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Matloff: This is part two of the oral history interview held with Mr. Eugene M. Zuckert on October 10, 1984, at 10:00 a.m. in Washington, D.C. Participating for the OSD Historical Office are Dr. Alfred Goldberg and Dr. Maurice Matloff.

In connection with your relations with the members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, how often did you and the other Secretaries meet with the Joint Chiefs?

Zuckert: The only times that we met with the Chiefs formally were in Mr. McNamara's office, when he would call the meeting. That was not true at the beginning. I remember we had one meeting in particular in the White House when President Kennedy called the Chiefs and Service Secretaries over there--that must have been early in the spring of 1961--and we were discussing the situation in Laos. He went around the room and asked everybody, individually, what he would do. I guess that he decided that wasn't the way to get answers, so we never did that again, to my knowledge.

Matloff: Was it your sense that the role of the Joint Chiefs vis-a-vis the Secretary of Defense had changed since your previous service in the Department?

Zuckert: Yes, drastically, because, of course, we had Bradley and the big war-time people, and that made a big difference. The prestige of the Chiefs was greater because the Chiefs themselves had that prestige. I didn't talk much to McNamara about the Joint Chiefs, but I think it's fairly obvious that, until Taylor came, he found the JCS rather frustrating to deal with. I don't think that he felt that he was getting the kind of guidance that he thought he should get. That is my opinion, not his.

Matloff: Did you have many dealings with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs?

Zuckert: No, we didn't. I dealt with the Chiefs through LeMay, and I also had another channel, a military assistant who dealt with the planning people, who were ginning up the stuff for the Chief for the Joint Chiefs. That was Glenn Martin, then Bill Schick, and finally, McBride. Probably the thing that you are most interested in is whether it worked or not. It worked well with Martin because he had been down in plans and he was a respected SAC type. It worked as well as anything worked in the first year of my administration.

Goldberg: It worked in the sense that you were kept informed?

Zuckert: That's right. There were no surprises. Schick didn't have the same standing. He was not a major general but a colonel, as I remember--one of my mistakes that I never should have permitted to happen. I don't remember who the next one was; McBride was the last one. I don't remember the issue, but we had a showdown. McNamara would get positions from the Chiefs in which LeMay joined, or get a LeMay position from the Chiefs, and he asked me, "What do you think about this?" I had to say that I hadn't heard of it. So I talked to General LeMay and I said, "This is no way to run a railroad. If this is the way it's going to be, I'm going to have to comment personally on every recommendation affecting the Air Force that comes from the Chiefs. I don't think that's the way you want it." There was a big scurrying around and they decided that they would have to improve the liaison. I believe that's when they brought McBride in.

Matloff: Apropos of your difference with LeMay, you mentioned last time on the TFX the difference over the source manufacturer--did you ever find yourself in agreement with the Secretary of Defense vis-a-vis your own Chief of Staff?

Zuckert: Sure, lots of times.

Matloff: How did you handle that problem?

Zuckert: LeMay was a good soldier, and I don't remember the specific instances, but there were lots of times when we disagreed. We disagreed on matters that did not have to do with the Secretary of Defense--for instance, we disagreed on promotions, retirements, and sometimes on who should tell a general that he was going to be retired. I did that in one particular case--Frank Everest--that was a horrible experience. LeMay, for all his reputation for being as tough as he was, and basically he is tough intellectually, was a pushover for people. But really, as well as anything can work, I think our relationship on the Joint Chiefs situation worked.

Goldberg: How do you think LeMay did as Chief of Staff?

Zuckert: I think that LeMay was a mixed success. Whenever we had a crisis, McNamara would always want to know where LeMay was because McNamara knew that LeMay was operationally the best. Intellectually I don't think he had respect for him. I come out having a lot of respect for LeMay. I think that a good part of his problem lay in how he expressed himself.

Goldberg: Or his inability to express himself.

Zuckert: No, I think that he liked to say things not in a sensational, but in a somewhat dramatic, pithy fashion, in the LeMay image. For instance, on bombing back to the stone age, I really think that if you had cross-examined LeMay, you would have come out with a much more defensible position, and that is, that there is no way of getting at this situation (and I'm short-handing it, too) unless you are prepared to commit yourself to something you may not want to commit yourself to. I think that is what LeMay was trying to say.

Goldberg: Did McNamara have any trouble going along with LeMay's appointment as Chief of Staff?

Zuckert: No. I don't think that he was happy, but I think that he accepted my judgment that there was really nobody else at the time that could lead the Air Force. The principal alternative would have been Schriever, and I'm a great admirer of Schriever, who is one of my closest friends today (we celebrate his and General McKee's birthdays together next week), but I did not feel that the Air Force was ready for someone who did not have a reputation as the ideal Air Force man.

Matloff: Did you sense whether McNamara had the same respect for Thomas White and John McConnell that he had for LeMay?

Zuckert: I don't think so. White was only there for six months. I don't think that McNamara was over-impressed with Tommy, but I don't think he had any strong reaction either way.

Goldberg: Solis Horwitz told me that they liked White and would have liked to have reappointed him.

Zuckert: Sol would know, but I see where your grapevine comes from, too. I'll tell you, I was the one who made the White decision, and I think that time has borne it out. I sensed that Tommy was tired. I don't remember how long he had been Chief of Staff, but he'd been in that Pentagon one hell of a long time. This did not endear me to General White, nor Mrs. White, nor anybody else, but it was my responsibility and my judgment. I thought it was time we moved on. McNamara always took an opposite stand almost as a matter of routine, but after I talked to him and told him my reasoning, I think that's what persuaded him to go along with the LeMay appointment in July of 1961.

Matloff: Were there any problems over the McConnell appointment?

Zuckert: That was another problem. That was a Schriever thing, too. The Schriever possibility was much more involved in the McConnell appointment than it was in the LeMay appointment the first time. LeMay was appointed and then he was appointed for a short term. We really didn't have, in my book, the kind of talent that we needed for a Chief of Staff, and McConnell was the best one.

