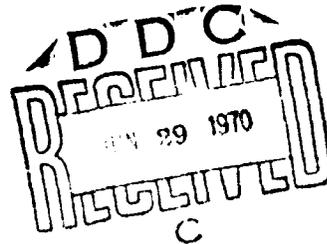


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WHAT STATE PLANNING AGENCIES CAN DO

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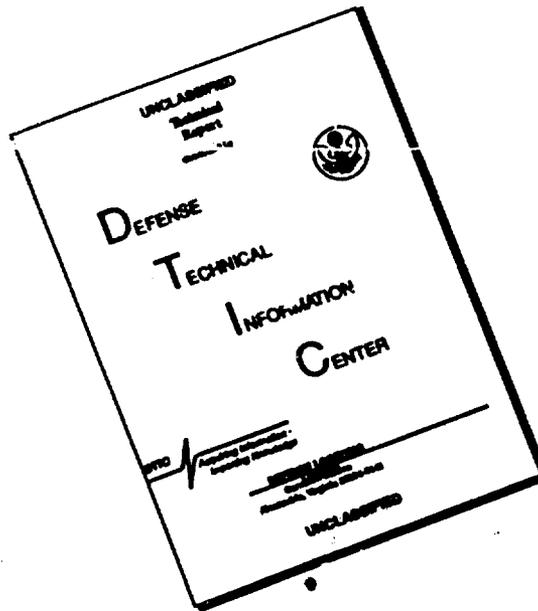
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LONG-RANGE PLANNING IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM:
WHAT STATE PLANNING AGENCIES CAN DO

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The President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice found the U.S. Criminal Justice System in need of substantial overhaul. It specifically called for research and experimentation to bring about improved crime reduction techniques. It also cited the need to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of existing programs and agencies, and to upgrade the personal skills of those employed by the system. The Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 provided Federal encouragement for these objectives by making available both planning and action grants to support locally initiated programs. To qualify for these funds, each state had to form a criminal justice planning agency to coordinate and oversee the projects its local agencies would carry out.

This paper raises some issues that state planning agencies should address to achieve the desired reforms and innovations. It begins by briefly describing what long-range planning involves, how it can be accomplished, and why such efforts typically fail.

WHAT IS LONG-RANGE PLANNING?

An articulate definition of planning defines it as "...the systematic enrichment of the information base for decisionmaking."^{**} It involves attempting to anticipate future events and then devising a course of

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** Erich Jantsch (ed.), *Perspectives of Planning*, Proceedings of the OECO Working Symposium on Long-Range Forecasting and Planning, Bellagio, Italy, 27 October-2 November 1968, p. 29.

action to deal with them. In an organization or system with multiple decisionmaking groups, planning serves two important functions. The first involves coordination to avoid overlap or omission among agencies or programs. The second is strategic, involving the synthesis and comparison of alternative courses of action to achieve the desired goals efficiently. Let us consider each of these in turn.

The need for coordinated planning in large organizations is generally recognized. A centrally prepared, long-range plan usually provides the basis for more detailed planning throughout the organization. The plan might include a scheduled timetable of events, a list of responsibilities for various subunits, the criteria for decisionmakers to use, or a combination of all three. Within the Criminal Justice System, both the quality and capacity of the correctional programs should affect arrest, charge, and sentencing decisions. State plans to develop new intelligence or information systems should affect planning decisions in local agencies.

The need for strategic planning is not always as apparent, because the results of its omission are not readily observed and the payoffs not immediately felt. Good strategic planning is both time-consuming and challenging. It involves specifying objectives or goals explicitly, not just listing them but by indicating their relative priorities or importance so that conflicts can be resolved. It entails attempting to forecast future events and constructing programs to deal with these events. It includes developing criteria that can be used to compare the relative contribution of alternative programs to the specified objectives, and performing the necessary calculations to determine the best programs in terms of cost and effectiveness.

