

# Congressional Oversight

DONALD LAMBRO

When John Breen, an employee of the Treasury Department's U.S. Savings Bond Division, visited the House Appropriations subcommittee that funds his agency, he hoped the bureaucratic scandal he had kept secret for years would finally be aired and eventually cleaned up by Congress. Surely, he believed, when the subcommittee responsible for monitoring his little agency learned of the waste, mismanagement, abuse, and bureaucratic make-work, it would take action. An investigation would be launched. Hearings would be held. He might be called as the lead witness. Congress would give the agency a rough going over and completely re-evaluate the need for this vestige of the war bonds program in today's economy.

But, alas, nothing of the sort ever happened. When Mr. Breen, a bond sales promotional representative, went to see Tex Gunnels, the chief counsel of the Treasury subcommittee, and told his story, he was told to either take his allegations elsewhere or look for another job.

What Mr. Breen admitted, after years of painful deception, was that he had been lying on his bond sales performance reports because of unrealistic and often nonsensical work quotas set by superiors. Among other things, he recorded promotional sales visits that were never made. He said he had seen corporate executive officers to promote bond sales when, in fact, he hadn't. He recorded that large numbers of workers attended his bond promotion meetings when they were poorly attended. But others did this, too, he said, and more. He charged that the voluminous records of the 450-man agency were to a large degree a tissue of deceptions and distortions.

Unimpressed, Mr. Gunnels suggested that Mr. Breen take his story to the Merit Systems Protection Board, created by Congress to protect whistleblowers. He said the subcommittee had no other choice but to believe top agency officials when they told the panel during annual oversight hearings that the program was in tip top shape and doing a gangbusters job of selling U.S. Savings Bonds.

"We have to take them at their word," Mr. Gunnels told the dejected and frustrated Mr. Breen.

Fortunately, Mr. Breen had already “gone public” with his story several weeks before with this reporter—which led to my independently confirming that abuses did exist among other employees who chose to keep their identity secret. Mr. Breen’s story led to an official investigation by the department’s Inspector General, which in turn led to Mr. Breen’s resignation in late February. But Tex Gunnel’s reaction, accompanied by similarly tepid responses from other oversight subcommittees, stunned the 40-year-old bureaucrat. Unfortunately, they were all too typical of Congress’ anemic concern for oversight.

Not only does John Breen’s experience accurately illustrate how Congress fails to fulfill its primary function under the Constitution as guardian of the nation’s purse strings, but his story in a very real sense reveals what only very few Washington observers have begun to realize. Namely, that Congress as the legislative branch of our government has to a large extent abdicated its role and its responsibilities for monitoring and controlling the vast bureaucracy it has so painstakingly created layer by layer over many decades. Not only does Congress lack the time, the interest, or the desire to regularly conduct its myriad oversight functions, but there is a serious question of whether with all its resources, it has the capacity adequately to survey and control everything under its vast legislative domain.

Unfortunate though this sad state of affairs may be, far more alarming is the fact that so little attention has been focused on it by either our brightest scholars or our finest journalists. Indeed, contemporary literature dealing with the actions of Congress over the past forty years or more is focused almost exclusively upon its legislative creations, great acts, new departments, astounding budgets, and continuing debates over the policies and programs to be implemented by the executive branch. Comparatively little is written about the degree to which Congress fails to look back at what it has wrought to re-evaluate actions and repair mistakes.

To be sure, the news media to a very large degree have fostered the myth that Congress is continually engaged in hard, probing, meticulous oversight of the nation’s programs and agencies. Don’t we read in our newspapers and see on our television screens the seemingly nonstop congressional hearings which explore every facet of our society, every nook and cranny of the federal bureaucracy? Aren’t agencies and programs constantly being screened through the reauthorization and annual appropriations process, in which our law-makers fire tough questions at agency heads

about what they have been doing with our tax dollars? Isn't this picture presented through the news media a wholly accurate one? Sadly, the answer to this question is an unequivocal no.

Few journalists are willing to admit it, because they make their living covering Congress, but the news media bear much of the blame for covering up this story by insisting on giving the congressional oversight system an image of accountability and action which it does not deserve.

### Falling Through the Cracks

When this reporter, as part of an ongoing series of investigative pieces, called the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to get some information about the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission, I found an extraordinary lack of knowledge about the agency's activities as well as an inability to ask why the agency should continue to exist. At the time the agency had thirty employees, plus three commissioners earning \$47,500 a year, and an annual budget of only \$1 million. Most of its work had been completed, and there were serious questions about its need to continue as an independent commission. But the committee hadn't broached that subject.

