


August 13, 1969 ADMIS

MEMO 9/20

MEMORANDUM FOR DANIEL P. MOYNIHAN
FRANCIS H. DUEHAY
WALTER McCANN

FROM:  CHECKER FINN
RE: A-400 Project



Based on my discussion of August 1 with Messrs. Duehay and McCann, I want to make the following clarifications in my A-400 Proposal:

1. The underlying question that I will attempt to answer as I go is how the Education Subcommittee of the Urban Affairs Council functions as a tool of Presidential decision making. I will attempt a continuing analysis of this at the same time as I scrutinize my own actions as the staff member for the Subcommittee. The question will be generalized, when appropriate, to examine the usefulness of this model for the President and his immediate staff.
2. One broad gauged project that I may try to generate through the Subcommittee is the development of a thorough catalog of federal education programs and a critical analysis of them. It is clear that we have lists of programs but no real sense of what they actually do, how they work, who makes decisions, what projects get funded etc. I will pursue this at least to the point of finding out what would be entailed in assembling it.
3. An ongoing query of considerable interest is how the Urban Affairs Council and one of its subcommittees decide to take up particular subjects or take on particular projects. I will examine this process and work it

into my reports whenever it can be divulged.

4. Clearly, some matters such as these are purely internal White House decisions that should not be reported, even as part of a project such as this.

I will use my discretion, and will occasionally have to share my thoughts only with Dr. Moynihan and Mr. Hess.

5. I will try to examine the staff work of the Education Subcommittee in the context of what such staff work has meant for other U.A.C. subcommittees, and work toward a partial "model" of what it means to be the staff for such a Cabinet committee.

6. We have established that portions of my work on education for Dr. Moynihan that are not directly related to the Education Subcommittee will nevertheless comprise part of my project. But I understand that a "diary of what Check, Finn does each day" is not suitable for A-400 project, and will edit and channel my activities in such a way that they produce an intellectually respectable task. An interesting question that arises in this connection is how does the education-related work that come to Dr. Moynihan differ from the concerns of the Education Subcommittee itself? What does it mean in this Administration to be a Presidential assistant with a major responsibility for education? And what does it mean to be the "staff man on education" for such an assistant?

7. I will, in the coming months, attempt to set priorities among the various problems confronting federal educational policy making. I listed 10 of those problems in my proposal, but without suggesting their relative importance. I will try to do so, and to make these priorities realistic by

setting them in the context of the apparent education priorities of the President, Secretary Finch, Commissioner Allen and Dr. Moynihan. At the same time, I will try to keep my own personal sense of priorities, for it is interesting to ask how much the matters I pursue as part of my job jibe with those I would personally select. And how much effect I have on that process.

8. Two individuals I will get in touch with are Ralph Huitt, formerly of HEW and now at Brookings, and Sam Halperin.

9. I will try to be prompt in submitting my monthly journals. They will start with August, and go at least through January or February.

10. It is pretty clear that I have little more sense now than I did when I wrote the proposal of precisely what matters the Subcommittee will assay. It is not even clear that the Subcommittee will be active. But it appears that I will be, and that in the next month I can shape and focus my activities in such a way that the resulting "project" has substance, interest and at least a measure of uniqueness.

cc: Steve Hess