

THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION 1981-1985:

AGENDA FOR ABOLISHMENT

by

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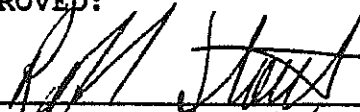
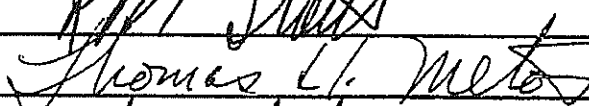
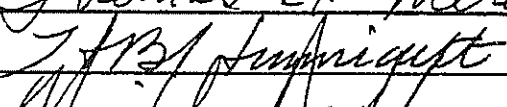
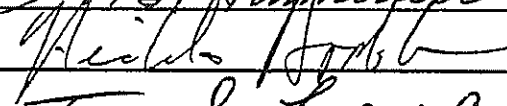
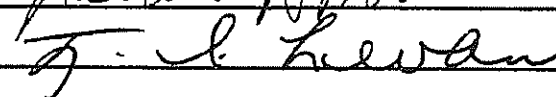
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## ABSTRACT

A reflection of the conservative American populace was captured in the Republican Platform of 1980, when President-elect Ronald Reagan promised to abolish the Departments of Energy and Education. But promises give way to realities, and Reagan's focus was fixed upon the significant major issues of the day, the economy and national defense. Congress was a key player. Yet Congress would not embroil itself in the issue after having so recently waged a bitter battle over the department's creation in 1979. Without legislation, the department was certain to remain. A group of far right extremists or ideologues, however, continued the banner waving of obliterating federal encroachment upon states' rights. Within the walls of the agency, the agenda was carried out. Secretary of Education Terrel Bell was an experienced Washington bureaucrat who was able to deflect some of the tactics devised by the ideologues as they sought strangle the department. The agenda to abolish the Department might have meandered slowly along crippling the organization had the Nation at Risk report not been published. This report created by Secretary Bell, and later claimed by the President as his own, focused attention on the growing concern of Americans about education. National attention riveted upon education, and from the lowest cabinet position, Secretary Bell found himself flying with the President on the campaign trail. With

the election of President Reagan to a second term in 1984, Secretary Bell resigned after four grueling years in Washington. It was only prior to the confirmation of William Bennett as Secretary of Education that the ideologues within the White House finally repressed the agenda. In a terse memo to the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources, President Reagan formally stated that he would no longer recommend the agenda for abolishment.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Government is not a machine, but a living thing. It is shaped to its functions by the sheer pressure of life.

Woodrow Wilson  
28th President

Republican Ronald Reagan swept into office defeating Democratic incumbent Jimmy Carter in 1980. The underlying theme of Reagan's campaign was less federal intervention. Particular emphasis was given to abolishing the Departments of Education and Energy, two conservative targets. Yet in 1989, after eight years in office, Ronald Reagan left the White House with both departments still intact. Why was one of the most popular Presidents of this century unable to do away with the United States Department of Education?

The intent of this study is to explore why the promise to dissolve the United States Department of Education was never fulfilled. What happened to the agenda for abolishment?

This chapter will be devoted to the scholarly heritage of the question of the study, first addressing decisionmaking in the executive branch, followed by the legislative branch, and the creation of two new agencies within the executive branch. The role of politics and the question of longevity will complete this chapter.



### The Executive Branch

The Office of The President of the United States of America complete with cabinet members and support staff holds a unique relationship to the other two branches of government, the Legislative and the Judiciary. The office is singular in its concept of power investment in one individual amidst a democracy and a system of checks and balances.

The American Presidency has been held by only forty-one men in 200 years. The American people have called upon their President to bear burdens for the nation. The complexity and rarity of the office have not lent themselves well to the casual observer, although every voter has an opinion of the man holding the office.

The President's first duty is to be the Chief of State, and then the Chief Executive. He can appoint and dismiss the hundreds of top officials who run the government. According to Clinton Rossiter in The American Presidency (1962), this role of executive causes the chief to have more problems than most. Much of it is because "his powers are simply not equal to his responsibilities" (Rossiter, 1971, p. 28).

The President also is Chief Legislator in providing leadership and guidance to Congress. The executive-legislative relationship depends on several variables including the political complexion of the President and Congress, the state of the Union and of the world, the vigor and tact of the President's leadership, and the mood of

Congress, "which is generally friendly near the beginning of a President's term and rebellious near the end" (Rossiter, 1962, p. 26). The President many times drafts the laws, introduces them and finds support among friends.

It was Franklin D. Roosevelt who created the modern Presidency, Harry S. Truman who defended it, and Dwight D. Eisenhower, who inherited it and made it acceptable to the American people (Rossiter, 1962, p. 137). Many biographers have delved into the histories of the Presidents in hopes of gaining insight as to why history remembers them. There are only a few, but growing, numbers of studies of the decisionmaking process in the White House. One such work is Graham T. Allison's work, Essence of Decision (1971) of how the White House handled The Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962.

The Cuban Missile Crisis during John F. Kennedy's administration formed the background for three rational models upon which decisionmaking could be based. Although the illustrations were that of the Cuban missile drama and foreign policy, it brought to light the workings of government during a crisis situation. The book stressed the human dimensions and intangible factors involved in governmental decisions. The three models follow with the questions that should be raised under each.

Model I is the Rational Policy Model which involved players who act from no consistent set of strategic objectives but rather account to various concepts of national

organization and personal goals and interests. The questions raised are: What is the problem? What are the alternatives? What are the strategic costs and benefits associated with each alternative? What is the observed pattern of national governmental values and shared axioms? What are the pressures in the "international strategic marketplace?"

Model II is the Organizational Process Model whose leader will ask the following questions: Of what organizations and organizational components does the government consist? What repertoires, and programs, do these organization have for making information about the problem available at various decision points in the government?

Bureaucratic Politics Model is Model III. The central questions posed include: Who plays? What determines each player's stand? What determines each player's relative influence? How does the game combine players' stands, influence, and moves to yield governmental decisions and actions?

Government decisions and actions are resultants of not a chosen solution, but rather "compromise, conflict, and confusion of officials with diverse interests and unequal influence" (Allison, 1971, p. 162). This applies to bureaucracies as well as to national defense issues.

Model III the Bureaucratic Politics provides a good framework from which to examine the question of this study.

A. Model III's first question is Who plays? Government

players can include chiefs such as the President, Secretary of State, Director of the CIA, and staffers, the immediate staff of each Chief, followers of the political appointees and permanent government officials, and Ad Hoc players or actors in the wider government game, Congress, the press, and interest group spokesmen. These all set limits upon what can be done.

Positions also define what players may and must do. The bureaucratic politics core is personality, how each person manages, his style, and how well he blends with others he works with (Allison, 1971, pp. 164-166).

B. What determines each player's stand? What determines his perceptions and interest that lead to a stand? The first are parochial priorities and perceptions, what sensitivities to certain issues, commitments to various projects, and personal standing with certain groups. Next, follow goals and interest, and finally are stakes and stands. Deadlines and faces of issues demand action by certain times, by major political speeches or by crisis.

C. Each player's impact on the results is determined by power or effective influence on government decision and actions. Power is an elusive blend of at least three elements: bargaining advantages, skill and will in using bargaining advantages, and other players' perceptions of the first two ingredients. Sources of power can originate from the position or formal authority, and actual control over

information that enables one to define the problem, identify options, and estimate feasibilities, and access.

D. What is the game? How are players' stands, influence, and moves combined to yield governmental decisions and actions? Action-channels are regularized means of taking government action on a specific kind of issue. They can structure the process by selecting the major players, determining their entrance and distributing particular advantages and disadvantages for each game. Rules of the Game stem from the Constitution, statutes, court interpretations, executive orders, conventions, and even culture. Some rules are explicit, other implicit, just as some are clear, and others fuzzy, stable and changing. Finally Action as Political Resultant illustrates that decisions and actions are neither the simple choice of a unified group, nor as a formal summary of leaders' preferences. Each players participates with the power at his discretion for outcomes that will advance his conception of national, organizational, group, and personal interests (Allison, 1971, pp. 169-173).

An interesting treatise of how political appointees and bureaucrats relate to one another is Hugh Heclo's book, A Government of Strangers (1977). Civil servants working in a bureaucracy regard political appointees as merely passing through the system. A seasoned bureaucrat has seen many a brash appointee try radically to change the system that existed before the politician arrived and will continue long

after the politician leaves. The temporary relationship between the two factions can be symbiotic or confrontational. The most usual form of rebellion from the bureaucrat is passivity. If bureaucrats wait long enough the appointee will be gone.

#### The Legislative Branch

The other actively involved player outlined by the Constitution is the Congress. How Congress arrives at conclusions is a "phenomenon of human behavior in a governmental setting" (Allison, 1971, p. 4). Aaron Wildavsky's classic work, Politics of the Budgetary Process (1964) states that the "budget becomes a link between financial resources and human behavior to accomplish policy objectives." The reason that Congress is more incremental than totally comprehensive each year is that it is easier to examine incremental increases rather than to create a wholly new budget. Eventually a constituency is built up to defend that part of the budget (Wildavsky, 1964, pp. 12, 18).

It is not what is in the estimate of the budget "but how good a politician you are that matters" and part of that is "doing good work" (Wildavsky, 1964, p. 64). Close personal relations are important during budget consideration time since political favors must be traded (Wildavsky, 1964, p. 79).

Rep. John Brademas gave further insight into the legislative process, particularly as it related to the education committee he served on during his tenure in Congress

in his book The Politics of Education: Conflict, and Consensus on Capitol Hill (1986). He observed President Reagan's reduction of the federal role in education. Yet he stated in a study done by the Educational Testing Service, that "federal involvement in education ha[d] not, as alleged, imposed harsh burdens on the states, but on the contrary, ha[d] strengthened state education agencies" (Brademas, 1986, p. 84).

The congressional process of law making is fragmented and so complex that it is "impossible to tell how many persons, opinions and influences" have molded a bill (Brademas, 1986, p. 14). The skillful building of coalition in Congress "requires patience, diligence and sensitivity to the constraints (constituents, interest groups, party leaders and conscience) in which one's colleagues operate" (Brademas, 1986, p. 25). It is a long and laborious task knowing that "very few ideas become bills, and very few bills become laws" (Brademas, 1986, p. 39). The final note was that one will "search in vain for theorems of legislative behavior that will hold true in all times and in all places" (Brademas, 1986, p. 58).

As for the influence of the President in Congress, this depends upon his personal style, popularity and party control in Congress. This is more and more being swayed by money and the media in an election (Brademas, 1986, p. 54).

### Creating an Agency in the Executive Branch

In recent legislative and educational history, there are two examples of creation of executive branch agencies by the legislature, The National Institute of Education (NIE) and the United States Department of Education, cabinet level.

NIE was formed under the Nixon administration. The politics involved were one of sheer survival, not finances. As a new agency it faced clarification of its mission, and its leadership lacked decisiveness which ultimately hurt the agency (Sproul, Weiner, Wolf, 1978, p. 1).

One of the miscues made by the managers of NIE was that they interpreted "the act of creation as a sign that important people [were] interested in the organization and consider[ed] it significant" when in reality the opposite might have been true (Sproul, et al., 1978, p. 1).

The creation of a new agency is no sure testament to its importance. Nor is it a sign that people agree on its goals. Enthusiastic expressions of high expectations may well mask either the absence of any operational definition of agency goals or the presence of serious conflict over them.... Who has a deep and lasting stake in the success of the organization? What rewards do they seek for their support? Who wrote the "minority reports" opposing the creation? On what basis could opponents and skeptics be persuaded to be friends? These are questions that the managers of a new organizations must place at the top of their list for exploration in the early days (Sproul, et al., 1978, p. 1).

Creation of a cabinet level agency was treated in Beryl A. Radin and Willis D. Hawley's book, The Politics of Federal Reorganization, Creating the United States Department



of Education (1988). The entire policy process is full of paradoxes. It is both "predictable and chaotic." Although formal authority is necessary, it is the informal sources of power that defines most relationships. At best the system is "fragmented and pluralistic" pulled along by relatively "predictable behavior of multiple actors who must deal with the imperatives of political demands, time, and deadlines." The analysis of the creation and implementation of the Department of Education had a policy process that contained distinct and sequential stages which often overlapped (Radin & Hawley, 1988, p. 219).

The culture of analysis and politics collide. The analyst pursues information for its own sake. The politician seeks for agreement and treat information "as a political resource" (Radin & Hawley, 1988, pp. 226-227). Ultimately all "shifts in organizational structures are political choices" (Radin & Hawley, 1988, p. 232).

#### Politics

The creation of an agency under the President heavily involves politics. Politics simply defined means "who gets what and how much" (Wildavsky, 1964, p. 8). One of the first studies involving the politics of education dealt with "the amount of money state governments made available for general aid to public schools [was] determined politically." This was found in Bailey, Frost, Marsh, and Wood's book Schoolmen and Politics, a Study of State Aid to Education in the Northeast

(1962). Prior to that time school systems and school problems had rarely been studied as "political phenomena." This was due in part to the myth that schools should be "kept out of politics" (Bailey, et al., 1962, preface). Such a notion was formed in the early part of the century when ruthless and corrupt local and state politicians often hired and fired school officials at will. It was also steeped in the fact that close alliance to one party would have disastrous long-range effects should the party be driven out of power (Bailey, et al., 1962, p. viii).

Education has a low visibility. To be viable, education must link with governors and legislators. The ultimate decisions are not determined by the recommendations of the education agencies, but by political decisions. Also schoolmen must unite rather than splinter into factions (Bailey, et al., 1962, pp. 29, 52). No outsider can completely sense the subtleties, or master the details of interaction and of political behavior.

The Northeast educational finance for public schools was not determined by professional educators or the hopes and expectations of parents and teacher.

State aid to local school districts in the Northeast is the outcome of extended and highly complex political struggles which involve the interaction of group interests, parties, boards, commissioners, and departments of education, governors, legislative leaders and followers, courts, academic scribblers, opinion leaders in the mass media, and a host of lesser individuals and institutions (Bailey, et al., 1962, p. 210)

### Are Government Organizations Immortal?

The underlying question of the study is why was the Department of Education not abolished? Does the interplay of the executive and legislative branches determine longevity? How much does politics embroil itself in the issue. Are there other reasons involved? Herbert Kaufman in Are Government Organizations Immortal? (1976) may lend insight into this question.

Kaufman's study involved government agencies from 1923 to 1973, a span of fifty years. The study did not include field offices, independent agencies less directly under Presidential supervision, or special boards, committees, and commissions. The total number was 421. It was difficult to assess the birth of an organization, since a few organizations were ambiguous in origin, and also some agencies may have had a long history under a different name. Those that originated and died within that fifty year span such as the Civilian Conservation Corps were not tabulated. Kaufman stated seven basic complexities that contributed to perpetuation of an organization and seven that contributed to its demise.

#### Factors Favoring Long Agency Life

1. A statutory base for an agency is reason for a more secure establishment rather than a departmental order or presidential executive order. One would probably infer that

presidential executive order. One would probably infer that when a law is intact it will remain there for a long time. Many departments evolved into statutory underpinning from their beginnings as a small agency. Because executive or administrative steps are more expeditious than legislative action, it may be more readily used than legislative action.

2. Sponsors and protectors of the program go from the originators of the bills to protectors eventually converting other committee persons and support staff. Senators enjoy a longer tenure and therefore will protect their "pet project." Also a cooperative agency may be of benefit to an elected official with the reciprocal obligations set in motion.

3. The size of the federal budget lends favor to an institution. Because the budget is so large, Congress is better off working in incremental adjustments rather than creating new programs each year. An agency will usually operate within the same limitations as the previous year. Slashes approaching total elimination are unknown for all practical purposes.

4. Some agencies such as Postal Service, the Veterans Administration, and General Services Administration have been deliberately insulated and are immune to executive supervision. Also because political appointees are usually gone before many changes can be formulated, time is on the agency's side. Delaying action is tantamount to sabotaging any changes.

5. Job preservation is a highly motivating factor. People develop strong organizational loyalty and commitment to programs. This coupled with the leader's reputation being tied to their agency, keeps people rallying around the agency. Opponents may resort to a type of warfare by openly attacking and embarrassing their competitor.

6. Outside clientele become a surprising supporter oftentimes because they recognize the regulatory agency is also a protecting agency. A truly competitive marketplace is absolutely ruthless.

7. Professional or trade associations round out the supporters that will defend their respective agencies. One reason is partly symbolic. The other is political, creating a stronger voice for the associations (Kaufman, 1976, pp. 3-11).

#### Hazards to Agency Survival

1. There is a two-edged sword with a statutory base. It is protective, but it also creates inflexibility of the organization to respond to changes in the environment. Adaptation is not always possible as an agency copes with rules that restrict its freedom of action. Also the clientele slows down the change process by being involved in the ultimate decisionmaking.

2. The patchwork or fragmented nature of government creates competition within the bureaucracy for similar tasks. Part of this has evolved because of the political climate at

the time, such as the reluctance of a senator to place a "pet" program in an already overloaded agency. Usually there is at least one other agency involved in the same services. An example is the Bureau of Reclamation and the Corps of Engineers which have many similar capacities and are both involved in natural resources protection, development, and management. So although there is no outside competition as in business, there is still an agency within the bureaucracy that can compete for the job of the organization.

3. Competition for the budget is increased when there are competing branches doing the same kind of thing. If an organization starts to lose out financially, there is a good chance that the agency will decline.

4. Sometimes the circumstance of the birth of an organization may have built-in obsolescence. For example if a job is created for political favors, or as a place to exile an enemy, or is unable to build a constituency in Congress and in the public, its existence is unlikely to continue beyond the tenure of the intended beneficiary. Other times the agency is created only for a service, or there may be unrealistic expectations, or mistakes made in the political arena, or underestimating financial or personnel needs.

5. Natural enemies accompany each agency. The more conscientiously an agency does its job, the more surely it will rouse critics and adversaries. The welfare agencies will enjoy the backing of their clientele if they are lenient in

the administration, but meet the wrath of other groups denouncing toleration of freeloading. It is a delicate tightrope.

6. Party politics and factions and the normal oscillations within the parties are a potential hazard. For this fact some organizations were intended to be insulated from partisan politics to insure steady growth and planning and investment.

In the earlier days, the bureaus could be brought into policy alignment simply by changing the staff. When total staffing became an impossibility, the idea of abolishing a department took hold. However, the energy required to abolish a department may not be worth the rewards.

It is not a simple thing to destroy an ongoing agency; the sustaining forces are something to reckon with, and the increment of additional obedience obtained by destruction will not always be worth the expenditure of political capital it entails. So the incentives for an incoming administration to strike out with a meat ax at all existing agencies are sharply checked.

7. Legislative protection has not withered, but it has been challenged by the competing imperatives of greater managerial flexibility for the purposes of efficiency and adaptation to changing times.

Although the odds favor that the agency will probably survive, organizational identity is far less secure than it

once was. The Department of the Treasury has been in continuous existence since 1789. On the other hand, others that lasted only a dozen years include the National Youth Administration, the Civilian Conservation Corps, and the works Progress Administration of New Deal days (Kaufman, 1976, pp. 12-22).

#### Kaufman's Findings

After positing his ideas, and tabulating the data, Herbert Kaufman argues that certain general statements can be made about government organizations' longevity.

The government organization examined do indeed display impressive powers of endurance.. There were 175 organizations in the 1923 sample, nearly 85% or 148 still existed in 1973. Only 27% or a little over 15% disappeared. Many of the agencies were at the same status they were in 1923.

Births of new organizations increased sufficiently after 1923 to balance off the aging of the large number of older, enduring units. The ages stayed pretty much the same. It was the birth of new organizations that kept the age average to 27. There was only a modest upsurge in the median age even after a half a century lapse of time.

Staff organizations increased a little more rapidly than line units. Line units were usually defined as those that produce the characteristic end-products or services of the organization to which they belonged. Staff units provided products or services that facilitated the work of the line



components but did not in themselves constitute the major output of the parent organization. In 1923, 64 percent of the 175 organizations in the sample were in the line. By 1973 the proportion of line units in the 394 organizations in the sample had declined to under 58 percent. At the same time staff units rose from 28 to 38 percent during the same 50 years interval. Why the line units died is not easily explained, but the rise in staff units may be answered through the fact that many administrators felt that their influence on their subordinates has been diluted. To reassert control, they increased the number of staff units in their own offices.

