrument," rather than that of an orchestrator or guide.

According to one key informant, questions continued unresolved: What did coordination mean? Was the role of coordination different in preparedness than in response? What were the obligations of the other departments and agencies? If there is no guidance role, why do you need a program the size of the FEMA NSEP program?

The unsettled issues lead to the question of the effectiveness of the SIG/IG mechanism for coordination of

NSEP. By and large, key informants judged that the SIG/IG mechanism was not successful. The perception was that "it was not a good thing." "It was a low point for FEMA."

Even more specific comments emerged from interview data. A composite of key informants' comments in their own words follows:

It could have been important but there was a lack of White House support. It created an environment in which FEMA could be openly challenged about its role. It continued a "decade-old perception that it was just another committee for emergency management. There was no face-saving for FEMA and the mechanism didn't help. It was a nuisance as a coordination mechanism. The SIG/IGs never worked as a coordination mechanism. It was always a question of "who had the 'FEMA watch?'" The purpose was not to enhance NSEP policy coordination, it was to get FEMA under control. The "IG thing" made a shambles of the process of policy development, moving policy development into an arena of lowest common denominator agreement.

According to key informants, casting the NSC in the role of policy-maker for NSEP could have been positive since FEMA was not a reasonable source itself. By making FEMA an executive agency for an organization with power (that is, the NSC), FEMA might have had at least reflected influence. Even in that, there was more promise that action. According to another key informant, the "SIG/IG didn't work. There was no interest at the NSC and there was a perception that FEMA ran and controlled what little agenda there was."

Several key informants also perceived over-reaction of FEMA staff to use the SIG/IGs for a FEMA agenda. While the motivation of the FEMA staff may have been that there would have been too little activity if FEMA had not generated activity, this was bad timing due to FEMA's generally poor reputation at the time. According to a senior official, the SIG/IG mechanism was moribund and was killed. Its time was up whether there had been a change in administration or not.

National System for Emergency Coordination and NSEP

Equivalent. By 1988, another mechanism was created for domestic emergency coordination purposes. It was called the National System for Emergency Coordination (NSEC). It was created by memorandum approved by President Reagan in January 1988 and signed by Edwin Meese, Chair of the Domestic Policy Council.

Only one key informant cited the creation of NSEC as a critical event. As a coordination mechanism, it existed only on paper. It was not supported by implementation, largely due to its non-acceptance in the emergency management community. It required departments and agencies to prepare cross-agency "functional," rather than department and agency, plans. It identified several types of emergencies and assigned "lead" and "support" roles for the

types of emergencies. While reflective of current theories of matrix management, this matrix-type of planning and coordination effort was out of step with a federal system that budgets and manages by formal organizations.

The NSEC was envisioned as a formal interagency coordination organization. Its general scheme was eventually supplemented by memorandum from National Security Advisor Colin Powell to cover national security emergencies. While neither was implemented in any serious way, they also were not supplanted when the Bush administration entered office and generated its own system for coordination of national security areas, including NSEP.

Policy Coordinating Committee. The Bush administration organizational structure for the NSC includes the establishment of Policy Coordinating Committees (PCCs) and subordinate working groups, a variation on the Reagan administration Senior Interagency Groups (SIGs) and their subordinate Interagency Groups (IGs). Ten key informants identified the creation and operation of the PCC coordination mechanism as a critical event. It demonstrated that there was some White House support for emergency management through formal coordination devices and is the last remaining formal system of entrée into the NSC

apparatus. The discussion here relates to the PCC mechanism as a coordination mechanism and FEMA's role therein.

Key informant opinion was divided on the effectiveness of the PCC mechanism as a coordination device. According to some, the creation of the PCC mechanism was a positive event. Some commented that "it was an attempt to give FEMA another chance." It "probably is the most significant thing of late." "It offers a high-stakes game with high dividends for the nation." "It allows FEMA to meet in a structured way with high level officials to develop a policy, thus co-opting the most senior leadership who then must support the policy because they made it."⁵⁸ "It is an opportunity for the director and a tool for FEMA to exploit in order to get what it doesn't have now." "It facilitates the community coordination process and provides the appearance that emergency management does things the way the rest of the national security community does, that is, through the PCC mechanism." "FEMA's getting the position of

⁵⁸However, several key informants noted that the level of the members of the PCC and working groups was too low. There was a lack of political appointee leadership, PCC members were generally administrative types (rather than program officials who could speak on substantive matters) and the working group members, again, were not program officials who could speak for and make commitments for their programs.

chair was a mild reaffirmation of FEMA's vision." "It shows that FEMA means business."⁹

In addition to those with the positive perceptions of a proactive FEMA/PCC mechanism, there were other perspectives favoring a less proactive FEMA role. For example, some thought FEMA's appropriate role was that of a "coat-holder" to the NSC and the departments and agencies. They viewed the "coat-holder" role as the only one that would be accepted by the emergency management community. Thus, the disparity among senior officials in agreeing upon the coordination role continued.

Other key informants had less positive perceptions of the PCC mechanism. They suggested that the PCC mechanism was not much better than the SIG/IGs mechanism and that the PCC was a failure. Some thought it too large and that it resembled the unwieldy EMPB. The general lack of productivity convinced them that the situation had not changed. "By operating in a community consensus mode, it is precluding FEMA's operation as an independent agency reporting directly to the President."

They also noted that the NSC has little interest in NSEP and suggested that the appropriate White House point of

⁹This was noted by way of contrast to the EMPB mechanism which was "an anomaly."

entry, considering the breadth of the FEMA domestic program, should be the president's chief of staff. They suggested that OMB has captured the policy guidance area in emergency management and FEMA is doing only the most routine things. They saw a political appointee leadership void in PCC operations.⁶⁰ And it was faulted, as was the SIG/IGs mechanism before it, for not having adequate infrastructure, study funds, facilities, staff, hardware, or legal counsel.

A summary comment provided by one of the key informants was that, despite the creation of formal organizations with a White House linkage, "the problem of coordination and integration of the preparedness and response activities of the twenty-six NSEP departments and agencies remains."

⁶⁰Note that this data was collected in late spring of 1990 and does not reflect any activities and leadership subsequent to that period.

NSEP-Related Coordination: Perhaps a "Philosopher's Stone" After All⁶¹

With a recognized "down-side" to coordination mechanisms that has come up repeatedly in the past fifty years both in academia and in public administration, it is not startling to find Alan Dean writing in 1981 that:

No head of an agency should be expected to direct or coordinate the work of his peers as a substitute for coming to grips with deficiencies in the executive branch organization Usually the defenders of the *status quo* contend that all that is needed is policy coordination and that it then will be easy for the disparate departments and agencies to administer their respective programs in a consistent manner. This happy outcome almost never takes place.⁶²

If one does not obtain personal power *from* one's institutional position, an alternative is to bring personal power to the position. A design concept of organization that darkens Dean's pessimistic forecast for the

⁶¹Seidman and Gilmour relate that in ancient times alchemists believed in the existence of a "philosopher's stone." They propose that coordination is the modern day equivalent to the "philosopher's stone." For those unfamiliar with the term, the elusive "philosopher's stone" would transmute baser metals into gold and serve as a catalyst in the redemption of humankind and the universe. In other words, the "philosopher's stone" would provide the key to the universe, just as coordination would provide the key to effective management.

