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Interview of

MELVIN R. LAIRD

MEMBER, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, 1952-68;  
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, 1969-73

WASHINGTON, D.C.

SEPTEMBER 2, 1986

INTERVIEWERS: MAURICE MATLOFF AND ALFRED GOLDBERG

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Matloff: This is part II of an oral history interview held with Mr. Melvin R. Laird in Washington, D.C., on September 2, 1986, at 2:00 p.m. Representing the OSD Historical Office are Drs. Alfred Goldberg and Maurice Matloff.

Laird: You have all the material over there; you have all the records; whatever happened to my personal papers?

Goldberg: I think that they are in the Forrestal Building, in a special vault, along with McNamara's papers and some others.

Matloff: At our meeting on August 18, we discussed your service on the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee in the House. Today we'd like to focus on your role and service as Secretary of Defense, from 1969 to 1973. Do you recall the circumstances of the appointment? Who recommended you, and how long and well you had known President Nixon before the appointment?

Laird: I had known President Nixon for many years. I first met him in 1950, and I knew him quite well.

Matloff: What were the circumstances of the appointment?

Laird: Bryce Harlow and I had convinced President-elect Nixon to take Scoop Jackson as Secretary of Defense. We had been working on the Cabinet for Nixon. Scoop agreed, with one condition; that Governor Evans would appoint a Democrat to take his place. Discussions were held with Governor Evans and he agreed that he would appoint a Democrat to take Scoop's place. Then Scoop went on to Hawaii for a few days with a group of his Democratic colleagues, and called to tell us that he would have to withdraw, because he had been convinced by his colleagues, including

Senator Kennedy and others, that should he decide to take the Secretary of Defense position in the Nixon administration, he would forever forfeit the opportunity of becoming President of the United States. We got the word after we had worked everything out, even with Gov. Evans, and Bryce Harlow and I went then to the Governors Conference in San Diego with President-elect Nixon. That was when he insisted that I had gotten him into all that trouble and that he was coming back to make an announcement on his Cabinet and wanted to announce the whole Cabinet. The only job that hadn't been decided on at that time was that of the Secretary of Defense. He told me that since I had gotten him into the problem, I had to do it. As far as being recommended is concerned, I don't think that there was any recommendation. He knew me well, and knew I was ranking member on the Defense Appropriations Committee—although the last year I wasn't the ranking member. I let Glen Lipscomb go ahead of me because we had a rule that you could only be ranking member of one subcommittee and I wanted to maintain my ranking position on HEW and Labor. Nixon had talked to me about getting in the Cabinet before then, in HEW, and I had refused absolutely, because I wanted to stay in the Congress. But, under the circumstances, I agreed to go over, provided that I had no interference from anybody on military and civilian personnel. I did not want to have to answer to anybody on any appointments I made.

Matloff: Did the President give you any instructions or directions on how he wanted the Department to run?

Laird: No.

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Matloff: Was the transition from Congressman to executive official in the bureaucracy difficult?

Laird: No. Very easy.

Matloff: What in your background would you say, in retrospect, proved useful in this new capacity?

Laird: I think an understanding of the Defense Department and dealing with the budget for so many years. You can't help but learn a few things about the Defense Department when you've been dealing with it for about 16 years. I had visited every one of the major commands, starting in 1953 when I took that defense trip through the Middle East by automobile. I had two months there; I even went out with Glubb Pasha and the Arab Legion on maneuvers. There was not a military post, I think, of any major consequence, that I had not visited, and I always felt that I knew the Defense budget better than anybody in the Congress.

Matloff: Were you briefed by your predecessor, Clark Clifford?

Laird: I was, and he was very helpful. Clark had only been there 10 months, and really wasn't familiar with the Department. But I did spend a lot of time with Bob McNamara, and as you probably know, I invited the former Secretaries of Defense over to have lunch with me even when I was Secretary. Every six weeks, at luncheon, we would discuss all sorts of things, and it was very helpful to me. But Clark never got to know the Department, because he had been on the outside and although he had been in the White House during the Truman administration, he had never dealt with Defense. He had never been exposed to the SIOP, or the Defense budget, and he had never had to prepare a budget. McNamara was very

helpful and he was very much up to speed. I met with him during the transition on several occasions. I also met with Tom Gates. I did get a lot of help, particularly from McNamara, because he did understand the Department.

Matloff: What was your initial conception of that role as Secretary of Defense? Did you see it primarily as a manager of resources, a strategist, or what?

Laird: The primary role that I had was that I had a time bomb ticking—it was the public opinion in the country. Nixon would never have been elected President if Hubert Humphrey had shown just a little bit of interest in winding down our involvement in Vietnam. If he had gone ahead with that Philadelphia speech, Nixon would never have been President. That was the one where he was going to outline that there was a plan for partial withdrawal of troops from Vietnam. But President Johnson ordered the denial that there was any such plan. Humphrey came out and said that he was against withdrawal, you know, because Johnson contacted him and said that if he went ahead with that statement, he would never have Johnson's support. I believe that Nixon was elected on the Vietnam issue. There was tremendous pressure in this country to show that you had a program to wind down America's commitment there. At first I talked about "de-Americanizing" the war, and then I came up with a new term after my visit over there, "Vietnamization." That primary goal was dictated by the American public, not by anybody else. That is the way this country runs.

Goldberg: This is a parallel to 1952, in a way, when Eisenhower promised to go to Korea and end the war.

**Laird:** Absolutely, but I believe that Eisenhower would have been elected over Stevenson without the Korean speech. But if Humphrey had taken just a little different course on the Vietnam situation, Nixon would never have been elected. Then, of course, I tried to set priorities. I set that as the number one priority, which was dictated by the American public. In order for the Defense Establishment, the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps, to survive in the long run and have continued American support, and to gain public support for other things, you had to solve that particular problem. Secondly, I established objectives to get into a lottery system on the draft, because the draft was very unfair as far as the college campuses and everything else were concerned. People were hiding out all over the United States, on the basis of having the resources to do things, and people were not picked on the basis of a fair contribution to the national security program of the country. So we first went into that with the understanding that we would end the draft and that we would no longer be able to call on selective service to meet the manpower needs of the armed forces. I set these objectives and announced them, about six of them, in the first two weeks I was in the Pentagon and that I would carry them forward.