Statutes were giving way to executive and administrative forms of action as the legal instruments by which agencies are created. Only 21 percent of the 246 organization born after 1923 were established by statute. By contrast, department orders created 62 percent, reorganization plans another 11 percent, executive order 4 percent, and other forms, the remaining 1 percent.

Statutes did not contribute much more to organizational durability than did other instruments of establishment. It would seem that organizations created through statutes enjoyed a higher protection than organizations given life by other forms. Groups created by departmental action went from 33 to 44 percent of the group that died. However, statutory units are still vulnerable to elimination by nonstatutory action. Of the 27 deaths of organizations covered in the

study, 18 occurred through departmental action, three by executive order, and one by reorganization plan; only five were accomplished by statute.

Many of the trends observed in all the organizations taken together manifested themselves also in individual departments, but not all trends appeared in all departments. This finding applied to only seven departments in both the 1923 and 1973 readings. Units established by statute declined. The proportion of staff units went up. There was a weak tendency toward higher survival rates for older organizations. The variation among subsets was great, so inferences must be drawn with great caution.

The growth of the executive branch, as exemplified by the organizations covered in this study, was not a steady process but proceeded in spurts. As the Twentieth Century approached, the agencies tended to grow in diversity and intensity. The growth seemed to coincide with Presidents commonly regarded as strong and innovative, and the quiescent periods especially in the middle and late twenties also coincided with other indicators of inactivity. There were exceptions, however. Party affiliation was not directly involved although fewer Republicans were in power during growth periods.

Deaths, too, were unevenly spaced, and they occurred at a lower rate than business failures, though not at a trivial rate. Deaths occurred in clusters. Government organizations studied, did enjoy a lower death rate than business, although

the sample was smaller than business. Nonetheless it was an indication, although perhaps underrated.

Among the organizations that died, six of the seven hazards to organizational existence appeared as causes of death. Overall, however, chance seemed to have played a large part in their termination. Twenty-seven organizations went out of existence between 1923 and 1973. At least one hazard played a significant role in the death of the organization. The one hazard that does not play a significant role is the alleged rigidity of statutes which would have impeded agency adjustments as the environment shifted. The major causes of death were competition, changes in leadership and policy, obsolescence resulting from routinization and adherence to past methods, and completion of mission. As for age, the older ones tended to fare better although the author was open to this question.

When the organizations alive in 1972 were arranged according to date of birth and the cumulative numbers alive in each presidential term were plotted, the curve produced assumed an exponential form. Built upon information gathered beginning with 1923 to 1973, the graph would show steeper slopes and higher totals showing more organizations in existence than ever (Kaufman, 1976, pp. 34-64).

Were these factors influential in the continuing existence of the Department of Education?

### The Study

The Executive Branch led by the President is greatly influenced by the personality of the man in the Oval Office. How he chooses to utilize his powers with Congress and within his own branch is a study in politics, or value judgments.

Education is not immune to the foibles and designs of politics. The creation of the Department of Education in 1979, and the campaign promise to abolish the department in 1980 provide the background for this study. Why was one of the most popular and persuasive Presidents of this century not able to fulfill his campaign promise to dismantle the United States Department of Education?

An historical brief of the Department of Education will follow in the next chapter. An introduction into President Reagan's political leadership, followed by a chapter on Congress, and Education Secretary Terrel H. Bell's contributions to the demise of the agenda will form the next chapters. The final section will be one of discussion and conclusion.

## CHAPTER II

### THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

#### The First Department of Education

The United States Department of Education has as a cabinet level body existed only since 1979. Its predecessor, however, had its origins in the 1800's, with the critical event of creation occurring during the 1860's.

Although education is not mentioned specifically in the Constitution, the founding fathers were deeply dedicated to education. George Washington favored a national university. Thomas Jefferson proposed that the "federal government bring the University of Geneva's faculty to the United States to provide quality education to young Americans." Several began working toward a national education policy even before the Constitution was written (Sniegowski, 1988, p. 21).

However, despite the tendencies of men like George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Franklin, many Americans were suspicious of too much federal control over their lives. American education was viewed largely as a purely private matter by the cultured elite and church leaders. It was a "right to be ignored, planned, or chosen with as much personal privilege as birth, baptism, marriage and burial. Moreover, it was believed, the average child...needed only a few elementary grades of education...to earn a living wage" (Kursh, 1965, p. 5).

America entered the Nineteenth Century with a fragmented and uneven educational system. Appalled by the lack of uniformity, men like Horace Mann and Henry Barnard spearheaded a movement in favor of common schools and taxation to support the schools. A consistent theme of the movement was the formation of a central educational agency.

Early arguments for the establishment of a federal educational agency included those who sought a complete Department of Education with cabinet representation, and others who felt it should be housed in the Smithsonian Institution established in 1846 through an act of Congress (Kursh, 1965, p. 8).

really? — Talk of a federal office was drafted onto a proposal in 1854 but the Civil War diverted any immediate action. Congress surprisingly, however, during this time did pass one of the first federal aid to education bills. On July 2, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Morrill Act which formed the basis of today's land-grant colleges.

The common school movement gained advocates as more and more persons felt federal intervention could guarantee equalized opportunities. The largest block of opposition, however, came from the Southern states and their advocacy of states' rights. But after the Civil War these states lost much of their unified voting block.

Before he was elected the 20th President, James A. Garfield was a Latin and Greek school teacher and college president.

As a representative from Ohio, he became the voice in Congress for passage of this national educational agency. Opponents mainly feared federal control of all of education. The arguments waged on for more than a year through various committees. President Andrew Johnson himself believed that the states held the right to control internal affairs (Sniegowski, 1988, p. 26). After persuasion by Senator James Dixon of Connecticut, President Andrew Johnson did sign the Organic Act., H.R. 276 on March 2, 1867. Thus a non-cabinet level Department of Education was created.

The main task of the newly created department was the collection and distribution of facts. Taken from the text of the Organic Act, the department was to to "aid the people of the United States in the establishment and maintenance of efficient school systems and otherwise promote the cause of education through the country."

The next matter at hand was the appointment of the first Commissioner of Education. The commissioner's salary was \$4,000 and his staff consisted of three clerks paid \$2,000, \$1,800, and \$1,600 respectively who could be appointed and removed by the commissioner. Several prominent men would have accepted the president's offer, but only two men clearly emerged, Henry Barnard and Emerson White. White was a "quiet intellectual man, the editor of a respected educational journal, and an ambitious, able administrator." White actively campaigned for the job, partly because he had been

defeated for renomination at the Union party's state convention and needed employment. Barnard also actively entered the race because he thought that he deserved it (Warren, 1974, pp. 91-93).

A third unannounced candidate entered himself into the running. Edward Neill, one of President Johnson's secretaries, was a college graduate and Presbyterian clergyman, who served as first superintendent of public instruction for the Minnesota Territory from 1851 to 1853. According to Donald Warren in To Enforce Education (1974), Neill was Barnard's true competitor, not White.

Donald Warren also pointed to several criticisms lodged against Barnard which later may have proven his downfall. First Barnard undertook "too many schemes." His time and the major portion of his interest and energy were given to his Journal of Education, to the point that he could not hold a permanent position after 1855. Secondly, his frequent illnesses caused him to cut short his term as chancellor of the University of Wisconsin. This he claimed was attributed to his "overwork...almost constant headaches...and a distressing instability of [his] nervous system" resulting in acute diarrhea. Yet through his recuperative periods, he continued work on his beloved Journal (Warren, 1974, pp. 96, 103).

Although Commissioner Barnard worked under limited funds with a severely restricted staff, he created his own



difficulties. In his first report to Congress, he committed an administrative and political blunder. He read the Department of Education mission through his own plans and consequently procrastinated the report's release, being late nearly one year. His frequent absences from Washington prevented him from garnering personal support from Congress. This absence was also heightened by his distaste to "waste time on social calls, social receptions, banalities of conversation and politics." Most members of Congress did not even know he was around, and those that did were hostile to him (Krush, 1965, p. 16).

Barnard failed to perceive warnings that the agency's survival remained an open question from the start. Criticism of the department became mounted and were fueled by Barnard's deficiencies as an administrator and his frequent illnesses and retreats to Hartford. Edward Neill, appointed chief clerk, also undermined Barnard's position in his own quest to become Commissioner of Education (Warren, 1974, pp. 122-143).

It was a miserable beginning. Consequently, in fiscal year 1869-70, the annual appropriations for H.R. 1672 were drastically reduced, thus crippling the department even further. The measure passed 81 to 42, cutting Barnard's salary by one-third (Warren, 1974, p. 142). According to Stephen Sniegowski, historian for the Office of Education Research Institute, Barnard who had worked hard to establish

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the national education agency, "nearly caused its elimination" (Sniegowski, 1988, p. 31).

Even before Barnard's departure, it was known the "agency must make a new start or die" (Warren, 1974, p. 151). The department had lost its independent status and been transferred to the Department of the Interior. With the election of President Grant, the opportunity for a new commissioner was forestalled by the reappointment of Barnard until Grant could decide upon a logical choice.

Grant chose well. John Eaton of Tennessee was "a popular, prominent, and pragmatic Civil War brigadier general who knew how to handle politicians and let it be known that he was serious about education" (Kursh, 1965, p. 17). He was a personal friend of Grant's and a staunch Republican as well as eminently qualified. At the time of his appointment, he was serving as Tennessee's State Superintendent of Public Instruction. As commissioner, Eaton won friends in Congress, and was then able to expand the staff from 3 to 38, the library to 18,000 volumes from the original 100, and have educational statistics analyzed as well as compiled. He ended his 16 year tenure in 1886, the longest of any commissioner to date. Under Eaton, the Department of Education's existence was virtually assured (Kursh, 1965, p. 18).

In 1870 the department was moved to the Bureau of Interior, and its name changed to the Office of Education.

There it remained for 70 years under various titles and commissioners.

The greatest expansion of the department occurred when President Lyndon B. Johnson inaugurated his War on Poverty programs to help the poor and disadvantaged in the 1960's. The budget skyrocketed from \$1.5 billion in 1965 to \$3.4 billion in 1966, and the staff grew from 2,113 to 3,198 (Sniegoski, 1988, pp. 46-47). By 1967, the Office of Education still a part of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW), had a budget exceeded only by that of Defense. Education had the money, the programs and personnel; it did not have a cabinet spokesperson. In theory the Assistant Secretary for Education became the highest federal education official. The average commissioner's tenure, however, during the mid-60's was 17 months (Mitzel, 1982, p. 1980).

The role of the federal government in education became prominent. Controversial legislation focused upon racial discrimination, and bussing was increasingly unpopular. The Bilingual Education Act of 1968 also proved highly controversial for advocating the teaching of children in their native language as well as English. Added to the already touchy situation was Title IX of the Higher Education Act of 1972 which forced colleges to allocate more monies for women's athletics.

State and local officials feared a great federal intrusion upon areas that traditionally had been reserved for the

states. By 1979 when Congress created Department of Education by the passage of P.L. 96-98, a large segment of the population opposed further federal intervention. This segment included higher education groups, and school boards as well as conservatives.

#### Creation of a Cabinet

President-elect Jimmy Carter promised the educational sector a cabinet level Department of Education during his campaign. While he did not feel he had any political debts to the special interest groups who dominated Washington, he did feel that he owed a great deal to the black community and to the teachers of the country who helped him win by a narrow margin. It was the first time in 119 years that the National Education Association (NEA) with 1.8 million members, had publicly endorsed a presidential candidate, and also contributed \$400,000 to Carter's campaign (Radin & Hawley, 1988, p. 41).

One puzzlement was his appointment of Joseph Califano as Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare since Califano favored keeping HEW intact. However, as a Washington-based attorney, Califano understood the flow of power, also having served as Domestic Advisor to President Lyndon Johnson. Being ethnic, able and a friend of Vice-President Mondale helped his appointment (Dobelle, 1987, pp. 40-46).

Carter was slow to fulfill his campaign promise. In late March, nearly three months after the inauguration, the

president of NEA expressed his anxiety about Carter's promise and set a meeting for April 27. It was Carter's Domestic Policy Advisor, Stuart Eizenstat, who kept Carter's focus on education, often reminding Carter of the 1.8 million NEA members (Dobelle, 1987, pp. 51-53).

Opposition against the creation of a cabinet post began to surface. As early as April 25, Secretary Califano wrote a memo against a separate Department of Education on the basis that the President needed less, not more people reporting to him. Albert Shanker, President of American Federation of Teacher (AFT), affiliate of the AFL-CIO, also stated his opposition, partly out of fear that NEA would dominate the new department (Dobelle, 1987, pp. 54-58).

Uncertain, Carter formed a President Reorganization Project (PRP) to blueprint the process for reorganizing the executive branch. There was an Organization Studies Division located within the Human Resources Study team to work on the study and analysis of the options for a new cabinet. Patricia Gwaltney, a 31-years-old career bureaucrat, headed the group comprised of nearly all career service people from OMB and HEW. The creation of a department dominated the committee's work although there were efforts to address health and safety. Their search began in earnest in the summer of 1977. The committee was made of relatively young and inexperienced staffers who did not have the political clout or understanding

to anticipate the political ramifications of their study (Radin & Hawley, 1988, p. 58).

President Carter was distracted with voter registration, breeder reactors, and the impending treaty with Panama and SALT. Chief of Staff Hamilton Jordan constantly urged Carter to focus on one issue rather than a multiplicity of items. But Carter's management style was that of an engineer, demanding that all matters pass through the President's scrutiny. Major decisions were bottlenecked with the President. Carter himself explained his mode of management.

Exact procedure is derived to some degree from my scientific or engineering background--I like to study first all the efforts that have been made historically toward the same goal, to bring together advice or ideas from as wide or divergent points of view as possible, to assimilate them personally or with a small staff, to assess the quality of the points of view...I like to be personally involved so that I can know the thought processes that go into the final decisions and also so that I can be a spokesman, without prompting, when I take my case to the people, the legislature or Congress (Carter, 1982, p. 128).

Some did not know if the study was a delaying tactic or a way of backing out of the campaign promise (Radin & Hawley, 1988, p. 57). Concurrent to the PRP was Secretary Califano's small, secret task force to reorganize HEW. Because it was viewed as a controversial move, meetings were confined to five people who were sworn to secrecy (Radin & Hawley, 1988, p. 58). Contrary to the popular notion that the education bill was Carter's pet project, Carter had ambivalent feelings regarding the bill. The Department of Education's creation

was not on the list of priorities for immediate action with the reorganization (Radin & Hawley, 1988, p. 57). For whatever reasons that existed, he did not make public his stance until others pressured him. Part of this ambivalence may have been because of Carter's need for overdosage of information. Carter may have also felt that he was caught between two powerful factions and did not want to be caught in the cross fire between Secretary of HEW Califano who was against the creation of a separate cabinet, and NEA who wanted a campaign promise fulfillment. Carter may have also felt undecided about whether to endorse the narrow legislation bringing in only a handful of programs under the cabinet, or the broader bill that Sen. Ribicoff (R-Conn.) was espousing. Or it may have simply not been politically expedient to endorse the creation of a new cabinet office.

#### The 95th Congress

As the PRP committee readied its proposal, OMB Director Bert Lance resigned on September 21, 1977, responding to allegations about his financial dealings with an Atlanta bank. After Lance left, there was a great deal of skepticism in general about the reorganization among the White House staff (Radin & Hawley, 1988, p. 69).

The proposal submitted to Carter in November 1977 emphasized alternatives that moved toward a broad Department of Education cutting across education and human resources development activities but excluding large cash transfer

programs in social welfare and health areas. Included were Head Start, Child Nutrition, Science Education, and Indian Education, which all later became highly controversial. Although the PRP consulted with more than 200 interest groups, it found difficulty in evaluating the importance of those consultations. Many interest groups demanded status quo. Also there was a complex web of relationships on Capitol Hill that extended "far beyond the reorganization issue" (Radin & Hawley, 1988, pp. 75-77).

PRP failed in that it did not take into account the most difficult problem in federal education policy--the question of the extent of the federal role in education (Radin & Hawley, 1988, p. 77). Within the White House itself were those who were politically expedient in their viewpoints and wanted as narrow a department as possible to eliminate the extensive political bargaining a broader department would entail. The only reason the staff supported the proposal was because it met the administration's campaign commitment (Radin & Hawley, 1988, p. 81). Others of an analytical persuasion encouraged a broad representation so that more efficiency could be achieved. Carter supported the broad program, otherwise he felt the results would not be worth the effort (Radin & Hawley, 1988, p. 82).

Carter had several opportunities to announce his public support of such a creation including the State of the Union Address, a special Presidential message on education policy



or a statement of speech by the Vice President. Carter finally agreed to make an informal response to a press question (Radin & Hawley, 1988, p. 84). Soon after editorials began lambasting the idea of a cabinet level department of education.

The education study group within PRP began compiling a list of possible program clusters that should and could be included within the department. A political strategy was devised. And the heat was turned on.

At a hearing on February 2, 1978, Califano did not refute a statement he had written earlier that he opposed the creation of the department. In other subcommittee appearances, he continued to fuel the opponents of the department. This brought an official retort from new OMB Director from Frank McIntyre (who had replaced Bert Lance) to the Vice President. To add to matters, reports were circulating that the relationship between the White House and Sen. Ribicoff was strained (Radin & Hawley, 1988, pp. 91-92).

Historically, the House had been less enthusiastic than the Senate in support of the creation of the Department of Education. Again the House was slow to respond. Representative Jack Brooks, chairman of the House Government Operations Committee, was less than anxious to sponsor the bill but was finally convinced by President Carter to introduce it as a companion to S.991. But Brooks' support for

the measure was never very enthusiastic (Radin & Hawley, 1988, p. 93).

While the PRP was struggling to determine the various components of the department, interest groups were rallying against the bill. The opposition included the American Federation of Teachers as well as a number of labor unions, some anti-union groups, the United States Catholic Conference, private school interests, and a batch of individuals who represented both liberal and conservative political ideologies.

Minority communities had a major stake in Head Start. They felt that Head Start was a success and that in its present form was cost effective. Letters were written and distributed to key members of Congress, and later telegrams from 12 key civil rights leaders were sent opposing inclusion in the department (Radin & Hawley, 1988, p. 100).

While Head Start supporters were arguing for exclusion, the vocational rehabilitation programs were stumping for inclusion in the new department. The reasoning was that it had to compete with too many other less prestigious programs within HEW (Radin & Hawley, 1988, p. 101). Support for the creation was more organized than the opposition.

The White House promised to make its position on the department officially known by April 14, 1978, at the Ribicoff Governmental Affairs Committee. This forced the White House's hand as to its political stance. McIntyre would be the

presenter, and therefore drafted a memo to the President on April 11th for approval. Because of a busy calendar meeting with Romanian President Nicolae Ceausescu on the 12th and 13th, Carter did not have a meeting with McIntyre until 7:30 a.m. on the morning of the hearing. Carter told McIntyre to rewrite the testimony that had been prepared for a narrow department, and instead present an argument for a broad Department of Education. The turnabout may have been influenced by reorganization adviser Richard Pettigrew. McIntyre arrived a half hour late for the hearing. The uncertainty that accompanied the testimony cast a sense of indecisiveness over the administration's position. Sen. Ribicoff, however, was pleased with the shift. PRP had felt that the President had been consistent all along but there were members of Congress and their staffs, interest group representatives, and executive agency staff who felt shocked and betrayed at what seemed to be a reversal of the administration's position (Radin & Hawley, 1988, p. 109).

Hearings on the new proposal were being conducted by Senator Abraham Ribicoff's committee. There was some disagreement as to whether Califano, who opposed the creation, should appear. A compromise was reached and Undersecretary Hale Champion appeared before the committee and submitted Califano's letter.