Goldberg: Was the foreshortened term McNamara's doing?

Zuckert: I think that McNamara said they would go along but they wouldn't go along for the two years. There was another thing too. LeMay had those heart attacks--at least one, in 1963, when he went out to Hawaii to recuperate. We had retired other people for similar problems.

Goldberg: He's done very well since then.

Zuckert: Yes, he's done great. He's a strong, and in many ways, a wonderful man.

Goldberg: What did you think of McNamara's actions with reference to Parrish and Richardson in '61?

Zuckert: That was the leak of the State Department.

Goldberg: Supposedly.

Zuckert: What did he do? He ordered me to fire him, didn't he?

Goldberg: Yes. Richardson was sent over to Europe and Parrish down to the Air University. It was in the spring.

Zuckert: It seemed like the first week. No, I think he was right. It's just that government by leak is a terrible thing.

Goldberg: It was a complete mistake, I think, to include Richardson. He had nothing to do with it.

Zuckert: Really? I don't. I thought at the time it was clear that he had.

Goldberg: Parrish claimed that there wasn't a leak.

Zuckert: Both of them have never particularly put my picture up on the wall for what happened.

Goldberg: They put McNamara's picture up and throw darts at it.

Matloff: I'm curious about your relations with other agencies as Secretary of the Air Force. Were there any relations, for example, with Secretary of State Rusk?

Zuckert: That was pretty much preempted by ISA.

Matloff: How about with the White House? Any direct or indirect access to the President?

Zuckert: Yes, I had a personal interview with the President about my support of the B-70. He couldn't understand why. What happened was, I brought Freddie Smith in to introduce him as Vice Chief, and he asked if I'd stay after he met Smith. Then he told me that he was very unhappy about my support of the B-70. What I told him was really the basis of that article I wrote in Foreign Affairs about the role of the Service Secretary, the man in the middle. He may not have been convinced, but he kind of shrugged and stood for it.

Matloff: What was your sense in that interview of the President's conception of the Service Secretary's role?

Zuckert: The President was a political animal and he felt that I was part of the administration and I ought to support the administration. Probably he felt that I either ought to support the administration or get out.

Goldberg: What happened to Smith, who lasted one year?

Zuckert: That was one appointment I shoved down LeMay's throat. I had worked with Freddie Smith since the days when we put in the programming office, in 1946-47, or a little later. I had a great deal of admiration for him, but the rigidity of his performance bothered me. He became involved in some controversial things--for instance the F-5, if I remember. I didn't think that he handled it the way a Vice Chief should. I had made LeMay take him, because I felt that

we needed a balance to the SAC dominance in headquarters. When LeMay came to me and said, "This thing isn't working," I could understand that it wasn't working. The problem became what could we do about General Smith? We offered him NORAD, if I remember. He wouldn't take it and he retired. It was an awkward, unhappy thing to part company with someone for whom you had the greatest intellectual respect.

Goldberg: It's interesting that LeMay doesn't even mention him in his book.

Zuckert: He doesn't mention me in his book. The LeMay claque didn't love me, and LeMay wasn't too hard to persuade on these things. He tolerated our relationship, because he had to. He was a good soldier. I don't hold it against a man for disagreeing with me. The third floor felt that I was too much under control of the Air Force and the Air Force felt I was too much under McNamara's control. After a while, my attitude was "the hell with it." You just call them the way you see them.

Goldberg: You couldn't win; it was an impossible situation.

Zuckert: No, you couldn't win.

Matloff: In going to the White House, did you go directly or did you work through the National Security Adviser? Did you clear it with the Secretary of Defense?

Zuckert: I always cleared it with the Secretary of Defense. For instance, that paper I wrote on the space program, early in the administration--I communicated directly with the President but I cleared it with McNamara.

Matloff: Did you have any similar dealings with President Johnson? Any occasion that you had to speak with him about initiatives?

Zuckert: No, I had more dealings with Johnson when he was Vice-President.

Matloff: You never had a feeling of what Johnson's attitude was on the role of the Service Secretary?

Zuckert: I don't think Johnson thought that way. I think he looked at all as if they were just characters in a play and he wanted to be sure that he had complete control over everybody.

Matloff: How about relations with Congress, obviously you had to testify on a number of these controversial issues. How did you handle the differences with the Secretary of Defense, for example, when you had to present the Air Force position? How much leeway did you have?

Zuckert: Complete leeway as long as I stated the administration position. If I were asked my personal opinion, I could give it.

Matloff: Even to problems with LeMay, as, for example, the differences over the TFX? He was called in also to testify.

Zuckert: He was called in first. I had a great relationship with Senator McClellan; it was one of the high points of my career. He lived in the Fairfax Hotel, and I went down one Sunday night to try to persuade him not to call LeMay before I testified because by that time I was behind by about 35 to nothing, since they had started out getting a couple of majors at Wright Field to testify on the source selection. I thought it could be highly deleterious to the relationship between

the Secretary and the military to have LeMay go up there first. I wanted my chance to go. Actually, it was a great benefit to me to go up last, because I had the opportunity to know what everybody else had said. Sol Horwitz and I worked very closely on this, and I took a lot of my cues from Sol. He had a great wisdom in this kind of problem. The TFX affair was my finest hour.

Matloff: In your discussion with Kennedy at the time the B-70 issue was very hot--did he say anything about your having testified on behalf of it?

Zuckert: Yes, he was concerned about the whole thing and the fact that I didn't stop the Air Force from going up on the Hill and lobbying.

Matloff: Let me ask your perceptions of the Soviet threat. Did your views change in any way as a result of your experience in the office of the Secretary of the Air Force?

