

Matloff: This is part II of an oral history interview held with Mr. David Packard in Washington, D.C., on November 28, 1988, at 10:30 a.m. Again representing the OSD Historical Office are Drs. Alfred Goldberg and Maurice Matloff.

Mr. Packard, at our meeting on November 9, 1987, we discussed the background of your appointment as Deputy Secretary of Defense, your conception of the role, your working relationships in and out of DoD, the budget, manpower, and weapons issues. This morning we would like to turn to other aspects of your service as Deputy Secretary of Defense from January 1969-December 1971, and also to your role on the President's Blue Ribbon Commission on Defense Management in 1985 and 1986. First, may we come back to the area of procurement policy and procedures during your service as Deputy Secretary of Defense? We touched last time on the Fitzhugh panel, established soon after Mr. Laird and you took office. Could you discuss briefly what led to its establishment and what role you played in connection with it?

Packard: The Blue Ribbon Commission of that time was chaired by Mr. Fitzhugh and was appointed by the President. Actually, I think Mel [Laird] had quite an influence on its employment, because we talked about some possible Commission members before the appointments were made. They were given almost carte blanche to investigate all aspects of the Defense Department. It was a good commission with good people on it and they did a rather thorough job.

Matloff: What were your reactions to the recommendations? Were you in agreement with most, or all, of them?

Packard: We talked about some of the recommendations at our last discussion, particularly those having to do with the responsibilities of the Deputy Secretary. That Commission had recommended that the Deputy job be split into three parts. One part would have to do with military affairs, the second one with procurement and related aspects, and the third part would deal with the administrative work.

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Both Mel and I felt that the division into three parts was probably not necessary, but we did agree that the procurement could be split away from the other responsibilities. We actually encouraged some legislation toward that end, which I think we described in the last meeting.

Matloff: To look ahead, did the work of the Fitzhugh Commission influence the way you handled, or the substance of, the work on the later Commission?

Packard: We worked fairly closely with the Commission, although they did a lot of investigation independently of anything that Mel or I did. We were generally aware of the things that they were talking about and we had been putting a good deal of effort into trying to improve the procurement activities of the Department. Some of the things that they talked about were similar to those that we were trying to do already, but some were things to which we hadn't given much consideration. It was a very wide-ranging and, I thought, a thorough report.

Matloff: You touched last time, at the close of our meeting, on the prototype program that was set up in connection with procurement. Would you describe that program, your role in it, and how effective you thought it was?

Packard: It might help to go back and outline some of the general conditions that prevailed around the whole acquisition program over there. We had taken over when there had been some difficulty with a number of major contracts. Lockheed had one of the big contracts in trouble, and there were some others. That was in very large part because they were awarded on what was called a "total package procurement process." This is a nice idea in theory, but it doesn't work. What is proposed is that you decide in advance all the performance details of a new weapon system, what the development costs are going to be, and what the production costs are going to be. The reason this approach really won't work is because it is not possible to know what the production costs of something that hasn't been developed yet are going to be. In addition to that, by putting all the constraints on

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such a contract, it made it very difficult to add improvements or changes during the course of development. The contract was very rigid and any changes had to be given consideration, which usually meant a reduction in price by the contractor. It was a very unwieldy procedure. In the course of most of the big developments, there was a large measure of overenthusiasm and people thought they could develop something for a lower cost than turned out to be the case, and in a shorter time.

We spent a good deal of time in looking at the whole procurement process and dealing with the problems that had resulted from the previous contracting procedures. I had had some experience, on a smaller scale, with the development of new products, and I had found from my own experience that it's very desirable to have some flexibility in the program, because as you move ahead with the technical work you find some things more difficult to do than you thought they were going to be. We talked to a lot of people about the whole contracting process, including people from the Dassault Aviation Company in France. They had a very intriguing procedure, which may have been the germ of the idea that I got from them. They went to the government and discussed what kind of a plane they would like to have, the general performance requirements; the government would give them a contract; and they would produce a plane to a very informal, general set of specifications. That looked like a procedure that could be used, if the contract were given to two different firms at the same time, with the understanding that the products that they developed would be competitively tested against each other and then you would choose the one that performed better. That approach seemed to me to have a great deal of merit, because it made it possible to reduce greatly the paperwork on the contract, if it was a fairly simple one; it would give the developer a lot of flexibility; and there would be great incentive for the two to work their hearts out to build a better product. We talked about this and I finally concluded

that it was a good approach. We undertook to put it into effect in a number of programs. It got to be termed "fly before you buy," but that was an accidental name assigned to it. There were several important programs. Probably the most important one was the contract for a light-weight fighter, for which General Dynamics produced the F-16 model and Northrop produced the F-17 model. Those were both done with overall performance specifications and not much other detail, and they both turned out to be very good airplanes. As I had anticipated, both of the firms worked very hard to demonstrate that they could build a better plane and they had complete freedom.