⁶²Alan Dean, "General Propositions of Organizational Design," Federal Reorganization: What Have We Learned, ed. Peter Szanton (Chatham, New Jersey: Chatham House Publisher, Inc., 1981), pp. 150-151.

coordination of peers was that, by OMB design, the director of FEMA was to compensate for lack of institutional influence by trading on personal credibility.

Seidman and Gilmour also recognize the subtleties of organizing for coordination, noting that the quest for coordination in government is akin to the quest for, in their terms, a "philosopher's stone." The task of coordination is often to:

reconcile the irreconcilable, harmonize competing and wholly divergent interests, overcome irrationalities in our government structures, and make hard policy choices to which no one will dissent.⁶³

Since the success of a coordination organization is dependent on favorable exchange relationships with other organizations, the independence of the departments and agencies from FEMA's influence is a design weakness. The mutual dependency needed for cooperation is missing.

Coordinative systems must be clearly focused and continually renewed in the minds of those participating, lest personal objectives fill up the whole horizon to the exclusion of the enterprise as a whole.⁶⁴ It is this phenomenon that is at the heart of the NSEP coordination

⁶³Seidman and Gilmour, Politics, Position and Power, p. 112.

⁶⁴Lyndall F. Urwick, The Pattern of Management (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956).

mission. What some might see as the future common good (effective emergency management) is often in conflict with the daily program interests of the participants (their legislative mandate). When the coordination processes involve groups, we find each member bringing more than an independent intellect to the table. Each brings his or her own agency's perspective and prestige which often compete with any common interest in emergency management they might have shared.

Seidman and Gilmour suggest that the nation must be able to identify national goals and priorities before expecting to coordinate activities related to them.⁶⁵ It is this priority setting that haunts the coordination expectations within the NSEP community. There has been no clear national statement or commitment of resources on a specific goal related to emergency coordination. There is no likely equivalent to a New Frontier or Great Society for emergency management.

During its first decade, the FEMA experience demonstrated the overarching principle that organizations and coordination processes are not established by simple, logical formulae. The agency's basic lack of stature and

⁶⁵Seidman and Gilmour, Politics, Position and Power, p. 245.

power impeded its ability to coordinate. "The Titans were not going to come to the table." The conflicting commentaries on the "whys" and "hows" of the mechanical aspects of coordinating formulae have been carried through the years without resolution. "Neither theorists nor practitioners can agree on a single, superior system of coordination."⁶

The design impact of minimal institutional White House access and the national problems of peer coordination created an uneven playing field for FEMA from the start. As will be shown in the next chapter, FEMA's design problems were then complicated by implementation problems associated with administrative processes. During the implementation period, personal relationships were used to compensate for the initial organizational design disadvantages.

⁶Howard E. McCurdy, "Coordination," ed. Thomas D. Lynch, Organization Theory and Management (New York: Marcel Dekker, Inc., 1983), p. 112.

CHAPTER VI

FINDINGS PART II: IMPLEMENTATION AS "THE MISSING LINK"¹

The Task of Implementation²

Implementation of major federal reorganization strategies may be considered at two levels. The first level concerns the concrete steps required to gain formal approval for reorganization. This includes assigning the staff work; researching and writing the proposals that establish the organization's mission, size, and budget; gaining presidential approval; and gaining legislative approval if it is needed. This first level generally is given a large amount of time. The second level for consideration centers on establishing all the preconditions for organizational success, actually ensuring the practical consequences of reorganization.

¹Erwin Hargrove, The Missing Link: The Study of the Implementation of Social Policy (Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute, 1975).

²One might ask the duration of an "implementation." Is the implementation accomplished in the first year? Is it accomplished in the fifth? For the purposes of this dissertation, the period of "implementation" for the FEMA reorganization is considered as three years--the period from the approval of the reorganization (September 1978), through the change in administrations (January 1981), and into the first year of the new administration. References in this chapter to events after 1981 are based on the model of the first three years.

The problems of getting from paper to operation generally are addressed only belatedly or poorly. The implementation of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reorganization was more characteristic of the first level of thinking than of the second. Possibly for this reason, FEMA experienced substantial "start up" problems. The implementation of the reorganization plan was cited by many key informants as a critical event. While, as discussed in the previous chapter, some of FEMA's trials were rooted in the basic organizational design; additional problems were rooted in administrative implementation.³

FEMA's experience with administrative implementation was not impaired by lack of political agreement or lack of funding.⁴ Instead, FEMA's implementation difficulties were more prosaic. They were related to the degree and level of follow through by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB)

³These implementation problems were cited repeatedly and strongly in interviews with key informants. The review of documents revealed that as early as August 2, 1978 (before congressional approval of the reorganization), the Director of OMB named an OMB coordinating group to assure a smooth transition. This was amended in September 18, 1978 memo that established an interagency Federal Emergency Management Agency Activation Group and Steering Committee. The Director of OMB traced implementation activities back to July 1978.

⁴The Jeffrey L. Pressman and Aaron B. Wildavsky book, Implementation (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1973), provides insight on political forces that can affect program implementation.

planning effort, to administrative complications, and to fluctuating personal access to White House leadership. This chapter provides a comprehensive discussion of these implementation difficulties.

Importance of Follow-through

For reorganization, as for any other change, implementation is the bottom line. Without it, the whole exercise is show and symbolism. Yet in real-life attempts at reorganization, serious concern with implementation is typically too little and too late. Enormous attention is devoted to analyzing and deciding what changes should be made. The problem of getting from here to there is addressed only belatedly. To paraphrase Erwin Hargrove, implementation often seems the "missing link" of reorganization.⁵

Mosher would agree.⁶ His twelve case studies suggest that implementation could be the stormy foundering point for reorganization. He found that, in about half of these cases, formalized administrative devices, or "machinery," was established for the purpose of planning the implementation. In a few, the affiliated planning groups even continued to advise management on the implementation process on a long-term basis. These planning groups handled

⁵I.M. Destler, "Implementing Reorganization," in Federal Reorganization: What Have We Learned? ed. Peter Szanton (Chatham, N.J.: Chatham House Publishers, 1981), p. 155. (Hereafter cited as Destler, "Implementing Reorganization.")

⁶Mosher, Governmental Reorganizations, pp. 510-512.

special problems and remained ready to facilitate the implementation task. Mosher found one case in which the reorganization ran into serious difficulty. In that case he found that there was no formalized administrative device for following through on the implementation.