Eight Senate committee hearings were devoted to which programs should be transferred to Education. Five programs

created the most controversy: child nutrition from the Department of Agriculture, vocational rehabilitation, and Head Start from outside the Education Division in HEW, Indian schools from Interior, and science education from National Science Foundation. Within each of these programs were constituencies who had allies in the Senate. Most effective were those from grass roots level who made their feelings known to their representatives.

As a result of the interest group initiatives and congressional pressure, the bill which emerged from the Senate was a much trimmer version than either proposal of Sen. Ribicoff or the administration. However, the bill was reported unanimously in mid-July to the full Senate. The Department of Education Organization Act passed the Senate by a vote of 72-11 on September 18, 1978.

The Senate approved the bill by a large margin, but the battle was different in the House. The day after the Ribicoff bill passed the Senate, H.R. 13343, the companion to S. 991, was introduced by Reps. Jack Brooks (D-Texas), Michael Blouin (D-Iowa) and Frank Thompson (D-NJ). Opposition was from both the conservative and liberal camps. Concern was voiced over the political payoff to NEA and the growing encroachment of the federal government that would be a "colossal bureaucratic blunder wasting tens of millions of dollars" (Radin & Hawley, 1988, p. 124). Others saw it

fragmenting the HEW coalition in Congress and thus diminishing the overall federal support for education.

The AFT was the most vocal opponent of the bill, stating that it might not be an improvement in federal education, that policy could not be implemented in isolation, and that overlap could continue. More fundamental was AFT's long-standing rivalry with the NEA. Because AFT was an AFL-CIO affiliate, it aligned more closely with labor and thus had more influence in the House.

The Education Coalition, an ad hoc group of private, nonprofit advocacy groups which had worked together on civil rights and education issues during the 1960's and 1980's, opposed the bill. It included such groups as the Children's Foundation, the Children's Defense Fund, the Alabama Council on Human Rights, the Federal Education Project, the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund. They were spurred on by the accomplishments of Head Start. The United States Catholic Conference also opposed the department mainly upon the premise that it would be dominated by public school interests.

In early August 1978, the strategy of the opponents was to attach as many amendments to the legislation to make the department unacceptable to the firmest supporters. Twenty amendments were added before the subcommittee voted. The vote turned out to be an easy victory for advocates. Reps. Benjamin S. Rosenthal (D-New York), and John Conyers (D-Michigan) were the only ones opposing. Brooks had won over

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the seven other subcommittee members. It then reached the full committee the next day. Again the tactic of attaching too many amendments was adopted. This delayed the vote which might have endangered it ever coming to the floor for action. A filibuster by amendment began. On the third day, Vice President Mondale intervened by pressing the committee for speedier action. On the fourth and final day, the committee approved the Department of Education Bill 27-15.

Although NEA had been unable to thwart the House opponents' strategies, it shifted into high gear after the Labor Day recess hoping that the bill would reach the House floor before Congress adjourned. NEA leaders met individually with each member of the Rules Committee in Washington individually to grant an open rule to hear debate, and local affiliates lobbied congressional members in their home districts. By a vote of 9-6 the rule was granted. The rule stipulated that no amendments to the bill would be in order except those germane amendments printed in the Congressional Record one calendar day prior to the offering of such provisions. Thirty amendments were dumped into the Record. The bill was scheduled for floor debate on September 29th but was pushed aside by Speaker Thomas O'Neill (D-Mass) when opponents threatened to filibuster.

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At this point the President and Vice President hosted a pep rally for congressional staffs and interest groups in order to halt and reverse the negative momentum building in

the House. On Monday the President met with key House members. The following Wednesday, the Vice President hosted a breakfast for civil rights leaders and an evening reception to which more than 100 organizational and Congressional members were invited. Briefing sessions were held during the week.

The bill was scheduled with 19 other bills. But it never got to the floor. Rep. Robert Walker (R-Penn) single-handedly led a crippling filibuster, to which the Speaker conceded for a second time. When Congress adjourned October 15, 1988, the education bill had not come up for a vote (Radin & Hawley, 1988, pp. 126-128).

#### The 96th Congress

Moving on the momentum that was created in the 1978 legislature, both sides continued their activity. NEA began immediately contacting its grass root people. Sen. Ribicoff continued his crusade and was able to get 40 co-sponsors of his next bill. However, opposition was still strong among the liberal Democrats and conservative Republicans. Rep. John Erlenborne (R-Ill) met with incoming GOP congressmen before they even took office as a plan to thwart the legislation (Radin & Hawley, 1988, pp. 128-129).

By 1978 only the higher education community was undecided on its position. This was partly because of the highly fragmented 50 organizations which comprised it and also because of its fear that NEA and the public schools would



One analysis of the Chief State School Officers was that the department was linked too closely to the NEA. They also faulted the White House with a lack of initiative. The administration responded and hosted a third meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee at the White House. The meetings became weekly and were joined by several members of the White House staff.

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The opposition consisted of the AFT, USCC and AFL-CIO lobbyists joined with the conservative groups, plus the various interest groups such as NSF and Indian lobbies. Only after the controversy became extensive did the press become increasingly interested in ED's enactment. The press seemed to be tipped in favor of opposing the creation with the Washington Post, New York Times, and Wall Street Journal leading the way.

Despite, or perhaps because of all of the editorials and controversy, Carter's State of Union address in January 1979 barely whispered a commitment to ED's enactment. Most of it was shrouded in the government reorganization rhetoric. Even though the vocal commitment was commingled with other domestic issues, according to one high level PRP staff, "ED was "one of two or three domestic priorities on the administration's unwritten agenda" (Radin & Hawley, 1988, p. 132).

In January of 1979, Sen. Ribicoff introduced S. 210 and excluded the three most controversial transfers: Head Start, Indian schools, and child nutrition. The debate was then



focused on the department itself such as greater public visibility, increased access to the President, and better coordination and management, with the opposing camps touting federal control and loss of civil rights protections. The President's recommendations were leaner like Sen. Ribicoff's bill with exception of two minor programs, two migrant education programs and no vocational rehabilitation.

After minimal debate on the few programs transferred, the committee voted 13-1 to report to the full Senate. The Senate passed the bill on the last day of April by a vote of 72-21, a ten vote gain from 1978.

The House of Representatives was again an uphill battle. Organizational flexibility was sacrificed to political expediency. At the end of February 1979, Rep. Brooks dutifully introduced H.R. 2444, President Carter's Department of Education. During House hearings the administration came armed with colored charts, numbers, costs and figures. However, the efficiency approach was swept away by the basic arguments of federal control and civil rights enforcement. What it boiled down to was what each constituency stood to lose or gain by the creation.

Civil rights' advocates were deeply concerned about their issues. Rep. Walker and his colleague Rep. John Ashbrook (R-Ohio) prepared to attach debilitating amendments on bussing, school prayer, abortion, and affirmative action to destroy the bills. Defeat seemed imminent all during the adoption

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process, and the administration was forced to make both small and large concessions at many critical points. The initiative held the administration captive, usurping invaluable and irreplaceable White House resources while neglecting other presidential matters (Radin & Hawley, 1988, p. 138). The amended bill reached the full committee two days after the Senate's resounding approval of the department. May and June were spent preparing for the debate on the floor of the House. First the bill had to go through the House Rules Committee chaired by Rep. Richard Bolling (D-Mo.). The final count was 9-5 in favor of granting the rule.

Floor debate began on June 11th and opponents went into a three-day filibuster by amendment, preventing the House from taking a vote. On the third day of debate around midnight, the White House was forced "to barter on programs and structures...cuts in personnel were promised and trades were made by the administration on other issues." To lose the bill would have become a political disaster for the administration.

Indian schools were returned to the Department of Interior. An Assistant Secretary for Non-Public School was promised to gain support from conservatives and Catholics. Hispanics won a separate Office for Bilingual Education. Museum interests were assured that their \$13 million program would have a direct reporting line to the secretary. And finally, certain science education programs were given back to NSF.

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The vote was postponed until after the July 4th recess. During the recess the Congressional Black Caucus received personal phone calls from the President assuring them that unacceptable civil rights amendments would be removed in conference. Carl Holman, President of the Urban Coalition, remained loyal to the administration and helped to prevent a very negative telegram from civil rights leaders to members of the House from being sent.

NEA was predicting a five vote victory while the administration's team anticipated a 7 vote defeat. NEA influence in the House was not as strong, partly because of the AFL-CIO's supporters. So NEA went to the grass roots level lobbying. The NEA Government Relations Office sent memos to all local chapters urging its affiliates to phone and visit the congressmen in their home districts. The White House also put out lists of members to phone and delegated the President to call swing members. The White House worked very closely with NEA.

On July 11, 1979, the Ed bill came for vote. The final tally was 210 for the administration and 206 opposing. Another hurdle crossed and one more to go.

The reconciliation of the House and Senate bill had few discrepancies. The usual procedure for conference committees following the passage of H.R. 2444 would have been sent immediately to the Senate, which then would have had the option of accepting the House version, Senate version or to

request a conference. If the Senate requested a conference, the House would then be required to vote first on the conference report, having the possibility of sending it back for revision. If the House requested a conference, however, the Senate would have to pass on the final version of the report before being returned to the full House. Then the House could only pass or defeat the legislation. It did not have the option of sending it back to conference.

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In a rare parliamentary maneuver, Rep. Brooks went straight to the Government Operations Committee, getting approval to seek a conference. He then needed only a majority in the full House. The House voted to instruct the conferees to keep the controversial clauses in the bill and then passed the measure 236 to 156. This avoided the House repeatedly sending the ED bill back to conference. Rep. Brooks knew that Erlenborne would oppose any effort to get the unanimous House consent. In this manner Brooks only needed a majority.

The most controversial issue was civil rights. Assessments were made of the various amendments and what number of votes would be lost to each. The final Department of Education bill contained 131 programs; six from Rehabilitative Services Administration; two each from NSF, the Department of Justice, and the Department of Labor; one from DOD, HUD, USDA (The Graduate School), and HEW's budgetary oversight for four special institutions. The legislation also provided for the creation of Offices of Elementary and

Secondary, Vocational and Adult Education, Postsecondary, Overseas Schools, Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Bilingual Education, Educational Research and Improvement, and the Office for Civil Rights. There were also a 500 employee cut from the original 800 passed by the House.

On September 13, 1979, the House/Senate conference committee approved S.210. It was sent to the House for final approval. Early reports were 214 to 214 with 7 undecided votes. The final count was 215-201 on September 27, 1979. Removal of the controversial amendments made up in liberal support what it lost among conservatives.

It had been a good week for Carter. Congress had passed the Panama Canal legislation and the House Commerce Committee had approved the hospital cost containment bill. Carter had now delivered on a campaign promise. It was one of President Carter's rare legislative victories. Carter signed the bill into law on October 17, 1979, in the in East Room of the White House (Radin & Hawley, 1988, p. 152).

#### The New Department of Education

A difficult battle had been waged and won by pro-cabinet individuals. The next stage was now set. Would the first Secretary of Education, expand and make the department a viable entity, or be like first commissioner Henry Barnard and give the enemies power to cripple the department, resulting in its eventual demise? The new secretary had seven months

to prepare the department to open its doors. Would it be a strong department or a crippled bureaucracy?

Even before the ink was dry on the bill, rumors were circulating around Washington about who the first Secretary of Education would be. Strong contenders included Merry Berry, assistant undersecretary; Jerry Apodaca, former Governor of New Mexico; Wilson C. Riles, then California Superintendent of Public Instruction; Harold Howe, II, a former United States Commissioner of Education and then a Ford Foundation vice president; Terry Stanford, President of Duke University and former governor of North Carolina (Radin & Hawley, 1988, p. 153). The fact that the Secretary of Education would be in for less than a year before a presidential election made appointments even more tenuous.

Carter surprised everyone with the appointment of Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals Judge, Shirley Hufstedler from California. At that time she was the highest ranking woman jurist in the United States, appointed by President Lyndon Johnson. She had demonstrated a strong commitment to civil rights and had authored a significant minority opinion advocating rights for limited English speaking children in the Lau v. Nichols case. She also served as a trustee of the California Institute of Technology, of Occidental College, and of the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies in Colorado (Radin & Hawley, 1988, pp. 154-155).

Such an appointment reaffirmed Carter's allegiance to affirmative action, but also signaled that Carter did not expect the department to become the captive of education constituencies (Radin & Hawley, 1988, p. 165).

Hufstedler had an enormous task ahead of her, ferreting out the many programs interwoven throughout the federal bureaucracy and pulling them into the Department of Education with the least amount of disruption. But change in and of itself brings disorganization and ill feelings. To add to the frustrations, Hufstedler was an outsider to the Washington circle. She was unfamiliar with the issues, the programs, and didn't know the budget process or the bureaucracy (Radin & Hawley, 1988, p. 176). Hufstedler's approach was one of analytical rather than political to the issues involved, often disregarding the advice of those who had been actively involved in the creation of the department (Radin & Hawley, 1988, p. 210).

On May 4, 1980, the new department opened its doors. Although Hufstedler had been involved in the implementation, she now had formal authority. She had given minimal attention to the organization and development of new structural units and failed to acknowledge the politics with which they were entwined (Radin and Hawley, 1988, p. 211). Her time was shortened by the 1980 Presidential elections.

When Carter was defeated in 1980 by Ronald Reagan, Hufstedler left behind a weak organization. The coordinating

mechanisms that had been an essential part of Hufstedler's strategy were not in place (Radin & Hawley, 1988, p. 211). Ronald Reagan ran on a platform to eliminate the Department of Education. This campaign promise was a distinct possibility, since for the first time in 25 years the Republicans controlled the Senate (Radin & Hawley, 1988, p. 211). What happened to that campaign rhetoric is the underlying question of this study.

#### Summary

There are some parallels between the legislation of 1867 and 1979 creating the Department of Education, noncabinet and cabinet status. Both found ardent advocates in Congress, Rep. James A. Garfield, and Sen. Abraham Ribicoff. Both sponsors had had experiences as educators and as Secretary of HEW. There were other similarities in the creation of the two departments. Presidents Johnson and Carter both had to be persuaded to endorse these education bills, though the latter probably had stronger personal feelings toward education. And the bitter controversy surrounding both pieces of legislation focused upon the question of federal involvement in education.

Historically Henry Barnard, the first Commissioner of the noncabinet Department of Education, triumphantly accepted the newly create department's top position, and then nearly caused its demise. Being a scholar and not a politician, he failed to grasp that funding was contingent on Congress's goodwill. The first Secretary of Education, cabinet status, was Shirley



Hufstedler. Her tenure was measured in months because of the Presidential elections of 1980. There was not enough time to assess her performance as Secretary. So it is to Terrel H. Bell, appointed by President Reagan, that the comparison is raised. Did he parallel his predecessor, Henry Barnard? Did Bell insure the success or demise of the newly created Department of Education?

## CHAPTER III

### PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN

The White House is glamorous...exciting...it is the top of the pole.

Larry Speakes  
Press Secretary to  
President Ronald Reagan

### The Great Communicator

Ronald Reagan was one of the most impressive and compelling heads of state since Franklin Roosevelt (Stockman, 1986; Speakes, 1988). More than any chief executive since Eisenhower, Ronald Reagan enjoyed the trust of the American people. Baffled though they might be by this phenomenon, even his enemies admitted that his credibility was beyond question (Regan, 1988, p. 31).

He liked to begin every meeting with a good story or joke, no matter whether the participants were people he saw every day or the hereditary ruler of a remote kingdom...he thought that laughter brought people closer together and dispelled the anxiety (Regan, 1988, p. 278). When he was shot during an attempted assassination, and holding his wife's hand he made the well-quoted, "Honey, I forgot to duck!" (Speakes, 1988, p. 7). His love of stories was connected to this same tendency to see everything in human terms (Regan, 1988, p. 279). His compassion was real as he would often send destitute people who had written to him a small sum of money or a thought. His genuineness was real, not contrived. At the beginning of his second term, polls indicated that Reagan

sat at a 60 percent approval, the highest of any President entering a second term (Speakes, 1988, p. 183).

Reagan took Congress very seriously and would often visit the Capitol for meetings. The President would regularly call members of the House. He was very effective on the phone although he did not always get his way. Tip O'Neill, former Speaker of the House, was told by some legislators that they saw more of Reagan during his first four months in office than they saw of Jimmy Carter during his entire four years (O'Neill, 1987, p. 409).

✓ O'Neill  
book for  
bits on  
education

President Reagan knew how to work with a Congress dominated by the Democrats. He was able to use his own goodwill and genuine liking for people to serve him well (R. Wirthlin, personal communication, January 16, 1989). He was flexible and willing to compromise in order to attain his goals (Speakes, 1988, p. 301).

The President's economic package was not slated for passage. But pass, it did. The educational block grants surprised everyone, including Secretary of Education Terrel Bell, when they steamrolled through. Had Reagan been ready with more legislation, he could easily have done more during his honeymoon period with Congress (C. Heatherly, personal communication, November 7, 1988). Under Reagan's leadership the nation's mood transformed from pessimism to optimism, its economy from stagnation to steady growth, and its position in the world from weakness to strength (Regan, 1988, p. 421).

All those close to Reagan, though not wholly agreeing with his styles or methods, shared a deep respect, almost verging on awe, for the President and a great appreciation to be present at the making of history (Regan, 1988, p. 420; Speakes, 1988, p. 311; R. Wirthlin, personal communication, January 16, 1989).

How then was such an agreeable, popular President unable to fulfill the Republican Platform to abolish the Department of Education? Where did the agenda originate? Who kept pushing the agenda? Why was Terrel Bell selected as Secretary of Education? Why did he allow Bell to remain in office when many felt Bell was perpetuating the United States Department of Education?

#### The Agenda for Abolishment

Q? The origin of the agenda to abolish the Department of Education had deep historical roots as well as a contemporary revival. When the founding fathers of our country wrote the Constitution they did not mention education per se. It was so taken for granted as a right, that there was no need to write it into the document (Kursh, 1965, p. 5). Others have noted that education was regarded as a highly personal decision, rather than a state decision.

It was only through the dedication of individuals that have brought about universal, compulsory education, based upon the premise that democracy required an educated mass. Still legislators were reluctant to infringe upon areas that were

deemed as the private rights of citizens, and the purview of the states.

Acceleration of federal involvement in education culminated in the 1960's when President Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society programs passed Congress. Education was suddenly thrust into a broad arena of programs, funding and regulations. The zenith of federal involvement occurred a little more than a decade later. The first United States cabinet-level Department of Education was legislated under Democratic President Jimmy Carter in 1979. Proponents of states' rights and less federal involvement had fought hard to prevent such a creation, and retained strong feelings about the passage.

A little more than a year after the department's creation, the Democrats were voted out of office, and conservative Republicans filled the White House. Many of the original opponents of the Department of Education felt that with a change of presidency and philosophy, the department could still be abolished. Central to all the arguments was the basic question of how much involvement the federal government should have in education. Some of this was expressed in the Republican Party Platform of 1980.

#### The Republican Party Platform

The Republican Party stated that they did "not advocate new federal bureaucracies with ominous power to shape...all domestic policies, from child care and schooling to Social Security and the tax code...To that end, the Republican

Party...encourages the elimination of the federal Department of Education" (Republican Party Platform 1980).

Mike Barrudy, then working as the Republican Platform Committee Chairperson with Senator John Tower of Texas, recalled that there was no controversy over the education inclusion. He felt this occurred because there was a lot of discontent among the delegates to the convention regarding education (M. Barrudy, personal communication, October 10, 1988; Arieff, 1980, June 28).

In a technical sense there are no ties of a candidate to his platform, yet it was at the peril of the president-elect if he did not fulfill his party's platform (M. Barrudy, personal communication, October 10, 1988). President Reagan's personal philosophy matched the party's platform towards education. Alex C. Sherriffs, Governor Reagan's education advisor for five years in California, summed up that Reagan would continue "to handle education issues about the same way in Washington as he did in Sacramento...a minimum of regulation...a tendency toward bloc grants to the states and let them decide what to do with the money" since a national system of education was scary to him (Trombley, 1980, Dec. 15, Part II).

#### The New Right

The conservatives were a very tightly knit group who allowed only the most trusted into their inner circles. As a result it was often difficult to gain access to the inner

sanctums where actual decisions were reached. Secretary Bell likened them to a secret society carefully guarding the closed ranks. For many, the Reagan administration was a time for revolution (Bell, 1988, p. 39).