Zuckert: No. I came away with the feeling that the Air Force concerns were justified. I remember one meeting that LeMay and I had with McCone, where we presented the Air Force view of the intelligence to him, and LeMay and I were really united on this. I haven't seen any reason to change my mind materially on the fact that the Russians were seeking to gain not parity, but superiority, so that I feel, with some exaggeration, that the Air Force position was justified.

Goldberg: How about the missile gap?

Zuckert: We found that out pretty early. That was in '61. I'm talking about a later period.

Goldberg: The Air Force was largely responsible for that, too--not to mention the bomber gap before that.

Matloff: Did you have any connection at all with this question of the missile gap, either the rise of the notion that there was a gap, or its demise? This spills over to your early period.

Zuckert: No, but I remember that a lot of our budget requests McNamara sat on because of this missile gap business. I think one of my mistakes was my acceptance of the Air Force wish-list in early '61. One of the problems I had--it was both an asset and a liability--was that I knew these people from '47, and they were my friends. I trusted them and had various opinions of those whose judgment I trusted and I didn't take into sufficient account or have the machinery to put up the other side. Time is a great factor, too; you are under pressure to get on with it. McNamara may have been able to do it. I never saw anybody who could get into the guts of a situation the way he could, in as short a time.

Goldberg: He also had the self-assurance that most people don't have.

Zuckert: It's amazing though. He didn't have the experience; he hadn't been in it since he'd been at Wright Field in 1945, but he just has that kind of analytical ability. You can't fault it.

Goldberg: It also may have been an asset for him not to have been there. You had been, were friends with these people, and were not only partisan but it was also difficult for you as a civilian to take positions on a lot of technical matters, especially weapons

matters, where you didn't have the background, knowledge, or the confidence that you had on other issues.

Zuckert: The other thing was--I've always described the job as being like a goalie for a bad hockey team that always had two men in the penalty box--you were getting things shot at you from all sides; you didn't have the murder-board kind of team to review what the staff was coming up with. You had to accept a lot of it on faith. That's wrong, but the pressures were such that that's what happened.

Goldberg: McNamara did have the apparatus eventually.

Zuckert: He had the built-in cynicism, too. He also had a mission, and what McNamara was really doing was carrying out his mission by being against things. The only things you could get through him were the matters on which you had sufficiently strong arguments. I didn't get good support from the military. They didn't understand that we were in a different league, that these were debates that you had to win by being good advocates.

Goldberg: How about by the time you left, did they understand that?

Zuckert: Yes, it was a lot different. After eleven months, I was pretty discouraged with my success. I said, "We've got to do something, get our best brains together and figure out what the hell we're doing wrong here." So I had a meeting down at Homestead, with Bart Leach, Dick Yutkin, Bob Dickson, and Glenn Martin, and we tried to figure out what was happening to us. We came to a better understanding of the need for quantifying. You can't just state, "Our experts say

that there's a military requirement for this or that." That was the start of our attempt to regroup and get back in the ball game and do it McNamara's way.

Goldberg: I presume that the other services reached the same conclusion sooner or later.

Zuckert: Probably. I think that John Connally was probably more sagacious than we were. He went along with McNamara on a lot of things that I never would have expected the Navy to agree with, and he must have persuaded them that this was the way to build strength--to go along. When John Connally left, LeMay decided that one way to get him and me apart was to have me become Secretary of the Navy. I had written something in which I had advocated rotating the service secretaries to diminish parochialism. So McNamara talked to the President and they came to me and asked me to become Secretary of the Navy. I was shocked, and I went through the tortures of the damned for about two weeks. Connally and his wife, on his last day here, came over to my house and tried to talk me into this thing. I finally decided that I just couldn't do it emotionally.

Goldberg: If you had taken it, you would have suffered the tortures of the damned.

Zuckert: Nobody would have trusted me either way. I would have been Benedict Arnold to both sides. So I turned it down, and McNamara told me that the President was very upset. He said that he couldn't understand anybody turning down the chance to be Secretary of the Navy.

Goldberg: Like Roosevelt.

Matloff: Regarding strategic planning during this period--1961-65--what role, if any, did you as Secretary of the Air Force play? Were you drawn in on the debate, for example, of counter-force/counter-city?

Zuckert: Yes. I think that I was responsible for bringing Glenn Kent to McNamara's attention. He was our best doctrinaire. It's partly the way I work, but if I had really wanted to master that counter-force/counter-value stuff, I should have gone someplace and studied it for a month. As a result, I got it in pieces and installments and never really mastered it to the extent that I think I should have to make me a good advocate. That was really the name of the game in the Pentagon, just as it is in arms control debates today--you tell me who the fellow is and I can tell you what he's going to say. I wasn't really the master of it; and on reflection, you cannot be an effective player in the game unless you are a good advocate. I knew what the elements were. I'm not saying that I was ignorant. But I hadn't reflected enough on these major issues to be an effective player in the game.

Matloff: How influential was the Air Force in strategic planning in the McNamara era?

Zuckert: We were generally on opposite sides, but, as I remember, much of what Glenn Kent was talking about became doctrine. We had problems on such things as the safeguards and command and control. I listened to my people and took their line, that the McNamara requirements would

complicate the problem of weapons delivery and so on. Our victory record was not exactly overwhelming, particularly in the first two years. It wasn't because we were so dumb and they were so bright. In my opinion, on the subject of airlift versus sealift, for example, all they did was hold up the development of airlift for two years by setting up this strawman of sealift versus airlift. McNamara was the boss and he could call the shots, but he wasn't always right. Those analysts they had had wet fingers which they would hold up to see where the wind was blowing before they came up with the answers.

Goldberg: They didn't know enough always to come up with good answers, either.

Zuckert: That's right. So I don't want to make it sound as if we were stupid, or ignorant, or ill-informed. We had some brilliant people working on these problems. But we were against the party line and we were too inflexible, which was an Air Force trait from '47.

Goldberg: How would you define the party line?