Mosher is not alone in his findings. Destler suggests that a formula for successful change is to assure that those proposing the change also wield leverage in the implementation of the reorganization.⁷ It is even more desirable if those implementing the change wield the president's authority, thereby assuring that their designs are not contested. Murphy also documents that implementation by other than the reformers constitutes a serious weakness.⁸

Harrison Wellford, Executive Associate Director for Reorganization and Management at OMB, testified in 1977 on behalf of OMB Director Bert Lance. He noted that the problems of the Johnson, Nixon, and Ford reorganizations were due, at least in part, to the absence of a connection between those who formulated the reorganization plans and

⁷Destler, "Implementing Reorganization," p. 167.

⁸Jerome T. Murphy, "Title I of ESEA: The Politics of Implementing Federal Education Reform," Harvard Educational Review 41 (1971):60.

those who implemented them.⁹ The leap from planning to implementation is a difficult behavioral and political move. Some consider it a step down into the realm of trivia. But it also is a dangerous step into a morass requiring different skills. The planner moves from the world of vision and singular authority into a sorting and competitive environment, without the benefit of bargaining advantages accrued to management officials during years of management influence jockeying.

Destler maintains that the neglect of implementation is not simply an intellectual error, but that it derives from deeper origins.¹⁰ Simply stated, there is no personal benefit to following through on reorganization. The benefit is in criticizing the current organization, planning reorganization, and moving on to new projects. Thus, the likelihood that top caliber staff would have devoted attention to the follow-through of the implementation should not have been assumed.

A critical element in the FEMA experience was that it was a 1977-1978 creation of a Democratic administration. With the Democratic loss of the 1980 election, FEMA was

⁹Beryl A. Radin and Willis D. Hawley, The Politics of Federal Reorganization (New York: Pergamon Press, 1988) pp. 54-57.

¹⁰Destler, "Implementing Reorganization," p. 165-166.

handed over to a Republican administration. At the political level, then, the policy implementers were clearly a different cast of characters from the planners. Since new policy teams bring new vision, the level of commitment to the predecessors' vision generally is not high. Thus, for better or worse, the FEMA implementation was handed over to a political team with a significantly different agenda from the political team that created it.

At the career level, however, several of the planners assigned to the PRP from their parent emergency management organization moved into the federated emergency management organization as senior career officials. This traditionally is seen as a strength because these officials should have understood the intended function of the new agency. They ultimately served under changed political direction, but it can be assumed that their strong backgrounds and interests in agency success were of benefit to FEMA implementation.

While the literature clearly supports positioning reorganization planners in an implementation role, this same strategy was seen by a few key informants as a weakness in the FEMA experience. These informants suggested that the personal motivations of reorganization planners caused them to design the new organization around career opportunities

for themselves. It was suggested that the planners' preconceptions resulted in basic design features that may have been flawed, for example, a federation structure rather than integration. In any event, by the time the first FEMA Director (Macy) arrived, almost one year after the reorganization was approved, he found an organizational structure already in place with six distinct non-interlocking programs. It was suggested by key informants that the planners' interests were allowed to override good management and the vision of integrated emergency management. This suggestion that staff interests can influence an area as important as government structure is of great importance for the whole area of organization design and effectiveness.

Pre-determined Administrative Arrangements

Administrative arrangements for the new organization purposely were left to the new FEMA management team. This decision subsequently became the subject of criticism. Arrangements for the administrative infrastructure of personnel systems, administrative processes, and space were neither pre-designed nor pre-positioned. The legacy was (optimistically) flexibility, and (pessimistically) confusion.

The intentional bypassing of systems for FEMA's personnel, administrative processes, and space was born in the thinking that the first director and management team should have complete prerogative regarding those areas. At least one key informant perceived that this decision harmed the new organization. Supporting this perception, a 1981 General Accounting Office (GAO) audit found that involvement in solving start-up problems adversely affected productivity by distracting agency officials from their new missions during the critical first year of operation." Too much time and effort were devoted to obtaining sufficient staff, support functions, and space when attention should have been spent on program issues. A 1983 follow-up GAO audit attributed FEMA's 1983 management problems to the same start-up problems identified in 1981. The GAO suggested that the reorganization planners should have included the implementation systems in their work and that the reorganization plan should not have been approved without arrangements for personnel, administrative processes, and space.

"U.S. Government, General Accounting Office, "Implementation: The Missing Link in Planning Reorganizations," 20 March 1981.

Non-career Personnel

Rapid action on positioning someone as head of a new agency generally is of critical importance in any reorganization effort. This leader is needed to balance the competitive strivings of the major program areas and to define organizational boundaries and programs. Reorganization brings a time of disorder to most organizations. However, evidence suggests that FEMA's early days were exceptionally disordered.

FEMA's implementation problems included delays in obtaining key agency officials. The agency was virtually leaderless during the early months of its existence. The reorganization plan was approved by congress in September 1978 and became effective on April 1, 1979. It provided for a director, a deputy director, and five principal program managers to be appointed by the president with the advice and consent of the Senate. The plan also called for the FEMA Director to appoint ten regional directors.

A search for a director was not immediately successful. A national election was in the offing, the pay was low--only \$57,500, and emergency management was not perceived as a high-prestige political "plum." Despite this, a veteran public servant who had served Democratic administrations for decades was identified and confirmed.

This first FEMA Director, John Macy, was nominated in June of 1979 and confirmed in July of 1979; he began his eighteen month term of office on August 1 of that same year. Thus, almost a year was lost between the date of the congressional approval of the organization and the date the director took over. As of mid-December 1979 (fifteen months after the plan was approved), only nine of FEMA's top political positions had been filled permanently--the director, two principal program managers, and six regional directors.¹² The remaining positions (except for the deputy director's position, which the director decided to keep vacant) were filled by August 1980. After the plan's approval date, a total of twenty-three months passed before the top political positions had been filled.

Key informants noted that this interval, as well as later periods when the agency was allowed to go without confirmed leadership, symbolized the lack of political importance attributed to the agency. Further, this perception resulted both in challenges to FEMA NSEP

¹²The political appointees who transferred in with their programs on temporary appointments had their own power structure and owed no allegiance to Director Macy and the new agency. Even after their confirmation, serious conflicts over turf added to the management difficulties related to implementation.

authority by the departments and agencies and in serious external relationship problems by 1984.

Career Personnel

The planners' vision was that FEMA leadership was to be of the highest caliber and the staff chosen was to be equally strong. However, the revitalization of the emergency management program was not a transformation that a new director and a handful of top aides could effect by themselves. The career program staff was critical to program change.

It was suggested during interviews that, from the beginning, the departments and agencies perceived FEMA staff to be of poor quality; this impaired interagency coordination. One key informant stated that the donor agencies did not want to lose their best people and, therefore, passed on an inadequate administrative infrastructure. For example, it was not until eight months after the reorganization plan's approval that negotiations for the transfer of thirty-five administrative positions were completed with the Department of Housing and Urban Development.¹³ This, however, was not the only staffing

¹³GAO also noted that new agencies like FEMA are at a disadvantage when negotiating with more established agencies (like the Department of Housing and Urban Development).

problem. A program official who did bring in administrative staff, expressed regret at having surrendered this staff to the new combined administrative support organization which, by the account of many of the key informants, was performing poorly.¹⁴ Ultimately, this implementation issue is related to the next, the problems with administrative processes.