In the late 1970's, the New Right began gaining momentum and was a major political force in the 1979-1980 election. Joined to the political arm was a religious right which included 51 TV networks, and 1300 radio stations. Other large industries in the conservative network included the Bechtel Foundation (construction); the Adolph Coors Foundation (brewing); the Fred C. Koch Foundation (energy, real estate); the Lilly Foundation (pharmaceuticals); the Samuel Noble Foundation (oil and drilling); the John M. Olin Foundation (agricultural chemicals, sporting weapons); the J. Howard Pew Freed Trust (Sun Oil); the Smith Richardson Foundation (Vicks Vaporub); and the Sarah Mellon Scaife Foundation (Gulf Oil) (Saloma, 1984, p. 24).

Other think tanks of the counter establishment included the American Enterprise Institute, Manhattan Institute, Shavano Institute, Center for the Study of Public Choice, Center for Judicial Studies, Scaife Foundation, Bradley Foundation, Ethics and Public Policy Center, National Institute for Public Policy, Hoover Institution, Center for Strategic and International Studies of Georgetown University (Blumenthal, 1986, p. 35).

really?

The New Right had strong intercommunications among the Old Right and the Republican Party organizations. Think tanks, political action groups, and the corporate community were all intermeshed with a common ideology of ultraconservatism. In the early 1980's the right wing controlled the GOP (Saloma, 1984, pp. 39, 86). It is interesting to note, though, once in the power game, ultraconservatives were often overwhelmed by their more experienced and skilled policy making bureaucrats (Saloma, 1984, p. 33). In large measure it was Ronald Reagan who helped to unify the New Right by becoming their titular head. In the old days conservatism had been dismissed by almost all political analysts as an eccentric movement whose origins could be traced to deeply rooted pathologies. The ideology, it was believed, could never withstand exposure to empirical examination. But Reagan's ability to represent conservatism as a mythological system insulated it from much criticism.

The conservative movement, thriving beyond the boundaries of traditional partisanship sustained Reagan's career just as he sustained the movement. But he was larger than the sum of the movement's myriad parts; without him, conservatism would have lacked its political focus in the years before his election, and conservatives would never have assumed power. Reagan's indispensability allowed him to use the movement without becoming tapped by any of its factions (Blumenthal, 1986, p. 36).

The ideologues, as they became known because of their ideological purity, could and would place credence in the adage that the end justified the means (Gordon Jones, personal

huh??

Gibberish

seemingly a  
forward  
reference

vg.



communication, October 12, 1988). Zealousness would often overrule unwritten rules of conduct among politicians (Gary Jones, personal communication, December 9, 1988). And despite the powerful influence they had during the Reagan administration, they still thought of themselves as a persecuted minority, almost overwhelmed by the liberal establishment, still "insecure, not quite sure of their legitimacy" (Blumenthal, 1986, p. 290).

#### The Heritage Foundation

The Heritage Foundation, a Washington based think tank, became an important advocate for abolishment of the department. The Heritage Foundation was a gathering place for conservatives and also a crystallizer of conservative thought for much of Reagan's tenure. It refined ideas and then marketed them.

Think tanks were generally privately funded organizations for research and created persuasive thought for legislators. Think tanks existed for both sides of the issues and to the extreme on both sides. Heritage Foundation was to the far right, but not at the end of the spectrum. Heritage rose to prominence during the Reagan Administration operating on a budget of over \$11.5 million. Seed money was provided by Colorado brewing magnate, Joseph Coors, and silent partner, Richard Scaife. The remaining monies were donated from private gifts, corporations, and grant-giving foundations totalling over 130,000 contributors. The 110-staff members

and policy recommendations to apply a conservative philosophy in four general areas: domestic and economic policy, foreign policy and defense, the United Nations, and Asian studies (Heritage Foundation pamphlet, no date).

Mandate for Leadership published by the Heritage Foundation was a large compilation of conservative policy with regard to each cabinet post, independent regulatory agencies, and selected other agencies. Its publication was concurrent with the presidential inauguration. This large tome became known as The Bible or The Blue Book during the early Reagan years. Any politically shrewd staffer had one in his library. The Heritage Foundation claimed that Mandate for Leadership or the Blue Book so crystallized Reagan's agenda that he was able to articulate a simple agenda--lower taxes, less government, a strong military.

In the opening paragraph on education, the Blue Book was clear in its mandate, "legislation should be altered to shift significant departmental responsibilities to the state and local levels" (Docksai in Heatherly, 1981, p. 163). Nowhere in the document does it advocate that the federal role in education be entirely dissolved. However, it did say federal presence should be reduced but not "abandon its legitimate concerns about the quality of American education" (Docksai in Heatherly, 1981, p. 164). The report then called for the abolishment of the Department of Education:

In principle, the Department of Education should be abolished as a Cabinet department. But the authors of

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this report take the position that the status of the agency as a Cabinet department is less critical to a new administration than the overhaul of federal education policy. The proposals presented in this report, if implemented, will do more to restore a healthy federal role in education than the mere abolition of the agency's Cabinet rank. (Docksai in Heatherly, 1981, p. 166).

so - not really  
a call to  
abolish.

According to Charles Heatherly, editor of Mandate for Leadership, the abolishment of the department became politically symbolic of the need for less federal intervention in education. The dismantling took on a rhetoric of its own. It became the clarion call. But timing was critical. Since the department was fresh and not fully staffed, Reagan's first year was the most strategic time to do away with the department or to modify it (C. Heatherly, personal communication, November 7, 1988).

Although Mandate for Leadership was a tactical document, it had only marginal influence on the White House agenda. According to Richard Wirthlin, Reagan's personal pollster and close adviser, President Reagan already had a clear vision of what he wanted to accomplish while he was in the presidency. Heritage's visible role in attempting to abolish the Department of Education would follow.

#### President Reagan Dropped the Agenda for Abolition

Not wanting to make the same mistakes that President Jimmy Carter had made by trying to juggle too many legislative packages at once, Reagan's people advised him to reduce his program to manageable and pressing needs. Economic reform and

rebuilding the military were selected. All other issues were shelved including abolishing the Department of Education (R. Wirthlin, personal communication, January 16, 1989; Von Dammn, 1989, p. 167). The single shot approach was to be used.

Reagan's advisers were firm on the matter. They knew where they were going and how to get there. Secretary of State Alexander Haig tried to raise the issue of contra aid to Central America. The White House told him to leave it alone. The staff reminded Haig that there was to be only one issue on the agenda--the economy (O'Neill, 1987, p. 410).

The glitz of the campaign trail always gives way to harsh and practical realities of the presidency. Richard Wirthlin and Charles Heatherly, editor of Mandate for Leadership, said they are certain that the abolishment of the Department of Education could have passed had Reagan made it his priority. Heatherly cites the passing of the education bloc grants as a case in point. But there was no real benefit to be gained from the tremendous effort it would take to pass legislation dismantling the department. So Reagan's focus was turned elsewhere (R. Wirthlin, personal communication, Jan. 16, 1989).

Edwin Meese, former counselor to the President, endorsed the fact that there was little activity for abolishment from the White House because there was no support from Congress. He differed slightly in that he maintained that President Reagan deemed the reduction of the department as still very

important. It was on a list that included social programs such as welfare, social security, and crime and drugs though it was dropped during the second administration (E. Meese, personal communication, November 28, 1989).

President Reagan personally dropped the agenda whatever the reason. His speechwriters occasionally glossed over the Department of Education's dismantling in eleven public addresses or news conferences from 1981 to 1984 (Reagan, 1981-84). Most were a line or two buried beneath other pressing issues. For all intent and purposes, the agenda had been superseded in priority.

Did President Reagan somehow fail his party when he did not follow through on his promise to dismantle the Department of Education? Godfrey Hodgson offers some insights in his book All Things to All Men (1980). Thirty years ago the party platform was a serious statement of common principle, and elected officials were expected to stand by it. As late as the 1950s the President stuck by the platform. By the 1960s, the platform committee's deliberations at the convention had become something of a farce that reflected the growing separation between the presidential candidate and the party as a whole. So it was important at least for appearance's sake that the President hold to his party platform, but to what extent remained an individual question. - o.k.

What if  
Pomper's  
work on  
platforms?

There was no question that the President of the United States was the most powerful single figure in the executive

branch. Only he could give a sense of direction and set of priorities to the executive bureaucracy. However much of the time the President was unable, with rare exceptions, to bring about significant change. Even within his own Executive Branch he is powerless when it came to carrying out policies. He could not order his own men or cabinet secretaries or subcabinet officers that he had appointed himself to do what he wanted. The President must "trade...wampum and glass beads" (Hodgson, 1980).

Part of this presidential inability was also due to the growing influence of Congress. Until the 1970s the presidency became stronger and stronger. But as a result of Vietnam and Watergate, Congress began to reassert itself. Congress had recaptured much of the power and prestige that had been lost to the imperial presidency (Hodgson, 1980, p. 133). With the separation of powers as outlined by the Constitution, yet with the cooperative crossovers that must inevitably occur, the modern presidency loses as many battles as it wins.

#### The Agenda Was Still Alive

But the agenda was not wholly dead. It was not to be forgotten. Ultraconservatives, many having connections with the Heritage Foundation, continued to wave the banner for dissolution. For some, it was an evangelical fight to the end. The Old Deluder had been replaced by the Department of Education. The Fundamentalist zeal had found a worthy cause

to engage in battle (H. Gardner, personal communication, October 30, 1989).

The harangues might not have been effective at all had the New Right not had a spokesman in the White House who had unlimited access to the President. Edwin Meese was the President's Personal Counselor. He was clearly the closest aide to Reagan, the one who understood the mind of the President. He had worked with Reagan for over a decade and Reagan trusted him (Stockman, 1986, pp. 45, 109). He was decent, considerate and honest to a fault. He refused to play the Washington game and could not or would not take the press into his confidence. If he had a weakness it was a tendency to get overconfident in himself or his abilities, which were multiple, and he loved clutter (Deaver, 1987, pp. 131, 196).

Edwin Meese fought the hardest for purity in matters of conservative ideology. It was Meese that kept up the conservative beliefs (Deaver, 1987, pp. 131, 196). He had intimate associations with the New Right and the Heritage Foundation. (Mr. Meese was appointed a Distinguished Fellow for the Heritage Foundation in 1988.) Ideologues continually traipsed in and out of his White House office (T. H. Bell, personal communication, September 23, 1989). Even while in the White House, Edwin Meese wrote a letter on White House stationery endorsing Heritage Foundation's President's Club, composed of donors who give more than \$1,000 to the Foundation (Blumenthal, 1986, p. 51). He was referred to as the kingpin

of the New Right (H. Gardner, personal communication, October 30, 1989).

Edwin Meese's power, however, was diluted by the organization of the early Reagan administration. The powerful position next to the President was split among three men. During his first term, the President basically relied upon Chief of Staff James Baker, Presidential Counselor Edwin Meese, and Deputy Chief of Staff Michael Deaver. Every avenue leading to the Oval Office was controlled by these men. Even Richard Allen, Security Advisor had to pass through these men. Their nickname was the Troika.

This created some tensions since Baker had been the campaign manager for George Bush's nomination for President, and Meese was a longtime Reagan supporter. To avoid potential conflict, a carefully worded written agreement was drawn up defining what duties would go to each man. According to Donald Regan, Baker eventually won out in part because Mike Deaver joined him. Baker's group soon became known for policy as well as legislative action. Meese tended to stick to ideological lines and lacked organizational skills. Meese was more conservative than Baker or Deaver, much less pragmatic, and much more California-oriented (Speakes, 1988, p. 67).

The troika, despite their difference worked surprisingly well, according to Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill. The three could set aside difference if things were crucial. The group had a somewhat mean-spirited philosophy but were very



capable of knowing where they were going and how to get there (O'Neill, 1987, p. 410). Others, however, said that there was a high amount of distrust particularly between the assistants, Richard Darman, Baker's right-hand man, and Kenneth Cribb and Craig Fuller, Ed Meese's lieutenants (Bell, 1988, p. 44). Infighting within the White House will always be fed by envies and hatred and petty jealousies (Von Dammn, 1989, pp. 110-111).

This in-fighting may have accounted for the on-again, off-again for abolition. The conflicts within the White House itself may have produced some of the chaos. Presidential aides James Baker and Edwin Meese were rumored to be "butting heads over the fate of the Department of Education." Meese was determined to abolish the agency, but Baker objected on the ground that it would be politically foolish to alienate hundreds of thousands of schoolteachers (Washington Whispers, 1982, Nov. 15, p. 16). Depending upon who was particularly powerful that day, his peculiar agenda would be endorsed by the President. Long periods of silence about the agenda were followed by bouts of strategic conflicts within the Department of Education itself and in the White House. The agenda might have died a natural death, but because of Edwin Meese and the ideologues access to power, the agenda kept resurfacing.

Selection of the Secretary of Education

department. Because appointment was slow, there were some rumors that no Secretary would be offered the position.

One of the strategies that the ideologues utilized was political appointments. By infiltrating the Department of Education they felt certain they could strangle it. Edwin Meese and Pendleton James, White House Personnel Director, oversaw most of the political appointments.

Why was Terrel Bell appointed Secretary of Education even though he had actively testified on behalf of the creation of the Department of Education? There were several reasons. First, Bell was eminently qualified for the position, having served at many levels of education and as the 21st Commissioner of Education. Second, he was a Republican. Third, others turned down the offer because of the dismantling and Bell actively solicited the position, and fourth, time was short.

There was no question that Terrel Bell was a well experienced educator having labored from elementary level to college during his tenure in education. He was on the "short" list that first came out with the committee, or the most promising candidates (W. Clohan, personal communication, November 22, 1988). Bell admitted in his autobiography that he wanted the job. Others made calls on his behalf to the White House. Attorney General Smith and Holmes Tuttle were calling for Bell's nomination (K. Lloyd, personal communication, March 15, 1989). Sen. Orrin Hatch, Chairman

of the Senate Labor and Education Committee, was one of the leading backers for Bell's nomination (O. Hatch, personal communication, December 16, 1988).

Second, Bell was a confirmed Republican. He had served under Republican Presidents Nixon and Ford, and had campaigned for Reagan in Utah. Before the election, Bell had been asked by his former boss, Caspar Weinberger, to prepare a white paper on education, one of several the campaign solicited (Rosenfeld, 1981, April 5).

Third, the transition team initially passed over Bell's name because he had testified in favor of the creation of the Department. Two distinguished educators had already been approached. W. Glenn Campbell, director of the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, and Dallin Oaks, president of Brigham Young University had turned down the appointment (Evans and Novak, 1981, Jan. 14). Others claimed they also had turned down the offer, or perhaps just wanted to say they had (Gary Jones, personal communication, December 9, 1988).

Bell's name popped up again thanks to Dr. Richard Wirthlin, Reagan's pollster-political adviser and a friend of Bell from Wirthlin's Utah days. Meese approved, and the name went to Reagan with endorsement from Utah's two conservative Republican senators. Not until January 5 did word seep out, too late to build a backfire. Meese, who had let Reaganite William Simon dangle long enough to destroy him as Secretary of the Treasury, pushed non-Reaganite Bell with unusual expedition (Evans and Novak, 1981, April 5).

Fourth, Edwin Meese and personnel recruiter, Pendleton James, became desperate to fill the position of Secretary of

why? / ② — Education, since candidate after candidate demurred selection, and inauguration was a few short weeks away. James and Meese were in California and scheduled to fly back to Washington. They flew Bell from Utah to the San Diego airport, where they were about to board a plane heading east. The meeting was held in the coffee shop. After a hurried 30 minute conference, Bell's name went to the President (Bell, 1988, pp. 2-3).

In personal interview with Edwin Meese, he stated that there was only one other name that had been nominated for the Secretary of Education position. That individual was given another cabinet post, and so the offer was made to Bell. In no way was Bell a compromise candidate, but an enthusiastic and supportive member of President Reagan's team (E. Meese, personal communication, November 28, 1989).

Only 13 days prior to Inauguration on January 7, 1981, Terrel Bell was announced as the new Secretary of Education. Neither President Reagan nor Bell appeared at the brief press conference (Schorr, 1981, Jan. 8). Perhaps the White House did not get their first or second choice. Oftentimes, the President and White House personnel office must settle for negotiated decisions rather than domination over the selection process. There is such an interplay of political forces that this often dissolves into a game. The selection process is a haphazard one (Heclo, 1977, pp. 89, 238).

The education community hailed the appointment. Some at the Heritage Foundation were outraged (Gordon Jones, personal communication, October 12, 1988). The Wall Street Journal called Bell Reagan's most perplexing nomination, since Bell's previous statements did not match Reagan's promises (Rosenfeld, 1981, April 5).

Bell received the unanimous vote of the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee. The most pointed exchange came between Sen. Dan Quayle, (R-Ind) and Secretary Bell over the sensitive and complex issue of congressional veto of executive branch regulations. Quayle also pointedly asked "How do we go about abolishing the Department of Education?" Secretary Bell responded that he was willing to look at alternatives to a separate Cabinet-level department, but firmly believed that education ought to be placed where it has access to the places where decisions are made. Bell repeated that there was a "commitment from the President-elect to abolish the department...and that he was firmly committed to reducing the size of the department" (Senate Hearing, 1981, Jan. 15).

Three days after the inauguration, the full Senate approved Secretary Bell's name. For the swearing in, there was no ceremony and there were no witnesses other than a few White House staffers. Three other cabinet members raised their right hands, and repeated the oath and signed the required papers along with Secretary Bell (Bell, 1988, p. 24).

### Why Secretary Bell Stayed

During the first year in office, Secretary Bell was able to appease both the New Right and the educational community. It was only later that the New Right became impatient and wanted Secretary Bell totally to annihilate the department. Many in the New Right urged President Reagan to ask for Secretary Bell's resignation. However, it was not inconsistent for Reagan to appoint persons that were not politically committed to his policies. He was basically indifferent throughout his career. Once Reagan appointed a lieutenant governor whom he had met only once at a reception. The Lt. Governor was mystified as to why he had been chosen (Boaz, 1988, p. 294). In President Reagan's cabinet at least three cabinet secretaries also wondered why--Secretary of State Alexander Haig, Secretary of the Treasury Donald Regan, and Secretary of Education Terrel Bell. This may be partly due to the fact that President Reagan did not know very many people with public policy credentials or Washington experience. Much of his earlier days had been against government. There were exceptions of Caspar Weinberger, George Schultz, and Williams Casey (FitzGerald, 1989, Jan. 16, p. 73). Edwin Meese claimed that Bell was as encouraging and supportive of President Reagan's policies as any cabinet member, otherwise he would not have stayed in office. Meese likened Secretary Bell to being a cheerleader at cabinet meetings and favored reduction of the budget. However, in

time Secretary Bell did change (E. Meese, personal communication, November 28, 1989).

Secretary Bell remained in office partly because President Reagan disliked firing anyone. If there was pressure placed upon the President from behind the scenes, others were asked to deliver the sad tidings such as Vice President George Bush, (Regan, 1988, p. 412-413) or Michael Deaver (Deaver, 1987, p. 135). Of his own accord, Reagan would not fire anyone because he was loyal to a fault (Speakes, 1988, p. 305). However, it was often the men in the inner circle or even Nancy Reagan who would initiate the termination (Deaver, 1987, p. 135).

Most importantly, it was President Reagan's personal style of management that best explained why President Reagan allowed those that did not support his policy issues to remain.

President Reagan's management style was labeled hands-off. Some called it indifference; others called it delegation to his lieutenants. President Reagan was not a detail man nor a planner. Don Regan, chief of staff during the second term, observed that Reagan did not trouble himself with minutiae, his preoccupation was with what might be called the outer Presidency. He was content to let others cope with the inner details of running the administration.

He trusted his lieutenants "to act on his intentions, rather than on his spoken instructions" (Regan, 1988, pp. 298-299). This osmotic understanding rather than clear instructions, left several cabinet officials in limbo. Donald

T. Regan, Secretary of the Treasury during the first term, initially waited for President Reagan to call him into the Oval Office and outline his economic objectives. The call never came. Finally Donald Regan began to study the President's public speeches, and surmised that perhaps President Reagan's public persona was his real persona (Regan, 1988, p. 160).

