Dwight Ink: President, Institute of Public Administration

The Symposium conferees in their first session identified many shortcomings in the quality of management in the federal government and the intergovernmental system. I concur with their assessment and most of the reforms proposed.

I think that we are doing better at utilizing new technology, and some other beneficial improvements have taken place here and there. Yet, the basic fabric of federal management seems to fall further and further behind what is needed. Scandals thrive. Our foreign assistance difficulties of the last four years in Eastern Europe are but one of many illustrations of why this concern is so deep. Let me amplify and draw some conclusions.

The concepts and organization of the Marshall Plan to help the countries of Europe recover from the destruction of World War II and become partners in a Europe-wide cooperative effort could well be used as a model today in Central and Eastern Europe. This system consisted of three parts: (1) general leadership and support in Washington under Paul Hoffman, Administrator, assisted by Don Stone, Director of Administration, and other top staff; (2) Averell Harriman, US Representative in Europe stationed in Paris also with essential professional staff; and (3) US missions in each participating country headed by a carefully selected director. In contrast, the US Agency for International Development has been subjected to fragmented unproductive purposes, inexperienced leadership, incursions by other federal agencies, redundant oversight, and no significant presence in Europe or the countries being assisted.

The US AID case. The AID approach in Eastern Europe has been very different, beginning with the strange notion that the dramatically different public policies required in the new democracies would be self implementing. Consequently, while our foreign assistance activities have been striving mightily to help private sectors emerge as the saviors of Eastern Europe, it has been our policy to carefully avoid responding to the pleas of the new and inexperienced governments for technical assistance in developing the governmental capacity to implement political and economic reform.

Organizationaliy, we have also failed. The leading operational responsibility for Eastern European assistance was placed, not in AID, but in the Department of State which has neither the experience nor the resources to run such programs. Day to day coordination was then given to a minor State Department official who was not equipped to handle such matters.

The Administrator of AID was not qualified for his job and was relegated to a paper assignment of being merely one of the deputies who was routinely bypassed in an unwieldy interagency superstructure. The Commerce, Treasury, and Agriculture departments, together with other agencies, have been involved in independent assistance projects serving the same countries. Although much of their funding has passed through the hands of AID, it has lacked the authority or capacity to coordinate efforts into a coherent country program or to oversee the fiscal or program management of this fragmented effort.

To further complicate administration, and contrary to all of the many successful efforts of AID in the past, the Eastern European Field Mission of AID is located in Washington far from the scene of action rather than in Eastern Europe where it belongs. Finally, this distant Mission in Washington lacks the technical resources which missions usually have, and it must go to other headquarters organizations to obtain such operational help. Without the customary onsite mission arrangement, our assistance activities have suffered greatly from lack of knowledge of the people and their problems in these hard pressed countries.

Who is responsible for success or failure in these countries in which over 400 million people are struggling to make the transformation from command societies to democracies with market economies? If it is AID, we have witnessed a classic case of "responsibility without authority". Yet no other agency has the experience or the legal charter to be held responsible.

Several worthwhile projects were launched by dedicated career people in AID despite these handicaps, but inept political leadership which had no understanding of institutional development prevented any coherent programs or continuity of effort. The results have certainly not enhanced the image of the United States in that part of the world, in sharp contrast to the positive image the United States gained from the Gulf War.

Decline in domestic agencies. Many other examples of the decline and inadequacies of federal agencies can be cited:

* **NASA**, once the flagship of good management, has been plagued by difficulties the last few years.

* The old **Atomic Energy Commission** received commendations from the Congress and GAO, but the Department of Energy today is in serious management trouble.

* **HUD**, as pointed out by the Senate Banking Committee, was well managed during its first few years, but became a disaster area during the 1980's and is in need of rebuilding.

Instead of projects to improve organization, management, and operations, we hear much today about the need to "reinvent government". What is most needed is a "rediscovery" and adaptation of the requisites of government organization and management that have been highly successful in the past. Innovation to meet new conditions and to utilize new technology is also needed in the mix, but not change for the sake of change.

Recommendations.

I have selected for comment eight initiatives or types of action which I believe would result in considerable improvement in the federal government. They are also applicable to unreformed state and local government.

(1) **Selecting experienced federal appointees.** Support for appointing people to federal positions who have proven public administration experience needs also to include persons with administrative experience in business, labor, and interest groups who reflect voter interests

and will be listened to by incoming administrations. Political compatibility is essential, but certainly not a sufficient qualification. The public suffers greatly from unprepared high officials who require elementary on-the-job training, and who see federal grants and projects primarily in political terms.

(2) **Restoring central leadership.** The vital central administrative management leadership and support for the President established by Harold Smith and Don Stone in the Bureau of the Budget in 1939 later suffered a long decline at the time of Watergate. This leadership now needs to be restored in OMB. The output of the National Performance Review will give Phil Lader a marvelous opportunity to provide the needed leadership to fashion a workable government-wide management revitalization program. He inherited an office which needs considerable strengthening to be adequate for this formidable task. Surely, the foreign assistance debacle and other examples cited above would have been prevented if the Executive Office and particularly OMB had been well organized and staffed.