Administrative Processes

Administrative processes are major tools in developing agency identity, gaining agency perspective, and integrating program area agendas. Without accepted and adequate administrative processes, the financial, personnel, contract, and other areas of administration are at risk. In FEMA's case, agency-wide administrative processes developed slowly.

The new organization did not "hit the road running." Important personnel vacancies caused delays in decision-making related to agency policies, programs, and procedures and to the establishment of administrative support systems. For instance, twenty-nine months after the congressional approval of the reorganization plan, FEMA still had not

¹⁴As a principle of organization, it is common to centralize administrative functions, thereby achieving economies of scale and reducing the "stovepipe" phenomenon.

finalized its financial management system.¹⁵ The GAO found that the transfer of insufficient accountants hindered FEMA's establishment of an effective accounting system. Key informants cited FEMA's early payroll and accounting systems as a serious problem. Two of the key informants added that, during its early period, FEMA came within just three days of having its phone service cut off for lack of payment of bills. This is a vivid illustration of serious internal problems that plagued the new organization from all directions.

Not surprisingly, informants suggested that performance was poor at budget hearings. In the view of some, this was due largely to the inadequacy of the financial management system. The system improved over the decade, but one key informant noted that the 1989 budget still remained a "mush" of batched line items. A 1987 report of the GAO, citing FEMA for inadequate management controls on funds, suggested that funds were not well-identified and were used in ways not intended in the appropriations process.

¹⁵The 1981 GAO report found that FEMA's accounting, budgeting, and payroll systems still were not finalized as of February 1981, twenty-nine months after the reorganization plan's approval.

The resource savings rationale for the reorganization effort set up other implementation problems. The perennial "economy and efficiency" argument for savings was behind the FEMA reorganization, as it was behind most federal reorganizations of this century. Despite President Carter's initial attempt to convince congress that economy was not the goal, cost-saving was built into the FEMA reorganization to meet congressional expectations. One key informant noted that the "discounted" start-up resources plan was deficient. It reduced administrative infrastructure below the point at which it could operate effectively, thus destining the agency to an under-funded and inadequate administrative system.

Lastly, key informants reported that general administration was a major implementation problem. A critical event cited repeatedly was the issue of putting in place an "agreed to" administrative process, that is, how to pay bills, how to run personnel operations, and how to manage other administrative matters. The federation of programs from the disparate source departments and agencies meant that each came with its own expectations of the optimal way to conduct business. Creating an administrative process serving and satisfying all its potent "stovepipe" parts was a difficult task for the new organization.

Physical Space

Office space carries both operational and symbolic importance. Prestigious and a geographically desirable office space benefits employee morale and reminds other organizations of the reflected presidential power embodied in the organization. New space also signals that the program has changed. Conversely, maintaining the same space, especially if it is not desirable, indicates that the position and mission of the organization have not really changed. Destler's analysis of reorganization implementation notes that "nothing 'propinques' like propinquity," and that "the best way to build allegiance to new organizational entities and their purposes is to bring people together physically, building up informal as well as formal contact."¹⁶

Appleby also cites the organizational importance of physical proximity to important superiors and colleagues. He suggests that it is important in achieving administrative unity and structural balance within the organization. Drawing on his background in World War II administration, he notes, further, that the parts of the organization are

¹⁶Destler, "Implementing Reorganization," pp. 162-163.

encouraged to work together to mutual advantage when housed in convenient proximity.¹⁷

Office space is not addressed in all organizational analyses. However, it represents another critical implementation issue cited frequently by the key informants. Although OMB assisted FEMA in obtaining approximately 55,000 square feet of office space for the director's office near the White House, the decision governing the first two years was to keep FEMA's headquarters dispersed in several different locations. The April 1981 FEMA telephone directory listed seven separate addresses in the downtown Washington, D.C. area that had significant numbers of employees. They included the Navy Yard in S.E. Washington; the GSA building at 18th and F Streets, N.W.; the Premier Building near 17th and I Streets, N.W.; the Logan Building near 18th and L Streets, N.W.; the Magazine Building in Rosslyn, Virginia; the U.S. Fire Administration Building at 24th and M Streets, N.W.; and the Housing and Urban Development Building at 7th and D Streets, S.W.¹⁸ Additional locations noted in the telephone directory were located

¹⁷Paul Appleby, Big Bureaucracy (Alfred A. Knopf: New York, 1945), pp. 88-92.

¹⁸It was not until August of 1981, more than two years after its creation, that the FEMA headquarters' operation was consolidated in one location.

outside the downtown area and in the ten standard federal regions. GAO found that the dispersal of personnel had led to:

1. inadequate interaction among personnel causing a lack of coherence and a feeling of disunity among staff members;
2. feelings that individual offices were semi-autonomous, thus making it difficult to establish an agency identity;
3. a need to establish internal administrative coordination among the different locations by placing an administrative officer at each site; and
4. extra costs in traveling and operating a mail system among the buildings.

Not everyone wanted to move. Some officials strongly preferred even limited space near the White House, if only for use as a mailing address. Some even suggested that it was the preferred location because of the attractiveness of the OMB cafeteria. Many more commented that the dispersed arrangement perpetuated the "stovepipe" mentality and countervailed the integration of the emergency management program. They found that the distinct locations prevented the culture change envisioned with the reorganization and that geographic boundaries perpetuated

loyalty to the distinct programs. A choice had to be made. The agency could geographically unite its functions or it could maintain an office for the director near the White House. The decision was to consolidate in one location. However, one key informant suggested that the 1981 consolidation move to 500 C Street, S.W., Washington, D.C., was a strategic error. The location was farther from the Old Executive Office Building and required a drive rather than a walk for senior personnel to visit between the FEMA offices responsible for NSEP and the National Security Council (NSC) offices. The move to that location made interaction inconvenient. In the key informant's view, trading proximity for consolidation was a poor trade.

Personal Access to the White House

During the Implementation Period

Besides the structural aspects of implementation issues, there is the personal aspect. The advantage of personal access might be exercised to overcome the structural difficulties of implementation. The calculus of power in the federal system and the lack of a recognized FEMA domain established an environment in which FEMA was dependent on personal White House support. This followed the political "truth" of personal influence that posits that personal relationships with those in power can overcome

other structural and process difficulties. Without such personal interaction with the most senior leadership, prestige, policy guidance, and policy approbation generally are not forthcoming and the agency program is not added as an important part of the national agenda. For this reason, the consistent and enduring success of FEMA officials in forging close relationships with White House officials would have been important in overcoming FEMA's implementation problems. FEMA's success was spotty.

