

cisively from his family name and connections at the time, so they have introduced new restraints on his behavior now and a variety of special cross-pressures. Generally, it is conceded, for instance, that the administration would not have fought so urgently and so hard to defeat the poll-tax amendment in 1965 had it not come to be construed as a Kennedy-Johnson test of strength. A similar situation evolved this summer in the clash between Congress and the White House over the settlement of the airlines strike. And Kennedy's single Senate adventure in catastrophe, the attempt to secure confirmation of Francis X. Morrissey to the Federal bench, began as an effort to fulfill a family obligation and came to grief largely because the Republicans in the Senate and the press around the country saw the particular beauty of the issue—the Kennedys' bringing out the full panoply of pressure for the appointment of a judge who was even less well qualified than other questionable nominees the Senate had confirmed.

"It was not a glorious chapter," Kennedy admits, but he and his friends and staff stoutly deny that the prolonged battle did permanent harm to his relationships within the Senate, or—as some believe—that he has never quite recovered the confidence he was gaining in himself. Doubtless the Morrissey scandal will continue to fade. What will come into view is not so clear. Kennedy could, in the next session, put his senatorial talents to special use as a bargainer, a mediator, a source of pressure on the contenders in the new and politically reconstructed Congress. Alternatively, the promise of his Congressional career could be caught in the vise of Lyndon Johnson's and Robert Kennedy's mutual suspicion and ongoing feud. Without his awesome array of privileges, Kennedy doubtless could not have reached the Senate when he did, and he continues to enjoy political and financial advantages that are unavailable to his colleagues. But there are also inhibitions on his ability to maintain a separate political identity. There would be more time, fewer pressures, and surely greater freedom to maneuver and to move if his name were Edward Moore.



For the Record

DOUGLASS CATER

FOUR YEARS AGO, a well-known historian then working in the White House gave a speech aiming rather sharp criticisms at those of us on the outside who reported the affairs of government. From his special vantage point, he sadly concluded that to future historians, our newspaper and magazine articles would be "sometimes worse than useless." "Their relationship to reality," he charged, "is often less than the shadows in Plato's cave."

This commentary was called to mind not long ago when Arthur Schlesinger himself wrote a magazine article and asserted as historical fact that the first thousand days of the Johnson administration "have produced only two significant new policy ideas—the rent subsidy and the demonstration city." He came forth with the dismal conclusion that President Johnson has "smothered the conditions which made innovation possible."

I fear that Schlesinger, too, has

become victim of the shadows in Plato's cave. In the interest of future historians, whose minds may not be so firmly made up, there is reason to consider this business of innovation. But one thing needs to be made clear: the "thousand days" reference should not be the basis for comparison with the indelible mark that John F. Kennedy left on the nation and history during his tragically brief presidency. History will have ample place for both Presidents.

IN VOLUME alone, the achievements of the last three years warrant a closer examination of the record. In the areas of my own special interest, nineteen major education measures were submitted to Congress and enacted during those thousand days—not only enacted but supported with twice the appropriations voted for education by all previous Congresses combined. In the same period twenty-six health measures were enacted, and Congress

allocated more dollars to health than it had during the entire 168 years since the Public Health Service was founded.

But no one would claim that legislative statistics alone are a satisfactory measure of innovation. It is necessary to look within the laws to decide whether they represent "significant new policy ideas."

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which Congress passed last year after three decades of frustrating failure to act, was no warmed-over version of earlier proposals. Each title of the act embodies new proposals grown out of the deliberations of a task force drawn from the nation's leading educators.

Title I, containing the formula for assistance to the educationally handicapped, not only breaks through past political barriers to school aid but also meets the highest priority need as defined by the task force—the education of the neglected children who live in poverty. Even greater innovations lie elsewhere in the act. Title III, by its support of supplementary services and centers in the community for injecting new ideas into the educational system, inspires an effort for not just more schooling but for better schooling. Title IV creates regional education laboratories, based in leading universities, which will serve as seedbeds for new curricula, new textbooks and teaching techniques, and new ways of stimulating the ferment of learning.

By any reasonable standards, each of these titles constitutes a significant new policy idea. So does Title I in the Higher Education Act of 1966, which encourages the university to direct its resources to the needs of America's communities (even as the agricultural extension legislation of a century ago faced the university toward rural America). So does Title III, which strengthens our less developed colleges by supporting partnership arrangements with stronger universities. So do Head Start, VISTA, and Upward Bound—all new educational initiatives. All resulted from creative exchange between leaders in the educational world and a President who has been receptive to fresh thinking about old problems.

This same creative activity has

gone on in the health field. Medicare for the aged, of course, has been debated since Truman's time. But little note has been taken of the fact that these same Social Security amendments of 1965 also contain a major advance in shaping new patterns of child-health care.