Office of Management and Budget Director David Stockman had a few informal sessions, but President Reagan gave no orders, no commands, asked for no information, expressed no urgency. "He conveyed the impression that since we all knew what needed to be done, we should simply get on with the job" (Stockman, 1986, p. 76).

Secretary Bell felt that President Reagan had ostracized him because his department was slated for extinction. As Terrel Bell said there could hardly be a lower status than to be in charge of a department designated for abolition (Bell, 1988, p. 27). However, in reality other cabinet members found themselves also wondering what President Reagan expected of them.

President Reagan's heavy delegation was dramatically pointed out during the Iran-Contra scandals that broke during his second term. Essentially there was nothing that the President could have done because he did not know about the diversion of monies. Inadequate or false records were kept with the purpose of concealing covert activities from the



President by John Poindexter, Bud McFarlane and Oliver North (Regan, 1988, p. 403).

#### Summary

President Reagan abandoned the agenda of abolishing the Department of Education. He turned his energies toward economic recovery and military defense. It was left to his staff to carry out whatever agenda they might have deemed necessary. Because of President Reagan's heavy delegation, his aides played powerful roles in the shaping of White House activities. The President's Personal Counselor was an ideologue who was able to keep the agenda from totally dying. However, because of the unique troika, or division of power among those closest to the President, no one person or his ideas could completely dominate.

It was President Reagan's managerial style of benign neglect which essentially allowed Terrel Bell to function as a cabinet secretary even though some might have perceived Bell as sabotaging the President's campaign promise. It was also this hands off style that allowed Secretary Bell to remain in office long after others were calling for his resignation.

It is to the congressional arena that focus will next be given. Since only a legislated act of Congress could officially abolish the department, what was the disposition of the bicameral legislature?

## CHAPTER IV

### THE LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL AND CONGRESS

All of Washington does not revolve around the White House, but Capitol Hill. That's where the ultimate decisions are made.

Larry Speakes  
Press Secretary to  
President Ronald Reagan

#### The Iron Triangle

not  
true

Congressional action is needed every time the smallest change is proposed in the Executive Branch organization. As a general observation, Congress is also traditionally skeptical about reorganization (Radin & Hawley, 1988, p. 25). In the issue of the dismantling of the Department of Education, Congress became one of the pivotal player because it refused to act upon any reorganization plan.

The proposed legislation for abolishment would normally have originated with the President or his designee, since it was a presidential campaign promise. Secretary Bell extracted the promise from President Reagan that the Department of Education would be responsible for the initial draft. The draft would then be sent to Congress, who would make the final decision. From Secretary Bell to the President to Congress would appear to be a linear progression of events. In reality it was more like a triangle.

Power was split among three sectors in Washington with each having its own interest groups. It has been called a

"subgovernment," a "triple alliance," an "unholy trinity" or an "iron triangle."

The first part of the triangle was made of congressional committees, their chairmen and staff. The second were special interest groups and the third was the executive branch. Public officials involved do not always "look upward to a hierarchy of power with the President at its apex, but sideways, to their constituency in the world outside government, and to their opposite numbers in Congress." Sometimes the media or judiciary became a part of that triangle (Hodgson, 1980, p. 87). Every decision was fraught with contingencies and compromises.

#### The Legislative Package for Abolition

Approximately three weeks after Bell was sworn in as Secretary of Education, Emerson Elliott, career civil servant, received a request through Gary Jones, then deputy undersecretary, to begin drawing up a reorganization plan for the Department of Education. Elliott devoted the majority of his time to the researching alternatives for a non-cabinet department (E. Elliott, personal communication, January 12, 1989). There were four major proposals that were presented to the President. The approximately 178 page compendium was divided into eight general sections: the federal role in education, the proposals of a national foundation, an independent agency, merger with another department, and dispersal of education to other areas. Also included were

—acquire!

the recommendations, charts and budgets, plus a question and answer section to understand better the ramifications of various choices (Bell, 1981).

The cover letter reiterated that Secretary Bell had promised this report to the President and that this recommendation would fulfill the commitment to eliminate the department. The operating parameters included a structure less than cabinet rank but that could function until the laws had been changed. Secretary Bell then endorsed the foundation plan (Bell, 1981).

The first section reiterating the federal role in education, attempted to stress that the genius of American education had been because of local and popular control, diversity, open access and pragmatic adaptation to problems. The rationale for the abolishment of the department was based on the Constitutional view that education was a state responsibility. However, the section also adamantly stated that abolishing the department would not, in itself, change the federal responsibilities that were mandated by laws, budgets, regulations and court decisions.

#### The Foundation, Independent Agency, Merger, Dispersal

There were four major criteria upon which to base the selection of reorganization. First, the structure had to be less than cabinet rank. Second, there had to be some identifiable federal organization that operated education programs. Third, there had to be provision for coordination

of federal education activities across the government. And fourth, there had to be a spokesperson for federal interest in education, that would address policies affecting education as a point of contact (Bell, 1981).

The foundation proposal would have kept the department at a sub-cabinet federal level and included most of the activities residing in the Department of Education. The idea of a foundation was first suggested by Edwin Meese III (Boaz, 1988, p. 294). This would have kept virtually all federal educational programs intact and given the chief direct access to the President.

Much of the groundwork was patterned after the National Science Foundation, bringing in experienced experts for one or two year assignments. Certain activities that clearly did not belong in education could be transferred such as Pell grants and guaranteed student loans to the Treasury Department, civil rights to an enforcement agency, and museum services to the National Endowment for the Humanities, and veterans education to the Veteran's Administration. The biggest criticism would be that this plan changed the department in name only (Sweeney, 1981, March 25).

An Independent Agency was another proposal submitted. This proposal created an agency similar to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. It differed from the foundation not as much in scope as in form, since it did not have a board.

The third option was to merge with another department. Most of the functions of the department would be transferred more or less intact to another agency, more than likely to either Health and Human Services or to Labor. It was argued that such a transfer would cost more than the establishment of a foundation or independent agency (Bell, 1981).

The final option was dispersal to another agency. This proposal would transfer all functions, programs and personnel in the Department of Education to other federal agencies and departments. Such a move would completely dismantle the department. Of all the options, this would be the most disruptive of staff, networks, physical location, and other administrative arrangements.

#### Public Reception to the Proposal

According to the accompanying letter, the proposal was submitted to the White House on Aug. 4, 1981 (Bell, 1981). Nothing appeared in the press until September 8 when a Wall Street Journal article stated that Secretary Bell said that President Reagan was reviewing specific plans to replace the Department of Education (Reagan reviewing plans, 1981, Sept. 8).

On September 8, 1981, Education Funding News reported that the President planned to announce specific plans for abolition shortly. It was believed that Reagan favored the dispersal of functions throughout other departments while

Secretary Bell favored the agency approach. Some saw this move as more symbolic than a real savings.

Others saw this as a futile effort. Glenn Gershaneck, press secretary to Sen. Robert Stafford, (R-Vt.), chairman for the Education subcommittee, said "It will take a long time before the education department is dismantled, if it happens at all" (President wants early end, 1981, Oct. 6). Other articles announcing the pending plans appeared in The Chronicle of Higher Education and School Board News.

It was not until November 18, 1981, however, that any major newspaper carried the news of legislative plans. The Nov. 2, 1981, Education Week headlined, "Reagan task force divided on fate of U.S. agency." It went on further to state that Secretary Bell, Deputy Undersecretary Gary L. Jones, and officials of the White House and the Office of Management and Budget, had been unable to reach agreement on the components of a sub-cabinet-level federal education office. White House officials, including Martin Anderson, assistant to the President for policy development, and Edwin Meese II, counselor to the President, were said to prefer eliminating the federal education office entirely (White, 1981, Nov.2) .

Around the Christmas season, more articles and editorials began appearing regarding the proposal of the abolition of the department. One stated that President Reagan was withholding his endorsement until he could assess what key legislators felt about it (Babcock, 1981, Nov. 18). Secretary

Bell recalled that there were several tense moments when he and Meese had conflicts during the drafting sessions (T. H. Bell, personal communication, September 23, 1989). The White House considered the foundation plan most attractive politically, but it generated little enthusiasm. The dismantling of the department became a symbolic test of the administration's will in some conservative circles (Fiske, 1981, Dec. 26). But Bell stood firmly for what he believed and the impasse was overcome (T. H. Bell, personal communication, September 23, 1989).

By January 1982 the proposal was ready for presentation to the full cabinet. During the meeting Secretary Bell studied the President's reactions intently to pick up any hints of dissatisfaction. Secretary Bell had made a commitment to the President to change the structure bureau and wanted assurance that this proposal filled the bill. The President showed no objections. The cabinet approved the proposal (Bell, 1988, p. 97).

#### Finding a Sponsor in the Senate

The next step was getting the proposed new law enacted by Congress. The suggested route was through the Senate where there was a Republican majority rather than the Democratic controlled House. First contact would be Majority Leader Howard Baker (R-Tenn.). Second would be Chairman of the Senate Government Operations Committee William Roth (D-Del.),



and third would be Mark O. Hatfield (R-Oregon), Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee (Bell, 1988, p. 93).

The polling firm, Decision/Making/Information, polled a sample of 1,300 adults and found that 55 percent approved of the creation of the Education Department, while 37 percent disapproved with 9 percent having no opinion (Hook, 1981, Oct. 28). Local superintendents favored the continuation of the department by two to one (Terrel Bell, 1981, March 10).

Partly due to public sentiment and partly due to pure politics, Sens. William Roth, Jack Brooks (D-Tex.), and Robert Stafford spoke out against any proposal to dismantle the department. Each of these senators presided over a committee that the bill would need to pass (Keller, 1982, Jan.). As the system operated, the committee chairmen typically maintained a high level of prestige and could exercise substantial authority over legislation assigned to their committees. Sen. Howard Baker told Secretary Bell that he not only refused to push the bill but "promised to fight the proposal with all his might" (Bell, 1988, p. 94). Without the majority leader's or chairmen's support, the passage of the bill was dubious (Vetterli, 1982, p. 76). The chairman was almost an independent czar in his little realm. The chairman's committee in turn was omnipotent in controlling the flow of legislation to the floor of the House and Senate (Murphy, 1973, p. 1).

Sen. Dan Quayle (R-Ind.) was asked if he would be willing to introduce the Administration's bill on the Senate floor.

The bill disbursed most of education activities to other federal agencies. The bill differed radically from the one recommended by Secretary Bell to the President (White, 1981, Nov. 2). A Quayle aide later reported that Sen. Quayle had been unsuccessful in gaining support from the President. His bill disbursed most education office activities to other federal agencies, leaving an education assistance agency (White, 1981, Nov. 2). Because Quayle's proposal recreated the fragmentation and duplication of effort that the creation of the department sought to eliminate, he could not find support for the bill (Keller, 1982, Jan.). Even Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) who was the emerging spokesman for the New Right (Vetterli, 1982, p. 78), failed to support the legislation. He was a strong conservative and newly appointed chairman of the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee. The issue never made it to his committee.

Secretary Bell approached nearly every member of the Senate. When he informally tallied his count, Secretary Bell found only 19 votes for his bill (Bell, 1988, pp. 95-96). When the White House found out about the lack of support, it backed away from the bill leaving Secretary Bell the only exponent of the universally disliked legislation (FitzGerald, 1989, Jan. 16).

### The House of Representatives

With the House having a Democratic majority, the bill's chances of passage were even less than in the Senate. Nevertheless, Rep. John N. Erlenborne (R-Ill.) introduced bill, HR 1904, that would transfer education programs to HEW (Hook, 1981, Oct. 28). Erlenborne was the most visible proponent of abolishing the department in the House (Keller, 1982, Jan). Yet, he too, conceded that it was much easier to oppose creation than dissolution of the Department of Education (J. Erlenborne, personal communication, October 11, 1989). By this time the bill's provisions had appeared in the press and the reaction was predictable. Most of the education associations, even those that had opposed the creation, refused to support the legislation for abolition (Bell, 1988, p. 95). There was no major constituency that supported the dissolution (J. Erlenborne, personal communication, October 11, 1989).

### Lobbying Groups

There were many great debates during the creation of the department during the 95th and 96th Congresses. One might suppose that these battles continued during the abolishment question. They did not. Lobbyists, particularly the NEA, played a vital role in the President Carter's successful legislation. In the process the lobbyists became stronger (E. Meese, personal correspondence, November 28, 1989). Some would presuppose that the lobbyists were vigorously involved

in petitioning Congress from eliminating the agency. During the 1981-85 time frame, however, NEA took a different stance.

What were the NEA and AFT and other educational lobbying groups doing at this time? According to Moses Holmes, National Education Association government relations specialist, there was not the high level involvement that had occurred during the passage of the bill creating the department. Rather it was quiet observation.

Although NEA continued to keep its linkages with Congress open, it took a more watchful rather than active stance. The NEA lobbyists knew that Congress's disposition was to leave the agency alone. Nobody wanted the painful process of destroying the Department of Education. However, had there been an inkling of such a item brought to the floor of Congress, there would have been all out war from NEA (M. Holmes, personal communication, December 12, 1988).

The AFT had been one of the most vocal opponents of the creation of the department. They opposed it in part because it failed to consolidate major educational programs such as Head Start, Vocational Rehabilitation and the Bureau of Indian Affairs Schools into the department. In short, AFT felt that a narrow education department was not a step forward from the existing structure. However, after its creation, AFT changed its stance and supported the Department of Education. According to correspondence dated March 9, 1989, by Gregory A. Humphrey, Director of Legislation, "it was not necessary

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for anyone to do very much since the Reagan Administration never even formally proposed legislation to dissolve, or otherwise change, the structure of the Department of Education." All that AFT did was issue a statement opposing the creation of a Federal Foundation. It was sufficient action in this case.

The Joint Commission on Federal Relations of the Association of Community College Trustees, and the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges took "no involvement...to keep Congress from considering a bill to dissolve the department because such legislation was never a real possibility in the Democratic controlled Congress." Though the Reagan Administration wanted to push such a bill, it would have been shelved immediately by the House Education and Labor Committee (F. Mensel, personal communication, March 9, 1989).

#### Summary: The Worst of Both Worlds

The proposal which the administration considered the most attractive politically, generated little enthusiasm and was referred to as the worst of both worlds. It satisfied neither the supporters of the department nor those who want it abolished (Babcock, 1981, Nov. 18) Secretary Bell poignantly stated that the proposal made all sides equally angry (Bell, 1988, p. 97).

When President Reagan began recognizing that his move to abolish the department had run into difficulty, he declined

to push for expedient action (Keller, 1982, Jan.). Distancing or getting as far away from an unpopular issue is a political tactic that was used by the White House (Bell, 1988, p. 97). Right wing critics droned on claiming that had a bill been drafted by the first session of Congress, it would have passed with the block grants during the honeymoon period of the presidency. More moderates individuals felt that Congress never would have passed such a resolution.

Congress balked because it was controversial legislation. Whenever an issue of strongly divided views and feeling exists, rarely does either side come out a winner. One may have those who agree with the position, but on the other side are those who passionately believe in the opposite view. If one is a politician why get into needless controversy? Careful weight must be given to the opposition and its potential before adding more enemies in one's political backyard. The political gain must far outweigh the political hazards before a politician will act (Bell, 1988, p. 96).

## CHAPTER V

### THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

There could hardly be a lower status than to be a Republican in the Reagan administration in charge of a department sired by Jimmy Carter, mothered by Congress, delivered by the National Education Association functioning as an activist midwife, and publicly designated for abolition.

Terrel Bell  
Secretary of Education

#### Political Appointments

The ideologues, failing to inveigle the support of the President Reagan and Congress, attempted slowly to strangle the Department of Education. A bureau often cannot be killed, but it can be made ineffective. The ideologues attempted to do make the department strangle itself to death. The first arena of the political battle began with staffing the large department. Political appointments to the department could be vetoed by the Secretary, however, the White House could also stymie the Secretary's choices. So compromises had to be reached.

Lorelei Kinder, head of the education transition team, was nominated by the White House to fill the number two spot as Undersecretary of Education. Secretary Bell totally opposed such an appointment, based upon the fact that Kinder had no formal educational background. Then Secretary Bell proposed the name of Christopher Cross, respected educator and

Republican. The White House turned this appointment down. Only upon the acceptance of ideologue Daniel Oliver to the position of General Solicitor did the logjam break. Secretary Bell finally got approval on the name of Bill Clohan as Undersecretary of Education (Muscatine, 1981, March 29).

Secretary Bell was criticized for being slow to appoint important positions of assistant secretaries. Part of that was due to his own late appointment and partly to internal differences with Reagan's top aides (W. Clohan, personal communication, November 22, 1988). Bell suggested part of it was because his was the last and dying department (Cannon, 1981, June 18). In reality, every postwar administration has had difficulty in wading through the clearance process of the hundreds of new appointees (Heclo, 1977, p. 98).

In some aspects, it was a peaceful time in the department. Early appointed ideologues tended to be quiet and more cooperative. Nearly a year went by without too much disruption (W. Clohan, personal communication, November 22, 1988). The later appointments began to cause upheavals within the department.

According to Bell, the movement conservatives "actually believed that if I chose, I could unilaterally close the department down, fire all the employees, and bring about the total demise of the federal role in education. Given this kind of naivete, it was easy for the next scheme to emerge to bottle up all my proposed appointments and approve only the



ideologues" (Bell, 1988, p. 40). Bell felt that no matter what he did, it would never be enough to satiate the New Right unless it were total abolishment of the department (T. H. Bell, personal communication, September 23, 1989).

To an outsider all the haggling about appointments was an absurdity. Yet the process of filling jobs was an important facet of political interactions because of its "symbolic significance in the mutual calculations of political power." Each appointment was a test of political power. Some felt that the person who stood behind the nominee was almost as important as the appointed. "Most political appointees were...a result of a variety of known and unknown compromises in the selection process" (Heclo, 1977, p. 98). To many already within the bureau it appeared that the bottom of the barrel appointees were sent to the Department of Education (K. Gardner, personal communication, October 30, 1989; Gary Jones, personal communication, December 9, 1988; K. Lloyd, personal communication, March 15, 1989).

Vince Reed, former superintendent of the District of Columbia Schools, was appointed Deputy Undersecretary for Elementary and Secondary Schools. In return Bell accepted Edward Curran, a conservative, as the director of the National Institute of Education. Robert Billings, a Baptist minister and close friend of Jerry Falwell of the Moral Majority, was given a position at the request of Jim Baker. Billings was

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later criticized as being too close to Bell (Bell, 1988, p. 50).

Other movement conservatives or ideologues included Charles Heatherly, departmental executive secretary, and Donald Seneese, assistant secretary for Office of Educational Research and Evaluation. These were part of the Wednesday luncheon group (Bell, 1988, p. 52) that met regularly to plan the demise of the department.

Why did ideologues accept political appointments to a dying department? The first reason was that by working inside the department they could insure its demise (W. Clohan, personal communication, November 22, 1988; C. Heatherly, personal communication, November 7, 1988; Gary Jones, personal communication, December 9, 1988). Many were from an evangelical background. They simply traded their concept of the devil to the department, and fought (H. Gardner, personal communication, October 30, 1989). Some ideologues would go to battle, not necessarily to win, but for the honor of fighting. And second, the personal opportunity to work in a politically appointed position emphasized the personal rewards of political spoils. No idealist, no matter how pure, is immune to a political appointment (C. Heatherly, personal communications, November 7, 1988).

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### Planned Sabotage

Some of the tactics utilized by the ideologues were seemingly well planned while others were simply petty. The idea was to divert attention from crucial issues to peripheral debates (S. Schonhout, personal communication, November 15, 1988). This was accomplished by appointing ideologues to almost every division within the department (T. H. Bell, personal communication, September 23, 1989). Bureaucrats knew that every major topic of discussion at meetings was filtered back to the White House. They got used to the fact the whatever was said of significance in the morning meeting would reach the White House by afternoon. There was some paranoia running around (K. Lloyd, personal communication, March 15, 1988; W. Clohan, personal communication, November 22, 1988; Gary Jones, personal communication, December 9, 1988).