Influence with the White House officials differs markedly according to personalities, the agency, and the times.¹⁹ The FEMA case was no exception. Its relationships with White House officials were FEMA's line to power, since neither the agency itself nor the times promoted the cause of emergency management. Cronin documents the isolation of the outer circle of national leaders. FEMA's position as an independent agency having an unattractive mission and positioned in the outer circle did not enhance its chances of having personal interaction with and support of the president or the most senior staff.²⁰

¹⁹Thomas Cronin, "Cabinet of Unequals," in Francis E. Rourke, Bureaucratic Power and National Politics (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1978), pp. 289-307.

²⁰In the early 1960's, while the director of the Office of Emergency Planning (OEP) still retained membership on the National Security Council (NSC), the function suffered a blow. According to one key informant, the director was

FEMA has been haunted with becoming an agency without power, "an object of contempt to its enemies and of despair to its friends."²¹ What follows is a review of key informant's perceptions of the association of FEMA leadership with the White House leadership. Many key informants provided their views on the personal nature of White House relationships. Three consistent themes to their comments represent their views. As a group they saw the relationships as being: (1) symbolic, (2) based on familiarity, and (3) the foundation of access.

The importance of symbolism is represented by the following sampling of informants' statements:

A consistent, continuing visible presence of high level White House officials is needed for departments and agencies to take FEMA seriously. You need to be a part of the president's program. The president needs to support the agency with a budget and with his charisma, to appear with the director, to visit the agency.

excluded from membership in President Kennedy's Executive Committee of the NSC because "OEP was a low-prestige agency and its director had nothing to contribute." The director's poor relationship with the Kennedy administration inner circle was a major reason for its non-inclusion. This suggests that more than orthodox administrative theory guides public policy. Later, FEMA found that emergency management was in competition with programs that, in the view of the other departments and agencies, were more important. Because of this, FEMA was not particularly attractive as a cause to champion or issue to adopt.

²¹Norton Long, The Polity (Chicago: Rand McNally & Co., 1962), p. 50.

Informants also addressed the close personal affinity that they saw as vital to a successful organizational relationship. Each key informant used different words in describing the relationship issue. In sorting their comments, the following composite emerged:

The White House is a family. It all goes back to friendships. You must know the president. There has to be a set of relationships among the leaders that is built on mutual respect and affection; otherwise, competition will drain and the team theme will be violated. The president, the vice president, the National Security Advisor and the FEMA Director must work on knowing each other as individuals. If the director isn't close enough to the president, regardless of structure, the thing won't work well. The people need to work closely with and have the confidence of the president. When you have that, the organization is important. The story of government is the story of personalities; It isn't organization and authorities that determine the success of the organization. It is personality.

As a group, the sense of their comments was that White House access is the *sine qua non* of organizational success. Typical comments in conveying their thoughts follow:

No one at FEMA can call Richard Darman to say 'we need...'.²² Access is everything. Power comes from access. Leadership and the relationship to the president are the critical determinants of success for the agency. Maybe there should be access to the chief of staff; we certainly can't get to the president, and the National Security Advisor isn't interested. Access to Scowcroft or Sununu is the

²²Reference to director of Office of Management and Budget under President Bush.

same thing as talking to the president.²³ FEMA needs that access. You need access to someone with clout to check the political reality of the system and to test whether the White House is serious about the program. You can write authorities until you are blue in the face, but what you need is personal clout. The director must be strong and close to the president. White House support depends on who [sic] in the White House cares. An agency, especially a new one without its own constituent power base, needs a White House mentor. There are two questions to ask of the political leadership: do they have access to the White House and do they have access to the larger emergency management community. They need both capabilities in order to succeed in this business.

According to key informants, GSA's Federal Preparedness Agency, a predecessor NSEP agency, had a mixed record of gaining White House support. Those programs that did gain support were dependent on the good will of White House friends. Key informants also indicated that the FEMA experience suggested that White House sponsorship seemed to be developed only on special program issues and with specific individuals. Since the depth of White House support for FEMA was not great, individuals traded on networks built up in other areas and used personal relationships to present views to appropriate White House staff. The perception of the key informants was that the relationships and access granted were highly individual,

²³The reference was to National Security Advisor General Brent Scowcroft and former Chief of Staff John Sununu.

were not transferred to FEMA as an agency, and generally were not transferred to other FEMA officials.

According to key informants, President Carter was unwilling to personally back the agency even in its infancy. It was reported that the first FEMA Director, John Macy, had very little White House support despite an earlier career in national political circles. Two key informants reported that the director's White House access came through NSC staff officers who had access superior to his own. Apparently, Director Macy never had access to President Carter's Chief of Staff Eisenstadt. One source did indicate that Director Macy may have "talked daily" to President Carter's staff when domestic disasters were occurring but, they added, by that time it was "too late."

It was reported that during the period of January 20, 1981 to April 25, 1981, Acting Director Bud Gallagher had good access based on a long-established politically conservative network. The EMPB secretariat also had good access for about three years under National Security Advisors Allen, Clark, and McFarlane. The EMPB's access diminished in 1984.

Edwin Meese gave Director Giuffrida (1982-1984) access but that access lasted only from 1982 until very early in 1984. The interest of Edwin Meese and/or his

departure from the White House were noted as critical events for FEMA by eleven key informants. Meese visited FEMA at least two times and had intended to visit on a semi-annual basis. He planned to meet regularly with the director and the associate directors on the budget and the state of the FEMA programs.²⁴ However, senior key informants reported that, despite the interest, FEMA continued as a set of non-integrated programs and, that even in the best of times, there was little program guidance from the White House. The key informants indicated that the personal and political difficulties of Director Giuffrida eventually strained the White House relationship.

As far as the key informants knew, FEMA directors or their representatives attended a total of two cabinet meetings in the entire history of FEMA. Both of these meetings occurred in the very early eighties: one was the briefing on the establishment of the EMPB, and the other was a briefing on civil defense. There also were an EMPB briefing over lunch in the West Wing of the White House with President Reagan and several briefings of the Domestic

²⁴It was suggested by one key informant that even after Edwin Meese became Attorney General, FEMA's formal White House contact on NSEP matters continued to be through him.

Policy Council by FEMA officials.²⁵ However, to the knowledge of the key informants, there was no FEMA attendance at any formal NSC meetings, although at least one program of interest to FEMA was a topic for discussion.²⁶

Other than minimal NSC staff guidance in the early 1980's and Meese's personal guidance of Director Giuffrida, it appeared to the key informants that there was no significant policy guidance for NSEP. According to two key informants, it was clear in 1985 that no future policy guidance was intended.²⁷ These informants saw this as an intentional action to minimize the turmoil and costs associated with NSEP and to permanently remove FEMA from serious NSEP circles. Another indication of the lack of White House access and sponsorship was not including FEMA in the drafting of the 1985 NSDD that curbed its authorities. FEMA was not consulted until the document was in nearly final form. In the view of one informant, there was no

²⁵Ralph Bledsoe, affiliated with FEMA from its beginning, was a White House supporter of the domestic emergency agenda and assured White House access during his tenure as executive secretary to the Domestic Policy Council.