**Matloff:** Would you enumerate them?

**Laird:** First, the Vietnam issue; second, the manpower problem, moving towards a lottery and ending the draft; and third, get our stores replaced. I had been making a point in the Appropriations Committee over the years that what we were doing under McNamara and continued under Johnson was

fighting the war now and paying for it later. We had withdrawn some \$10 billion worth of stores and equipment from all over the world and transferred them to the Vietnam operation without replenishing supplies in NATO, or in the Navy, just drawing down all over. We had to get those replenished—that was very important. \$10 billion that had not been accounted for but had been spent, and the Congress had not made its proper contribution. Then the fourth point—there was a feeling in the Pentagon that people were not participating in the management, so I set up a meeting at Airlie to tell them about how we were going to have a participatory-type management in the Pentagon; they were all going to be involved. The fifth point was to set up budget guidelines. We were going to establish for the first time an assignment of fiscal guidance to every agency and every department of the government. There was no fiscal guidance. I disagreed with McNamara on the idea that he had been able to cut \$10 to \$15 billion out of the defense budget. He would let the services and the agencies send a letter to Santa Claus, and he would make the various cuts and say, "Look at all the money I've cut out of this." I didn't think that was the proper way to do it. I wanted to give them the fiscal guidance in advance. So I established for the first time in 12 or 15 years that all the services had fiscal guidance in advance in making up the budget. I felt that was very important. The sixth thing was to appoint all new heads of all the independent agencies. I got rid of the man at the National Security Agency and the man at the Defense Intelligence Agency. I put my own people there. These weren't just jobs leading to retirement. I knew how

important the National Security Agency was because of my work on the Committee. A lot of Secretaries had not paid much attention to that, although at that time there were 108,000 employees involved. I made sure that the directors of those agencies met with me at least twice a week. The December before I left, both Bennett and Gayler went out of there with orders and wearing four stars. Bennett went to Korea, and Gayler went to CINCPAC. I made those changes in the agencies. I am not trying to minimize the importance of having your own people in each of those agencies so that they know who appointed them—just as I would always interview the watch officers, down in the Command and Control Center. I wanted those officers, as I wanted the Director of the Joint Staff, to know that their appointments didn't come from the Chairman, or from the Joint Chiefs, but from the Secretary of Defense. I always had two or three names before I would make those appointments.

Goldberg: You knew all these people before?

Laird: Most of them, yes.

Goldberg: Others you appointed on recommendation?

Laird: Yes, as Assistant Secretary of Defense for Administration, I brought in Bob Froehlke, who was my childhood friend. I said, "I want you to do this personnel thing, this participatory thing, and I want you to be my eyes and ears so that we can make these changes. I expect you to do this for one year. Then you will become Secretary of the Army." I went to Stan Resor, who is a friend and someone I had known, and said, "I want you to stay for one year, because I'm going to bring Bob Froehlke in here, but he is going to do this very important job in the personnel area

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for me and I don't want him to get sidetracked on anything else." Bob would bring in three names to me on all of these jobs in the Pentagon. It was his job to make a recommendation to me and do the primary interviewing. He was very good at it. He had been president of a large insurance company, and is now chairman of the board of the Equitable Insurance Co. up in New York, a very responsible job with the third largest insurance company in the country.

Goldberg: So some of these people you did know before?

Laird: Yes, most of them. I can't tell you enough about how important people are, much more important than hardware or anything else over there, more than ships, tanks, planes, guns, or anything else. The people factor is the important thing to get understood.

Goldberg: Why aren't more Secretaries aware of that?

Laird: I am not sure, but I know that is the most important thing.

Goldberg: I agree with you.

Laird: I wrote a pamphlet on that, with Larry Korb, when he was at the Naval War College. It's a small book, People Not Hardware: the Number One Priority of the Department of Defense.

Goldberg: Apparently John Lehman and others over there agree with you.

Matloff: Aside from the people factor, did you see any weaknesses in the structure or the working relations of the Department when you took it over?

Laird: Yes, I thought there was a lack of communication. I think that I had as good communication with the Comptroller as anybody has ever had, because I had known Bob Moot for many years and he had been appearing before our Defense Appropriations Committee for a long period of time.

He was a career person. I had great admiration and respect for him, and I could trust him. I think that you will find that I used him in many ways. He was very important.

Matloff: One of your first actions was to set up the Fitzhugh Panel to review the Department of Defense. Why did you do that?

Laird: First, that was something that the President had promised during the campaign, to establish a Blue Ribbon Panel to look into operations and so forth in the Department of Defense. I felt that it was important to carry through on that, but the Fitzhugh Panel also did many other things for me. Bob Froehlke was responsible for the appointments on the Panel. I did the calling, and asked everybody from Lewis Powell (who was over on safari in Africa, and is now on the Supreme Court) on, and they were very helpful in reviewing what was going on in Defense. Fitzhugh would come in and see me twice a week, and give me a report on what was going on. His office was just down the hall. He was a very distinguished businessman, chairman of the board of the Metropolitan Insurance Company, I felt that that continuing review and look at things by an outsider wasn't so much the final report as what they were finding out as they went around. They went to Vietnam, to NATO, and all over, and did a very good job. As a matter of fact, if you look at the Packard Commission Report, you will find that many of the things that were not implemented in the Fitzhugh report, particularly in the intelligence area and in relation to the Joint Chiefs, were recommended in the Packard Commission Report. I also set up another group to make a study of the all-volunteer service. The reason I did that was that I wanted about a year; I needed

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time. We set up a panel on that. Mr. Froehlke also did the work on making those selections. The President had made a speech during the campaign that he would move the country towards an all-volunteer service. I think that was in October 1968. We had no plan to do it, so I had brought in Roger Kelley, from the Caterpillar Tractor Co. in Peoria, to be Assistant Secretary for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. I told him, "This is a program we have to get working on. I don't anticipate that you can do it right away, but we have to show movement right away." So we set up that commission and we did implement the recommendations of that commission. Roger Kelley worked very closely with it.

Goldberg: Did you have any doubts about going from the draft to a volunteer force?

Laird: Yes, I was not for it in the Congress. I had been on the other side of that particular issue. I have always been in favor of moving towards a universal training system and had taken the position in the Congress that it was better for us to move toward universal training with each person giving a certain amount of time to military service. I had taken that position in Congress as opposed to the volunteer service. But in this particular case, I felt that we were under a lot of pressure because of the unfairness of the draft in the Vietnam War and, in addition, the President of the United States and the Republican Party platform had made a commitment and were elected on that commitment. I happened to be one of those people that believed that when you make a commitment in politics, you have to live with it and try to deliver. It was my responsibility to deliver on a political commitment that had been made.

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Matloff: You spoke about your concept of participatory management— obviously there were some differences in approach with Mr. McNamara on the management of the Department. What changes did you make, for example, in the PPBS system and systems analysis, that he had introduced in the Department?