WHY PLANS FAIL

Planning efforts fail for a variety of reasons. A successful planning effort should attempt to deal explicitly with each of the following problems:

Resistance from the agencies involved. It appears to be a bureaucratic law that all organizations, both public and private, will

resist divulging information that would allow an external evaluation of their activities. In the planning context, the best example of this phenomenon is the continual struggle between the Secretary of Defense and the uniformed services in attempting to arrive at an effective force structure. Neither the Air Force nor the Navy wants to provide the necessary data to allow a direct comparison between land-based and sea-based missiles. The same phenomenon can be observed in municipal governments, where city agencies refuse to present alternative courses of action to the mayor for his choice, or where only the preferred alternative is presented adequately and others are presented in such a way as to make them appear patently inferior.

Separation of planning and control. Unless organizational control is in some way tied to the plan, there is little likelihood the plan will be carried out. This tie has been made successfully in some organizations by linking the planning and budget processes so that funds are allocated in a manner consistent with the planning objectives. The planning, programming, and budgeting techniques developed at RAND embody this principal and are now common practice in parts of the Federal Government.*

Failure to involve the top decisionmakers. Planning decisions must obviously be consistent with the desires of top management, but time and again planning staffs attempt to operate without their intimate involvement. For example, each military service has extensive planning staffs who prepare contingency plans to deal with various kinds of emergencies. Yet, whenever a crisis such as the discovery of missiles in Cuba or the Pueblo capture occur, these service plans are seldom put into operation because they have been prepared without Presidential involvement and are unacceptable to him.

Similarly, in many urban planning efforts the work is isolated from the political decisionmaking process. It appears that the only decisionmakers who really know what is in the plan are those who are against it. Consequently, when the plan is published, there is a loud outcry from the offended parties. The plan then takes its place with similar reference material in the city's archives, never to be

*For a more complete description of program budgeting see David Novick, *Program Budgeting*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1965.

resurrected.

Failure to plan for uncertainty. No matter how carefully the planners attempt to forecast the future there will undoubtedly be surprises. Plans must be flexible enough to account for changes made necessary by additional information. Many of the new information systems being planned today to take advantage of third-generation computers are in serious trouble because they lack the necessary degree of flexibility. The lead-time required to determine system requirements, write detailed specifications, and accomplish the software design and programming can run from two to four years. In that time information requirements, operations, and transaction volumes are likely to change radically, making many systems obsolete before they ever come on-line. Airline reservation, command and control, and production control systems all have had these difficulties.

Failure to consider all alternatives. Many planning efforts come to grief because the planners fail to consider a wide range of options and simply settle on an approach that appears both acceptable and feasible for the present. As time passes, however, other more attractive options come to light and the original plan is eventually scrapped, at a great waste of time and resources.

Failure to provide information sources to evaluate the plan. It is often the case that after choosing a course of action there is no way of finding out whether the plan is fulfilling its objectives. This happens if the planners fail to think through their requirements for evaluative data and make arrangements to have it collected.

PLANNING ISSUES IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

So much for generalities. Let us now consider the specific issues with which criminal justice planning must deal. We begin by making some observations about the state of affairs within the justice system today.

1. The objectives of most criminal justice agencies are either obscure or appear to be inconsistent among agencies. Most current planning attempts to deal with the burden of day-to-day problems in ways that have developed more by historical

accident than through rational choice.

2. There is a shortage of resources throughout the system, with demands growing faster than capacity in every area. There are not enough police. There are long court backlogs. Prisons operate at one and one-half times normal capacity and probation and parole officer caseloads are growing daily. The demands for other government services are also increasing. Welfare and school budgets climb from ten to thirty percent per year.
3. The quality of administration in most justice agencies is extremely low. The justice system appears to function in spite of its administration rather than because of it. Administrators are often surprised by swiftly moving events. Their employees are engulfed in a sea of paperwork. To outsiders, it appears that each agency is run for the convenience of its own staff rather than to serve some segments of society. Service is slow, lines are long, and problems are referred elsewhere. Complainants get mad at the police. Policemen and witnesses get mad at the courts. In addition, when dealing with specific problems, the rules by which the system operates often seem to make the most desirable course of action impossible.
4. Finally, there is a general lack of evaluative criteria or data by which outsiders can judge the effectiveness or efficiency of individual agencies. This deficiency forces one to judge an agency on the basis of a few sensational occurrences rather than on its more routine functions.

