

MOYNIHAN Meeting --no writing but
very sensitive, so would put in
Dec. Handwriting.



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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

December 7, 1971

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Meeting with Dr. Daniel P. Moynihan
December 7, 1971
5:00 p.m. (30 mins)

- I. PURPOSE: To discuss several items of general concern.
- II. BACKGROUND: This meeting was set up at your request.
- III. PARTICIPANTS: Pat Moynihan and John Ehrlichman
- IV. PRESS PLAN: There will be no press involvement; however, Ollie Atkins will take one or two photographs at the outset of the session.
- V. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION: I am attaching the last three letters you have received from Dr. Moynihan
 - At Tab A is the September 20th memorandum concerning Pat's views on Richard Herrnstein's article, "I.Q.";
 - At Tab B is the November 9th memorandum on public education and the mixing of races in schools; and
 - At Tab C is the more recent (November 23rd) letter about Nathan Glazer's comments on Family Assistance in his article, "The Limits of Social Policy" ... and the interesting parallel with Winston Churchill's unemployment insurance scheme.

Alexander P. Butterfield



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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN..

UNITED STATES MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

September 20, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

You asked for comment on Richard Herrnstein's article, "I.Q.", published in The Atlantic.

There was a time when such articles were written in Latin. It was better so. On the other hand, nobody knew much in those times, so it would not have been especially worth reading.

Herrnstein is, of course, very much worth reading. The findings of intelligence testing, which he summarizes, have profound implications for social policy. The development of these tests, as he states, is the largest achievement of psychology to date.

Humans vary by something called intelligence, a characteristic largely inherited, which correlates with a whole range of personal outcomes: how much money you make, who you marry, whether you marry... a long list. (An early finding was that couples with low I.Q.'s tend to have larger numbers of children than those of average or high intelligence. Why then was the race not getting dumber? It turned out the children of low intelligence couples tend not to reproduce, thus maintaining equilibrium.) Intelligence correlates with occupation which translates into income, although the connection can be pretty loose at times. People tend to marry at their own intelligence level. (The

I.Q.'s of husbands and wives correlate more strongly than do those of siblings.) This tends to mean that high or low intelligence, and thus social class, is transmitted from one generation to the next in a society that has got itself sorted out. There are many qualifications and lots of surprises, but the pattern is there. When this happens in other species, this is to say when breeding groups are associated with fitness for survival, the process of speciation begins. One set of ancestors produces two, or three, or more streams of descendants. Since Darwin this process has fascinated scientists, and especially of late as they begin to establish the connection between intelligence and fitness in a technological society.

Herrnstein and others believe that the world's work is done by highly gifted people. This is probably more so now than in the past. This leads psychologists to be much concerned about who is gifted. Having learned to rank intelligence within socially defined groups, e.g. Englishmen, they have naturally turned to doing so between groups. Differences have been found. It was established some time ago, for example, that the intelligence of the Irish in Ireland is about one standard deviation behind that of the English in England. This does not matter much for people clustered around the center of the distribution, which is to say most people, but it makes a big difference in the so-called "tails" where the very gifted and the very deprived are found. (To score one standard deviation above the mean is to be ahead of 5/6ths of the group.) For a population to score lower than another does not mean there are no high I.Q.'s in that population, only that there are fewer.

These comparisons have not been confined to the British Isles. Psychologists now think they know

something of the ranking of the major races. Asians first; Caucasians second; Africans third. This latter point is not settled. It is an inference from the testing of persons of African descent in Caucasian settings. So-called culture free tests have been devised which ^{seem to} confirm these differences. (In such a test, for example, American eskimos score higher than American whites, while the difference between whites and Chicanos disappears.) For many years it has been recorded that American Negroes score, in the aggregate, a little more than one standard deviation behind American whites on intelligence tests. In the period, say 1930-1960 it was held that this was the result of environmental deprivation, and had no genetic basis. In the course of the 1960s an increasing number of studies, culminating in Arthur Jensen's 1969 article in the Harvard Education Review, contended that the black/white difference is genetic in origin and cannot be overcome by environmental change. Herrnstein does not say so in his article, but he believes Jensen is right.

You ask, correctly, what are the implications of all this for social policy. Few persons have done so: not many Presidents. It gets close to thinking about the unthinkable.

Frankly, I don't see how a society such as ours can live with this knowledge. Scientists can live with it: have done so. But how can it be public as against private knowledge? Yet this is what is now going to happen and somehow we will have to get used to it. Jensen has finished a big book, to be published within the year. Herrnstein believes it to be definitive. Last summer a book upholding the "Jensenist heresy" appeared in Britain and will shortly be published here. These are not the works of redneck preachers interpreting the Old Testament. The authors are liberal men of science. Thus we must expect to hear more, not less about the subject.