A letter from the People for the American Way included in William Bennett's confirmation hearings (1985) listed some of the tactics used.

In April 1981, a concerned parent called the Department of Education to request information about textbook content. Deputy Assistant Secretary for Legislation George Archibald referred the caller to Mel and Norma Gabler of Texas, the nation's leading advocates of textbook censorship.

In September, 1983, another caller was referred by a Special Assistant to the Deputy Undersecretary for Planning, Budget and Evaluation to Phyllis Schlafly of the Eagle Forum for information about "school room politicization."

Recently, Thomas G. Tancredo, the Department of Education's Region VIII Representative in Denver, distributed at government expense a statement which declared that "godlessness has taken over America: and praised private religious schools as an alternative

to the public schools. The speech was written five years ago ~~the~~ by then-executive director of the Moral Majority, Robert Billings (Senate Hearing, 1985, pp. 173-174).

One moderate deputy undersecretary repeatedly asked an ideologue for a report to be included in a larger summary presentation to Secretary Bell. The ideologue kept deferring. At the presentation to Secretary Bell, the ideologue presented his surprise report. The Secretary thought that his deputy had undermined the ideologue's position. This type of action continued to widen the rift between the ideologues and the moderates.

Several incidences<sup>t</sup> seemed to be planned by the ideologues. They included budget cuts, the firing of Undersecretary Bill Clohan, the NIE-Ed Curran Incidence, the Daniel Oliver incidence, and press leaks.

#### Budget Cuts

Perhaps the most difficult thing that Secretary Bell had to do was to battle the enormous budget cuts to the department (T. H. Bell, personal communication, September 23, 1989). Many of the programs had been mandated by Congress and could not be cut. However, wherever David Stockman and the OMB could slash away, they did. Stockman wanted to cut the budget from \$13.9 billion to \$10.6 billion making nearly a 45% decrease over three years (Stockman, 1986, p. 372).

OMB Director David Stockman knighted Secretary Bell with the Dubious Achievement of the Year, since Bell had submitted

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the largest education budget in history. Secretary Bell appealed his case by stating that it was not a dime above the enacted 1984 funding bill (Stockman, 1986, p. 372). Stockman later confessed in his book that he wanted to bring about a "sweeping change in the national economic governance in 40 days" and that it was a "preposterous, wantonly reckless notion" (Stockman, 1986, p. 80).

President Reagan endorsed the heavy cutbacks in the budget. However the Department of Education would have suffered more severely at the hands of Stockman, if President Reagan had not administered a tempering hand in Secretary Bell's estimation (T. H. Bell, personal communication, September 23, 1989).

Part of the severe cutbacks included reducing the number of jobs available in the department by 1000 positions. Natural attrition helped. But because of the peculiarities of the civil service system, a higher grade position when being eliminated could move into a lower grade position. The occupant of the lower grade could then bump a grade below him out of a job. It had a terrible domino effect. This created discord and unrest among employees of the department as well as extremely low morale among the staff (W. Clohan, personal communication, November 22, 1988). It seemed that only the highest career grade officers did not feel the affects of the turmoil (E. Elliott, personal communication, December 21, 1988; Gary Jones, personal communication, December 7, 1988;

V. Reed, personal communication, December 12, 1988; B. Smith, personal communication, November 18, 1988).

Added to this atmosphere of upheaval was the deliberate undermining of Bell's and the careerists' positions by the ideologues. There was great mistrust by the ideologues of the careerists. What might seem to be unique among the political appointees of the Reagan era was no more than history repeating itself. According to Heclo, political executives typically arrived in office expecting to deal with Washington bureaucrats, not people. If one had come from private business, the idea of management control was foremost. "This combined with suspicions of government activity in general and Democratic social programs in particular, seemed to predispose Republican appointees to be particularly distrustful of career officials" (Heclo, 1977, p. 182). The discord between the political appointees, particularly the movement conservatives and the careerists was highly apparent as well as the separation between the more pragmatic moderates and ideologues that had been appointed. There were several camps co-existing within the walls of the department. It was also rumored that there were weekly revival meetings held in the building every Tuesday morning to add to the schizoid makeup. Tension was very strained. Morale was low (W. Clohan, personal communication, November 22, 1988; H. Gardner, personal communication, October 30, 1989; B. Smith, personal

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communication, November 18, 1988); L. Walser, personal communication, October 3, 1988).

#### The Bill Clohan Incidence

One of the first successfully planned efforts by the ideologues was the firing of Undersecretary Bill Clohan. Secretary Bell's regular informant on the Wednesday luncheons told him that Clohan was marked as the first senior staff member to feel the sting of the ideologues. Bell felt that this was an empty threat, but by spring of 1982, criticism of Clohan by the White House was in full bloom.

Clohan was the compromise candidate for Undersecretary when Secretary Bell turned Kinder's name down and the White House countered with denial of Cross's name. Clohan was an Air Force Academy graduate and while at Andrews Air Force Base attended Georgetown Night Law School. Originally from West Virginia, Secretary Bell describes Clohan as bright, personable, capable, and loyal (Bell, 1988, p. 53).

Clohan attributed the beginning of his troubles with the White House, namely with Meese, to one cabinet meeting. Once when Secretary Bell was out of town, Clohan went in Bell's stead to a meeting. Meese was giving a rundown of localized special tuition tax credit proposals in February or March. The Department of Education was not primarily involved since it was a Treasury's tax issue. Meese characterized the proposal and briefly described that elementary, secondary, parochial and higher education groups supported the tuition

tax credit. Clohan corrected Meese by stating that he knew of no higher education including the Jesuits' colleges that supported this proposal. According to Clohan, "Meese nearly came across the table" at him." Meese put Clohan down in front of everyone. He accused Clohan of opposing the tuition tax credit (W. Clohan, personal communication, November 22, 1988).

The accusations against Clohan included his close associations with the Hill. That someone was John Ashbrook (R-Ohio), one of the most conservative Republicans on the Education Labor Committee, and a supporter of the White House. If anything, the White House needed to curry good favor with Ashbrook (W. Clohan, personal communication, November 22, 1988).

The actual event that triggered Clohan's dismissal was claimed to be in the best interest of the President's agenda. After Clohan gave a speech to the Council of Chief State School Officers, a reporter cornered him and asked him about the President's commitment to tuition tax credit. All Clohan said was that the President had approved the broad outlines of the proposal and would be announcing his plan soon to the public.

An article ran the next morning on the front page of The Washington Post, and Ed Meese called Secretary Bell at 7 am Washington time from Missouri (6 a.m. his time) demanding Clohan's resignation since he had leaked the President's story



on tuition tax credits. The irony of the event was that Congress was out of session so no one could raise an uproar (W. Clohan, personal communication, November 22, 1988).

Meese directed Penn James to express the White House's displeasure about leaking this decision prematurely. Bell knew that this matter was being distorted deliberately to trigger a reaction. Several days later James called to say they wanted Clohan's resignation immediately. Bell vigorously defended his undersecretary stating that Meese and Penn were overreacting. Penn reminded Bell that the undersecretary served at the pleasure of the President. It's called minute-to-minute tenure. Penn later called and stated that the decision was irrevocable. Bell, defeated, called in Clohan and told him that he was fired. Clohan promptly wrote out his resignation (Bell, 1988, p. 54). Some say that Secretary Bell offered Clohan up as a sacrificial offering to stave off the ideologues. Clohan denied that Secretary Bell ever did such a thing. The New Right were clearly behind the action. Clohan, himself, admitted that he was not on the inside track (W. Clohan, personal communication, November 22, 1988). Newspapers reported that it was an ideological purging (Babcock, 1982, April 9). There was no official explanation for his departure. However, there were unconfirmed reports that Mr. Clohan's resignation was asked by White House officials, reportedly on the grounds that he was not in total sympathy with Reagan Administration efforts (Hunter, 1982,

2/10 April 9). Some suppose that this was a planned action, since Clohan's firing came the same day in which conservatives leaders Richard Viguerie and Howard Phillips called for Bell's resignation for failure to stop the flow of federal dollars to radical groups (Babcock, 1982, April 11).

Comments made several later by Clohan in The Washington Post included that "No reason was given [for the dismissal]. The implication was they didn't have confidence in me....It was unsettling. I would feel much better if they gave me a good reason" (Babcock, 1982, April 9). For the far right, this was their first victory. For Bell it was painful, unfair, and frightening (Bell, 1988, p. 54).

#### The Curran-NIE Incidence

The next planned incidence involved Edward Curran who was the director of a prestigious private girls school in Washington, D.C. before becoming director of the National Institute of Education (NIE). He pressed hard for a back-to-basics education. Curran's proposed agenda for NIE in fiscal year 1983 included such conservative topics as tuition tax credits, home instruction, and the influence of working mothers on children's achievement, and education vouchers (Lewis, 1982, September). Curran, however, strongly felt that NIE should be done away with. Terrel Bell described the event as follows.

doh! — When he [Curran] decided that NIE should be abolished, he did not choose to discuss it with me. He wrote directly to the president, and he "forgot" to send me a copy. His letter said his institute was

wasting money and doing no good and that the federal government had no role in education research. It ended with a plea that NIE be abolished.

The letter was a very clever piece of strategy....my director of NIE would nudge me along the way by asking the President to do what he knew I would not do....I was furious, of course, when Dick Darman, deputy to Chief of Staff Jim Baker, referred the letter to me for review and comment. True to Washington's tradition, the letter was also leaked to the press. The cynics who specialize in cabinet watching started speculating what I would do...I gave Darman a quick direct response: I was wholly opposed to the recommendations, and I wanted Curran fired. (Bell, 1988, pp. 57-58)

Bell conceded that this put him in a precarious situation, but a cabinet officer could not tolerate insubordination. To Bell's relief, the White House supported him through Jim Baker to fire Curran or at least transfer him out of the department (Bell, 1988, p. 59).

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Curran visited Bell and apologized profusely for his oversight in not sending a copy earlier. Bell said that even then he failed to hear him Curran say that the letter should have gone through Bell to the President. Curran wanted to keep his job. But Bell was firm. Curran was later appointed to serve as deputy director of the Peace Corps (Bell, 1988, p. 59).

#### Daniel Oliver Incidence

Problems created by the ideologues still continued to plague the department. Part of the unrest was in NIE after Curran left. Robert Sweet, deputy director, formerly a New Hampshire book salesman and teacher was a staunch ideologue. The newly appointed director of NIE was Dr. Manuel Justiz,

professor of education at the University of New Mexico. Director Justiz complained of Deputy director Sweet's refusal to take directions, and his continual disruption.

Added to the confusion was George Roche, Chairman of the National Council on Educational Research (NCER), and Daniel Oliver's restructuring of the relationship between NCER and NIE. The opinion which was sent to the White House with again no carbon to Secretary Bell, stated that NCER was independent of the director of NIE, and that NCER was the chief policy-making body for all aspects of NIE. Bell was unaware of the proceedings until at a regularly scheduled meeting of NCER, the council voted to place NIE's director, Justiz, in a subordinate position to the council. Sweet would then oversee Justiz's work.

According to the provisions of the law that created the Department of Education, however, all presidential appointed officers reported to the Secretary. NIE could not report to a council outside the Secretary's authority. Bell had a confrontation with Oliver, and Oliver denied doing anything but objectively interpreting the statute. Bell then went directly to the White House and demanded that those responsible for Chairman Roche's appointment force him to remove Sweet from his new post.

Finally after an incredible 10 months Sweet was offered a job in the White House. Oliver was also requested to be transferred. He was eventually appointed general counsel to

the Department of Agriculture, and later served as the chairman of the Federal Trade Commission (Bell, 1988, p. 60), and was appointed a Fellow at the Heritage Foundation in 1989 (E. Meese, personal communication, November 28, 1989).

#### Press Leaks

Press leaks were essentially a limited silent partnership in the making of policy with the media. Other administrations such as the Kennedys used it to produce a specific effect. In the Reagan era, press leaks were raised to an art form.

Those who entered this silent partnership with the media generally found greater leniency when stories broke. When Jim Baker and Bill Casey had a controversy, the press was tough on Casey who did not play the game but very easy on Baker who worked with the press (Regan, 1988, pp. 282-284). Jim Baker, Chief of Staff, cultivated the press, sometimes spending as much as 50 percent of his time with reporters and editors. This gave him considerable influence of how policies were treated in the press. Meese, on the other hand only catered to the California press or the right-wing reporters (Speakes, 1988, p. 71).

Sabotage also came in the form of press leaks. Since information was a prime strategic resource in Washington, the passing of unauthorized messages outside channels reached its zenith.

There are routine leaks to build credit and keep channels open for when they might be needed, positive leaks to promote something, negative leaks to discredit a person or policy, and counterleaks. There is even

the daring reverse leaks, an unauthorized release of information apparently for one reason but actually accomplishing the opposite (Bell, 1988, p. 60).

Bell conceded in his book that some of the press leaks were beginning to erode his credibility. His first counter strategy was to withdraw the controversial bilingual regulations created for the Lau ruling. But he felt that he needed more directed public relations and began creating a Presidential Commission in his mind. The result was the popular Nation at Risk Report, which became a powerful tool in persuading the administration to drop the agenda for abolishment.

#### Secretary Bell

Even though the White House and Congress had for all purposes politely neglected the issue of abolishment, the ideologues shifted their strategy to infiltrate the department itself. Had a secretary with no knowledge of the Washington power games, no administrative skills, no connections, or general astuteness filled the position, the ideologues might have succeeded in crippling the department. The third element of why there still exists a department is because of Secretary Bell.

From Lava Hot Springs, Idaho, Secretary Bell took the lessons of his widowed mother and his eight siblings. He began his career as a chemistry teacher and athletic coach after his stint in the Marine corps as a machine gun

Complete  
press  
collapse

instructor. He then became superintendent of various school districts in Wyoming and Utah. Later he was state school superintendent of Utah. His first tour of Washington was as deputy commissioner in the Office of Education during the Nixon administration. However, just prior to his coming, James Allen, Commissioner of Education, had just been fired. Bell was asked to serve as acting Commissioner of Education until the appointment of a new secretary could be made. This stretched into seven months (Bell, 1988, pp. 57-64).

His second tenure in Washington was as Commissioner of Education from June 1974 to July 1976, under President Gerald Ford. He served under Secretaries of Health, Education, and Welfare, Caspar Weinberger, David Matthews, and Elliot Richardson. Bell then retired to head the Utah Commission on Higher Education, where he was serving at the time of his appointment as Secretary of Education.

Secretary Bell has had diverse experience at all levels of education as well as experience in a large bureaucratic administration. This was what the first secretary, Shirley Hufstadler, had lacked with her background as a courtroom judge. Although she had done an admirable job in transferring the myriad of vast programs into the department, her few months in office had not allowed a strong organization to be built (Radin & Hawley, 1988, p. 211). Bell, on the other hand, intimately knew the workings of many of the large and complex programs housed in the department.

Added to Secretary Bell's administrative abilities was his knowledge of the formal and political workings of Washington. With his previous service as commissioner, he still had many friends within the department as well as on the Hill. He knew how the system worked.

Secretary Bell kept in constant contact with various legislators and officials (T. H. Bell, personal communication, September 23, 1989). He knew how to appeal in person for education's cause. His instinct for lobbying proved helpful.

Secretary Bell had some strategic thoughts how to counter the attacks of the New Right ideologues. Some worked and others did not fare as well. According to Heatherly, one of the most strategic moves that Secretary Bell did in keeping the department alive, was to extract the promise from President Reagan for Secretary Bell to formulate the plan for dismantling (C. Heatherly, personal communication, November 11, 1988). Bell admitted that this was purposefully planned (T. H. Bell, personal communication, September 23, 1989).

[Bell] then told the president-elect that if [he] were selected to be his secretary of education [he] would want the responsibility of supervising the staff work that drafted alternatives to the department structure. The president-elect answered, "Well, okay, let's go for it!" And with that casual response [Bell] became a member of the president's cabinet (Bell, 1988, pp. 4-5).

There were only three places that the abolishment plan could have been placed: the White House, OMB with Stockman, or the department. A less knowledgeable secretary might never



have asked. It was important to Secretary Bell that he help determine the structure of the succeeding agency that would house the department (T. H. Bell, personal communication, September 23, 1989).

why?

Undersecretary Clohan when asked what was one of Secretary Bell's strongest traits thoughtfully replied, "People underestimate him" (W. Clohan, personal communication, November 22, 1988). Secretary Bell stood just a little over five feet five inches tall. His demeanor was of quiet benevolence. So it might have been somewhat surprising that the docile Secretary could take such a firm stand on issues he picked to fight. Also Secretary Bell carefully selected the battles that he would wager (W. Clohan, personal communication, November 22, 1988).

Secretary Bell was willing to lay his job on the line if it came to that over Curran's dismissal from NIE. Secretary Bell felt that the challenge to his authority had to be met firmly, without equivocation even though there was no certainty of the outcome (Bell, 1988, p. 58). He also met the Daniel Oliver and the NCER incidence with firm resolve. He spared budget cuts through effective lobbying at the White House. A popularly circulated story was that Secretary Bell prevailed over Budget Director Stockman in an Oval Office showdown that was refereed by the President.

In a poll conducted by U.S. News & World Report in July 1981 among Washington insiders, Secretary Bell was rated as

fifth overall in a field of twelve cabinet officers. His assets were as a "respected educator, ha[d] shrewd political sense, and White House rapport" with his liabilities as that "job may be abolished; walks a political tightrope" with the comments of "smart...in charge...honest...political operator" (Rating Reagan's cabinet, 1981, July 27). Secretary Bell's assets were well noted by those in the Washington scene.

Secretary Bell also used the media well. When he felt that press leaks were beginning to hurt him in the beginning of his tenure, he made a media event of the deregulation of the bilingual laws. This was hailed by many as important, and even won him good standing, if only temporarily, with the New Right.

An example of how Secretary Bell used the press was when he was appointed Secretary of Education. The White House was extremely slow in publishing a press release announcing that the 13th cabinet seat had been filled. Even after the press began making calls to Secretary Bell's hotel room, the White House still did not respond. Apparently there were some staffers who were against the appointment, and wanted only a small news article. When the release did appear, it was only Bell's resume.

Secretary Bell, however, took matters into his own hands. He set up a three-hour round robin, with different reporters visiting each hour at the Mayflower Hotel. Twelve different reporters from national syndications were able to ask

Secretary Bell questions of interest to them. Individual stories were created. For the next two days, Secretary Bell's appointment received wide coverage (K. Lloyd, personal communication, March 15, 1988).

The Nation at Risk Report was Bell's brainchild. Secretary Bell wanted to stage a media event to highlight the issues of education. When the White House received the idea of a presidential commission with a lukewarm enthusiasm, Secretary Bell formed a secretary's commission. It took nearly two years for the results to be seen, but the effort paid off handsomely. The Nation at Risk Report brought more attention to education since the launching of Sputnik in the late 1950's. More people were concerned with education than had been the two decades before.

Though not an attribute, Secretary Bell claimed much of what happened to him as old fashion luck. He happened to be at the right place at the right time. The stunning reception from the public to his Nation at Risk Report exceeded his wildest imagination. The fact that it was an election year and that President Reagan needed a domestic issue was coincidental timing with the report's release. Time after time things seemed to fall into place for Secretary Bell (T. H. Bell, personal communication, September 23, 1989).

#### Summary

There was an interesting mix of personnel working in the department. In one sector were the political appointees, and

in another were the bureaucrats who had seen many appointees come and go. Within the ranks of the political appointees were those who were experienced educators and those who were being repaid a political favor. To add to the mix were the religious right with their weekly revival meetings in the department.

The ideologues staged several strategies to upset the department. However, as an experienced bureaucrat, a lifelong educator, a staunch defender of education, and with ample luck, Secretary Bell warded off most of the tactics. Whether a culprit or hero, Terrel Bell was an important factor in the continuing existence of the Department of Education.

## CHAPTER VI

### NATION AT RISK REPORT AND RETIRING THE AGENDA

My problem is not so much doing what is right but knowing what is right.