²⁶The meeting concerned an action on machine tools under Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962.

²⁷NSDD 188 transferred policy responsibility to the NSC.

action officer sympathetic to FEMA at the White House at the time.

It was reported that Director Julius Becton (1985-1989) received his guidance as management guidance and not as program guidance. He was to clean up FEMA, mend fences with the departments and agencies, build FEMA morale, and take a common sense approach to the organization and its programs. He said:

My highest priorities have been and will continue to be, the restoration or establishment of integrity and credibility within the FEMA family and to restore the competence of the Agency.²

One informant noted that the overall level of White House interest in FEMA atrophied following Meese's departure from the White House. However, Director Becton continued to have access on disaster matters to the domestic side of the White House and on NSEP matters to the national security side of the White House. His access was to National Security Advisor Carlucci. Later, through a personal and military network, it was to Carlucci's successor, National Security Advisor Colin Powell. Several White House sanctioned documents, including one setting NSEP priorities

²Julius W. Becton, in testimony. U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Science and Technology Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act, Hearing before the Subcommittee on Science, Research and Technology of the Committee on Science and Technology. 99th Cong., 2d sess., March 12, 1986.

were signed during this period of access. In general, however, the period of the mid- to late-eighties was marked by the lack of a powerful "action officer" and champion in the White House staff. It was reported that Acting Director Robert Morris (August 1985-October 1985 and June 1989-May 1990) received no policy guidance from the White House.²⁹

Most often, key informants indicated that they knew of no NSEP policy guidance from the White House. Appointments were a personnel matter, not a program issue. Program guidance on agency mission simply was not provided. Appointees determined direction on their own, either from study or in conjunction with other FEMA political appointees.

Did FEMA Want Too Much? Or Was The Problem Structural?

Only a few informants said White House access was unimportant. One informant, who had held a White House position, clearly indicated that, in his view, White House access is not important. He and a few others argued that an agency's success is determined by the charisma of its leadership. If the agency is not successful, the blame should not be placed on the president's doorstep. A few

²⁹This study did not reach into the tenure of Director Wallace Stickney. Mr. Stickney reported for duty on August 27, 1990.

others also noted that the White House connection was not a prerequisite for effective agency operations. In their view, FEMA had as much reinforcement from the White House as it needed. If FEMA didn't use it, it was FEMA's fault. These views of FEMA's self-determination were not the prevalent view of the key informants but they were strongly held by a few.

A few pragmatists offered their analyses of the reasons for the perceived White House personal estrangement from FEMA. This group offered the following composite viewpoint:

To get attention in the White House, you must be useful. Do what needs to be done, then, if you are lucky, the White House will offer to support you. Emergency management is not an area where you get direction from the top. The Director of FEMA has to be the best politician in the world. Don't draw on the time of the president, just give him good press.

They suggested that FEMA officials had not made the FEMA program useful to the White House. Its officials were not up to withstanding political heat and, in the first half of the decade, seemed to attract adverse publicity. They also noted that: "emergency management doesn't have a long history and it conflicts with what other agencies do." Others offered that it is hard to find a best friend when no-one wants to be seen with you. "The problem is that the work is negative and it is hard to keep folks charged up."

"Unless the subject is popular, the White House leadership doesn't want to get involved." And finally, "emergency management was a low priority item for Carter, Reagan, and Bush because Americans prefer to think there won't be a crisis. Planning for bad situations is counter to our culture because planning for it means it might occur."

FEMA's listing on the White House protocol list reflects this lack of affinity with the White House. The list, which is maintained by the Department of State, is rearranged with each new administration and includes all branches of the government. The Bush administration's list is approximately thirty pages long. On that list, the Director of FEMA is on page five in position #28(u). It is significant to note, for comparison, that the Director of the OMB, also holding a national coordinative job, is near the top in position #9(a).

Conclusion

By any standard, implementation is a critical phase in an effective reorganization. It is the time in which motivation and energy are harnessed and directed toward the vision of the reorganization. Start-up problems are inevitable. But GAO, as well as several of the key informants, found that the FEMA implementation problems were excessive. Coupled with the agency's basic organizational

design problems, the implementation problems took FEMA's difficulties beyond those typically encountered with federal reorganization.

The prevalent perception among informants was that the FEMA mission did not have the political support necessary to compensate for either its design problems or its implementation problems. Nobody in the White House had time for NSEP. Coupled with the absence of an articulated White House vision, there was no demonstration of White House support communicated to the departments and agencies. While a few of the key informants disagreed, most thought that the perceived limited support of White House leadership compounded FEMA's implementation difficulties.

While OMB devoted substantial time and resources to developing reorganization plans for review by the president and the congress, implementation of those plans did not receive the same attention. The decision to leave implementation matters to the new management team appeared to some as a strategic error of significance. Several informants suggested that, whatever the integrity and vision of the FEMA leadership, it could have been no match for the problems of policy voids, staff credibility, unsettled administrative processes, and unsatisfactory space.

The political vacancies eventually were filled, only to become "lame duck" or vacated positions in January 1981 with the incoming Republican administration. With that, the political learning curve and the non-career personnel process began again. The past ten years have given time to develop administrative processes. Career staff has had time to stabilize and improve. And the agency has settled into its space in Southwest Washington, D.C. Time has left the specific implementation problems in history but the agency's success in recovering from their disabling affects are uncertain. Implementation problems were clearly identifiable by the GAO. Both those implementation problems and the perceived insufficiency in White House access remain clear in the memories of the key informants as critical in determining FEMA's position in the federal community and the eventual redefinition of its role.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION: THERE IS NO INTEREST IN BASEBALL IN DECEMBER¹

This administrative case study has examined the origins of the federal function of national security emergency preparedness (NSEP), its organizational history, the 1978 public policy decision to reorganize its administrative mechanism, and subsequent events that shaped the implementation and redefinition of the 1978 plan. The public policy decision made in 1978 evolved into an organizational reality that was at variance with the intended vision. This case study traced that variance to critical events.

This research found that these variances could have been anticipated had the designers and implementers considered the organizational and behavioral dynamics known from history and the literature of orthodox administrative theory and the *realpolitik*. The FEMA case study provides insights that are meaningful for the design of federal organizations and for reorganizations that are intended to implement public policy decisions.

¹Non-attribution interview.

There were four major findings of this research.

They follow:

1. Frequent reorganization has been a significant aspect of NSEP history.
2. The relationship of an organization and its leadership with the White House structure and leadership is a critical aspect of organizational design.
3. The task of coordination is a murky and challenging assignment.
4. The effectiveness of a reorganization can be undermined by its implementation.

Short discussions of these four findings and their implications for emergency management follow.