This description may sound overly harsh, and in truth some agencies are run much better than the average. A good part of the problem stems from the enforced fragmentation of efforts caused by the separation of functions. The criminal justice system shares this dilemma with other social action agencies such as job-training or drug prevention groups.

The Need for Coordinative Planning

Some specific topics that require coordinated planning are the following:

The provision of common services. To avoid duplication or oversight, agencies with overlapping jurisdiction in different problem areas must coordinate their activities. If the state is planning to set up a new information system, local agencies must take this into account.

The relative effectiveness and capacity among individual agencies. Very few agencies have sole jurisdiction for a particular problem. The criminal justice system is characterized by arrestees flowing through a number of agencies as their case progresses. Referral decisions should be affected by the quality of treatment or service that can be expected from each alternative agency to which referral can be made.

Changes in legal or administrative procedures and constraints. A slight change in procedures in one agency can have quite a large effect, say in the type or quantity of prisoners received, on an agency further along in the process.

The pursuit of common research. Research studies that may have applications to other agencies should be conducted in a way that makes the results generalizable and relevant to all agencies affected.

Operations. Of course, all of the areas that require coordinative action, such as riot control, crime investigation, criminal intelligence, or criminal processing, should receive operations planning.

The Need for Strategic Planning

In the area of strategic planning, the problems that require immediate attention, for each criminal justice agency, are those with long lead-time solutions.

Personnel. What types of people will be required in what quantities? Is the supply adequate? Are training programs and facilities adequate?

Research. What types of data are needed to better understand crime problems; deterrent effects; rehabilitative effects? In general

few of the basic input/output relationships between criminal justice activities and crime problems are well understood.

Equipment. New communications, or data processing systems may require several years to acquire. What other types of hardware should be developed?

Organization and Management. Many system improvements will require organizational changes; yet changes cannot occur too frequently or chaos will ensure. Therefore each reorganization must be carefully planned to incorporate all of the changes desired at that time.

METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

Finally, we consider the methodological issues facing a state planning body. The purpose of such a body should be to improve the quality of law enforcement and criminal justice within its jurisdiction. The first issue then is what criteria are to be used in measuring this quality? Of course the crime rate is important. What about the fear of victimization that many studies have shown to be quite different from the actual chances of harm? What about the quality and quantity of other police services such as emergency aid? What about the severity and distribution of harassment or invasion of privacy caused by law enforcement efforts? How important are delays and inconvenience to all parties in reaching a judgment for arrestees? How should the equity and fairness of the system be measured? For instance, should each citizen receive the same quantity of police services or should these services be distributed to equalize the probability of victimization? There are many possible standards by which the system can be judged. The state planning agencies should attempt to form a consensus about the characteristics of a model system, not in terms of procedures so much as in terms of the effects it would have on society.

Finally it is not clear to what degree the state planning groups have thought through the various tactics available to them in pursuing these goals. A number of possibilities might be worth consideration.

1. The states could attempt to use LEAA funds to supplement operating funds where they are short. The trouble with this

approach is that the block grant funds available represent only about an additional 40-percent increase in state and local funding and are only a temporary solution.

2. The states could assist local agencies in carrying out whatever projects they desired, subject to some screening for quality.
3. The states could first determine what research or innovation was required and use the LEAA funds to encourage various agencies to carry it out.
4. The state planning agency could carry out investigative studies in the style of Ralph Nader and rely on public pressure to bring about change.
5. The state planning agency could attempt to exert more control over the entire criminal justice budget in an effort to bring about change.
6. The state planning agency could attempt to gain more direct control over local agencies by seeking legislative or regulatory controls over their actions.

Some of these tactics may sound rather extreme. They are only meant to be illustrative. No doubt different tactics will prove appropriate for different goals. *The main point is that it may be unrealistic to expect changes simply because demonstration projects are funded.*

The planning process outlined here requires some degree of analysis at every step. The disciplines required include operations research for modeling, simulation, and optimization; economics for cost/benefit analysis and econometric modeling; engineering for hardware evaluation and system design; psychology for personnel testing and evaluation; information scientists for system evaluation and design. Planners must decide whether these talents are currently available to their group in-house, or whether they wish to turn to an organization like RAND that has such capabilities.