Zuckert: There were several aspects to it. Let me state two. One was McNamara's concern about the use of tactical nuclear weapons in Europe because of no doctrine. This was one I became persuaded of when I went over there myself in 1961 with Norstad and Everest. I felt that he was right about that. I thought that flexibility with regard to nuclear weapons was a lot more important than just that the big exchange never should happen. So I think the Air Force was too rigid.

Goldberg: They had to do it. It was tough for them to work these things out. They were used to the big planning for the big exchange and it was easier for them to be inflexible. Flexible is very hard.

Matloff: What changes in your view did the McNamara era introduce in the field of strategy?

Zuckert: I think, in the first place, that just religious positions are a thing of the past. The level of debate in the Pentagon and the use of quantification to attempt to quantify things; the recognition that these problems were intellectual problems, not magical or completely intuitive; that it was useful to explore, debate, argue, and advocate—sort of an intellectual trial by combat. I think this was the most important. The other thing he introduced was a philosophy of action. I was thinking of it in connection with this State Department debacle in the Beirut bombing. If McNamara had been Secretary of State, and we'd had one problem over there, we might have had number two, but we never would have had number three. It was a cutting through that McNamara did that was so important. The story about the airplanes shot down over Germany illustrates this facet: We had lost two planes over East Germany, and McNamara called me up and said, "I wish you would convey to General Disosway that this disturbs the President very much and we don't want it to happen again." I never thought, General Disosway doesn't work for me, he works for the Joint Chiefs, through the Commander in Europe. One thing I did know, those airplanes had Air Force markings on them. McNamara in his simple way

said to himself, "Air Force airplanes/Air Force markings/ Air Force Secretary." There was never any doubt that I had to, and should, communicate directly with the Air Force commander in Europe. We didn't go through all this ballet. That's a long-winded way of saying that McNamara did bring a different degree of dipping down into the organization.

Goldberg: It was true in the White House too, wasn't it? People in the White House went directly down below. They didn't go through channels; they went to the person who was supposed to know or supposed to do something.

Zuckert: Sure. Kennedy called me on the phone one of the first days we were there and said, "What's the range of the Thor missile?" He didn't send out for it, he asked me for an answer. I said, "Sixteen hundred miles," and I prayed to God he wouldn't ask me whether it was nautical or statute.

Goldberg: Why do you think McNamara backed off on counter-force after talking about it as he did in 1962 at Athens and Ann Arbor?

Zuckert: I really don't know. I'm going to have dinner with him tomorrow night and I'll ask him. He'll tell me that he didn't. That's facetious.

Matloff: The usual view is that during that administration the range of options was broadened, that this was one of the efforts of the McNamara period, to try to broaden the range of strategic options: the concern for preparation for limited war, conventional war, as well as nuclear war.

Zuckert: This is the flexibility I was talking about earlier.

Matloff: You sensed that as well?

Zuckert: Yes, I think that he was trying to get us out of a strait jacket.

Matloff: In regard to the problems of service competition, how serious a problem was interservice rivalry for you?

Zuckert: It wasn't the most serious problem. I can't remember the problem that Ailes and I had about tactical air in Vietnam, but I know there was a problem. It was the same problem that we've always had, and Ailes and I got together, if I remember correctly, to stop the services from shooting at one another. I have always held the view that the Joint Chiefs haven't really done anywhere near what they could have done in, not compromising, but trying to get together and seeing that their best interests lay in presenting a united face to the civilian authority and in coming up with more realistic force structures, for example. They may say they have never been asked to, but there's never been a forum in which they came up with, "If this is going to be the limit, this is going to be the force structure." They used to come up with these dream force structures (JSOP, wasn't it?) that everybody knew wouldn't happen, and that was the outlet for interservice rivalry. If you could get everything you wanted, you didn't have a rivalry, but you didn't have a force structure.

Goldberg: What could be done about that?

Zuckert: I really think that one way to do it is keep changing personnel until it happens. I honestly think that the Chiefs have never

understood or been permitted to understand, because of their service problems, that their self-interest lies in some form of realistic compromise.

Goldberg: What are your ideas about it?

Zuckert: I'm troubled. There are some problems that don't yield to organizational solutions, and I'm afraid that this is one of them. The idea that by investing the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs with greater power will do it for you, is going to be disproved with time. It is still going to depend upon who the Chief is, what his relationship with the Secretary of Defense is, what the Secretary is like, what the President is like, and how they regard this. Just to try to legislate greater authority for the Chief is doomed, in my book. There are lots of problems that worry me about this thing. The idea that you should have a separate staff insulated from the service connections worries me too. How are you going to be sure that there is an active understanding of the technology? How do they keep abreast of what actually is happening in the field within the services? Communication in the services is such an important part of their being a useful entity. You have a group sitting out here that's supposed to understand what is happening to war and they have been away from it for twelve years.

Goldberg: The General Staff system did that for the Germans for a long time.

Zuckert: But you do get a remoteness. I'm not worried about the German staff system just because it was German. Lehman coming out

with that story about don't let's Prussianize--that's a lot of nonsense. These are tough issues and you don't solve them by going the opposite way from what you have been. Right at the moment--that was Dick Yutkin [phone call]--he and I have been trying to reach some conclusions on this type of thing. I really think that it takes a Secretary of Defense who thoroughly understands the problem, has the backing of the President, and who has a Chairman of the Joint Chiefs that he has respect for and can work with. That is more important than almost anything. I don't believe you are going to solve it by organizing it and sanitizing people.

Goldberg: But the Secretary and the Chairman can't do it alone. They've got to have a staff and they also have to be able to deal with the services. After all, you have all these instances in the Joint Chiefs where they hold a meeting on some particular issue and then at the end of it they say, "This is what we've decided, but we don't think it's necessary to inform the Secretary of Defense." And they don't. That has happened. I presume it still happens.

Zuckert: It shouldn't happen, in the sense that if the Secretary of Defense is seriously concerned with this problem. In a small way it's like what happened to me when they said, "We're not going to tell the Secretary; we're going to send it right to the Chief." The answer to that is, "The hell you are."

