

ISSUE PAPER

- A. TITLE: General Services Administration. GSA has become increasingly ineffective and criticized by other Agencies, Congress and the media. Agencies also heavily criticized. Studies have documented numerous problems. Operating reorganization within the Executive authority is proposed.
- B. SUBMITTED BY: Office of Policy Coordination, Dwight Ink.
- C. SUMMARY: GSA was recommended by first Hoover Commission to regulate certain Federal housekeeping operations and to provide centralized services for agencies where determined to be more efficient and effective. GSA has greatly expanded and is criticized for inept political appointments, politicized career service, inefficiency and corruption. Criticized both for inability to enforce standards among agencies and nonresponsiveness to agency needs.
- Major features of proposed reorganization include delegation of some operating authority to major agencies, streamlining of GSA, increased analytical and planning capability in GSA, development of close cooperation of GSA and agencies, revised OMB role, and professionalization in GSA and agencies.
- D. LEVEL OF ACTION REQUIRED: Presidential statement of policy, OMB Director and GSA Administrator implementation.
- E. TYPE OF ACTION REQUIRED:
1. Administrative: Shift of emphasis from day to day pencil and paper operations to setting and monitoring government standards, evaluation of agency programs, building government professionalism and handling the specialized work for which individual agencies should not staff.
 2. Regulatory: GSA, with agency participation, would set standards; no regulatory impact outside government.
 3. Organizational: Realign government-wide responsibilities for Federal administrative services; assign a government-wide policy role to OMB. GSA to provide operational policies and standards, as well as system controls for supply, building maintenance, vehicle procurement and maintenance; continues to manage buildings construction and acquisition; continues to develop policy and approval for computer acquisition. Then delegates to agencies the bulk of small purchase, building maintenance and renovation.
- Delegate most supply and minor maintenance functions to departments and agencies. GSA, DOD and VA to jointly develop plans for improved cooperation (e.g. warehousing). Shift some operating personnel from GSA to agencies. All GSA positions below Administrator to be filled by professionals from government or industry on a competitive basis.

- F. TIMING: First sixty days, Presidential directive to OMB, GSA and agencies outlining general approach.
- 60-90 days: initiate delegations to agencies.
- 90 days - 18 months: transfer of personnel from GSA to agencies.
- G. RESOURCES AFFECTED: Some decrease in GSA budget and personnel offset by corresponding increase in agencies. No significant overall change.
- H. MAJOR AREAS OF IMPACT:
1. Congressional: Principally interested committees to be kept informed:
 - House Government Operations and Senate Governmental Affairs, House Public Works and Transportation and Senate Environment and Public Works, and Appropriations Subcommittees on Treasury, Postal Service, and General Government. Also individual members principally interested: Senator Lawton Chiles, Congressman Jack Brooks.
 2. Departments & Agencies: Departments and major agencies would provide own administrative services in some areas (instead of procuring from GSA).
- I. DESCRIPTION: A series of steps are suggested,
1. More Involvement of Agencies:
 - Delegate to agencies authority to provide own administrative services in certain areas, especially supplies, in conformance with GSA standards and oversight.
 - GSA uses field offices to monitor agency performance, provide services to smaller agencies, manage buildings, provide technical assistance.
 - Use of departmental assistant secretaries for administration as a user-agency group, supported by GSA administrative service officers in each agency, both in Washington and in the field.
 2. Reorganization:
 - Reorganize GSA Central office into smaller staff organization to establish standards, direct oversight activities, and assist agencies; delegate to Regions greater GSA operating authority.
 - Institute systematic long-range planning policy development and program evaluation at all levels of GSA; involve customer agencies, private sector in policy formulation; ensure that planning is integrated with decision making.
 - Establish research and development capability to assure utilization of modern technology.
 - Rectify current OMB and Congressional constraints (lack of fund flexibility, lease prospectus process, etc.). GSA/OMB working group should identify such constraints, their effect, and corrective

actions: resolve Executive Branch problems and identify to Congress the effects of legislative constraints and propose cooperative effort to correct.

- GSA should first clear policies and major initiatives with OMB and then OMB should use clout to support GSA.
- Develop channels to private sector counterparts to exchange information on up-to-date technology, planning, processes, etc. (e.g. ADP, procurement, warehousing and distribution, building maintenance, space management, records management, etc).
- Devise means of resolving long standing issues, such as lease vs. purchase of buildings.

3. Better Staffing:

- Professionalize staff, drawing upon:
 - better trained GSA workforce
 - new talent from other agencies
 - industry sources and experience
- Appoint an agency head with strong operating experience, preferably both government and industry background (perhaps the administrator from one and the deputy from the other). This is the most important single recommendation.
- More continuity in deputy and commissioner positions. All positions below the administrator should be filled by professional managers from government or industry on a competitive basis.
- Provide leadership, in conjunction with OPM, in professionalizing this area throughout government through better selection and training. (ADP and telecommunications, for example, are badly handled by most agencies).
- Better career ladders and mobility both within GSA and between GSA and the general services staffs of agencies.
- Develop stronger engineering capacity to evaluate potential government use of new hardware, especially ADP and telecommunications.

4. Retain and Improve Certain Freeman Initiatives:

- Meaningful training
- 5 year planning mechanism
- More emphasis by Inspector General on preventing fraud and waste.
- Professionalize procurement operation, including stronger field role.
- EEO program, because there are few experienced women or minorities in general services field, there is need to bring them into middle management in order to later have meaningful representation at policy levels.
- Field resource planning and allocation channeled through regional administrators.