(3) **Restoring departmental leadership.** In addition to the inclusion of demonstrated experience in selecting departmental political appointees, there needs to be restored in each department a focal point for leadership in administrative management. That role used to reside with Assistant Secretaries for Administration before the positions became politicized and the functions split among several offices. President Nixon recommended a professional undersecretary for organization and management systems, an idea warmly embraced by Congress. This concept should be reintroduced in some form.

(4) **Streamlined emergency-type approaches.** Our management of disaster reconstruction has on occasion been extremely innovative and highly successful. Overhead costs and response times have been cut to a fraction, the public service image greatly enhanced, and new ways of close intergovernmental cooperation put in place. With operating reliance placed on professional experience, executive-legislative relations have at times been extremely productive. We should be able to adapt more of these streamlined approaches to government in non-emergency circumstances.

(5) **Correcting imbalance of external and internal oversight.** The steady increase in external oversight does not appear to have decreased the amount of scandal and waste as evidenced by HUD, S&L, AID, etc. In part, this may be due to concentrating too much of the oversight on symptoms more than causes, a problem the General Accounting Office with its excellent leadership has avoided more than other oversight agents.

(6) **Make managers responsible and accountable.** A more important cause of continued cases of scandal, however, is that the internal oversight of the line and staff managers -- a fundamental element of management supervision -- has been deemphasized. The transfer of the audit function to the inspector generals in many agencies is one example of an increasing impression that oversight is no longer a major responsibility of the manager, but is largely the province of the independent agents of oversight. Unless external oversight and internal management oversight are in better sync, we will probably see more and more waste and corruption, not less.

(7) **Training for public service.** Recently developed OPM information reveals that many of the same problems OMB found in the 1970's concerning university training for the public service still exists. Many federal agencies find that university training programs provide only marginally for the development of knowledge and skills needed by public managers. Most of the academic public administration programs today focus undue attention on policy analysis, with inadequate concentration on management and executive competencies. University schools and institutes of public affairs and administration should develop curricula to fill market needs, not the whims of professors.

(8) **Need for purpose and courage.** We should also be more candid in the process of encouraging young men and women to aspire to public management positions. These positions are not for the faint hearted or for those who want to coast through life. Neither are they for those who are easily discouraged and cannot accept defeat and disappointment. Public management should be for those who have personal courage and want a challenge, yet are willing to place the mission of their organization ahead of their personal ambitions, and ethics ahead of their own job security.

Principal Conferees in the Public Administration Symposium

(All were provided an opportunity to contribute to this report)

Christine Altenburger	**Senior Research Associate, Coalition to Improve Management in State and Local Government.** Previously, Professor and Assistant Dean, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Pittsburgh; U.S. Army Company Commander
Enid Beaumont	**Director, Academy for State and Local Government.** Previously, Executive Director, National Institute of Public Affairs; Director, Public Administration Program, New York University; Assistant Administrator, Human Resources Administration, New York City
Henry Beukema	**Program Officer, The Pittsburgh Foundation/Howard Heinz Endowment.** Previously, Assistant Secretary of The University of Pittsburgh; Military History Instructor, Vanderbilt University
Alfred Blumstein	**Dean, H. John Heinz School of Public Policy and Management, Carnegie Mellon University.** Previously, Institute for Defense Analysis; Visiting Fellow, Institute of Criminology, University of Cambridge, England
Regis Bobonis	**Vice President and General Manager, Centech.** Previously, Manager of Community Relations, Duquesene Light Company; newspaper reporter
Davis B. Bobrow	**Dean, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Pittsburgh.** Previously, Professor of Political Science and Public Affairs, University if Minnesota; Special Assistant, Office of Secretary of Defense
Michael Carroll	**Vice President for Community Affairs, Lilly Endowment, Inc.** Previously, Deputy Mayor of Indianapolis (died in airplane accident in Fall of 1992)
Beverly A. Cigler	**Professor, Public Policy and Administration, Penn State Harrisburg and Director, Pennsylvania Program to Improve State and Local Government.** Previously, MPA Director, North Carolina State University.
Gregory Curtis	**President, Laurel Foundation.** Previously, C. S. May Associates, Philanthropic Financial Management; Staff of Mayors Richard Lugar of Indianapolis and John Lindsay of New York
Claire Daehnick	**Director of Research and Services, Coalition to Improve Management in State and Local Government.** Previously, local government elected official
Alan Dean	**Fellow and former Chairman, National Academy of Public Administration.** Previously, Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation; Deputy Assistant Director, Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President
Edward Ferguson	**Deputy Executive Director, National Association of Counties.** Previously, Executive Director, League of Oregon Cities; Executive Director, Association of Indiana Counties
John Fobes	**Director, Americans for University of UNESCO.** Previously, Deputy Secretary General, UNESCO; Executive Assistant (Administration), Marshall Plan
Richard Fogel	**Assistant Comptroller General for General Government Programs, U.S. General Accounting Office.** Previously, Assistant Comptroller General, Human Resources Programs, and Associate Director, General Governmental Division, U.S. General Accounting Office
Elsie Hillman	**National Republican Committee.** Previously, Chair, Allegheny County Republican Committee; volunteer in numerous civic and charitable organizations