Goldberg: But if you don't know about it?

Zuckert: You do know about it. The building leaks like a sieve.

Goldberg: I know, but I'm talking about specific instances where LeMay came back and debriefed his staff and said, "This is what we decided. We also decided it wasn't necessary to inform the Secretary of Defense about this."

Zuckert: But that's why changing personnel can be very salutary, because you can't keep doing that (not telling the Secretary of Defense) without the Secretary knowing it.

Goldberg: Obviously they tell him most things, but there are some things that they feel they can handle better themselves, or they just don't want him in on it.

Zuckert: But it depends upon the tone of the relationship. So there may be instances where they don't tell the Secretary of Defense and they should, but what is the presumption--are they more scared to tell the Secretary, or not to tell the Secretary?

Goldberg: But even McNamara was very careful in his relations with the JCS, wasn't he? In spite of his feelings about them, there were issues he just wouldn't push with them. For instance, sometimes they withheld information and he didn't order them to give it to him. There are times when Gilpatric wanted to get information and he couldn't get it; the Chiefs wouldn't give it to him. He went to McNamara, and said, "Can you help me with this?" McNamara then wrote a note to Taylor and said, "Dear Max, can you help Ros?" He didn't say, "Give him what he's asking for."

Zuckert: I don't know what was in the back of McNamara's mind, but, you must admit, that was not the normal McNamara style of operation.

And there was a motive behind it--don't let's push this one because we've got this one coming up. After all, as I say, you've got these forces and the Chiefs are not without their resources.

Goldberg: There is a Constitutional issue involved, also, as far as the Chiefs are concerned, about their records.

Zuckert: And their role with respect to the President. They felt that McNamara was keeping them, so he may have been showing moderation. That's why I say you can't set these things up hard and fast with nicely etched organizational lines; you've got to depend a lot on the play of the relationship. What kind of a President do we have? If the President of the United States were a Symington, for example, I think that the Chiefs would act entirely differently from if he were a Forrestal. Organization isn't going to cure that. I'm taking more time to try to work through this problem of what do you do about the separate staff. I know that the separate staff has advantages, but I'm also concerned about some of the disadvantages. I'm also concerned about these moves that will reduce the effectiveness of the services. There is a certain point at which you reduce the effectiveness of this thing so that it's no longer a useful mass. McNamara used to discount problems like these--morale, relationships, dealings, communications between the systems command and the fighting commands, what kind of weapons do we need. This organization has to be able to function. If you keep taking enough out of it, eventually you're going to have something that looks like a service command on several fronts.

Matloff: Let me just tick off some of the controversies that are associated with this period, and ask you what role you played in them and what you came away with from your dealings with the Secretary of Defense's office. For example, what was the difference, in a nutshell, as you saw it with the McNamara people on the B-70 bomber?

Zuckert: With McNamara, I never could tell how much of it was tactical and how much of it was what he really felt. Putting the burden of proof on you, he always kicked the ball deep into your territory. Sometimes you were deep in your territory and didn't have the ball; that was tough, too. McNamara's stated objection to the B-70 was that we didn't know how we were going to use it, that we didn't know how we were going to deploy it, protect it, or use it in case of enemy attack, and that we didn't know what we would do with it when we got it over Russia. McNamara never said that something wasn't good. He'd say, "It's no damn good." That puts the burden on you. The big problem, I think, was that the B-70 was probably behind the times. It probably would have had a high loss ratio becuase of the fact that it was such a hot target, and at the wrong altitude.

Matloff: How about the TFX fighter--in connection with the Secretary of Defense's office?

Zuckert: You're talking about the joint fighter. The Navy fought the joint fighter a lot more than we did. The Navy doesn't like to do anything with anybody. So we did not fight the idea of a joint fighter the way the Navy did. We were mildly opposed to it. It

didn't bother me, but when somebody doesn't want to make something work it is very easy not to make it work. Harold Brown once said about the TFX, "If the Navy had wanted to make it work it would have been a good airplane." But it didn't want to. It's a part of the Navy religion.

Matloff: How about Skybolt?

Zuckert: Yes, that was pure fun. Skybolt was very important in connection with getting a bond with the British to give up their V-bomber force. We thought that Skybolt could be turned into a usable weapon. We were handicapped by the fact that Douglas was building it, and they were, I thought, weak at the top, and did not give me the confidence I needed. We had about five failures, if I remember. McNamara wanted to go to Bermuda and cancel the Skybolt. I told him, "I know we've had five failures, but General Gerrity and his people have been up here and they tell me there's a 95 per cent chance that this thing is going to go and go well. You're going to have egg on your face, if you go tell the British that for technical reasons it should be canceled. I'm leaving the country, but I don't want to put you on the spot. If you want me to cancel that shot, I will do it." He said, "Nope, the damned Air Force--it's a poor weapon and it won't go." I replied, "All right, remember that number, 95 (or maybe it was 97) per cent." I took off for Japan and the shot took place when I was on the way back and the word came through that it had been perfect. It gave him kind of a problem in telling the British that the darn thing

wouldn't work. It may not have been a great weapon. I don't know. We didn't go far enough in the program to know.

Matloff: How about the whole question of ballistic missiles? Was that an issue that you got involved in?

Zuckert: I don't remember.

Matloff: Turning to problems in the international field which arose during the period of 1961-65--what role, if any, did you play and what did you know about these crises at the time, for example, the Bay of Pigs?

Zuckert: We knew nothing.

Matloff: How about the Cuban missile crisis?

Zuckert: I was kept very well informed, but through Air Force channels, not from the Secretary of Defense. I was not invited in on the policy end. My job was operational. There were a lot of things to do, calling up of units, etc., and we were busy. We spent five days and nights at the office. I was not in on the glamorous part of the business.