It is likely to be a major controversy of the 1970s primarily because it offers an alternate -- and more "scientific" -- explanation to a whole range of phenomena now identified as prima facie evidence of injustice. Some persons will try -- as Jensen hopes -- to use this information to bring about better racial outcomes. It is reasonably clear, for example, that there are forms of learning in which blacks have no deficit whatever compared to whites. Such activities can be stressed in the school curriculum. But it is also clear that the findings Herrnstein summarizes provide a formidable argument against charges of discrimination in cases where individuals are selected on the basis of objective measurements of intelligence. At a yet nastier level persons opposed to school integration can certainly find ammunition in this material. Doubtless someone will soon discover -- what has been in the literature since 1915 -- that prisons are disproportionately filled with persons of low or retarded intelligence, and use this information for assorted ugly purposes. I need not go on: the "danger" of this knowledge is self-evident.

There are long and short run implications. Man is a young species and presumably capable of speciation. Technology, which incessantly seeks and rewards talent, could well bring this about. I suppose it even more likely that technology will bring about the destruction of mankind even sooner, so the subject need not detain us.

The short run implication is for social stratification based on biological superiority. This is already happening. The ironic aspect of it all is that democracy apparently hastens the process. Herrnstein alludes to this. As education and health care and opportunity become more open to all, inherited differences in ability become more not less important. (If you believe, as I do, that ideologies generally reflect the interests of those who espouse

them, this helps explain why gifted persons typically support more education, more health care, more opportunity.) The result, in Michael Young's phrase, is the Rise of the Meritocracy. For most persons it would be exceedingly painful to live in a world where you get what is coming to you. (I recall reading that during World War II the British Navy began admitting enlisted men as officer candidates. A technological navy needed talent. But they held back a certain proportion of seamen otherwise qualified: they did not want the mess deck stripped of leadership. In the "old Navy" rank was based on social class and carried few implications about natural ability. One thinks of Melbourne's remark about his predilection for the Order of the Bath on grounds that there was "no damned nonsense about merit.")

For you, during your Presidency, a primary problem is how to deal with the widespread legal and social expectation of equality of outcomes with respect to socially defined groups, primarily racial, ethnic, and religious groups. During the mid-1960s I concluded that the demand for equal opportunity would be followed by this demand for equal results. In his Howard University speech, which I drafted, President Johnson said it would and should. It was. Now we are told by scientists it can't be had.

It seems to me essential for you to proceed on the assumption that the scientists have not proved their case. You may recall that the question of Jensen's article once came up at a cabinet meeting. You asked me what was the state of opinion on the subject. I replied (and Lee DuBridge concurred) that Jensen was a respected scholar who had set forth a hypothesis, nothing more, which might or might not prove to be correct, but that it was not likely that any of us would live to find out. I did not trouble you about it,

but the subject was then much on my mind. (Jensen had published, after all, in the journal of my own graduate school.) Just about every social program I proposed to you in those two years had as one of its objectives either disproving Jensen, or minimizing the consequence of his turning out to be right. I suppose it is time I acknowledged this.

I reasoned as follows. Issues of race were coming more and more to preoccupy us. The nation and government were committed to racial equality. This could only be meaningful in terms of approximate equal outcomes. How to achieve them? The best route, had it been available, would have been to bring about equality of educational achievement which could easily enough be translated into equal occupational patterns, which in turn would bring about an approximately equal range of income and social status. This, finally, would bring about a successful "ethnic solution" to the problem of race, namely that those individuals who wished to retain a primary identity with their group are free to do so, while who don't much care about that identity, or who actively dislike it, are also free to pursue their wishes and cease, as it were, to be Italian or Jewish or Yankee.

I already knew when I arrived in Washington that equality of educational achievement was not an active option. Our schools were (and are) producing unequal people. This translates into the occupational structure, and so down the causal sequence. It was necessary to devise a substitute strategy, and to do so in the face of great unwillingness by the public, especially perhaps the liberal public, to live with this seeming reality, which Coleman, et al. had established -- as much to their discomfiture as anyone's -- in the 1966 report Equality of Educational Opportunity.

The issue arose almost the moment we arrived. Your first message to the Congress on a substantive

issue dealt with poverty. You were declaring, in effect, that you were going to stick with the objective but would try to find better ways to achieve it. A number of programs were scheduled to be transferred to regular departments on grounds that they were now "operational", the experimental and design stages having been successfully concluded. Drafting the message I described Head Start as "operational". Moments before the draft went to you I received a call from OEO telling me of the preliminary findings of the first major evaluation of Head Start which showed it to be relatively ineffective in raising educational achievement. This hardly surprised me. The Coleman data predicted that Head Start would not succeed. But so alas did Jensen, and for very different reasons. His article, published not days earlier, began (as I recall) "Compensatory education has been tried and apparently it has failed." It seemed to me that you had to take the view that compensatory education had not failed, that we simply had not got the knack of it. The alternative explanation was Jensen's and we could not live with that. I changed the draft to read that Head Start was still experimental, but that it had certainly taught us how important the first five years of life were, etc. We discussed the matter, and you agreed that we should start out the Administration by proclaiming a prime social objective of learning and doing something about the early childhood experiences of children, especially the children of the poor. It made institutional sense: this was the one period of life no other level of government was much involved with. It made educational sense: the major finding of Coleman and others is that poor children arrive in school already behind and never thereafter catch up. (In statistical terms the gap remains almost constant.) In scientific terms it also made sense. Work done at NIMH had shown that the IQ of poor black children begins to decline at about 18 months (something like that:

I am writing away from my books) and that by special tutoring the decline can be prevented. Accordingly you proposed the establishment of the Office of Child Development in HEW and a commitment to the First Five Years of Life. A year later you proposed the establishment of a National Institute of Education to bring big science and big resources to bear on the question of creating an effective educational system for the children of the poor. In between you proposed the Family Assistance Plan which would create a universal system of income supplementation which, among other things, would help close the income gap created by the occupational structure which reflected the failure of the educational system.