Laird: I didn't make as many changes as people think. I felt that it was absolutely essential to have a strong systems analysis staff advisory to the Secretary of Defense. What I did was try not to highlight that staff to the point that McNamara did. I tried to get them to work closely with me and I tried to keep them out of the Congress. He was always sending them over to testify before the Congress and crossed purposes with the services and so forth. I thought that was a mistake. I felt that under my policies I was going to assign fiscal guidance. I was going to have to make decisions and use them as my personal staff, rather than expose them the way McNamara did. I think that it worked out a lot better doing it that way.

Matloff: How about your attitude toward ISA, which had quite a prominent position in the McNamara period? How did you view it?

Laird: They had a prominent position as far as I was concerned, but I tried to lessen their exposure. I thought they were being overexposed and they were always in a position where they were in conflict with the Department of State. I did not feel that that was to the long-term advantage of the Department of Defense. I brought in Warren Nutter in that job; he exhibited a little lower profile. I had known him for a long time

down at the University of Virginia, and he had worked with me on the Republican platforms of 1960 and 1964 as an economist. His forte was not necessarily in the foreign affairs area, but in the foreign economic area. Then I brought in Larry Eagleburger, who was a very close friend of mine. His mother was chairman of my first campaign committee in Portage County, in Wisconsin, when Larry was a little boy crawling around on the floor. His dad was a doctor in Stevens Point when I first ran for office. Larry understood how to work quietly within the government. I also brought in Armistead Selden, who was a former Democratic congressman from Alabama and was well acquainted with the ways of the foreign relations and foreign affairs committees in the Congress and had a good back-door entrance into all of those committees. I didn't want him out in the forefront. I wanted him dealing directly with the Congress in their own way and with their own personnel, and Larry, directly with the State Department and the National Security Council staff. ISA did a very good job.

Matloff: You were satisfied that the lower profile worked better?

Laird: Yes.

Goldberg: You wanted that lower profile for all of OSD, didn't you, not just for those organizations?

Laird: The same thing with Systems Analysis—I wanted them to operate that way too, because it doesn't do you any good having that kind of a profile around this town. You can accomplish more quietly. Armistead Selden, the number two man in the Armed Services Committee, left to run for Lister Hill's seat in the Senate, in Alabama. He was defeated in that

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election. He was a relative of Lister Hill, and very close to Sparkman, who was chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. He was very close to Doc Morgan, Clem Zablocki, all of those Democrats. He had been on that committee for some 15 years, and I can't tell you how effective those papers were with those committees in the Congress. I didn't want them making a lot of speeches. I didn't want them out there doing a lot of testifying. I tried to get their testimony limited as much as possible, because I didn't want them running up on the Hill all the time. If somebody was going up on the Hill publicly, I wanted to do it.

Matloff: Did giving ISA a low profile help in your relations with the State Department?

Laird: Much. Talk to somebody like Selin. Ivan will tell you that we used those people much more effectively by not keeping them out and letting them be shot at all the time. Then I could make the decision and they influenced the decision; they influenced me greatly.

Goldberg: By the same token, were you trying to give a higher profile to the military services and JCS?

Laird: That was all part of it, you see, and they felt much better about it, not only the military, but also the services themselves. Then it was easier to turn them down on things.

Goldberg: Because they knew it was being done with good will? If they have a positive attitude towards you, it makes it a lot easier to say no to them.

Laird: Yes, and we were going through great reductions in personnel. A lot of people don't understand that personnel reductions in those four

years were very big, a million in civilian and well over a million in military. You remember reading about that period. We didn't get a lot of heat for those reductions. We closed more bases than they closed at any other time.

Goldberg: You were helped, of course, by the general attitude toward the war and toward the military. There was a greater willingness and it was more difficult for individual congressmen really to try to kick over the traces.

Matloff: Would it be fair to say that you were giving the JCS and the services more of a role, both in connection with the defense budget and with force structure planning?

Laird: Yes, as long as they stayed within the fiscal guidance I gave them. I made them decide on their trade-off rather than let somebody else decide. Sometimes we had to change them a little bit, but we let them come in first. I'd give them three levels of guidance—high guidance, medium-range guidance, and low guidance. Then you look at the lower guidance and the medium guidance and see what they give to the priorities there. Sometimes those priorities were not proper because they knew that if they put this in the low guidance, that somehow or other there would be some overwhelming need that would require me to put something else in there. By having those three different levels and looking at those tradeoffs, it was very helpful in putting the budget together.

Matloff: What about working relationships that you had with various people in positions in and out of the Department, starting with the deputies that you had?

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Laird: I only really had one. I had Packard for a little over three years and Rush for eight months. Rush came over from Germany. I had gotten to know him there. President Nixon talked to me about Rush, because he felt that he wanted to get Rush involved in the Defense Department during that eight-month period since he knew I was leaving. He thought that perhaps Rush could take over as Secretary of Defense.

Matloff: You had set the four-year term as the limit of your service?

Laird: The day I got there. But that didn't work out too well. I had to report to Nixon that I didn't think Rush could make it as Secretary.

Matloff: What, in general, was the division of labor between you and David Packard, while he was Deputy Secretary of Defense?

Laird: I had known David a long time, and we had been friends. I used to say, "Dave, you've got to run the store day-to-day, and I want you to be the chief operating officer. I'll try to be the chief executive officer." He understood that, and we worked it that way. David and I would always have at least one meal a day together and we would always meet in the morning. He sometimes would come to my Vietnam operational meeting. I had a Vietnam task force operational meeting every morning. It wasn't required that he come to that, but he liked to come, particularly if I was going out of town for a day or two. He would attend a day or two prior to the time I left, because contrary to what you may hear, there was never any operational order that I didn't initial, as far as the Joint Staff was concerned. Each day I would initial the bombing recommendations for the B-52s, and as far as the operational orders for the Navy and the Air Force tactical fighters were concerned, you'll find

if you go to the records that those were done by me. You couldn't ask for a better person than Dave Packard.

Matloff: Was he your alter ego, in other words?

Laird: Yes.

Goldberg: That wasn't true with Rush, obviously.

Laird: Rush really never quite got aboard. Probably not enough time. It was much more difficult. I missed David Packard during that period of about 3 months when I didn't have a Deputy. Nixon called me over and told me that he knew that I was leaving and that he thought that perhaps this would be a good time for Rush to come over. That didn't work out. Maybe I tried to compare him too much with Packard, I don't know.