Matloff: Did you and the Air Force Chief of Staff agree on a course of action?

Zuckert: I was not in on the policy aspects of it. I was kept informed.

Matloff: How about our involvement in Indochina? What was your attitude toward that?

Zuckert: Two incidents stand out in my mind. One was when I went over there in December of '62. McNamara had just been over there and

he came back and issued a very optimistic statement, as I remember, at the airport in Saigon. I flew over some of that communist-held area and talked to General Harkins and his staff, saw the problems the Air Force and Army were having, and when I came out, I was very pessimistic. There was so much green there, so much jungle, and so much that was phony, too. We went up and watched the Vietnamese air force operating; I guess they had T-28s in those days. They bombed this log house, that was supposed to be a communist stronghold. When it was over, I said to the Vietnamese officer, "That was pretty good bombing," and he responded, "We did a lot better for the Life photographer last week." Then I had an hour and a half with Diem and I came away feeling as if I'd been in never-never land. We went out to see one of those villages they were building and they ran amok. It was really a charade, a fire drill. You came away with the feeling that this was very, very tenuous. My feeling came to fruit in a meeting with President Johnson just before I quit in April 1965. There were three of us who were quitting. I've always felt that Johnson was trying to get people on the record, and I have a suspicion that that meeting was bugged. He asked Harold Brown, who was going in, what he would do, and Brown waffled. Johnson kept after him pretty hard, and as I thought about it later, I figured all of that must be on record somewhere. He asked me what I would recommend, and based on this feeling I had consistently held since 1962, I told him that I didn't think you could get there from here--that you had two alternatives: one was to

get out, and the other was to try to put more modern equipment in there and build up with a significant addition. He asked me which one of the two I would take, and I took the significant addition. I felt that we were so deeply committed, we had so much sunk costs, that we had to do somewhat more. You can debate forever as to whether or not we would have had then so much more sunk costs that we would have had to get out.

Matloff: Did you subscribe to the domino theory in that period?

Zuckert: Yes, I did.

Matloff: There was some feeling of optimism in 1963, apparently, at least among some American officials, that the Americans might be able to end their military role by '65. You didn't share that feeling?

Zuckert: I don't think I did; I don't think the record will show that I did. What happened was, McNamara would ask us for a recommendation as to whether or not we should put jet aircraft into Vietnam, and LeMay and I would discuss it and I would go back with accepting his judgment that we weren't going to win it with T-28s. They would never follow the recommendation until six months after it had been made. They were always behind the power curve. I think in a way this did a lot to buoy up the Viet Cong, the feeling that we were like a poker player reluctantly raising.

Matloff: Were you disturbed by the reporting in the press of Air Force actions in this period?

Zuckert: Like the T-28? Yes, I testified before Stennis on the T-28 business.

Matloff: How about the handling by the press of Air Force operations, did you and/or Mr. McNamara feel that something might be done about that? Did you ever discuss that problem with him?

Zuckert: I don't remember. I was afraid that you were going to pull out some speech or something indicating that I really had goofed.

Matloff: Do you think that we failed in Vietnam, and, if so, why? Was it a failure of military policy, national policy, or what?

Zuckert: Obviously, we failed--partly because we were not willing to do what you had to do to win quickly enough. Also, my assessment of the home team advantage has increased tremendously. There are two things: the home team advantage, and the leverage of terrorism or guerrilla action. I don't think that monumental force, unless you are going to obliterate somebody, is going to do the job in these situations. You have to get in and get out. You can't have a situation where there's no way to get out.

Goldberg: Even if we had invaded and occupied all of North Vietnam, we still wouldn't have been able to get out.

Zuckert: That's right. Also, the American public opinion does not have a great deal of stamina.

Matloff: Was that opinion taken sufficiently into account by the policy makers?

Zuckert: No, we always make the same mistake.

Goldberg: It was never a popular war, and couldn't be. By its very nature, it couldn't be a popular war.

Zuckert: If you think that El Salvador was bad, and then you look back at Vietnam, maybe that's seventeen times worse--because at least there is some possibility of a threat to this country.

Matloff: Were you drawn in on the Berlin crisis of '61-'62? Did you play any role in connection with it?

Zuckert: I don't recall. I did not have a policy role in connection with it. You see, McNamara regarded me as a manufacturing vice president. I was in charge of making sure that he got everything he needed, and that the Joint Chiefs got everything they needed, from the Air Force.

Matloff: Did you get drawn in on the question of whether the reserves should be called up?

Zuckert: No, although we expressed our opinion on it. We were not very reluctant to use reserves and National Guard the way I think the Army was. We liked exercising our National Guard on airlift, that type of problem.

Goldberg: That's why the Air Force has the best National Guard.

Matloff: How about on NATO problems, did you get involved in any way with the buildup, or problems of policy and strategy?

Zuckert: No. I remember that I did express my feelings very strongly with respect to Nitze's sea force--the MLF.

Goldberg: That was the submarine with the American crew and the French chef.

Zuckert: I wasn't drawn in. I just expressed my opinions.

Matloff: Did you, and do you, see the American military commitment there as permanent?

Zuckert: I've been wrestling with that problem, too. I belong to a group that's been discussing that for the past year. "Permanent" and "never" are two words I never use. I think that the American commitment ideally should be maintained, though probably on a somewhat gradually diminishing basis. I hear a lot of people talk about getting out of Europe and reneging on the pledge. I don't think it's that black and white. I don't think that you give away the countries that are the heritage to a large part of our population--the Poles, the French, and particularly the English. I think looking at it with no war, but perspectively, your feelings are entirely differently from if London is attacked or somebody throws a nuclear weapon at the Winchester Cathedral, or something of that sort. I think that we underestimate the emotional reactions that could occur, if the situation were different from what it is, plus the fact that we surely don't want to be alone in the world. I think that the maintenance of a constructive relationship with the NATO nations has to be one of our goals. What is a constructive relationship? It's something that you perceive as helpful and something that they perceive as helpful.