New Approach on Health

In the search for ways to combat the major killer diseases, less than a year elapsed between idea and act—between the recommendations issued by the presidential commission headed by Dr. Michael E.



De Bakey and the legislative launching of a vital new program for heart disease, cancer, and stroke. It initiates a fundamental new approach to the delivery of health services. Rather than simply subsidizing more research or more training or more traditional health care, it is launching regional medical programs that join the leaders in research with those who teach and those who diagnose and treat. University medical centers will be directly linked to treatment stations in the local hospitals. Such teamwork can cut the time it has taken to bring the modern miracles of medical discovery to the benefit of patients who need help.

It is impossible to catalogue here

the entire list of significant new policy ideas. But I must mention—in addition to model cities and rent supplements, cited by Schlesinger—the International Education Act, the Arts and Humanities Foundation, the Acts for Air and Water Pollution Control and Solid Waste Disposal, the Clean Rivers Act, and the Urban Mass Transit Act. Behind each one, there are three common characteristics revealing a strong spirit of innovation:

First, each emerged from the vigorous labor of a task force appointed by the President and employing a wide range of talent in and outside the government. These task forces, working in a confidential relationship, have proved to be a remarkably effective way to bring ideas directly to the White House.

Second, each of these initiatives is aimed at goals—of health, education, clean air and water, less congested cities, and less contaminated countrysides—that cannot be measured by the traditional economic yardsticks used for government programs. The President has spurred an effort to define such goals—in human rather than dollar terms—and to develop new yardsticks for measuring progress toward them. This is no small order. But it could constitute one of the most important innovations in government since the Employment Act of 1946 pioneered the way to modern economic indicators.

Third, each of these initiatives goes beyond simply doling out Federal dollars to deal with public problems. Each of them attempts to build new institutions capable of coping with these problems. The neighborhood health center, the regional heart, cancer, and stroke plan, the river-basin authority to control pollution—these and other such arrangements seek to combine the appropriate roles of Federal, state, and local government, and of public and private enterprise. Institution building is a hard and sometimes thankless task. It takes long and careful planning to devise the authority to cut across fiercely held jurisdictions in dealing with problems that no longer respect the old boundary lines.

Solutions will not be hastened by counsels of despair. In a recent

column, James Reston, totting up the achievements of the last two years, concluded mournfully that the President "has an administrative monstrosity on his hands."

Reston ignores very real efforts to meet organizational problems even in a period of rapid innovation. The two new departments—of Transportation and of Housing and Urban Development—represent major beginnings in pulling together areas once rife with rivalry and disorder. The highly fragmented fiefdom of Health, Education and Welfare has been the object of strongly led efforts at better organization, starting with the Office of Education and the Public Health Service. During a recent visit to Texas, Secretary John W. Gardner reviewed with President Johnson further organizational plans to be proposed to the new Congress.

Throughout the government, the Budget Bureau has worked this past year with department heads to institute the "Programming, Planning, Budgeting System" already in effect in the Pentagon. As PPBS starts to take hold, it will provide a more meaningful way to compare costs and benefits and to co-ordinate the work of government.

SOME CRITICS, not including Reston, propose the easy alternative of turning funds en bloc over to the states and letting them deal with administrative headaches, presupposing an organizational genius on the state level that is lacking in Washington. A more promising avenue is opened up by the Comprehensive Health Planning Amendments passed by the Congress this year. Funds are provided for each state to plan the integration of its widely scattered services into a program for better serving the health needs of its citizens. As the state plan develops, the Federal government intends to replace the categorical grants it now makes with "comprehensive" health grants. Moving in this same direction, Title V of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act provides grants to state education agencies to strengthen staff and improve their planning capacity.

Undoubtedly there is further room for consolidating Federal pro-

grams. But it is well to remember that they represent priorities of public need that were hard fought in Congress. I doubt that there will be strong popular sentiment to abandon them in favor of bloc grants.

Much criticism nowadays is couched in cosmic terms. The old ideologist has passed from the scene. (Few argue any more that socialism is *the* answer to all our social needs.) But a good many critics still deal in apocalyptic visions, painting broad-brush portraits of the disasters confronting America before they go on to prescribe vague remedies.

How to claim the proper priority for a public need? How to recruit and train the skilled manpower? How to build the institutional arrangements that can carry a program



beyond the enthusiasm of its beginnings? How to stimulate healthy growth and correct inevitable shortcomings? These are the questions for those who would be social innovators. These are the problems that yield only to hard work and tough-minded imagination. Otherwise, a full-employment economy may not supply the services to meet a social need even when it is willing to spend the dollars.

This is the area of silence today in the discussions among not only the critics but also the commentators. To read much of the public commentary is to remain ignorant of challenges that excite those who

work in Washington and those who contribute their labors from afar.

As a former journalist, I recognize the governing rules of the trade: good news or constructive news is really dull news. But as one now vitally concerned with innovation and institution building, I am dismayed by the way these subjects are neglected.