Goldberg: He had a lot of managerial experience, didn't he?

Laird: He had been chairman and CEO of Union Carbide.

Matloff: In October 1972 the Congress passed legislation creating a second Deputy of Defense position, a proposal that you strongly supported. Why did you never fill the position?

Laird: The reason I didn't fill it was simply that it was to be a short-time appointment and I felt that it would be better if I recommended to the new Secretary of Defense that he fill that position. I think it only was six months or so that I had that position available, maybe less, and I felt that I shouldn't fill that position in view of the fact that I was leaving.

Matloff: This is an element where the records won't show anything.

Laird: I didn't think it was fair. When you ask somebody to come to Defense, you're asking him to give up a great deal. It's like the

question David Packard was asked before a committee over in Congress. They were condemning the fact that we had a Secretary of Defense's mess and they asked him about the cost of a meal there. He thought for a few moments and said, "It's probably costing me about \$250,000 a meal," because he was giving up all of his dividends and all the appreciation. During that period of time the appreciation and dividends in Hewlett-Packard stock was \$38 million. In addition to that, he sold \$110 million of other stock and paid his capital gains, which were over \$37 million. When you divide that up by the number of lunches he had, those lunches in the Secretary of Defense's mess, just in the way of losses in revenue for the Government it cost him around \$250,000 a meal. I think that is a pretty good example of why you have to be careful when you start getting people into those jobs in Defense. When you ask me why I didn't bring somebody aboard for six months or three months, the answer is you just couldn't get somebody to come over there and give up as much as he had to, knowing that he was just going to serve such a short time. Knowing the change was so close, I felt it was better to let the new Secretary do it.

Goldberg: It wouldn't have been bad if they'd been gourmet meals, would it?

Matloff: In your dealings with the Joint Chiefs of Staff and with the Chairman, how close were you with the successive chairmen? You had General Wheeler, and then Admiral Moorer.

Laird: I asked Gen. Wheeler to stay an additional year and had to go to Congress to get it approved. I got a special bill through the Congress.

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I was very close to both Wheeler and Moorer. I don't know how much closer a Secretary of Defense could be. They were with me an hour or two every day.

Matloff: Did you prefer dealing with the Chairman, rather than with the JCS as a corporate body?

Laird: Yes. I met with each service chief. I met with them together once a week and separately once a week. I met with them as a corporate body once a week. I appointed all of them during the period of time I was there, but some of the terms had not run out when I first came in.

Matloff: Did you ever have any problems in getting information either from the Joint Chiefs of Staff or the military services?

Laird: No.

Matloff: How did you persuade the JCS with reference to Vietnamization? Did you have any problem getting them to go along with that?

Laird: Yes, I had problems with it.

Matloff: How did you manage to persuade them?

Laird: I always had General Abrams, who would support me from the field. He understood what was going on in the United States; he was a can-do person. I had known him and had quite a few back-channel dealings with him when I couldn't get the Chiefs to go along. I'd had a few problems now and then with Westy [Westmoreland] but Abrams and Freddy Weyand were really can-do people.

Goldberg: They were both out there.

Laird: Yes, and they understood what the problem was back here.

Matloff: You mentioned the all-volunteer force. Did you have any problems with the military chiefs in connection with making the all-volunteer force work?

Laird: Yes, I just had to tell them that that was what we were going to do.

Matloff: How did you make use of the service secretaries? How did you see their role?

Laird: I felt they were my eyes and ears within the services. They were my managers, and they all knew that they were appointed by me.

Matloff: One of the secretaries in the McNamara period referred to himself as a group vice president. That was how he viewed his position. Did you see their role that way?

Laird: I felt that they were there to represent me and to run their services the best possible way and to work within their services. I had good service secretaries.

Goldberg: Do you think that their stature was enhanced during this period, that the services valued them more highly than they had in the past, that they had more influence?

Laird: I think it was, and certainly the Congress felt that they had more influence. Right now over there some of the service secretaries are having a little problem. I talked to a service secretary the other day who hadn't seen the Secretary of Defense to have a private visit with him for six weeks.

Goldberg: Well, he's not around.

Laird: No, but he hadn't seen him.

Goldberg: But if he's over in Europe or Asia, it's pretty hard to see him unless you go out there. That is the problem.

Matloff: How about relations with the State Department? What were your relations with Secretary of State William Rogers?

Laird: Very good.

Matloff: Did your views on national security policy differ in any way from his?

Laird: Yes, they differed. We had some very bitter arguments. I lost on some, and I won on some. I lost on the Cambodian bombing. I took the position that we should bomb the sanctuaries in Cambodia, and I recommended it, but I didn't think that we should keep it secret. I thought that we could get public support for going in and hitting those sanctuaries, because they were only staging areas for the North Vietnamese. They were occupied territory. I felt that I could get support for it because we were trying to withdraw troops and minimize American casualties as much as we could, and I felt that I could defend that publicly. The Secretary of State and Kissinger argued that we had to keep it secret. The President came down on their side and not mine. I told them that you couldn't have ten thousand people involved and keep it secret. So when the story broke in The New York Times that we were bombing Cambodia even the President thought I had leaked it, in order to justify the position I had taken in the Security Council. He later found out that I had not, but I still think that I was right, and that the secret bombing in Cambodia was a bad political mistake because it built up distrust for Nixon in the eyes of a lot of young people. I could see the demonstrations starting. I still feel

that my position was right on that. I can go through many different changes that took place where I got overruled, but I always had a chance. You've got to give Nixon credit; he'd always listen to you.

**Matloff:** About your relations with the President, how often did you see him?

**Laird:** I could talk to him any time, night or day. Sometimes I didn't like to talk to him too much at night. I had no problems.

**Matloff:** Did you have to clear with the Assistant for National Security Affairs, Mr. Kissinger?

**Laird:** No. I could call him anytime.

**Matloff:** Did he ever consult with you on other than defense issues?

**Laird:** Yes, I got involved with things like revenue sharing and the welfare program. I went up to Camp David when he was having domestic meetings and got involved in some of those things.

**Matloff:** How did you handle Pentagon contacts with the White House? Did you have any procedure that you laid down?

**Laird:** I insisted that in every contact that was made by the White House, if it was a civilian whom they were contacting, they had to let Carl Wallace know.

**Matloff:** You designated somebody in the OSD?

**Laird:** Yes, my special assistant. If it was a military matter, they had to contact Bob Pursely or Dan Murphy, my military assistants.