"Look," said a top staff official, "we just don't have time to look at agencies like this. We have to invest our energies in much larger subjects like the Panama Canal treaties or SALT II. We have to let agencies like this go by the board."

As I continued my investigation into the federal bureaucracy, I soon discovered that Congress has little time for many of its creations, large and small. In many cases our representatives have simply forgotten about them.

For example, when I wrote about Congress' "forgotten agencies," as I called them, I came across the Minority Business Development Agency, which was created by President Nixon in 1969 as part of his "black capitalism" campaign. What I soon discovered was that no legislative committee in the Senate had responsibility over this \$50 million agency—that is, no one had oversight responsibility to ensure the agency performed as Congress intended. Incredible as it seemed at the time, a committee official confessed, "It just fell through the cracks; no one has authorization oversight over MBDA in the Senate."

The error was corrected soon after my discovery, but I wondered at the time how many other agencies, obscure or well

known, may have either “fallen through the cracks” or perhaps coasted for years under Congress’ attitude of benign neglect. A hasty survey of several usually knowledgeable congressional committee aides, in addition to some members of Congress, made it clear to me that they were totally unaware of such forgotten agencies as:

—The Joint Mexican-United States Defense Commission, which was established by President Roosevelt in 1942 to coordinate defense activities against the Nazis. The commission still exists long after Hitler’s Third Reich has faded into history.

—The Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Office of International Affairs, which spends its time issuing studies and literature about such things as the European influence on American architecture and “New Towns in the Soviet Union.”

—The Overseas Private Investment Corporation, created in 1969 to provide insurance and loan guarantees to U.S. investors abroad, which has written billions of dollars’ worth of policies, mostly for America’s 500 wealthiest corporations and 50 largest banks.

As a veteran Senate investigator said, “Congress doesn’t have the time or even the desire to examine tiny agencies like these. We don’t have time to even examine the big agencies except only in a very cursory way. This isn’t something that a member of Congress would ever admit publicly, but most of the government gets very little attention from Congress. It’s too big. It’s too complex. To be perfectly frank with you, Congress as an institution has created a monster it can no longer control. In many respects we just go through the motions.”

“Sure,” he continued, “we hold hearings. We ask questions. We come up with the overall figures for new appropriations and authorizations. But we are no longer in total control of either the agencies’ actions or their spending. It’s sad to say, but we spend most our time putting out brush fires and chasing the next scandal. We’re in charge of watching the store, but there are too many stores to watch.”

Nothing better epitomizes what this very candid Senate official is saying than an examination of the scandal that rocked the General Services Administration (GSA), the government’s \$7 billion-a-year building and supply agency. The exposé of corruption, abuse, waste, and mismanagement—which in dollar terms may be the biggest government scandal ever—was broken by *Washington Post* reporter Ronald Kessler. His startling series led to Senate

hearings by the Federal Practices subcommittee, then chaired by Senator Lawton Chiles, (D-Fla.). But far more important than the sordid details of the scandal itself was the question of how such a situation—involving corrupt GSA officials—could have existed for so long without Congress' knowledge and response. Why did Congress allow GSA to purchase a quarter of a billion dollars a year in office furniture while government warehouses were bulging with the stuff? Why did Congress allow the GSA to pay two to three times more than "off the shelf" stock would have cost?

The answer, in part, is that Congress didn't know about many of these abuses, and what's worse, made no effort to find out.

GSA, long the proverbial dumping ground for political hacks, had rarely—if ever—been examined or seriously probed by lawmakers during the 1960s or early 1970s. Members were far more interested in GSA plans to construct or lease a building in their state or district than they were in what was going on behind the gray walls of the old Interior Department building where the Tea Pot Dome Scandal was hatched.

Yet, if members of Congress could rightly express ignorance over outright corruption at GSA, how could they plead ignorance about the waste, abuse, and mismanagement in its purchasing programs? Why didn't Congress know about these things sooner? Lawton Chiles asked Comptroller General Elmer Staats of the General Accounting Office (GAO).

Mr. Staats, a distinguished, white-haired gentleman who looks more like a diplomat than Congress' chief auditor, must have found it difficult to disguise his incredulity. "Senator," he quietly replied, "over the last six years GAO has provided Congress with over 200 reports on GSA, which have detailed the kind of waste, mismanagement, and abuse we are hearing about today."