Lyndon B. Johnson  
36th President

#### Secretary's Commission on Excellence

Little did Secretary Bell realize that a commission he created in 1981 would pay off so handsomely. Bell had originally proposed that a Presidential commission be created, but there was no enthusiasm for the proposal from the White House. So Secretary Bell formed his own. He fought through all the necessary redtape to form this commission. He even dedicated the full-time effort of an executive director to the project which was filled by Dr. Milton Goldberg.

The purpose of the Commission on Excellence was to raise school standards. The cost of operating the commission was estimated at \$332,000, or a hundred dollars a day for the commission quarterly meetings and an addition \$453,000 for a 16 member staff provided by the Education department. Named that day were Dr. David Pierpont Gardner as chairman with vice-chairman Yvonne Larsen, president of San Diego's board of education. Others included: Gov. Albert H. Quie of Minnesota; Anne Campbell, commissioner of education in Nebraska; Glenn T. Seaborg, former head of the Atomic Energy Commission, who was now a chemistry professor at the

University of California at Berkeley; A. Barlett Giamatti, president of Yale, and Jay Sommer, a foreign language teacher at New Rochelle High School in New York, who was recently honored at the White House as teacher of the year.

Others were William O. Baker, retired chairman of Bell Telephone Laboratories in Morristown, N.J.; Emeral A. Brosby, principal of North High School in Detroit; Charles A. Foster, Jr., president of the Foundation for Teaching of Economics in San Francisco; Norman C. Francis, president of Xavier University in New Orleans, and Shirley Gordon, president of High Line Community College in Midway, Washington.


Rounding out the list were Robert B. Haderlein, president of the National School Boards Association, from Gilrard, Kansas; Gerald Holton Mallinckrodt, a Harvard professor of physics and history of science; Annette Y. Kirk, a former school teacher from Mecosta, Michigan; Margaret S. Marston, a member of the Virginia state board of education, from Arlington; Francisco D. Sanchez Jr., superintendent of schools in Albuquerque, N.M., and Richard Wallace, principal of Lutheran High School East in Cleveland Heights, Ohio (Bell names commission, 1981, Aug. 27).

All but two members of the committee were educators from a wide diversity of backgrounds. Some members accepted the appointment only on the condition that they would be allowed to write a minority opinion. The deadline was 18 months.

The commission was more active than most. At least every three to four weeks a meeting, hearing, or school visit was held by members of the commission. Input from public meetings plus 40 major research pieces were shifted through by the commission. The biggest problems were identified and then addressed. As the committee worked, every member contributed to the finished product. Some members naturally felt more ownership than others, but all members saw it as theirs (M. Goldberg, personal communication, October 10, 1989).

Because of Chairman David Gardner's persistence, a general consensus was reached by the group. There was no minority opinion written. It took missing the original deadline by a month, but it was done (Bell, 1988, p. 119). The main objection raised was the language of the report. Was it too strong or too weak, did it convey the exact meaning? What seemed inoffensive wording at the beginning, took on a more critical mien as printing deadlines neared. Through persuasive telephone conversations much was settled. It was through the dedication of Chairman David Gardner and Executive Director Milton Goldberg spending up to 30 hours a week via the phone that the final report made it to press (M. Goldberg, personal communication, October 10, 1989).

By the end of the the first year, the idea of dissemination conferences was also born. These were 12 strategically selected locations around the country which followed the presidential announcement of the release of the



report (M. Goldberg, personal communication, October 10, 1989).

#### The Report is Released

The first indication from the President was that he was pleased with the report. However, Secretary Bell could not understand the quiet reception that the right wing movement conservatives gave the report. He soon found out why. The ideologues were planning to use the announcement of the Nation at Risk as a time to state their intentions. According to Bell's source, it was Ed Meese who inserted the remarks about tuition tax credits, school prayer, and private schools. A call to Jim Baker was immediately made, and Baker reassured Bell that these remarks would be removed. Secretary Bell was already on his way to the press conference when he received a call over the car phone telling him that the earlier remarks had been reinserted by Meese. It was too late to do anything (Bell, 1988, p. 128).

The President praised the work of the commission and then launched into a discussion of school prayer, tuition tax credits and abolishing the department of Education. None of these were included in the report. Secretary Bell stated that Ken Cribb and Ed Meese gave each other congratulatory gestures as the President finished his comments because they had accomplished another strategic victory (Bell, 1988, p. 129).

The Nation at Risk Report had a stunning impact on public debate. The declaration of a "rising tide of mediocrity"



threatening America's public schools was the subject of cover stories in Time and Newsweek, and major newspapers. The President's remarks not germane to the report were largely ignored by the press, or were considered tacked on since these were political issues.

The report was regarded as a major victory for Bell (Peterson, 1983, May 3). And overnight it seemed that Secretary Bell became a celebrity (Hunter, 1983, July 26).

A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform began its 229-page indictment:

Our nation is at risk. Our once unchallenged preeminence in commerce, industry, science, and technological innovation is being overtaken by competitors throughout the world. This report is concerned with only one of the many causes and dimensions of the problem, but it is the one that undergirds American prosperity, security, and civility. We report to the American people that while we can take justifiable pride in what our schools and colleges have historically accomplished and contributed to the United States and the well-being of its people, the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people. What was unimaginable a generation ago has begun to occur--others are matching and surpassing our educational attainments. ...That we have compromised this commitment is, upon reflection, hardly surprising, given the multitude of often conflicting demands we have placed on our nation's schools and colleges. They are routinely called on to provide solutions to personal, social, and political problems that the home and other institutions either will not or cannot resolve. We must understand that these demands on our schools and colleges often exact an educational cost as well as a financial one (D. Gardner, 1983, p. 1).

The report reiterated the fact that there were 23 million illiterate Americans, a steady decline in academic

achievement, an increase in college remedial math classes, and a decline in science achievement and writing skills. The report was a thoroughly damning indictment of the condition of American education. One sentence read, "If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war."

Other critics could not understand the strange reception given to the commission's report. There was nothing really new about the findings. Yet, Washington reacted as if some devastating new information had come to light. (Boaz, 1988, p. 291). The report, however, capstoned the frustration that Americans had been feeling.

#### The Agenda Stalls

As a direct result of the tremendous attention The Nation at Risk generated, the White House staff relinquished its demand to abolish the department. In June 1983, a month after the release of the report, an article appeared in The Kansas City Star stating that "there is 'no question' that the time has come for the president to re-evaluate his position on the department of Education. That's the bottom line. The votes aren't there" (President's education plan, 1983, June 1).

The administration began playing a game of about-face. During a daily briefing with reporters, Presidential Spokesman Larry Speakes refused nine times to answer reporters' questions as to whether President Reagan still favored doing

ANAR reinforces natural bulwarks  
against abolition of  
ED.

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away with the cabinet agency. Finally Speakes said that legislative realities indicated that the department would remain. Speakes said the President hadn't backed off from his position but favored a redirection of federal educational priorities (Education agency abolition, 1983, June 9).

#### The Governors and Vice President Bush

Secretary Bell had a unique opportunity to share the findings of the Nation at Risk with the governors of the states. During the summer of 1983 in Maine, Secretary Bell and his family were invited for dinner at Vice-President George Bush's home. This also coincided with a lobster feast for the governors who were meeting in Portland, Maine. Vice President Bush essentially created an informal forum for Bell to urge governors to push for new reforms in their states. It was a freewheeling discussion that helped set the stage for many of the reforms that would later occur. The governors also wanted information that would tell them where their states stood educationally in comparison to others. Secretary Bell developed this request into what was called the wall chart, ranking states on school performances, expenditures, and population characteristics (Bell, 1988, pp. 134-138).

Wall  
Chart  
born

#### A Political Football

The summer of 1983 was the beginning of the presidential elections for 1984. Walter Mondale, expected to win the Democratic nomination for President. He delivered addresses attacking President Reagan's voodoo education policies,

need provide facts  
on this point

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hitting hard on the reduction of the federal education budget (Gailey, 1983, June 9). In rebuttal, President Reagan found the polls revealing a deep undercurrent of concern about the nation's schools. The White House was looking for a domestic issue for the campaign. The Nation at Risk was popular and had public appeal. The White House jumped on the Nation at Risk bandwagon and capitalized on it for the campaign (Peterson, 1983, June 15). Imagemaker Michael Deaver became persuasive in bringing President Reagan into the Nation at Risk press conferences. Deaver recognized early the importance of the report and made certain that President Reagan would be identified with a winning issue (T. H. Bell, personal communication, September 23, 1989).

Critics and allies of President Reagan felt that the "White House [was] reacting more to political polling data than to educational needs" (Jaboslovsky, 1983, June 26). House Democrats responded by sending the President a letter warning that exploitation of education for partisan political reasons was a serious mistake which could only work against the best interests of public education. Secretary Bell took the attitude that whether it was a political campaign issue or not, it gave education a visibility that it had not enjoyed since Sputnik. Partly responding to the popularity of the report, the Republican Convention in Dallas voted not to include abolishment of the department in the platform (Reagan's schoolwork fails, 1983, June 17).



Hess in Hodgson (1980) outlined a presidential cycle. The first year was a honeymoon period where Congress and the press essentially left the President alone. It was the year that his staff were most arrogant, since they had won the campaign. The second year when the President had to begin making hard choices and gain enemies, the office turned inward with some resentment. Attention had to be paid to midterm congressional elections also. During the third year the President entered the foreign affairs arena, which seemed to have the least public and congressional restraints on his actions. In the fourth year, the President's attentions snapped back to domestic considerations, and he was blatantly, unashamedly running for office. Should he win a second term, it was generally downhill (Hodgson, 1980, p. 34). President Reagan entered his fourth year looking for a domestic issue and adopted the Nation at Risk as part of his campaign.

Secretary Bell found himself pressed into the campaign making speeches and travelling around the country in the President's personal jet. On these trips, President Reagan affirmed a commitment to improving the nation's schools, promised federal aid for schools in poor communities and for handicapped students, and pledged to continue the program of loans for college students (Fiske, 1984, Nov. 13). From being the earmarked department for abolishment, Secretary Bell had come a long ways.

### The Agenda is Formally Shelved When Bell Resigns

The heady days of the Nation at Risk proved to be short lived after the re-election of Ronald Reagan. Secretary Bell was still sensitive that the extremists wanted to take charge of the department. White House staff members again wanted to make deep cuts in the education budget and, despite the Republican platform pledge, still wanted to do away with the department. Secretary Bell was told that his job would be to support the cutbacks. Bell read the warning that the old agenda still prevailed (Bell, 1988, p. 160). There was no commitment to a federal leadership role in carrying out the recommendations of A Nation at Risk.

Bell spent a sleepless night, and the next morning wrote out his resignation. Dated November 8, 1984, the following is the text of the letter submitted.

Dear Mr. President:

Because of personal circumstances that I have discussed with Jim Baker, I submit my resignation as U.S. Secretary of Education, effective Dec. 31, 1984.

The past four years have been the most challenging and exciting of my professional life. Serving the country as a member of your Cabinet has been a signal honor.

I leave my position feeling that we are in the midst of a lasting and meaningful academic renewal that will benefit millions of learners in our nation's schools and colleges.

It has been a pleasure to serve under your leadership in our quest for excellence in education.

Thank you for the privilege of serving in your Cabinet, and may God bless you as you carry your awesome responsibility of providing leadership for our great Republic.

Sincerely,

T.H. Bell  
(Bell, 1984, Nov. 12).

Three days later without any communication to Secretary Bell, the President announced to the press that Bell had resigned for personal reasons (Bell, 1988, p. 162). Bell accepted a professorship at the University of Utah. Bell later elaborated that his personal reasons for leaving included involvement in a civil lawsuit over dispute of a land title, and the need to help his sons with a new sod farm. He also explained that if he worked in education in his home state for two more years, that it would give him time to build up more retirement credits (Bell bids Washington farewell, 1984, Nov. 14).

#### The Agenda Surfaces Again

On Nov. 21, 1984, a senior White House official stated that President Reagan might again seek to abolish the department of Education. President Reagan believed there was a federal role in education, but "no need for a Cabinet-level department" (Hoffman, 1984, Nov. 21). Despite the success of The Nation at Risk and the campaign promises, the agenda surfaced again.

Happy  
Thanksgiving!

### The Bennett Hearing

The nominated successor to Secretary Bell was William H. Bennett, then chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Bennett had been a university teacher and administrator and director of an independent educational center. In addition to being a doctor of philosophy, he was also an attorney (Senate Hearing, 1985, p. 1). He was also the choice of the New Right. His nomination was a strategic victory for the ideologues (H. Gardner, personal communication, October 30, 1989).

The League of United Latin American Citizens was one of the groups that opposed Bennett's nomination, because Bennett associated with organizations that were viewed as historically opposed to education policies which made loans and grants to needy students. The League felt that association with the Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress, an umbrella organization consisting of about a dozen conservative lobbying groups, including the Heritage Foundation and the American Enterprise Institute would hurt their educational opportunities (Senate Hearing, 1985, p. 186).

During confirmation hearings, the issue of the abolishment of the department of Education was one of the major themes brought up by the committee. There was a great deal of agitation in the hearing regarding the existence of the department, to the point that the Chairman of the Committee (Sen. Orrin G. Hatch) intervened.



I really don't know what all the uproar is over about the department of Education. There is, in my opinion, no way this committee is going to do that....it doesn't take any brains at all to realize that there just isn't any possibility of the department being dissolved or abolished at this point.

...I see a lot of irritation on the committee about that issue. We all know President Reagan would like to have abolished it. He has acknowledged he can't do that. This committee has basically told him he can't do that. So, personally, I don't see why anybody should be upset over that issue (Senate Hearing, 1985, p. 62).

On the issue of abolishment, Bennett repeated that the President had recently said that "there aren't very many votes for it. The president is realistic on this question, and, I think, correct." Later Bennett clearly stated that "I am not going in to abolish the department, nor was I asked, nor was I winked at the time when I was not asked to" (Senate Hearing, 1985, pp. 58, 100).

It was finally Sen. Weicker (R-Conn.) that made the request for a final clarification. "This is the administration, in a way, that is causing this doubt. Let the administration clear it up. And I am making that request, now, with the representatives of the administration, to have such a communication" (Senate Hearing, 1985, p. 98).

The following memo from the White House fulfilled that request to drop the issue of the abolishment of the department of Education.

★  
The Honorable Orrin G. Hatch  
Chairman  
Committee on Labor and Human Resources  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Orrin:

This will respond to questions raised regarding the Administration's position on the existence of the department of Education during your Committee's hearings on the nomination of Dr. William J. Bennett to the Secretary of Education.

As you know, I have previously recommended the abolition of the department of Education. This was because I believed that Federal educational programs could be administered effectively without a cabinet approach. That proposal has received very little support in the Congress. In nominating Dr. Bennett to be Secretary of Education, I have chosen a proven capable administrator with an unquestioned commitment to excellence in education who will be able to present me with thoughtful constructive views on ways to improve the Federal role in education. I have no intention of recommending abolition of the department to the Congress at this time; rather, I have asked Dr. Bennett to advise me on the best ways possible for the Federal government to assist in improving the quality of American education.

Sincerely,  
Ronald Reagan  
(Senate Hearing, 1985, p. 103).

With the letter in hand, the members of the committee approved the confirmation of William Bennett as the third Secretary of Education. Under Bennett the department became known as a bully pulpit, but there was never any attempt to abolish the department. The issue of abolishing the department of Education was finally laid to rest.

### Summary

Secretary Bell wanted a media event. Beyond his wildest dreams he received the attention he wanted in The Nation at Risk Report. This popular report brought accolades to Bell and national focus upon education.

The President was looking for a domestic issue for the upcoming elections. He shrewdly bent this popular issue into own campaign rhetoric, never minding that only three years earlier he had been advocating abolishing the very agency that produced the report. The President promised education a new life.

Unbelievably after all the positive promises about education during the campaign, the agenda to abolish the department resurfaced again. However, during the confirmation hearing for the new Secretary of Education, the Senate committee requested a formal written response from the White House. The White House responded and the committee approved the President's choice for secretary. The dismantling question was finally laid to rest.

## CHAPTER VII

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

I have always been amazed by those who say they are quite willing to go into government but they are not willing to go into politics. My answer is that you can no more divorce government from politics than you can separate sex from creation.

James Forrestal  
First Secretary of Defense

#### Summary

The agenda for abolishing the Department of Education originated from many sources. It was rooted in our country's historical beginnings of fear of a strong central government. It was a feeling that persisted years later as opponents of the Great Society program found a spokesman in Ronald Reagan. Opponents were more closely unified during the last years of Jimmy Carter's presidency as legislation was pushed through establishing a cabinet-level Department of Education. Riding on the waning crest of this 1979 emotional fervor, President Reagan and the Republican Party drew upon the dissolution of the department as a symbolic statement about less federal intervention in education. The President, the times, and the basic American historic tradition combined to produce a campaign promise.

A political campaign addresses many issues. After the tumult of the campaign has died down, the President then must decide how to bring together a government coalition of Congress, those in key agencies, the press, and multiple

players, in order to bring about needed change. Perhaps the Baltimore Evening Sun was prophetic in stating that the abolition of the Department of Education "may be one of the many Reagan campaign promises that [would] not likely to be kept" (A new ed secretary, 1981, Jan. 9).

Richard Wirthlin argued that President Reagan did not want to repeat the mistakes of President Carter by establishing too broad an agenda. President Reagan, instead, selected those issues with clear political paybacks, revitalizing the economy and building military defense. He personally shelved the agenda to abolish the Department of Education (R. Wirthlin, personal communication, January 16, 1989).

President Reagan did not lead out in the legislative role assigned a President. According to Secretary Bell who had seen President Reagan persuading congressmen when he really wanted an issue passed, the President lacked enthusiasm for the issue (T. H. Bell, personal communication, September 23, 1989).

The agenda was uninteresting for the mainstream of Americans. Only a handful of New Right ideologues continued to keep the issue alive. As time passed the ideologues could not kill the department but did attempt to strangle it. They met some successes, because of the prominence of Edwin Meese, Counselor to the President, who was sympathetic to the cause. His access to the President gave him influence over certain events.

The threat to abolish the Department of Education was not empty. Real battles were fought within the walls of the Department of Education. Some civil servants lost their jobs or were cut to lower levels of pay. Ideologues within the department plotted to disrupt its operations. Political appointments attempted to eradicate programs that they oversaw. Press leaks and routine reporting of all meetings put bureaucrats on edge. Poor morale was widespread in the department.

The ideologues in the department were extremely confrontational and difficult to appease. In addition, many of the ideologues did not possess sufficient practical administrative skills for their jobs (S. Potter, personal communication, December 12, 1988). The continuing joke among bureaucrats was that the department was a dumping ground for the least able appointees. Those who were owed political favors but who lacked skills for other appointments, ended up in the department (W. Clohan, personal communication, November 22, 1988; H. Gardner, personal communication, October 30, 1989; L. Walser, personal communication, October 3, 1988).

Variables / factors  
It could be said that the ideological agenda was unrealistic. It failed to consider the Democratic Congress, the lack of political payoff for the effort, and the competition for attention from economic revitalization and increased defense.

The ideologues wanted to fight according to their own rules and not those of Washington's. A docket of unwritten rules exists among Washington politicians. One of the unwritten rules is that one could fight a person of opposing ideological standing, and then go out to dinner together in the evening. There were many illustrations of men in opposing camps who could extend a hand of friendship to their opponent in social circles. President Reagan on the occasion of Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill's birthday, celebrated lunch together. For over an hour they swapped Irish folks stories and jokes. They walked out of the dining room, arm in arm, and within ten minutes after the refreshments were finished and good-byes said, they would be at each other's throats (Deaver, 1987, p. 212). Some of the ultraconservatives did not adhere to the unwritten rules. A high ranking education official was smeared with rumors. The originator of the rumor, an ideologue, later personally apologized, but only after the damage had been done. The New Right's zeal was sometimes unbounded.

Secretary Terrel Bell's experience showed. He could have repeated the mistakes of first Commissioner Henry Barnard in failing to read the political atmosphere. But Secretary Bell knew how to lobby and keep channels of information open. His boldness in facing the opposition and fighting for the department, especially over budget cuts, proved a strong defense against the tactics of the ideologues. The cleverest

tactic was to elicit the promise from President Reagan that he, Secretary Bell, should write the proposals for the reorganization of the department. Thus Secretary Bell could mold the final structure of the department. Secretary Bell's luckiest tactic was his brainchild, The Nation at Risk Report, which rallied national attention to the plight of education and won public support.