**Matloff:** What was the reason for this?

Laird: At first there were a lot of people calling up saying that the White House wants you to do this and wants you to do that. I just couldn't stand that and so I had the President sign a special directive, which I wrote, saying that this procedure would be followed. Even when contacts were made, such as by Al Haig or somebody over there, those were always reported to me. When Kissinger made a few calls to the Chairman, the Chairman would report those calls to me. I had no problem, and I think Tom Moorer will tell you that there was never a lack of confidence in that system. There was a problem that they got into over some people working for the Joint Chiefs over in the White House, but that was an entirely different situation. Those people were working for the National Security Council and they were making some reports to the Chairman, but that was a little bit different.

Matloff: How did you deal with the Nixon/Kissinger combination when you differed with them on issues—for example, on the pace of Vietnamization? When you found yourself in somewhat of an adversarial role, how did you handle that problem?

Laird: I usually handled it through my friends in Congress. It's kind of like Ehrlichman and some of those men over there. I would not take a call from Ehrlichman or Haldeman. They had to talk to Carl Wallace; I would not accept a call. The only person I myself talked to was Henry or the President. I had to set up that rule. Ehrlichman was making calls to Carl Wallace, saying, "The President has decided that we'll get rid of Fort DeRussy and give it to the State of Hawaii." Carl would

bring this to my attention. All of a sudden an order came over from Nixon, assigning Fort DeRussy to the State of Hawaii. I wasn't for that, because I had plans to build a recreational facility there for the Department of Defense. We built a hotel there, but in order to get that order set aside, I had to get some language written into the authorization bill. Confidentially, I thought I could take care of Ehrlichman. I knew that he'd gotten the President to sign this darn thing, and the President, I am sure, wasn't fully advised as to what he was doing. So I got the language and got Eddy Hebert and Les Arends to put that language in the authorization bill, which prohibited the transfer of Fort DeRussy. I can give you lots of examples of that. There was nothing wrong with that; I just thought my friends could help me on things like that.

Goldberg: But this is not the kind of thing we're going to find in the record, is it?

Laird: You might find that order in there.

Goldberg: But not the explanation, which is what we're looking for, and which is why we're here. We can only get it from you, if you'll pardon my saying so, from the horse's mouth.

Laird: Carl Wallace, if he was still alive, could give you lots of examples. He was a great fellow.

Goldberg: Yes, I remember him.

Matloff: Did the fact that Kissinger was really serving as de facto Secretary of State complicate your relationships in dealing with the President?

Laird: I think that was a problem for the State Department, but I didn't have that problem. I got along very well with Henry. He probably thought that I was a little devious on some occasions, but I understood that he was, too, and so we got along pretty well. I'd known Henry longer than anybody else. He had contributed to a book that I edited back in 1962 on conservative papers, and then I did the Republican papers by Doubleday in 1964 and Henry was a part of that, too. So I had known him for some time and I could play that game a little bit, too.

Matloff: Did you encounter any problems in dealing with Congress? You had a great advantage, of course, knowing how the system worked.

Laird: I thought that I got along very well with the Congress. I didn't have any problems with it. I certainly hated to see Senator Russell pass away. That was a great loss to me. Senator Stennis was helpful to me—even Ellender, you know. They all thought that he [Ellender] was an anti-Defense sort, but not as far as I was concerned. I had been on a lot of conference committees with them over the years and I had gotten to know them, and felt that I always had support if I ever needed it, like in the ABM matter. We always did our own lobbying. I didn't want the White House to get involved. I just didn't want them to go up there working on the ABM or SALT. I wanted to do it in our department, and I wanted our legislative people to have the responsibility. I didn't want anybody in the White House interfering with the legislative process. I kept them out of it. I wouldn't let Bryce Harlow, my friend, into it. I said, "You keep out of Defense." I had good people in Defense, like Dick Capen, Rady Johnson, Jack Stempler, people that I had worked with over a long period

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of time, and I didn't want anybody in the White House advocating or opposing anything that had to do with the Department of Defense, so I kept them out of there. I think that is important, to call the shots in the Congress. I sat over there in that little formal office of the Vice President the day that we were having the ABM vote. I knew that the vote was close. Dick Capen was there with me. He was the man we had first set up going public on the POW issue. Now he is the publisher and president of the Miami Herald. I was sitting there and having Dick call out Senators, while the vote was going on. We lost the vote and I had to get a motion to reconsider. So I got Margaret Smith in there and said, "Margaret, we've had a lot of good times together. I've got to get you to go in there and move to reconsider this thing. We cannot let this ABM thing go down the drain or we're not going to have any chance for a SALT agreement or arms control. There must be something I can do for you." She gave me something I could do for her, and I did it. She went in and moved that day, and we won by one vote. If I had had the White House working on that, we would have lost it, for sure.

Matloff: I think the record reflects that no major DoD requests in the budget field were turned down during your term.

Laird: I didn't lose one. I gave them a few figures once in a while, where they could make a cut here and there. You always have to give them a few things. It's not a one-way street. Like this call from Harold Brown just now—Sam Nunn and John Warner have asked us to draw up a consensus paper on the Defense budget and strategic planning for the next

five years. This group that we are working with has Bud McFarlane, Cy Vance, Brent Scowcroft, Schlesinger, Harold Brown, and myself. In order to get Cy Vance to go with you on SDI, since he was absolutely opposed to it when it first started, you have to be able to work with him and make some concessions to his point of view on a few things. If you are going to develop a consensus position, and that's what the Congress always has to do, you have to be willing to give a few things. I always gave them a few things. I don't want to say that I hard-lined them on everything. I would say, this is something you shouldn't touch, but this is something you can do this on, and they respect you more for doing that.

Goldberg: To get back to Kissinger, what were the main issues that you had with him?

Laird: The biggest issues I had with him were when he signed off a couple of times on lower budget guidance than I thought that we should have. So I had to appeal a paper that had been signed off by the National Security Council. He signed off against the B-1 bomber. He came out against that and said that was the President's position, and signed it "The President had decided." But it was signed by Kissinger. So I had to appeal. I sent Dave Packard over on the B-1 bomber when they knocked that out. As a matter of fact, Cap was in the OMB at the time knocking it out. Schlesinger was there and also Cap, and they all ganged up on me and wanted to knock out the B-1 bomber. I sent Dave over to the meeting and he went over there prepared to resign, but we got it restored. I thought the B-1 bomber was very important at that time because we were using B-52s heavily

in a lot of sorties, and I felt that we had to have a follow-on bomber. The B-1 was then stopped by Carter, and we lost about four years. I am not saying that I would start the B-1 in 1981. I think that the B-1 was the right bomber for 1970 and 1971. But at that time that was the only thing available for us and Dave and I felt that it was absolutely essential. We got the President to change his position. On several occasions Kissinger did not go along with me on troop reductions. The State Department was never for troop reductions. They were tougher than anybody else. Bill Rogers wasn't. Every time I gave the senior review group over there a paper that the State Department was on, I kept calling Bill and he tried to be helpful. Kissinger and I had our differences. I had great support in the Congress.