The question, then, is why didn't Congress heed GAO's reports? Why had they ignored the work of their own \$243 million-a-year auditing arm?

Unfortunately, much of the very excellent work that GAO puts out is ignored by Congress. In the words of a House committee staffer, "Very few members read their reports. All too often they are used to come up with some sexy revelation for a good press release to the papers back home. Their recommendations for saving money are not being heeded by the oversight committees. For all the money we put into GAO, and the worthwhile investigative work they do, I'm afraid Congress just doesn't put the agency to good use."

## The Least Glamorous Branch

How is it possible that the Congress—with a budget of nearly \$1.5 billion a year, over 18,000 employees, and more than 317 committees and subcommittees—performs so poorly?

Part of the problem is that the members themselves have so little interest in the task of oversight, even though it is Congress' primary responsibility to the nation. Attend any committee or subcommittee oversight hearing on any given day and you will find they are very poorly attended. The chairman will be there, perhaps the ranking minority member, and sometimes one or two others will drift into the hearing room, ask a few questions and then leave. The exception to this is when the hearing generates enough interest or is sensational enough to lure the television cameras and a flock of reporters into the committee's chambers. Then the members, dressed appropriately in blue shirts, will arrive early and stay late in order to have their chance for exposure on the TV screens.

All too frequently members are not interested in questioning agencies about how they have been spending their resources, asking why we need some of these programs in the first place, or making agency officials justify their regulations or expenditures, a House Agriculture Committee staffer explained. "It's tedious, dull, time-consuming work and these guys have no appetite for it. Very often questions are simply submitted in writing and the answers are placed in the record weeks later, but no one ever bothers to read them."

There are almost 1,200 people who staff the Senate's 129 committees and subcommittees, and nearly 2,000 professionals staff the 188 committees in the House. In the recent 96th Congress, law-makers passed more than 1,300 pieces of legislation. Thousands of other bills written by committee employees never made it out of committee, let alone to final passage by Congress. But an examination of the work of the committees and subcommittees suggests that many of these panels do little substantive oversight work beyond giving a member a chairmanship, some additional staffing, and of course some prestige.

It isn't just that many committees spend their time dealing with trivial matters, such as the hearing last May on a bill to regulate the flow of pedestrian traffic through the Capitol (held by the House subcommittee on libraries and memorials). But very often many of them do little or nothing at all, except provide patronage

and a means by which members and their aides can finance their travel.

Last year the House Interior and Insular Affairs' subcommittee on Pacific Affairs held three hearings but passed no legislation. The panel issued one report, financed one trip to the Pacific by its members, and sponsored seven staff trips.

The Senate Judiciary Committee's Limitations and Contracted and Delegated Authority subcommittee, with a staff of eight, issued no legislation and held only eleven days of hearings last year.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee's European Affairs subcommittee, despite enormously important political developments on the European continent, "has not acted on legislation for years," according to a spokesman, and "rarely meets." It last held hearings in 1979 on NATO and SALT.

The Senate Finance Committee's Tourism and Sugar subcommittee "never met" and "didn't hold any hearings last year," a spokesman said. Similarly, the committee's oversight subcommittee on the Internal Revenue Service, "didn't do much" nor did it "issue anything" in the way of reports or legislation last year. In the past two years the committee's Revenue Sharing, Intergovernmental Revenue Impact and Economic Problems subcommittee held only four days of hearings and issued only two reports.

Meanwhile, the Senate Select Committee on Small Business' subcommittee on governmental regulations and paperwork "reviewed no bills last year," even though both problems have seriously burdened the private sector and contributed significantly to inflation and declining productivity.

Over the last two years the House District of Columbia subcommittee on metropolitan affairs "reviewed" three bills and held just eleven days of hearings. The last bill it reported out was in 1979.

Similarly, the House Veterans Affairs subcommittee on housing held only four days of hearings over the last two years and acted on four bills. The entire Veterans Committee acted on only six bills during this two-year period.

### **The Iron Triangle**

Over the last decade there has been an explosive growth in the number of subcommittees in Congress, largely to provide more members with their own chairmanships and personal staffs to do with as they please. Thus, instead of expanding the staffs of the major authorizing oversight committees to reflect the growth and

complexity in the agencies and their programs, a panoply of esoteric subcommittee titles—some so vague they have allowed their chairmen to investigate virtually anything under the sun—were created. According to Michael J. Malbin, of the American Enterprise Institute, the personal staffs as well as the committee staffs in the Senate have increased by 50 percent since the late 1970s, and they have virtually doubled since the late 1960s. But has this improved Congress' oversight role? The all too abundant evidence suggests strongly that it has not.