NSEP Reorganization: Recurring Trap for the Unwary

Organization--or reorganization in government, can often be a trap for the unwary. The relationships involved in the division of labor and responsibility are far more subtle and complex than the little boxes which the graph drawers put on paper with their perpendicular and horizontal connecting lines.²

Administrative structure and its constancy says much about public policy and programs. Essential and favorable functions are not built on shifting sands. For this reason, the many reorganizations of the NSEP administrative

²Dean Acheson, "Thoughts About Thoughts in High Places," New York Times Magazine, October 11, 1959.

structure point to possible difficulties in establishing NSEP as an accepted and important function of government. Chapter I asked if NSEP were the trophy of bureaucratic competition or more the victim of bureaucratic juggling and inconstant supporters. The research found it was the latter.

The origins of the NSEP function are rooted in the president's specific constitutional authorities and responsibility to provide for the common defense. In the interval between the formal recognition of the function in the Executive Office in 1933 and President Carter's Reorganization Plan No. 3 of 1978, NSEP shifted significantly in how it was viewed and how it was treated. At times it was close to the president. At other times it was at a distance. It was the story of trying to "get it right," over and over again.

In the perennial search for authority and control over policy, reorganization is always studied but rarely seen successfully implemented. This leads to the conclusion in the second chapter that the reorganization maps often are wrong and that reorganization theory is weak.

The scope of NSEP and its centripetal/centrifugal relationship to the White House never have been agreed upon for an enduring period, either with FEMA's predecessor

organizations or in the current federal arrangement. What is most clear from this research on reorganization is the distinct pattern of aversion to the concentration of power except in extreme emergency, and the continuing debate over what constitutes an acceptable amount of central coordination at any time.

An apparently clear mission statement promoted in 1978 for the NSEP function was not one that arose from consensus either within the executive branch or among the executive branch, the legislative branch, and interest groups. In any event, the mission subsequently changed in a reassessment of the need for, and role of, an administrative structure for NSEP. This occurred prior to the changing world order of the late 1980's and early 1990's. This bodes ominously for the NSEP administrative structure of the 1990's. If a changing world order views traditional threats to national security as remote, it is likely that the NSEP function will need to be further redefined and reorganized in light of accepted threats or it will be removed from the national policy agenda. In a period of tight budgets, absence from the policy agenda may well result in its being viewed as a non-essential function of government.

One is prompted to ask what might have been done differently or what might yet be done differently. In the

course of the interviews, many key informants offered advice to FEMA's leaders on this finding and on the other three findings. Their suggestions and observations were not universally endorsed but they were thoughtful. They are reflected here as a prescription for organizational improvement. The key informants offered insights and advice primarily on what can be expected from FEMA in its current configuration.

They suggested, for instance, that the agency was born disadvantaged because the function is not of inherent importance and acceptability within the federal community. The NSEP administrative function needed two things then and still needs them now. It needs an accepted and important mission, and it needs the ability to accomplish goals valued by the larger community.³ In the words of a key informant, "FEMA was charged with a bastard function--that always takes a back seat." Some argued that it is a "limping" organization and that it is "out of its league" in claiming a role in the national security realm.

The "fix" they offered was that FEMA obtain a clearly articulated mandate, relevant to popular values, and with reasonable expectation of achievement. They suggested

³Philip Selznick, Leadership in Administration: A Sociological Interpretation (Evanston, Illinois: Row, Peterson, 1957).

that the fundamental problem transcending all others was an absence of a guiding philosophy for NSEP. They urged that FEMA rethink its NSEP mission--and stop doing what is neither important nor wanted. They said to move away from the low probability, high consequence emergencies because they are not relevant to the American people, especially in tight budget times.

Beyond the current administrative configuration, several strongly recommended the need to regain the "delegate agency funding" mechanism lost in 1973 and gain control of an emergency management budget presentation process within the Office of Management and Budget. They also recommended that FEMA either obtain cabinet status or that at least part of the emergency management organization be installed in the Executive Office.

There remains no "right" answer on the appropriate scope and organizational placement of NSEP--as a department, a sub-departmental organization, an independent agency, or a part of the Executive Office. This basic design factor remains as important, yet as unsettled, as ever. Without a formula or map, the determination of the scope of the NSEP administrative mechanism falls to the subjective judgment of the White House leadership of the period.

White House Institutional and Personal Support

The research found a lack of formal White House support that impaired the FEMA's operation by not establishing its legitimacy and worth. For FEMA, an agency without a stable history and without a reliable and strong constituency, the disappointing vertical relationship had serious organizational repercussions. White House support was critical to the vision. Within a political system, attributed power and the perceived distribution of power determine how priorities are set and resources are allocated by the departments and agencies, especially to functions other than their own.

With few exceptions, the general findings were that the authority and political importance of the organization structures like the EMC, EMPB, SIG, and PCC were neither clearly established by the White House nor accepted by the community of federal departments and agencies as their primary vehicle for policy determination. The intent here is not to be naïve about the range and depth of presidential time and interest. It is to reflect what the key informants observed as a difficulty of the independent agency in performing a task on behalf of the president when visible White House support is absent. The literature suggests that certain administrative mechanisms are suited to certain

functions. The research found that for reasons related to unclear assignments, territorial conflicts, and the tendency to maintain the *status quo*, the independent agency is not well suited for the discharge of a NSEP coordination role.

As for the other findings of the research, one is prompted to ask what might have been done differently or what might yet be done differently. The maxims of the *realpolitik* were confirmed as several key informants observed that the success of the agency will be determined by the character and ability of the director and by the belief of White House officials in the worth of the agency's mission.

The key informants offered insights and advice on what can be expected from FEMA in its current configuration. They urged that FEMA establish and foster a close-knit personal network based on mutual respect and affection with top White House, department, agency, and state political officials.⁴ Their *sine qua non* was to position politically astute and good managers in the leadership positions. They said that the director needed to be "an insider with access."

⁴It is significant to note that two key informants strongly disagreed that White House access was necessary for success. In fact, their view was that White House access would be the "fruit of success," that is, the outgrowth of success in performing its job.

With access to the White House, they suggested that the FEMA leadership actively "frame issues clearly for the policy crowd" and actively establish relevance to the president's program. They saw a need for FEMA to have "top-flight analytic horsepower" to deal with the "real" issues and become part of the president's national program. They felt that FEMA's value will be understood when it brings "value added" to the White House.

The status of the NSEP administrative mechanism within the federal community remains a function of variable White House interest. Thus, this basic design factor discussed in the fourth chapter remains as important yet unsettled as ever. The "chicken and egg" conundrum continues. To have influence, FEMA must be part of the national agenda; yet to be part of the national agenda, FEMA must have influence.

Coordination: The Philosopher's Stone

Chapter V discussed why the search for the right formula for a coordination system is the twentieth century quest for the "philosopher's stone." Scientific management theory would suggest that there is one best way. However, the literature does not agree on the meaning of the word, and key informants in this research effort did not agree on what FEMA's coordination mission was in 1978 or what the

redefined coordination mission has been since 1985. One school sees coordination in a structural framework, another in the *realpolitik* framework. The literature cues the coordinator on how to coordinate. The difficulty may be that coordination is difficult in the best of circumstances; and that, in the final analysis, no one wants to be coordinated. Without a willing community of interest, trust, harmony, and a common goal, coordination is out of reach. The problem seems to lie in the belief that coordination diminishes department and agency prerogatives. Everyone seems to hail the principle but not the practice of coordination.

