THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM FOR

ROBERT H. FINCH

H. R. HALDEMAN

GEORGE P. SHULTZ

As I wind up affairs in the White House I would like to send along a few thoughts on problems it would appear you will be dealing with in the coming two years.

Of these, one of the more important is that of relations of the Administration with the world of higher education.

The question to be asked is as follows: "Why -- given the high quality, and foresight, of the President's statements on higher education, with their emphasis on academic and institutional freedom, and the quite exceptional nature of his program proposals -- why are we so detested?"

The answer, I suppose, is that for all the proprieties of our formal positions, we have simultaneously been sending out signals that we detest them.

There is no way to recover the losses of the first two years. But I do believe that we can halt a further deterioration, and that this ought to be a matter of considerable concern to the White House Staff who care about such things, as well as, of course, to Elliot Richardson.

My proposal is simple, and it may be, simple minded. I believe there is a fundamental community of interest between the Administration and higher education. There is the elemental

matter of financial support, which becomes more critical every day. There is also -- and this really has to be understood -- an area of shared political interest. The universities have an urgent and increasingly perceived interest in a diminishment of the power of the authoritarian left, and of the enthusiasms, as it were, of the groups that will associate with the authoritarian left in moments of crisis. Nothing would be more calculated to reduce the power of these groups than the continued success of a respectable conservative Administration winding down the war, winding up the economy, easing group relations, looking to the future, etc.

Somehow we have got to get this message across: as well as to deliver on that promise.

I tried this in the keynote address to the American Council on Education early last month. I gave a long paper discussing the Administration's program in the context of the general condition of higher education. I think I can fairly say the speech was extraordinarily well received. Four thousand copies were picked up by delegates before the day was out, and I have had an unusually large mail in the aftermath. (There has also been one concrete result. HEW and the A. C. E. have now commenced regularly monthly meetings, to which Elliot Richardson attaches some importance.)

By and large the audience was impressed. By and large they had not focused on our program proposals, had not thought anyone around here was paying much competent attention to their problems. I enclose two typical letters, one from Howard Johnson of M. I. T., whom I know, another from Ernest Boyer, the new chancellor of the State University of New York, whom I do not. (Tabs A and B)

But there was another reaction as well. This is best summed up in a letter from Alan Pifer, head of the Carnegie Corporation. It is not pleasant reading, but I think you three, at least should know that -- to my knowledge -- he reflects a very widespread attitude when he writes:

> What you have to realize, however, is the utter lack of credibility the Nixon Administration has with the educational community--at all levels. I'm not talking here about militant students and radical young faculty. I'm talking about millions of intelligent people who feel that the President and his Administration have downgraded their profession, disregarded them and let the Vice President ridicule what they stand for. They are deeply affronted, and I should doubt now that they can ever be won back from their mood of disillusion and distrust. The kind of politics the President, Vice President and others have been practicing will win some votes, but I can assure you it has left a residue of bitterness among intelligent and informed Americans that will not disappear as long as these men are in office. This bitterness is so intense it will probably poison any enterprises The White House launches which require the co-operation of the educational community. It's a hell of a situation for the nation but when you sow the wind you can expect to reap the whirlwind. (Tab C)

(I should perhaps note that Pifer, while very much a liberal, has no particular party identification. He was chairman of the President's task force on education appointed after the 1968 election.)

I would hope this would not be taken for New York effetery. The night before I spoke to the A. C. E. I lectured at a small, Presbyterian college about twenty miles west of St. Louis. A very pretty, very nice place, only just emerging from its original function as a finishing school for jeunes filles de bonne famille. The President of the college is a Rèpublican, a friend of Bob Finch. Before I was allowed to speak --

almost as a condition for permission to speak -- the president delivered a ten-minute denunciation of the Administration. Hip and thigh. It would be hard to exaggerate the intensity of his feelings, or of the audience's response. Afterwards we got on fine over drinks, but it was hardly a pleasant experience.

Daniel P. Moynihan

Attachments (4)