Clearly Congress doesn't do as good a job as it should, and one veteran Senate Appropriations Committee staffer pointed out some structural reasons why this is so:

First of all the authorizing committees tend to become advocates for the programs they are authorizing. If it's the Banking Committee, it's the homebuilders. If it's the Labor and Human Resources Committee, it may be the labor unions or the cities looking for more welfare money.

In other words, these special interest groups want more funds to deal with their problems, and the authorizing committees are concerned only with deciding how much more money do they need to deal with it. It's a little unusual for them to then go back and decide that the money is not being well spent.

They are usually trying to find new ways to spend money, not ways to control expenditures.

Those staffers who agreed to talk candidly (though without attribution) about congressional oversight were in general agreement that Congress overall is doing a poor job, with some exceptions. The House Government Operations Committee and the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee were most consistently singled out, because of their special investigative mandate, as performing the best job of oversight, but some said that even these committees were "not as aggressive as they could be" in reviewing government agencies.

Ironically, the House and Senate Appropriations Committees have, to a large extent, taken on more of the oversight responsibilities than the legislative committees who created the programs in the first place. Yet all too often the appropriations subcommittees are ill equipped to thoroughly comb through the agencies and programs they are funding and evaluate how well or how poorly they are performing. Moreover, they are unable to reform the mechanisms of the programs, since this authority and responsibility belongs only to the authorizing committees.



### Appropriation by Lottery

Perhaps the best example of the totally inadequate and pitifully weak oversight efforts of Congress can be found in the Senate Appropriations subcommittee on Housing and Urban Development and independent agencies, chaired in the last Congress by William Proxmire (D-Wis.). In addition to HUD, a \$10-billion department, Senator Proxmire had jurisdiction over the Veterans Administration, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the National Science Foundation, and more than a dozen other agencies. Each year his subcommittee held hearings on between \$75 and \$80 billion in programs. To examine all of their budget requests, review all of their programs, conduct investigations, and prepare questions for each of the agencies, Senator Proxmire had a total staff of two people.

It should be noted that perhaps among all of his colleagues no one does a more thorough job of questioning agency heads about their expenditures than Senator Proxmire. His cross-examinations of National Science Foundation officials are minor classics in bewilderment at some of NSF's often wasteful spending practices. Nonetheless, only the most cursory examination of the agencies under his review could have ever been made, or was made, despite the heroic efforts of his two subcommittee aides.

Attending an Appropriations Committee "markup" of its funding bill is a case study in how not to run a railroad. There is little time to weigh and evaluate thoroughly each proposed budget for every agency or department. Members wander in and out midway through consideration of specific spending requests. Many law-makers are more concerned with protecting (in other words, expanding) the budgets of agencies under their respective subcommittees. All too often members are voting billions of dollars for programs when they haven't the slightest idea where the money goes, or whether or not its expenditure is accomplishing the objectives Congress set out to achieve. Often figures are arbitrarily tossed out by members, with little idea as to whether the agency or program should even be funded at all, let alone have its budget raised.

A case in point concerns an incident in which the committee was discussing a minor foreign aid appropriation of about \$20 million for a loan program. As a Senate aide described it, "Suddenly Proxmire asked what this outfit did. And nobody in the room knew. And he said, then why are we giving them this money? And somebody said, well, that's what they asked for. So,

Proxmire asked what they got last year. And somebody said about \$17 million. Proxmire replied, well, do they need \$20 million? And nobody responded. Then somebody suggested cutting their request to \$15 million. And someone else proposed cutting them to \$12 million. No one in the room objected. So they got \$12 million. But the point is that nobody in the room had any idea what the money was really going for."

### **The Power of Staff**

And because most of the reauthorization and appropriation bills involve tens of billions of dollars, members of Congress often do not have the slightest idea of where the money they are voting to be spent is specifically going. "There is an appalling amount of ignorance among members of Congress about the programs over which they are asked to conduct oversight," complained a Commerce Committee staffer. "We write their questions, draw up their legislation, and author their amendments. With the exception of the chairman and the ranking minority member, very few of the others (members) play much of a role in the committee's actual work."

A Senate Judiciary Committee aide noted that Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.), who chaired Judiciary in the last Congress, had "close to 100 staff members on the committee. But I don't think that more than one or two of them had much of an idea of what goes on in the Justice Department."