Medicare's 'Failure'

Let me cite one example. On November 1, Medicare had been in effect for four months. In that brief time, two million older Americans had received hospital treatment; over half a billion dollars had been paid out for hospital and medical bills. Ninety-eight per cent of the general-hospital beds in the country are participating in the program. It has inspired a nationwide effort to improve hospital standards and to eliminate segregation in hospital services. The vast majority of doctors have collaborated to make Medicare work.

Yet despite earlier press predictions of the congestion and chaos Medicare would bring, the fulfillment of this promise for older Americans has stirred vast apathy among the news media of America. On the night before the Congressional elections last month, one of the television networks devoted five minutes of prime time to a twelve-bed hospital in Calloway, Nebraska, which had a grievance against Medicare. The viewer was left with the impression of bureaucratic bungling and governmental red tape. No opportunity was given to HEW or Nebraska officials to reply. The facts are that the Nebraska Health Department had determined that the Calloway Hospital did not meet minimum Medicare standards. The hospital had made no effort to qualify and ignored offers of assistance.

There you have it: a ninety-eight per cent success story is no story. A twelve-bed failure becomes an exposé.

Even if we don't celebrate our successes in government, we ought to understand them and build on them. The twenty-first century is already breathing down our neck. Each day brings new challenges of organization, of innovation, and of institution building.

AT HOME & ABROAD



The Small, Hard War In the Delta

DENIS WARNER

SAIGON
“DIGGING,” the French briefing officer in Hanoi habitually answered when asked what the Vietminh were doing at Dien Bien Phu during the lulls between the brief, bitter, and bloody main assaults. It was an appropriate answer. By the time the battle ended in 1954, the Vietminh trenches had spread from the hills, across the plains under the French wire, and into the last of their strongholds.

Much of the Vietcong’s almost unbelievably extensive digging has been underground and out of sight. Toward the middle of this year, however, the North Vietnamese began surface digging in the six-mile-wide demilitarized zone along the 17th parallel. By October they had burrowed for miles. There were long communications trenches leading to artillery positions and smaller trench systems with machine-gun emplacements. Trails just wide enough for a man or a bicycle grew overnight to accommodate jeeps or small trucks, and out of the North came troops to fill the newly created positions. Not only was the digging

reminiscent of Dien Bien Phu; there also was evidence that it reflected Dien Bien Phu thinking, that from this firm base several divisions intended to strike south for what certainly would have been the major battle of the Vietnam war.

Late in October I had dinner in Saigon with six well-informed Allied staff officers. Five of them predicted that the Vietcong and North Vietnamese forces would launch a major fall offensive, perhaps to coincide with the midterm elections in the United States, and that, though certain to fail, it would meet with enough initial success to cause consternation in Washington and elsewhere. The sixth officer did not disagree that an offensive was planned; he simply did not believe that it could reach the jumping-off stage. A day or two later a senior officer ran through the numerous indicators that an enemy offensive was in the making: up to five North Vietnamese divisions were in the general tactical area along the 17th parallel; forward supply dumps had been captured and destroyed by the U.S. Marines during Operations Hastings

and Prairie; reconnaissance patrols continued to make contact; air and other intelligence confirmed that the Northerners were continuing to reinforce and resupply; and, in the High Plateau and in Zones C and D, west-northwest of Saigon, Vietcong preparations for diversionary actions were under way. As for counter-indicators—anything that might suggest the offensive had been abandoned—the officer held up his thumb and forefinger to form a zero.

Marines Move In

On the ground, the evidence was even more convincing. Not long after the bombing of North Vietnam began early in 1965, Hanoi advanced the argument that this had dissolved all boundaries and thereafter began to pay increasing attention to the narrow neck of central Vietnam that used to join Tonkin to the southernmost state of Cochin China. At this point, the distance from the Laotian border to the South China Sea is only forty-five miles. About half of it is a rolling coastal plain where rice fields are interspersed with plantations of corn and bananas. Inland, there are dense tropical rain forests, steep and high mountains, elephants, baboons, tigers, and very few people.

Before the U.S. Marines established their headquarters for Task Force Delta under the command of Brigadier General Lowell E. English at Dong Ha, about nine miles south of the demilitarized zone and in the center of the coastal plain, the South Vietnamese 1st Division had tactical responsibility for the area. It engaged in what one adviser described as “search and evade” operations. When the American advance guard of sixty-five airmen arrived at Dong Ha and put up their tents, one company from the 1st Division was assigned to protect them. Not long after the Americans’ arrival, a company of armed and uniformed North Vietnamese troops walked down the runway less than a quarter of a mile from the camp. “Of course we’re not going to fight them,” the South Vietnamese company commander replied to one American inquiry. “Do you want us all to be killed?”

North of Dong Ha the Vietcong now began to build their own forti-