Matloff: We spoke last time about threat perceptions that you had as a member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee. Did they change in any way when you became Secretary of Defense, or did you have the same basic view of the threat?

Laird: I had the same basic view. I got in some trouble with some members of the administration on that. The first year I said, when I went up to testify, that I thought the Soviet Union was going for a first-strike capability. I didn't say it had one, but that it was going for it. All hell broke loose at the State Department. Kissinger wouldn't support me on that, and neither would State. I felt that with the Soviet developments during that time--their missile program, going for those big weapons, and so forth--that they were first-strike weapons. The Washington Post gave

me a couple of bad editorials and that's how I got that big missile head in the cartoons, that I was overstating the Soviet threat.

**Goldberg:** Were there any differences within Defense on this?

**Laird:** Not in Defense. They supported me completely. We footnoted the National Intelligence Reports during that period, and I made sure that those footnotes were all reviewed and written by Bill Baroody. If you look at those National Intelligence estimates at that time, you will notice our footnotes. I think that those footnotes have turned out to be right. The trouble was, I had been listening in the Defense committee for so long to the CIA, and even to Allen Dulles, telling us that the Soviets were going to have to devote less and less to defense because there was going to be tremendous pressure within the country for consumer goods. He was telling us that back in 1954 when they were down at about 8.5% of their gross national product. They went up to about 14 or 15% of their gross national product and they can devote about as much as they want to defense.

**Goldberg:** Did you have much confidence in all these numbers that you were listening to on that subject?

**Laird:** No.

**Matloff:** Leading from threat perception to strategic planning, did you favor the Nixon Doctrine, the cutback from 2 1/2 to 1 1/2 wars?

**Laird:** Right, we wrote it. That came out of Bill Baroody's little office over there. We sold that baby because when we looked at our capabilities we couldn't go along with the idea that we could fight 2 1/2

wars. We tried to get into the strategy of realistic terms. You have to base it on what you have. The three pillars came right out of our shop—partnership, strength, and the willingness to negotiate—the three pillars of the Nixon Doctrine. I've got that first paper here someplace. You've probably got it, too.

Matloff: How intimately were you involved in the elements of strategic nuclear policy? This was a period when you were speaking about the strategy of realistic deterrence. Were you involved personally in that?

Laird: Yes, but the people that I relied on most in that particular area at that particular time were Johnny Foster and Gardiner Tucker. Gardiner at that time was heading up the Systems Analysis group.

Matloff: What did you have in mind by realistic deterrence? How did it differ from, say, what McNamara might have wanted? or from what anybody who preceded you might have wanted?

Laird: It did have to do with the flexible response theory, there's no question about that. But it also recognized the realism of dealing with the budgetary problems that we had, and tried to get the best deterrent capability for our country, recognizing the resources that were available at the time. That was why I felt that going forward with the Trident, the B-1, and the cruise missile programs, both in the Air Force and the Navy, were so important. The Air Force and the Navy, contrary to what some people may tell you, did not want to go forward with the cruise. I made the Navy put money in their budget for the cruise. I made the Air Force put money in their budget. They didn't come with that money in their budgets.

Goldberg: So this was an instance when you really overruled them?

Laird: Sure, we had to. For example, the Navy didn't want the Trident submarine. The Navy has never been too crazy about strategic weapons. I had a lot of problems with the Trident. I had Rickover, who wanted only 14 missiles; I went to 24. The reason I went to 24 was that I was confident during the period of this century that we would be able to hide those submarines. I did not foresee the possibility that we couldn't hide them during this period. I felt that you need only 10 more people on a 24-missile submarine than you have on a 16-missile submarine, and you have to look at the period of time, the cost effectiveness of the manpower situation. You get many more missiles and you have to have two crews for each of those submarines. I got into that whole thing with Rickover. He came down, and the Navy appealed it, but I made the decision that this was the way it was going to be. I went up and sold the 10-boat program to the Congress, and they approved the whole idea of the 10-boat program. Right now, even today, the Navy is not much on the Trident. As a matter of fact, the authorization bill that was passed in the House the other day does not have a Trident in it. I had to go up to see Joe McDade and to see my friends on the Democratic side to get that Trident in the appropriation bill the other day. It's in there, but it isn't in the authorization bill.

Goldberg: What was the basis for the Navy's opposition?

Laird: They have never been interested in strategic forces. They do not believe that they should be involved in the nuclear force, as far as the strategic weapons are concerned. They consider themselves strictly a

conventional war-fighting machine. They were not crazy about the Polaris. I handled the Polaris amendments in the Congress for Red Raborn when he had that place in the Munitions Building on Constitution Avenue. One of the few times that Eisenhower called me up for a private breakfast was when he asked me not to put in the amendment to accelerate the Polaris program. I went ahead and put it in and we carried it in the House in 1956. I'll tell you, it was very handy for Kennedy to have that at the time of the Cuban missile crisis—that we accelerated the Polaris program. The Polaris submarine is probably one of the strongest strategic deterrents that we have. I've always been strongly in favor of that submarine program.

Goldberg: But you were making the different distinction between the 14- or 16-missile submarine and the 24 that you wanted.

Laird: That's a different problem.

Goldberg: What was the Navy opposition on that? Why were they opposed to 24?

Laird: They wanted a bigger Navy—more people. They weren't necessarily for more submarines. They are always for more attack submarines, but they've never been for the strategic missile-carrying submarine.

Goldberg: But in order to get the same number of missiles they would have had to have more submarines, and therefore more people.

Laird: The people issue got involved.

Matloff: How did you stand on this question of strategic sufficiency, parity with the Russians in the strategic fields—should it be superiority, sufficiency, or what? Did you go along with the notion of strategic sufficiency? This is the term that was used during that period.

Laird: I went along with it, but in my testimony I always felt that until we could get agreements, we should be for a superior force. I thought that that should be the Defense Department's position. We might have to compromise somewhat, based on budgetary concerns.

Matloff: How did you stand on the problem that had come up during the previous administration of counterforce vs. counter-city doctrine? Do you have any position on that?