Matloff: Do you foresee a possible eventual reduction in ground power? or the strategic deterrent itself?

Zuckert: Yes. From now on, I don't think that you can indefinitely maintain the pledge that if Frankfurt were hit, we will do something. We won't swap Chicago for Frankfurt. The pledge is not going to be as strong as it started out to be. It is going to be diluted.

Matloff: It has been said that if the alliance were to unravel, the last link to be taken away would be the strategic deterrent, that the last uncoupling would be that.

Zuckert: I think that if I were a Russian, I would be uncertain about what the United States would do. We would have to maintain that uncertainty.

Goldberg: We're uncertain. Why shouldn't they be?

Zuckert: If Reagan is president, they may have a different perception from if somebody else is.

Matloff: Since you brought up the Russians again, did you feel the assumptions of the policy of containment were realistic? or was detente possibly a more realistic policy?

Goldberg: They aren't necessarily opposites.

Zuckert: I can't separate what my views were and are, but I know that this is a seven-level chess game and you want to avoid a policy of containment. How about a policy of containment with some detente attached to it? How do you foster your objective, which is to make sure that there is no war, and yet that you don't lose too much by having that as your objective? How do you get the Russians to continue to respect your power, and yet how do you reduce tension? If I were the president, I would always say that my objective is to eliminate nuclear weapons. I would not expect to in my lifetime, but on the other hand, that's my objective, and I would always take steps that would push me forward toward that objective. I think you'll lose

your popular support, if that isn't really your objective. If it takes fifty years, you're going to take fifty years doing it, but you're not kidding anybody by saying that the only way is to eliminate nuclear weapons.

Matloff: This brings us to arms control and disarmement. Were you drawn in on the movement to have the limited test ban treaty and the proposed comprehensive treaty?

Zuckert: I think I may have signed papers from the Air Staff on that, and some of them I probably would not be particularly proud of right now. I just don't remember.

Matloff: On the establishment of ACDA?

Zuckert: It was only occasionally that I got into what you might call the philosophical policy side of defense problems.

Matloff: On the question of military/industrial relations, were you so concerned that you shared General Eisenhower's warning about the military/industrial complex?

Zuckert: When you don't like something, you call it a complex. When you do like it, you call it a partnership. What I objected to was that Eisenhower waited until the end of his term to come out with that condemnation. I made a speech on this once, in 1969, in which I defended the military/industrial complex, because you have to have it. But it's like anything else in this world. There are certain inevitable consequences that come from a partnership, and one of them is getting too close. So you have to regulate this, strive to make sure all the

time that the military establishment, under the insistence of its civilian head, is in charge, and not the contractors. They have grudgingly to respect you.

Matloff: Did you get involved with the Dinosaur project?

Zuckert: Yes. Dinosaur was important, we felt, because it was the project that we had, but some of my technical people, like Charyk, and maybe Al Flax, later, were not really intrigued with Dinosaur and didn't think that it added much to what we know. I felt that it was important because it involved people and doing something on the military side of space.

Matloff: On OSD organization and management, particularly on the general question of relations of the service secretaries to the Secretary of Defense--you had observed an evolution from the days of Symington vis-a-vis Forrestal to your own day. How did you see that position evolving, and how do you foresee its future, if it has a future?

Zuckert: I am concerned that the effectiveness of the services will continue to be whittled away under the demand for uniformity, elimination of waste, duplication, and one or the other clichés that are used. It's tough to try to get me to be objective about it, but I see it this way: there are things which should be done under one roof rather than three roofs. The ordering of underwear is an obvious one. But sometimes you can go to the point of insisting on such uniformity that you develop administrative constipation. You have to have three guys in OSD to dream it up and force it through and you do it without

any real benefit being gained, except that you've made things uniform. There's too much of that that goes on--the idea, for instance, that they're talking about putting all bases under OSD, instead of being service bases. If that is true, that is really where it goes way overboard, because the peculiar requirements of the services have a lot to do with how the base is run, managed, equipped, and everything else.

Goldberg: They can't be serious about that.

Zuckert: The Secretary of the Air Force told me that.

Goldberg: That's incredible.

Zuckert: They are putting the medical services much more strongly together, aren't they? There are some that are arguable; then there are some that just don't make any sense. McNamara had a saying, "If it takes a lot of people, it can't get done." The trouble is that you build up an OSD that finally gets so top-heavy that it really can't run anything. The great advantage in the McNamara days was that, partly because he was McNamara, but also because of where his interests lay, he knew a lot of what was going on. You get these big organizations, requirements, and coordinations. It always goes in waves. Then all of a sudden you find that you have built a colossus and you have to cut it back.

Matloff: You used a term at one point in another interview, calling the service secretary "a group vice president."

Zuckert: Yes. That's the way I see it. If I'm the service secretary and I'm responsible for the delivery of the correctly trained

people, the correct weapons--the fighting force, I want to have enough of that under me that I can produce it. I'm not against "elimination of duplication, waste, and overlapping," but there is a certain element of competition. You never would have had the Polaris submarine, if the atomic weapon hadn't been so primarily an Air Force weapon.

Matloff: Is there anything else you would like to add to your previous points about possible changes in the structure in OSD, for example, between the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and the Secretary of the Navy?

Zuckert: I'm really giving this matter a lot of thought and I will come out with my views at some point, but I'm always troubled by big reorganizations. I remember so well the experience with ERDA--we were going to solve all the problems by grouping all the research and development. There never is "the" answer, and whenever they sell it that way, there's something wrong with it.

Matloff: How would you characterize the styles, effectiveness, and personalities of the Secretaries of Defense and other top officials in OSD and JCS with whom you worked? If you had to make an overall judgment about McNamara's effectiveness as an administrator, what would you say?

Zuckert: I thought that he was the greatest I've ever met, hands down.

Matloff: What would you say were his strengths and his weaknesses as Secretary of Defense?