What were the other staffers doing? "Writing legislation for more programs, or doing investigations on the oil companies, any number of things, including a lot of work that provided Kennedy with information for his presidential campaign. But whatever they were doing, it did not include very much oversight of the Justice Department, which is the primary function of the committee."

"Meanwhile," this aide continued, "at the Justice Department, which has 50,000 employees, you've got perhaps 20 divisions or agencies that are being totally neglected in terms of oversight. It includes the Drug Enforcement Administration and the Immigration and Naturalization Service, both of which anybody who knows anything about them will tell you are in absolute shambles. They are virtually incapable of doing their jobs."

"The Justice Department is in many ways the fulcrum of everything that happens in the government," he said. "All of the litigation, all of the cases are done through Justice for the government. They have their finger in everything. And yet what Congress

knows about what goes on inside the department is negligible.”

The abuses which existed within the FBI for many years illustrate another failure of Congress to exercise consistent and thorough oversight. One Judiciary staffer argued that had Congress been doing its job, instead of giving the FBI a blank check as it did under J. Edgar Hoover, those abuses would never have occurred, or they would have been stopped before they got out of control. Even today there is still relatively little detailed oversight of the FBI's activities.

Scattered among a largely tarnished oversight record are a few bright examples of how Congress has performed its oversight responsibilities well. For example, Senator Kennedy's marathon series of hearings and investigation into airline deregulation under his chairmanship of Judiciary's Administrative Practices subcommittee paved the way for that landmark legislation. The Appropriations Committee's forceful re-examination of the Federal Trade Commission last year forced the FTC to withdraw from several areas of regulation, though they never questioned the overall effectiveness of the agency itself in accomplishing its mandate. But these examples are the exception. And very often, in these cases as in others, Congress was reacting to the drumbeat of criticism from the private sector.

Yet the consensus among committee aides and staff directors I talked to is that Congress is doing an often abysmal job of oversight. And the evidence, they suggest, is strewn across the bureaucratic landscape for all to see.

Take, for example, the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, which despite the expenditure of billions of dollars, has failed to curb crime, and has in recent years become a virtual joke in the cloakrooms of Congress. Congress has sharply reduced its funding, but a massive bureaucracy remains in place. “As far as I know the Judiciary Committee, which has jurisdiction over it, hasn't held a hearing at all on what LEAA is doing,” said a committee official.

Dozens of other agencies remain as mute monuments to congressional inattention or disinterest. The Consumer Product Safety Commission, which in the last Congress came within an eyelash of being abolished, barely clings to life. The Small Business Administration, which has a sordid history of fraud, abuse, mismanagement, and confusion, is threatened almost annually with dissolution by some congressional leader, but Congress cannot bring itself to pull the plug. The Labor Department's Com-

prehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) has been plagued by fraud, political favoritism in the granting of jobs, and other scandals. The Community Services Administration's existence has been one long unbroken string of scandals. No one argues any longer that it has helped the poor it was created to serve, yet few are willing to suggest that CSA should be abolished. The Department of Energy is spending \$8 to \$9 billion a year on contracts for—for what? Most members of Congress couldn't tell you.

Among the aides I interviewed, no one could recall the last time Congress had thoroughly re-examined such venerable departments as Agriculture, Labor, Commerce, HUD, and HHS from the ground up. "These are departments that haven't been scrutinized in years," said an aide to a southern senator. "You've got programs in Agriculture that haven't been seriously questioned in decades."

A Senate committee investigator, who has worked on oversight on both sides of the Capitol, put it even more bluntly:

There is more fraud, waste, and mismanagement and just plain extravagant and frivolous spending out there in the departments and agencies than anyone in or out of Congress fully realizes. The Labor Department has more skeletons in its closet than any of them. There are reports locked away down there that deal with CETA fraud, labor union corruption, and much more, which have never seen the light of day. One of the greatest oversight crimes in the Congress was the (Labor Committee) chairmanship of (Senator Harrison) Pete Williams of New Jersey, who never held a substantive hearing on the involvement of organized crime in the labor unions.

There are internal audits buried at HUD, the National Institutes of Health, the Community Services Administration, SBA, GSA, and many others just waiting for someone in authority in Congress, someone with guts and backbone, to make them public and hold investigative hearings on these programs.

### **Can It Work?**

While all of this represents a monumental failure on the part of Congress as the pivotal branch of our national government, it also poses an extraordinary opportunity for change. The question that confronts us now is what can be done to reform the process and repair the damage.