Laird: I felt that as far as that question was concerned, the less you talked about it the better off you were. I tell you, that frightens people badly and it causes them to shy away from the whole defense program. It's all right to develop your papers and discuss it in Executive Session and the Congress, but you shouldn't be out frightening people on that and making people the targets all over. The Russians understand what the situation is, and that's the important thing.

Goldberg: As for the substance of that particular problem, aside from not wanting to make it a public issue, what was your position on that?

Laird: You would probably have to target both.

Goldberg: And did, in fact.

Laird: Yes.

Matloff: How about on the questions of limited war and counterinsurgency planning, did you see a place for those as well as worrying about the nuclear strategic problem?

Laird: We did, but in that particular period, I have to be very frank with you, my major concern had to be winding down our involvement in

Vietnam and to try to see that we didn't get into that kind of situation again. Most of my time in the Pentagon was taken up with Vietnam.

Goldberg: That was true of Clifford, too, wasn't it?

Laird: Yes, but he wasn't there very long.

Goldberg: I know, but the short time he was there, that was where he put his focus.

Laird: Sure. And Clifford had something going there. If Johnson hadn't called him off, at the time of the campaign in October 1968—he will tell you he thought that was one of the worst tricks ever pulled on him when I gave that press statement, because he had to go on that Meet the Press show, and it was pretty tough for him.

Goldberg: That was the biggest tactical error Johnson made politically, probably. Laird: Yes, I think it was. I see Hubert's wife quite often. We are on a board together out in Minneapolis, and we talk about it somewhat. She's a very happy lady, though; she has remarried.

Matloff: On the question of strategy, and on the business of announcing the Cambodian bombing, did you, on the whole, go along with the Nixon strategy in the war in Vietnam?

Laird: I was certainly for using all of the power that we possibly could, as far as air and naval power were concerned, in order to meet the targets on the withdrawal of ground forces in Vietnam. So I advocated, contrary

to what some people tell you, the use of bombing in Cambodia, and the early mining of the harbors in the North. Hersh and the Englishman Shawcross in their books said that I opposed those things. I did not oppose them. I initiated the orders to carry on those particular missions. They get confused the fact that I fought the way it was done, the secrecy of it. I would not sign the order to change the coordinates. I knew the order was going out, but I said, "If that's going out, the President's going to have to sign that, I will not sign it."

Goldberg: Who blocked you on the earlier mining?

Laird: That was blocked over at State in the National Security Council. Another thing, there was never a disagreement between what Abrams wanted, as far as air power is concerned, and what he got. He got everything he asked for.

Matloff: On the business of interservice competition, how serious a problem was it for you, speaking in general, not just on Vietnam? Did you have to do something to mitigate the competition?

Laird: I didn't find that a serious problem. I think a certain amount of competition between the services is very good. It just has to be controlled. That is why I think those weekly luncheons with the three service secretaries are an absolute must, to bring them together and discuss their problems together. It takes maybe an hour and a half to do it, but it pays great dividends, so that they understand each other's problems. You don't have to do much talking, let them do the talking.

Goldberg: But they're not in on everything within the services.

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Laird: In many cases they are not; that's why in many cases you must meet with them and their chiefs. I did that, too. Everybody thought that I was spending a lot of time on something we didn't have to do, but just knowing that we had that meeting was important. Sometimes it would only be 15 minutes, sometimes an hour and a half—but it's important to have that access. Those chiefs always knew they could walk in my door. They would come storming in there many times, bitching about something. It was very good to have that.

Goldberg: You had the advantage of a collegial experience in Congress, which most people who come to that office don't have.

Laird: I think that's helpful.

Matloff: We spoke about the budget. Were you satisfied with Defense's share of the federal budget during the period of your tenure as Secretary of Defense?

Laird: I always took a few appeals. I don't think that I was ever completely satisfied with what I got.

Matloff: You had to take a substantial cut in conventional forces.

Laird: Yes, I understood what the problem was in the administration, and within the Congress. I don't think that I got everything that I wanted, but I think that we were dealt with fairly by the Congress and by the President. I would take Bob Moot over to meet with the President, and I think a lot of Secretaries wouldn't take their comptroller with them. We'd meet over in that little office over at the Old Executive Office Building, and particularly in the last part of the budget crunch. We didn't get everything we wanted.

Matloff: Congress was determined to cut in this period.

Laird: Yes, were they ever. But I always wanted to have a little bit I could give them, too.

Matloff: In connection with selling Vietnamization to the Chiefs, I think you had in mind that this would be one way of preserving the armed forces after the war was over.

Laird: That's the thing I kept telling them all the time, "You've got to look at the thing not on the basis of this year or next year, but of where we're going to be ten years from now. This is not the most important thing that we have. We've got Europe, the Japanese problem, all these other problems. If we're going to face up to those problems in the long run, we have to accommodate the special situation over here. In the long run you're not going to be doing your military service any good if you hardline this thing on me now."

Goldberg: Getting them to look ten years ahead, you did something quite remarkable, because they don't generally do that.

Laird: They don't, and they would have been down the drain if they had not have been able to accommodate me on this matter.

Matloff: Did you have in mind something fairly concrete as to what you thought the shape of those forces would and should be?

Laird: Sure. That's when we got into the whole idea of total force. Total force was not a concept that I developed just for the forces of the United States—Army, Navy, Marines, Reserve, National Guard—but it also applied to our allies, and their forces. I went to Japan—the first Secretary of Defense to do so—and I laid it on the line. They were only

spending 5/10 of 1% of their gross national product. People said, "You can't go to Japan; you can't talk to them about this. There will be demonstrations against you." I went, and started that joint Japanese-American defense planning to try to get them involved with the total force concept, at least in the areas of ASW and air defense. So the total force concept was something much broader than just the planning within the United States forces.

Matloff: I think you were also calling attention that you wanted smaller, more mobile, and more efficient forces.

Laird: Right. That's an interesting thing. [Points to picture.] See that group over there, those are the uniforms of our thirteen colonies. That's the award that I got last year, the Harry S. Truman award, for developing the total force concept and bringing in the Reserve and the National Guard. In the debate on the floor of the House just two weeks ago the House of Representatives voted that the governors better watch it--this idea of their passing a resolution at the governors' conference that they were going to have complete control over the National Guard. Sonny Montgomery and Dickinson and the rest of them got up there and passed an amendment and spanked the governors over there. You can't have a total force concept, you can't give the National Guard modern tanks and airplanes, if they're not going to be a part of your total force planning.

Goldberg: For emergency.

Laird: Yes. But I really think that total force concept that was developed during that period was a very important thing. It is something we are living with now.