Zuckert: His strength was, first, the orderliness of his mind, his ability to keep to the essentials, even better than Symington, in that respect. In his official capacity he's tough; he really is resolute. Personally he's very compassionate, but when he's dealing with issues he's much less personal. He is a great advocate, and that is so much a key to the success of how you get things done in this government. You overwhelm people with the persuasiveness of your logic.

Matloff: How about the converse side--the weaknesses?

Zuckert: I think that the weaknesses were pretty clear. One was, of course, staying seven years. You must never stay seven years--it's like trying to pitch a double header and to throw the ball 98 miles an hour on every pitch. McNamara told me once that he was only going to stay four years. I think that he keyed his whole effort; he didn't care whom he insulted or offended; he just did it his way. Also, I think, one of his strengths and weaknesses was this business of quantification. I don't think that he really believes that you can quantify to the extent that he thought you could. I hope I'm right that he doesn't believe all his own propaganda. I have strong reservations about some of the positions he took. Another thing where there was both strength and weakness was his loyalty to his boss. We always used to say in the building that he was never more vigorous in defending a position than the one his boss had told him to take which he really didn't believe in, and he always overcompensated to make sure that his boss's position was the one that prevailed.

Goldberg: And he expected his subordinates to do the same.

Zuckert: Yes. I think that he had the normal human weakness of, "Here I am, trying to do a job, and they just don't understand." I think that hurt a lot. Another great weakness he had, in my opinion, was his failure to do even the elementary things to preserve his relationships with the Hill. You don't go out of your way and tell Senator McClellan to go to hell when he asks you to hold up a contract for two weeks.

Goldberg: He got started well, the first year or two, apparently.

Zuckert: He did that by blowing them over. But every pitcher should have a change of pace, and McNamara just had that high hard one, and it worked for a while.

Goldberg: Schlesinger is pretty much the same way.

Zuckert: Yes, but Schlesinger wasn't as good as McNamara, in my opinion. He was pompous, and McNamara was never pompous.

Matloff: Any impressions of Deputy Secretary of Defense Gilpatric and Vance?

Zuckert: I'm a great admirer of both of them, particularly Vance. I think that Vance is the pillar of the community, the perfect counselor, the wise member of the Yale Board of Corporation, all those things. But compared to McNamara, he's just not that tough. He couldn't throw that ball the way McNamara could throw it. I think Gilpatric is of the same ilk--the counselor. They both lacked the force that McNamara had.

Matloff: Did any of the Assistant Secretaries of Defense impress you particularly one way or another?

Zuckert: I hated them all. The trouble with the Assistant Secretaries was that they would not stand up to McNamara. You could make a deal with them, but the deal was always "if the Secretary of Defense goes along." As a result, there was a lot of unnecessary friction. But there were some smart people--Hitch was a smart man, and that whole story of the development of PPBS was conceptually terrific, except that it just doesn't work in this atmosphere, in this environment.

Goldberg: It wasn't all that new, either, for that matter.

Zuckert: No, it wasn't. Harold Brown--I genuflect when I see him in operation. He is a very able man, and I think grew a lot as Secretary of Defense.

Matloff: I'll shoot names at you. The Joint Chiefs of Staff: Lemnitzer, Taylor, and Wheeler, who were in that same period, particularly the first period.

Zuckert: Wheeler was one of the most delightful human beings, and I think that he was able and gentle, but I don't think that he quite knew how to cope with McNamara. Lemnitzer was more traditional Army. He thought things worked a heck of a lot better in the past than they were working then, and he couldn't change his style to meet with McNamara. McNamara used to say, "You can't change a gazelle into a cheetah." I never understood Max Taylor. I read a lot of his stuff. I agree with a lot of the things he's saying, and I think he's amazing

to be saying them at his age, too. He was intellectually the smartest and brightest of the Chiefs, but I never knew what he was up to and I didn't get close enough to him to find out.

Matloff: How about the Presidents: Truman, Kennedy, and Johnson?

Zuckert: Truman was primarily intuitive. I always thought his decision on using the atomic weapon was one of the great decisions that I have been privileged in my lifetime to have observed. I admire the way it was done and the way he did it. But the thing that surprised me was that he was so narrow in some ways, too--his going back to Independence, Missouri, and saying he didn't think the Russians had the atomic bomb, in 1952.

Matloff: Anything more on Kennedy and Johnson?

Zuckert: As Alain Enthoven said, as we went out of the Pentagon on the night Kennedy was killed, "We'll never be the same again." That was one period all of us remember. You felt part of something that you never will feel again working in any other organization. I don't know what it was, but there was a magic to it.

Goldberg: Camelot?

Zuckert: I wouldn't say that.

Matloff: How about Johnson?

Zuckert: It's a shame.

Goldberg: Sui generis.

Matloff: The very last question: As you look back on your role as Secretary of the Air Force, what do you regard as your major achievements?

Zuckert: You fellows have brow-beaten me so much that I don't think I did anything. I really can't say.

Matloff: I must tell you, one official answered, when I asked him that question, "Surviving."

Zuckert: No, I think that my greatest accomplishment was realizing what I could do and what I couldn't do; what I did well and what I didn't do well.

Goldberg: Educational, in other words.

Zuckert: Yes. I think that I helped hold the Air Force together during a very difficult time. I think the Air Force came out of it, partly as a result of me, as a more sophisticated and effective organization in its role in the Defense Department than it was when I went in.

Matloff: Did you leave with any great disappointments, not having done something that you would have liked to have done?

Zuckert: As I think of it now, yes. I wish that I had contributed more to the debate on the strategic aspects, in which I have taken a great deal of interest since. But you're lucky to have had your time at bat.

Matloff: This brings me to an end of my questions. If you would like to add anything, please feel free.

Zuckert: No, I don't.

Matloff: Thank you for your cooperation and your willingness to share your recollections and observations with us.