Not long before she left Congress to pursue a career in education, Rep. Barbara Jordan of Texas told me she did not believe the country needed “any more new programs or new laws.” Instead, she said, “the challenge before the Congress is to make the programs we already have work.” That is a large order but not an impossible one. There are a number of reforms that can be made to achieve it.

First, Congress should declare a three-year moratorium on any new legislation, except in cases of national emergency.

Such a declaration of purpose must be accompanied by a clear directive to begin a thorough reassessment and evaluation of every expenditure within the federal government. Every program would have to undergo a reauthorization during this period or otherwise go out of business.

Second, the committee system must be completely restructured for a 36-month examination of every department, agency, commission, and program in the government—from the Interstate Commerce Commission to the Department of Education. Such a restructuring would require consolidating and simplifying the tangled mess of committees and subcommittees in Congress to reflect each of the major Cabinet departments and all of the independent agencies.

Third, auditors within each of the departments and agencies would be detailed during this moratorium to the appropriate committees dealing with their programs. Every internal audit and report dealing with each agency’s operation would be made available to each respective committee.

Fourth, GAO auditors now assigned to each department and agency would be reassigned to work with their respective committees in a comprehensive review of each program. Such a review would include a thorough reconsideration of every money-saving, bureaucracy-trimming recommendation made by GAO over the past ten years.

Wherever possible, the House and Senate should conduct joint hearings and investigations in the interest of saving time and resources.

And finally, on the basis of each set of findings covering each organized unit of government, a reauthorization bill would be promptly reported to both houses of Congress for action—calling for the agency or program’s reform, merger, reduction, or elimination.

This, admittedly, is a large order, and obviously a revolutionary one for Congress. But it is one that would receive the over-

whelming endorsement of the American people. For Congress would be setting about the business of putting the nation's government in order. Currently it is very much in disarray and disorder.

Earlier this year a group of congressional committee aides who worked on various transition team reports for President Reagan wondered aloud why Congress could not do precisely what they had done: That is, take a fresh look at each program, evaluate its mandate and its track record, and determine whether or not that program should be restructured or abolished.

"When you think of the resources that Congress has, the thousands of staff people, they could do what we did," one transition official said. "But Congress could do it much more effectively and thoroughly, because they've got the subpoena power, the authority to have hearings under oath, and, of course, all of its manpower resources."

Still, in the end, Congress must itself decide whether it wants to spend the time doing something "which isn't very glamorous, and which involves a lot of hard, tedious, detailed work," as one House Appropriations Committee aide put it. And contrary to the conventional wisdom, the political rewards for such an undertaking could be very great indeed. For the party that takes up the banner of oversight and runs with it, is the party that is going to dominate Congress and our government for many years to come.

# Globaloney 2000

HERMAN KAHN AND ERNEST SCHNEIDER

In July 1980, the White House issued *The Global 2000 Report to the President*. Its basic conclusions could hardly be more stark:

If present trends continue, the world in 2000 will be more crowded, more polluted, less stable ecologically, and more vulnerable to disruption than the world we live in now. Serious stresses involving population, resources, and environment are clearly visible ahead. . . . Barring revolutionary advances in technology, life for most people on earth will be more precarious in 2000 than it is now. . . . unless the nations of the world act decisively to alter current trends.

In short, unless we change our wicked ways, disaster lies ahead. This clarion call is not new. A decade ago, the same alarm was sounded even more shrilly, dogmatically, and dramatically by the Club of Rome, a group of distinguished industrialists and scientists who sponsored one of the most influential books of our time, *The Limits to Growth*.<sup>1</sup> Their message was simple: if economic growth and population growth are not drastically curbed, the world will collapse within the next century. This time the message was very similar, but its purveyor was President Carter, backed by the authority of the United States government.

Global 2000 was prepared by the State Department and the Council on Environmental Quality in response to a request made by the President in 1977; Council Chairman Gus Speth and Assistant Secretary of State Thomas Pickering put the study together. Their two agencies were aided by the Departments of Agriculture, Energy, and Interior, the Agency for International Development, the CIA, the EPA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, NASA, the National Science Foundation, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Office of Science and Technology Policy. Who could doubt that these sober and responsible outfits know what they are doing?

Indeed, compared to the Club of Rome report, Global 2000

1. Meadows, Meadows, Randers and Behrens, (New York: Universe Books, 1972).