Goldberg: It certainly enhanced the position of both the Reserve and the National Guard. There's no question of that.

Laird: Look at this award, it's kind of a special thing. I did not realize the different uniforms.

Goldberg: They don't have the Continental uniform; that would make 14.

Laird: But this is the National Guard and Reserve, individually.

Matloff: I think that I am going to skip over the weaponry and the manpower allocations.

Laird: I can give you a lot of that material; I can't believe you can't get those planning papers.

Goldberg: We do have a lot of planning papers, but what we really want is your views on them.

Laird: What I'd like you to get are those daily papers. Bob Pursely wrote a daily paper for me.

Goldberg: They ought to be in your papers over at the Forrestal Building.

Laird: Are you sure they're over in Forrestal?

Goldberg: The last I knew, they were. If you want me to find out and tell you positively, I can do that. You'll know exactly where they are, and I'll find out what's there.

Matloff: We've reached a point where we can talk about area problems, like NATO and Vietnam.

Laird: Pursely was a very unusual man. Did you know him?

Goldberg: Yes, I met him once, and he had his problems after he left your office.

Laird: He's really quite a man. There was continuity in the Secretary's office from Bob Pursely on the L&L side. He was with McNamara, with Clifford, and with me. He was a very unusual person, probably the smartest military officer, most intelligent, and thorough. He worked so hard.

Goldberg: He had his problems with the Air Force after you left, didn't he?

Laird: I promoted him. I think he really decided to leave. Jock Whitney offered him a fancy job as his investment counselor, and Pursely made a couple of million dollars in about two years. Now he is chairman of the board of U.S. Life Insurance Co., in Houston, Texas.

Goldberg: But you know, the story in Air Force and elsewhere at the time was that you had sort of forced him on the Air Force in that Japan job, and that they didn't like it, and he wasn't going to get anywhere after that.

Laird: That might be true.

Goldberg: This was true of so many officers who worked in OSD, or even among JCS people. Some of them never got anywhere.

Laird: It's hard to get anyplace. It's kind of like Dan Murphy.

Goldberg: He didn't do so badly, though.

Laird: I signed the orders to put him in the Sixth Fleet before I left. Noel Gayler would never have gone any place, either, or Bennett. I tried to get all their orders cut before I left.

Goldberg: That's the only way to do it.

Laird: I went to Murphy's ceremony, when he took over command of the Sixth Fleet. I was over in the White House then, as domestic counselor, but I still was following those things a little bit, because I didn't

want anybody to screw me up on those changes. I was able to follow them because I was counselor to the President for domestic affairs.

Goldberg: In connection with the same thing, there were some examples before you, and I'm sure after, too, where people who served as military assistants to the Secretaries got shafted completely after going back to the service. One such was a Marine named Carey Randall, who was the military assistant to Wilson and McElroy, and the Marines wouldn't have him. I think that it was Wilson who promoted him to Brigadier General to the great reluctance of the Marines. After he finished his tour in OSD he was through. The Marines were tired of him.

Laird: That was like Bud Zumwalt. He was a great fellow, I liked him. I knew him before, when he was commander, and then a captain, working for Paul Nitze. Paul would come over to testify before a committee and Bud got blamed for the haircut and beard matter in the Navy.

Goldberg: And the pants, too?

Laird: Yes, and the thing about it is that Tom Moorer signed that. I always give Tom the needle about that, because that ALNAV was not signed by Bud Zumwalt; it was signed in the last part of Tom's term. But old Bud always got hell for it. Then Bud decided that he was going to run for U.S. Senator, in Virginia. I told him that he was crazy, running against Harry Byrd. I said, "That's just a crazy thing you're doing, you're not going to get any place." Bud had a radio spot that he was "the first CNO to support the appointment of a woman admiral." Bud was out campaigning and I found out he was in Richmond. I sent him a telegram: "Bud, I'll keep my mouth shut about this, but you'll remember I had to send back two

admiral's lists to you, and I wrote across them there are no more admirals until we have a woman.' It's all right for you to take credit in this campaign and I can assure you I will keep my mouth shut." Just in fun, you see. But Bud kept sending those lists up and I wrote across them, because I put out the order that we were going to have a woman in every branch of the service. We never had one. Did you ever see the picture out there with all those ladies? I've got to show it to you, because Jeannie Holm says that they are the pictures of the women that I advanced during my tour of the Pentagon. I had them all to lunch the week before I left the Pentagon.

Goldberg: Did you appoint Zumwalt?

Laird: Yes.

Goldberg: Was that partly on Nitze's recommendation?

Laird: Paul had a lot to do with it. I had a lot of respect for Paul, and he was very high on Zumwalt. I wanted Paul to be head of ISA, and I had it all arranged for him to have that job and he agreed to do it. Then I had a problem with the Senate committee, with Goldwater, who said that he would never go for Paul Nitze and found him personally obnoxious. I asked him why and he said, "McNamara always put him out in front during the '64 campaign and made him say that I was trigger-happy and that I was going to give everybody in the field the right to use nuclear weapons. It was all Nitze. He was lying." Barry now is quite friendly with Paul. He has changed his position on Paul.

Goldberg: He has changed his position on a lot of things.

Laird: Yes, but that's the reason I went to Nutter. Then I took Paul and said, "I'm going to bring you in on a special assignment, assistant on arms control." He was there with me all the four years I was there. He had a little office down the hall. He represented me at all the meetings and went to the arms control talks, but he was listed as a special assistant to the Secretary of Defense. So when you ask me if he influenced me, I have to say yes. He really made a strong case for Zumwalt.

Goldberg: Schlesinger tried to bring Nitze in, also, as Assistant Secretary for ISA. He couldn't make it, either, still because of Goldwater, a few years later.

Matloff: The rest of the questions are mostly of NATO, Indochina, cold war policies, and your perspectives on OSD organization and management.

Laird: How much time are you spending on this thing? You've got all the material in the world over there.

Matloff: Not really.

Goldberg: We've had nine hours with McNamara and we're not finished with him. We get something from these interviews that we can't possibly get from the documents. These are the things that help us understand and connect the documents, and give us explanations of why. The documents tell us what and how. The why has to come from the people. You've been telling us yourself how important people are in all this. The paper itself doesn't give us the whole story, and never will. That's the chief reason we have this program, and it's a major one. We spend a lot of time on it, give it a lot of attention; these interviews become major

historical sources for us. They are used in accordance with your wishes. We'll use them as much or as little as you wish. We'll give you a choice of four different options on how we use them. We will transcribe them all and send them to you. You will have an opportunity to review them and do whatever you like.