In his autobiography Secretary Bell wrote that he was genuinely open to the various alternatives and wanted to accommodate the President's request to reorganize the department. However, he wanted to be a part of the final shape. Wirthlin stated that Secretary Bell was not required to do away with the department, but to be open to alternatives. Much of the job began as an ego gratification for Secretary Bell. It was with the passage of time, however, that Secretary Bell became convinced that the department needed a cabinet spokesman.

of?  
Secretary Bell did diminish the federal role in education (Sniegowski, 1988). In 1982 the first year summary report from the Heritage Foundation was printed. Secretary Bell was complimented for having fulfilled 17 of the 29 objectives that had been outlined earlier; legislation and budget, personnel and accountability, taxes and finance, civil rights and special programs. The group praised the department for a commendable change in direction. The biggest praise went for Bell's efforts to abolish the Department of Education and to



transform federally mandated categorical programs into block grants (Washington Focus, 1981, Nov. 30; Heritage Foundation gives ED, 1981, Nov. 24).

However, his actions were not enough for some ideologues. They wanted completely to eliminate the department (T. H. Bell, personal communication, September 23, 1989). Some ideologues wanted to abolish the department and cut all federal expenditures for education (Bell, 1988, p. 97).

Secretary Bell's involvement was only a part of a larger puzzle of the ideologues' failure to abolish the department. The pivotal player was Congress. Congress was in no mood to abolish what it had so recently created. The bill for abolition found no support in either party. Reorganization was a mammoth undertaking. Congress was astute enough to know that if such expenditures of energy were made, political payoffs had to accrue. There was nothing to be gained by demolishing the department. Even those groups who had initially opposed the creation, now threw their weight behind its continuation. Sponsorship of the bill was impossible to find in the Senate and House. Even those congressmen who supported President Reagan were loathe to bring the issue up again. One newspaper article stated that the President might present a bill to save face, but had been thoroughly stonewalled (Nagy, 1982, Feb. 22).

Having explored the players and agendas of the early days of the Department of Education, Herbert Kaufman's model does

explain the many reasons why the department still existed. It is possible but difficult to dismantle government organizations.

The probabilities favor an organization's long term existence. Kaufman was perhaps prophetic about the Department of Education when he stated that it is not a simple thing to destroy an ongoing agency. The sustaining forces were something to reckon with, and the increment of additional altercations would not always be worth the expenditure of political capital.

First the basis of creation was important. A statutory agency was more likely to survive than one created by executive order. The process of undoing legislation is laborious. This was an important component in the survival of the Department of Education.

Second, many of the original sponsors of the department continued to serve on the education committees of both the Senate and House. Their longevity in Congress was important. The ownership of the original sponsors tended to spread to others on the committee. The congressmen were not eager to rehash what they had so recently created.

Third, the budget was so large that Congress preferred incremental change to major revisions. Education had one of the largest budgets. The difficulty of moving millions of dollars in programs from the department into other agencies was not trivial.

Fourth, although the department was not immune to executive supervision, it was a large bureaucracy that was not easily permeated. Delaying action by those with vested interests could easily occur.

*did this occur?*

Fifth, job preservation was found to be a motivation, though not a factor in this study. One could speculate that Secretary Bell wanted to keep his title. However, in view of the transiency of a political appointee, it was not a factor.

The sixth and seventh categories address outside clientele and professional associations. Outside support for the department was very strong. Earlier opponents of the department's creation such as the higher education lobby, AFT, and even former Commissioner Ernest Boyer, were all now solidly behind its continuation. The department also enjoyed the continuing support of NEA.

The continuation of the department fulfilled nearly every one of the factors favoring long agency life. However, there were only a few hazards that impacted the longevity of the department.

The first hazard did not apply. The department had not been in existence long enough to demonstrate such rigidity.

Second, competition among agencies for similar tasks may have existed, but not to the same extent as is true for such agencies as the Bureau of Reclamation and the Corps of Engineers. Duplicate education programs were smaller, and less prestigious. The department generally did not have

competition in its delivery of services. If there were any conflicts, they usually existed at state and local levels.

The third hazard tied into the second. Agencies did not compete for the same budget monies because they served different clientele.

The fourth hazard, that of built-in obsolescence, did not apply in this study. The department, though political, was not created solely in exchange for a political favor or a place to exile an enemy. The department might have begun as a political favor to NEA, but laws mandated by Congress had to be implemented.

Fifth, the hazard of natural enemies accompanying each agency did exist, particularly with the ideologues. However, education was the basis for a literate population. The basic premise that education was important was never questioned. The question rather was how far federal involvement should extend into education.

The sixth hazard was party politics and factions. This was very much a part of the issue of the agenda for abolition. However, because the department was a large bureaucracy, it was somewhat insulated from partisan politics. The "incentives for an incoming administration to strike out with a meat ax at all existing agencies" were not high enough.

The illusion that legislation would protect an agency was the seventh and final hazard. There is always some false security associated with an act of Congress. Although

legislation increased the probability of longevity, it did not guarantee the agency's existence. Legislated organizations have been known to last only a short time. It was evident that had the department been formed by executive order, it would have been dissolved with an executive signature.

Of the seven hazards, the hazards of political opposition and possibly inattention to Congress were the most serious faced by the department. The factors favoring the long life of the department far outweighed the hazards. In this particular historic brief, the department did outlast its critics (Kaufman, 1976, pp. 3-22).

Framing the events of 1981-1985 after Model III of Bureaucracy in Allison's book, Essence of Decision, the issue of abolishing the Department of Education took on very human dimensions. The game was to dismantle the department. The players were the New Right ideologues, the President, Congress, and Secretary Bell.

The goals of each player varied. The President did not care if the department was dismantled or not. This priority was preempted by other more pressing issues. He would have liked a legislative bill to fulfill his campaign promise, but it was not vital. The ideologues wanted to rid the federal government of the department because they wanted less federal intervention. In some conservative circles, dismantling the department became a symbolic test of the administration's will (Babcock, 1981, Nov. 18). Congress did not want to handle an

unnecessary controversy. Finally, Secretary Bell wanted a national spokesman for education.

The player that had the most to lose was probably Secretary Bell. Education was an area he had given lifelong service. For both the ideologues and the President, there was a campaign promise fulfillment that was perceived important. Otherwise for the President, he was occupied with other more pressing issues. Congress had nothing to lose by ignoring the issue, but many votes to lose if they passed legislation abolishing the department.

Who had the greatest bargaining position? Secretary Bell and the ideologues agree that Bell had the upper hand (C. Heatherly, personal communication, November 7, 1988; T. H. Bell, personal communication, September 23, 1989). He was the one that was responsible for drafting legislation that would go to the Congress. Secretary Bell controlled the content and the timing. Whether delay was a tactic of Secretary Bell's or a natural consequence of a large bureaucracy, the honeymoon period in Congress passed without a bill being introduced. Secretary Bell was able to defend major revisions in the structure by overseeing the task force. He had a national audience because of his connections in the education field and also because he was a cabinet member. The ideologues' only real bargaining power was Counselor to the President Ed Meese. Because of Meese's close access to the President, he was able to win concessions that otherwise would not have given. The

other tactics used by the ideologues were press leaks and holding up political appointments. The President had bargaining power, but chose not to exercise it. There was nothing to be gained. Congress simply refused to play.

#### Conclusions

Kaufman's model does provide an explanation for the continuing existence of the Department of Education. However, one should add that the Constitutional structure separating the branches of government created a built-in tension, and ready-made conflict when the executive and legislative branches interfaced (M. Goldberg, personal communication, October 10, 1989). Also the bureaucracy itself was self-sustaining and very difficult to change. 2

Less definable were the personalities of the individual players who held key positions. Their perceptions, their values, their persuasive powers, their political clout, and their support base all influenced outcomes. This volatile combination of personalities, varying agendas, social settings, economic stability, against the backdrop of the separation of powers, created an unpredictable string of events. The only predictability about politics is that it is complex and always changing.

It may be that the original desire to abolish the department was modified to use the agency as a bully pulpit for the right wing agenda. Certainly, William Bennett,

Secretary Bell's successor, politicized the office as it had never been done before in its history. He used his position and power to initiate programs strongly supported by the New Right.

There is little doubt that the office of Secretary of Education was, can and will continue to be a highly politically charged position. However, the individual personalities of the various Secretaries of Education as well as Presidents will greatly influence the direction of the department.

There was a deeper underlying problem than the fact that the Department of Education did or did not exist. That was the indifference of the general American public to education. To the general public, the agenda was an issue of no real consequence. During the ideological struggle most people did not care. That was one of the main reasons why Congress abandoned the issue. They had no constituency.

The separation of education and politics is a facade. Educators would presuppose politics to follow a set standard of behaviors, clearly and rationally set forth. Consequently, when confronted with ambiguity, educators become uncomfortable often to the point of abandonment. Educators must understand and participate in the political processes that determine financial support, if they are to survive.

Whatever else critics may say about Secretary Bell, whether he was a hero or villain, all concede that he was an

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astute politician. Without his political savvy and influence the department might have been lost. Secretary Bell was an archetype of the political administrator who must surface to keep education properly funded and viable. Schoolmen in politics at all levels will be crucially important for the future of education.



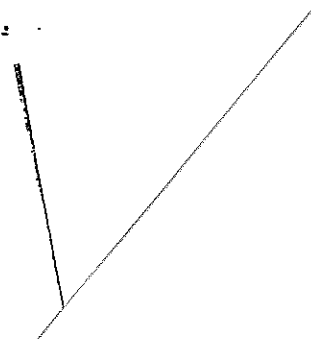
Despite all the inadequacies of our diversified and independent school system, there is reaffirmation that democracy does work. In the ideological struggle to abolish or perpetuate the Department of Education, there was no blood bath, no assassination, no terrorist bombing, and no hostages taken. Each player deeply believed in his cause. Even though these feelings were strong, none resorted to violence.

Imperfect as the American system is, it is the freedom to change and grow and improve that undergirds our entire way of life. Truly where else could an ideologue and a bureaucrat fiercely argue in committee meeting, then afterwards play a round of golf together (B. Smith, personal communication, November 18, 1988). The diversity, though frustrating, time consuming, and costly produces a policy direction that people can support. It strengthens the ultimate outcome.

With a reluctant President, a noncooperative Congress, and a politically astute Secretary of Education, the agenda for abolishing the Department of Education faded. However, to those in the national educational scene, it was the most significant non-issue of the day (F. Mensel, personal

communication, March 9, 1989). The ideological battle to abolish the United States Department of Education was more than an historical event about bureaucracy, power, and politics. It was an attestation of the freedom of choice, and the freedom to exercise it.

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APPENDIX A  
METHODOLOGY

This singular perspective of the Department of Education history is a extrapolation of interviews, current periodicals, and research of a cross section of disciplines. The initial historical overview began at the University of Maryland. Through questioning others for sources of information, the Library of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) was suggested.

Visiting the OERI facility was most helpful. The resident historian, Dr. Steven Sniegowski, directed me to other research that had already been compiled on the history of the Department of Education as well as to newspaper clippings. All newspaper clippings pertinent to the Department were copied. These provided the chronological basis of the events as they unfolded.

A contact in the Library of Congress urged further research by interviewing several in the Department of Education. An appointment was arranged to meet with a seasoned bureaucrat in October of 1988. This was an exploratory visit to gain a grasp of the events. From this initial meeting, several names were suggested for interviews. Other names came from readings and articles. The following is a listing of those interviewed.

Interviews

Barrudy, Mike. Former Republican Party Central Committee Chairman. 10/31/88.

Bell, Terrel H. Former U.S. Secretary of Education. 9/23/89.

Bigelow, Daniel. Higher Education, Dept. of Ed. 2/7/88.

Clohan, Bill. Former Undersecretary of Education with T.H. Bell. 11/22/88.

Elliott, Emerson. Acting Commissioner National Center for Educational Statistics. 1/12/89.

Elliott, Kim. Legislative Director for Senator Weicker's office. 12/21/88.

Erlenborne, John. Former Republican Representative to the U.S. House of Representatives from Illinois. 10/11/89.

Fege, Arnie. Director of Government Relations for the National Congress of Parent Teachers' Association. 4/13/89.

Gardner, Harry. Special assistant to the Deputy Secretary of Postsecondary Education, Department of Education. 10/30/89.

Gault, Polly. Staff Director for Senate subcommittee on Education, Arts, and Humanities. 12/21/88.

Goldberg, Milt. Former Executive Director of the Commission on Excellence in Education which produced the Nation at Risk Report. 10/10/89.

Heatherly, Charles. Former Executive Secretary under T.H. Bell. 11/7/88.

Heclo, Hugh. Author of Are government agencies immortal? 3/3/89.

Holmes, Moses. National Education Association, Government Relations Specialist. 12/12/88.

Jennings, Jack. Counsel for House Committee on Education and Labor. 12/5/88.

Jones, Gary L. Former U.S. Undersecretary of Education. 12/9/88.

Jones, Gordon. Vice President for Government Relations, Heritage Foundation. 10/12/88.

Kaplan, George. Washington Observer. 10/25/88.

LaPoint, Richard. U.S. Deputy Undersecretary for Elementary and Secondary Education. Former executive director of NCER under T.H. Bell. 3/16/89

Lloyd, Kent. Former Deputy Undersecretary for Management under T.H. Bell. 3/15/89.

Meese, Edwin. Former counselor to President Reagan. 11/28/89.

Potter, Sally. National Education Association, Government Relations Specialist. 12/12/88.

Reed, Vince. Former Deputy Undersecretary for Secondary and Elementary Schools under T.H. Bell. 12/12/88.

Schönhaut, Sharon. Former Executive Assistant to T.H. Bell. 11/15/88.

Smith, Bill. Former U.S. Commissioner of Education. 11/18/88.

Van Rash, Judy. National Republican Platform Committee Chairperson. 10/31/88.

Walser, LeRoy. Executive Director of Interagency Committee on Education, Dept. of Ed. 10/3/88.

Wirthlin, Richard. Personal pollster to President Reagan. 1/16/89.

Appointments were solicited by telephone, and followed by a mailed list of questions to the prospective interviewee. Generally discussions followed the outlined questions. Copious notes were taken during the interview. Some notes were in shorthand notation. Transcriptions were written within 24 hours after the interview. Both the transcription and original notes were filed for future reference.

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A sample of the questions that were sent to Charles Heatherly, editor of Mandate for Leadership, Heritage Foundation, follows. This particular interview followed the outlined questions and took one and a half hours.

#### Questions

1. George Kaplan said that the Mandate for Leadership was brilliant in concept and helped to shape Reagan's agenda. Where did the agenda come from and what did you hope to accomplish through its publication?

2. Did you accomplish what you had hoped to with Mandate for Leadership? What were some of the reasons you observed why it was or was not as effective as you had wished?

3. What was happening at the Department of Energy at this time?

4. Where does Edwin Meese fit into the picture? Did he embody your feelings or carry them further than you had hoped?

5. Who nominated Terrel Bell for secretary?

6. You were later offered a position with the Department of Education. Why did you accept knowing that the Department was to be abolished?

7. What was the feeling and mood at the Department during your tenure?

8. What are your views or feelings why the dismantling of the Department never came to fruition?

9. Is there anyone else I should interview?

Interviews averaged one hour with the longest lasting three hours. The most difficult appointment to arrange took over twelve months, and only after intervention by mutual acquaintances. Many interviews took several months to schedule because of travel and conferences.

Some interviewees preferred telephone conversations which were recorded in similar manner as personal interviews. The interview with Secretary Bell was a prearranged telephone conversation complete with written questions, because of his schedule.

Surprisingly, many of the interviewees were very accessible. All those interviewed were extremely accommodating and cooperative, almost eager to tell their part of the story. A handful of interviewees stalled or ignored written requests. Associations preferred written letters, while Congressmen usually worked through their staffs, requiring several months for answers. Former Congressmen also were contacted through a Capitol Hill locator called Former Members of Congress.

All interviews whether by phone or in person were followed up with a handwritten thank you. Written responses were followed up with a thank you phone call to the writer.

When a person's schedule was very busy or that only a small piece of information was needed, a letter of inquiry was sent. Those who responded are listed below. A sample letter of inquiry to Vice President Dan Quayle follows.

Hatch, Orrin G. Senator from Utah. Correspondence 12/16/88.

Humphrey, Gregory A. American Federation of Teachers, Director of Legislation. Correspondence 3/9/89.

Mensel, Frank. Vice President for Federal Relations, American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, and Director of Federal Relations, Association of Community College Trustees. Correspondence 3/9/89.

(Sample Letter)

The Honorable Dan Quayle  
Vice President of the United States  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20501

Dear Mr. Vice President:

RE: Doctoral Research Question

I am presently completing my research on the US Department of Education in 1981-84 for my Ph.D. dissertation. You served on the Senate Labor and Human Resource Committee which made you a logical choice for sponsorship of a bill to do away with the Department. Eileen White in Education Week, November 2, 1981, reported that you were asked to introduce the Administration's bill on the Senate floor.

Would you feel comfortable answering the following questions?

1. Who asked you to sponsor this bill?
2. What were the series of events that followed?
3. What is your perceptions of why the dismantling never occurred?

Your time is very demanding and valuable, so I especially appreciate your help in this matter.

Respectfully yours,

Ellen Horiuchi

Several conversations with Dr. Donald R. Warren of the University of Maryland, proved helpful in directing me to background literature such as Organizing an Anarchy. His book, To Enforce Education is an historical treatise of the Department during Henry Barnard's time. Other professors at the University of Maryland Education Administration Department directed me to other works such as Graham Allison's Essence of Decision.

The data base ERIC was available at the Montgomery County School District Professional Library. Also current periodicals were updated here. The Montgomery County Library System provided many of the autobiographical books during the Reagan era as well as Hugh Heclo's book Government of Strangers.

The Congressional Research Services data base, SCORPIO, was utilized. This data service listed all entries of congressional nature (hearings, appointments, reports) as well as other publications found in public libraries. This was helpful in providing information that would normally not be listed in traditional research files.

Dissertation Abstracts were utilized at the Library of Congress and yielded two microfiche. The Public Affairs Office of the Department of Education had some information regarding the Department. The librarian at the Heritage Foundation suggested several books to read about the New Right. Conversations with the government relations staff of the Brookings Institution yielded Herbert Kaufman's book, Are Government Organizations Immortal? Federal bureaucrats in other cabinets suggested other possible leads.



## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Ellen Nobuko Horiuchi was born in Lahaina, Maui, Hawaii, on August 30, 1948. She received her elementary schooling in Berkeley, and San Mateo, California. She attended Lincoln Jr. High and Orem High School in Orem, Utah, graduating in 1966. She attended Brigham Young University majoring in elementary education with an art minor. She received her Bachelors of Arts degree, magna cum laude, in 1970, also giving the commencement address for the college of education. In 1977 she was awarded her Masters of Education in educational administration from Brigham Young University. She taught three years in Alpine School District, Utah. She was also a community school director for San Juan School District, Utah, and public relations specialist for the College of Eastern Utah. She accepted a year's teaching experience in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, Central America, prior to her assignment as elementary principal of Dugway Elementary School, Dugway, Utah, Tooele School District. She served four years as principal being recognized by the Utah PTA for her leadership in volunteerism and the Utah Alliance for Arts Education. She is listed in the Outstanding Young Women of America, Who's Who in American Education, and the International Who's Who of Business and Professional Women. She has served as president of the Kigalia Fine Arts Council, and is chairman of a family trust that provides scholarships to the San Juan Center in Blanding, Utah. Pursuant to her doctoral work, she accepted a Charles Stewart Mott Fellowship at Arizona State University. She is a member of Phi Kappa Phi, Alpha Lambda Delta, and Spurs, national honor societies. She presently resides in the greater Washington, D.C. area. She serves as an art docent with the National Gallery of Art. She and her husband, Stephen, are the parents of one son, Scott Mitsutaka.

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