Within the current administrative configuration key informants suggested that FEMA, with White House support, be given the mandate to issue general policy direction and to coordinate, *but not direct or control*, department and agency emergency operations. But coordination difficulties do not rest solely with the coordinator. They are shared with those being coordinated. While not from a key informant, a few remaining insights are especially pertinent to the coordination role. Committee members need vital programmatic ties to their own departments and agencies and they must be part of the decision-making processes of their agencies. The coordination aspect of their jobs needs to be

as important as the other primary aspects. Only in this way can the bonds of conciliation be determined and implemented effectively. The prestige and morale of the committees suffer if the representatives do not devote time and energy and if they are not senior representatives of their organizations. With credible leadership bringing status to the position of coordinator, focus, and credible, mutually satisfying participation, coordination of federal department and agency NSEP remains possible with the current administrative mechanism. The task is neither simple nor mechanical. It demands status, support, and credibly established administrative processes.

The key informants also suggested that FEMA would be better accepted as coordinator if it contributed something that departments and agencies valued. They offered ideas: perhaps service as a clearinghouse for information or as a reservoir of operations officers for crisis operations. FEMA could reconstitute itself as an agency of professional emergency managers, knowledgeable about other federal agencies' capabilities and authorities, and having communications capabilities that could be "rented" during any kind of national emergency to coordinate emergency response. It was clear that they saw the acceptable role as one of facilitating process, not dealing in substance. They

recommended that FEMA staff stay in the background, do the work, build the infrastructure for response, and let the departments and agencies be in charge. Interestingly, this concept varies significantly from the ideas for FEMA enhancement that were suggested in the discussions of a revitalized organization mission and significant White House support. It is as though the FEMA mission lends itself to division into a policy arm and an operations arm.

Implementation: The Missing Link

The research found that the "missing link" of implementation further impeded the realization of the NSEP vision of 1978. With FEMA's arguable mission and with the structure falling short in meeting basic organization design criteria, the case study of FEMA can be added to those other case studies of the literature on implementation short-falls. Public policy can rise or fall on the care taken with its implementation--so too can reorganization success rise or fall. Key informants had few suggestions for administrative implementation. They did urge that FEMA deal with the internal "stovepipe issue" that continues to impair strategic planning.⁵ They also urged that FEMA generate congressional support, state and local government support,

⁵Often repeated reference to the perception that FEMA programs have not yet been integrated.

and a "lot of good publicity." And as their third suggestion, they urged that FEMA management be mindful of internal operations and investments in the future. FEMA has been accused of "eating its own." Attention to internal FEMA culture and the welfare of employees will help the agency mature and return dividends many times over.

Thoughts on Further Research

The most relevant addition to this area of research would be a follow-on review of the service of Director Stickney and his management team as he carries the agency and the FEMA NSEP program into its second decade. The performance and productivity of the NSC Policy Coordinating Committee, the evolving status of the agency in the NSEP community, the director's conduct of the coordination function, and the nature of his White House relationship will be testimony to whether the organizational design and implementation difficulties identified in the FEMA early years can be overcome. FEMA's success or failure in establishing a major or useful role for itself in the Desert Shield/Desert Storm emergency of late 1990 and early 1991 should be examined in follow-on research. That emergency was an opportunity for FEMA to demonstrate the response capability for which it was to have planned.

Comparative studies of this coordination function with the coordination functions of the drug, intelligence, national security, personnel, and budget areas would be telling in identifying whether other coordination organizations experienced organizational design difficulties similar to those of FEMA. It has been suggested that the other functions can be contrasted with FEMA as being more relevant to government, more institutionalized, and more favorably manipulated in the national political agenda.

Another valuable research effort lending itself to a comparative methodology would be the comparison of legislated coordination programs with non-legislated coordination programs. Three lending themselves to comparison are the National Security Council, the Office of Personnel Management, and the Office of Management and Budget.

Concluding Remarks

The leadership of FEMA has an opportunity to address the design issues that were evident to the key informants. This must be done if the 1990's national strategy for emergency management is to be judged by history as a successful or hollow public policy. FEMA still is a maturing young agency entering only its second decade. New leadership has been installed and the national security

threat has shifted significantly, offering the opportunity for re-focusing the agency. Planners must keep focused on the goal of a rightly-conceived organization that embraces the whole system of relationships, communication, and objectives guiding the total work of the organization.

Whether or not the future holds a positive new vision on the choice of the administrative mechanism for NSEP depends on whether emergency management is topical and a part of the national agenda. NSEP policy has been withdrawn to the hands of those whose record suggests they do not strongly support it at this time. On its own, FEMA will not be able to right its course completely. FEMA needs high-level, visible, political support; that support may well depend on an emergency demanding it. Without an emergency, the attention and a reassessment will be unlikely. As noted by one of the key informants: "There is no interest in baseball in December."

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------|---|
| AO: | Administrative Order |
| BOB: | Bureau of the Budget |
| CIA: | Central Intelligence Agency |
| DCPA: | Defense Civil Preparedness Agency |
| DOC: | Department of Commerce |
| DOD: | Department of Defense |
| DOJ: | Department of Justice |
| DOS: | Department of State |
| EMC: | Emergency Management Council |
| EMPB: | Emergency Mobilization Preparedness Board |
| EO: | Executive Order |
| FDA: | Federal Disaster Assistance Administration |
| FCDA: | Federal Civil Defense Administration |
| FEMA: | Federal Emergency Management Agency |
| FPA: | Federal Preparedness Agency |
| GAO: | General Accounting Office |
| GSA: | General Services Administration |
| HUD: | Department of Housing and Urban Development |
| IG: | Interagency Group |
| NSC: | National Communications System |
| NGA: | National Governors' Association |
| NASA: | National Aeronautics and Space Administration |
| NEC: | National Emergency Council |

NRPB: National Resources Planning Board
NSC: National Security Council
NSD: National Security Directive
NSDD: National Security Decision Directive
NSEC: National System for Emergency Coordination
NSEP: National Security Emergency Preparedness
NSRB: National Security Resources Board
OCD: Office of Civil Defense
OCDL: Office of Civil Defense Liaison
OCDM: Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization
OCDP: Office of Civil Defense Planning
ODCM: Office of Defense and Civilian Mobilization
ODM: Office of Defense Mobilization
OEM: Office of Emergency Management
OEP: Office of Emergency Planning
OEP: Office of Emergency Preparedness
OMB: Office of Management and Budget
PCC: Policy Coordinating Committee
PRP: President's Reorganization Project
SBA: Small Business Administration
SIG: Senior Interagency Group
TREAS: Department of Treasury
WRB: War Resources Board

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