In the spring and summer of 1970 you engineered the disestablishment at long last of the dual school system of the South. The one thing Coleman taught us was that low income children when mixed with a majority of better off children raise their performance without lowering that of their schoolmates. You may recall we talked about this when I brought Coleman to see you. To achieve this gap-narrowing effect in the South we had to integrate the schools, and you did just that. Similarly, it was reasonable to think that poor nutrition was a factor in poor school performance -- not as a result of brain damage, but simply because a kid who is hungry doesn't concentrate very well. (You may recall that I got into trouble in the spring of 1969 when somebody leaked a memorandum I had sent you on the subject of such brain damage stating that NIMH thought there was very little. I was concerned about this. The hunger lobby seemed almost anxious to label half the black population as mentally retarded, a thesis which fitted much too closely with Jensen.)

Well. There is no purpose my reciting your program to you. My point is simply this. Intelligence in its various manifestations is the result of the mixed influence of heredity and environment.

Nature/nurture. Whatever the facts of inheritance, we know that the environment in which ^{the} poor are raised in our society makes things hard for them thereafter. (E.g. Chicanos score below "whites" on I.Q. tests but not on "culture free" tests.) The duty of government is to do everything it can to minimize that component of inequality which results from environment. It is my contention that if we do so the residual genetic differences, if any, will prove something we can live with. After all, one doesn't have to be very smart to know that Jews and Chinese are on balance smarter than the rest of us, but the rest of us get along.

further

My contention is that you have a legislative program -- I could go on to list a dozen other items -- which constitutes a viable response to the challenge presented by Herrnstein's article and the material on which it is based. This is not a lucky accident. It was put together that way, with that precise object in mind. Now some specifics.

First. The legislative program continues to need your attention. (As does everything else, of course!) Just before the summer recess the Senate voted unanimously to establish your National Institute of Education. In the House the bill is sponsored by John Brademas, who fully intends to pass it. Edith Green is not so sure. I am going out to Portland to speak for her in a few weeks, and we have agreed to talk about this subject. I opened Brademas' hearings on the bill last February, and found his Select Committee very much behind the idea. Still, I think a few calls from you would help.

Second. I would check up on your Office of Child Development. We got a good director down from Yale, and he is hard at it, but I don't think the office has ever had the attention in HEW that you intended for it. How is the First Five Years of Life program coming? I am sure Elliot Richardson would welcome this kind of a boost.

Third. We need radical and fast change in secondary school education in this country. I think we already know enough to do this. High school reflects the intellectual interests and style of an elite. It ought to reflect the occupational structure. The one job we do worst in this country is turning boys into men. The social arrangements for becoming an adult in a tribe of New Guinea headhunters makes us look like the savages we are in this respect. We have got to connect up the world of school with the world of work, and high school is where to do it. Why don't you tell this to the teachers of the country, and remind the public that because school population will not increase during the 1970s we should have the resources to seriously attempt such a transformation.

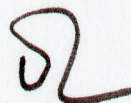
Fourth. We ought to put our giant minds to work redefining what is important. Every time you talk about the dignity of work the liberals go crazy, but I would keep at it, if perhaps with somewhat different words. They will still go crazy of course. (I have yet to forgive the New York Times editorial writers for continuing to suggest that your White House staff somehow deliberately dreamed up that Head Start evaluation to discredit compensatory education.) Simply your being a sports fan is more important in this respect than you may suppose. Herrnstein is probably right that the world's work is done by persons of talent, but the world is kept together by the decency of quite ordinary people. Those common decencies, as Orwell wrote, are not at all common, and need to be valued more than they are.

Fifth. I continue to hope we might find a way to move back somewhat from the stark black/white consciousness of recent years. I fear that if those are the only categories that are allowed to matter we are in for decades of bitterness.

Sixth. You might want to chat with Herrnstein. He is an enormously attractive person and admires you enormously.

Finally, may I plead that you say nothing about this subject, nor let anyone around you do so. There is no possibility of your concern being depicted for what it is, a desire to respond to knowledge in a responsible and prudent manner. In the bowels of Christ I plead with you not to let the Vice President say anything. His article in the New York Times on the events at Attica was an invitation to derision, and for some almost an incitement to violence.

I am here in New York, faithful to your command, and most honored by your appointment. I have finished my little book on the Family Assistance Plan. It will be serialized in the New Yorker. When, many years hence, you have a chance to look at it, I think you will be all the more proud of what you did and the way you did it.



Daniel P. Moynihan

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