We also looked at this in terms of the fact that we couldn't do this with very big programs, like the B-1 bomber, for example, because we couldn't afford to build two of them. But, if you looked at the details of most of the new weapons systems, they involved a lot of components that were developed by subcontractors independently. From that we concluded that if you couldn't do the whole job on a prototype basis, you could do some of the components. That was actually done with the radar on the AWACS system. The airplane itself was a Boeing product, and the radar was the critical element in that, determining the performance of the whole system. We arranged that Boeing would have two contractors for the radar and actually tested one against the other. That was the general outline of the so-called prototype procedure.

Matloff: Did the procedure outlast your service?

Packard: It continued for a while. Bill Clements was the Deputy Secretary a short time after I left; there was somebody in between, as I remember. Bill was very supportive of the prototype approach; Secretary Schlesinger was also. They carried the program along. There were some problems with it. One problem was that it took a little more up-front money to do this, and everyone knows that is hard to come by in the Pentagon. The services were reluctant to push it that far. They were

accustomed to using the old system, although the Air Force was very enthusiastic about the F-16, and it was one of the best planes they have had in recent years. Gradually they got away from the program and didn't follow up as extensively as I had hoped they would.

Goldberg: One of the problems, it seems to me, in flexibility is not so much the technical problems encountered by the aircraft companies and other industrial firms, but the frequent demands or requests for changes by the military services in the system.

Packard: It takes two to tango; there were problems on both sides.

Goldberg: A great deal of the problem was precisely that, wasn't it? This is what is alleged by the manufacturers.

Packard: There is a strong tendency to try to get the latest possible capability in any new weapons system. The trouble is that some of the ideas that are suggested have not been thoroughly proven, and there is always somebody around who will say he can do it and will take a contract to do it. So there are some difficulties in asking for more than should be asked for. That was why we tried to limit this just to performance details, and a lot of the other things would fall in place. I think they did fall in place reasonably well.

Goldberg: Perhaps one of the reasons for the services getting away from the competitive prototype system that you have been discussing is that the more up-front money for it meant the fewer systems that they could start.

Packard: That's right, there is a big competition. The cost during the first few years of a new system is not very large, and it's the old theory of the camel getting his nose under the tent, and you can't get him out.

Goldberg: That's what has been happening for the last eight years.

Packard: That's right, and that builds up what they call a big bow wave of funding requirements to get all these programs done. As you say, right now they are simply going to have to cut out some of the programs.

Matloff: In the area of threat perceptions and strategic planning, what was your perception of the threat facing the country, and were there any differences between the JCS and the Secretary of Defense, or among the various agencies in government?

Packard: When we came in, at the end of the McNamara regime, he had built up what looked like a very systematic and rigorous management procedure. But it was not in great favor with the services. There was strong feeling built up between the people in the military services and the Secretary. We approached that in a different way, and I think we had a much better rapport between the Office of the Secretary and the services during the time I was there than they had before.

Matloff: How did you view the threat facing the country?

Packard: At that time we were in Vietnam, and that was a very important consideration, which overrode almost everything else. We were in the same situation that had been present since the end of World War II. The Cold War was defining the military threats around the world, and therefore the military capability that people thought we needed. When I was there, for example, the Soviets had developed a relationship with Egypt. The whole order of the Mediterranean was in jeopardy, and we weren't sure what Turkey was going to do. In many ways, it was a very risky situation. I visited that part of the world and met the people, and tried to decide what our strategy should be. In the Far East our whole approach to Vietnam was conditioned by what the Chinese had done during the Korean War. We were very concerned about the military attack and the land up in the north part of the country. We thought that might bring the Chinese in, and we would have a more difficult problem. There were some conditions around the world that were considerably different from those that prevail today. I think it is a very encouraging

thing that we have now seen almost all over the world a situation in which the communist system has not performed what it promised for its own people. It has not been the threat that it was expected to be for the free enterprise system. That change is being brought about in China and those developing countries all around the Western Pacific that have taken a free enterprise approach and are doing very well. It's only a matter of time, I think, when North and South Korea will get together. And if you look at the Mediterranean situation, we have friends all around that area now. So the situation has become much more favorable to the United States and its allies since the time when I was there.

Matloff: As Deputy Secretary of Defense, were you drawn in on the discussions on strategy and strategic planning--for example, the Nixon doctrine to cut back from a 2 1/2 war concept to a 1 1/2 war level?

Packard: Yes. As a matter of fact, I was in on that subject in this way. The basic decisions on those issues, of course, have to be made by the President. The mechanism is to do that through the Security Council, and Henry Kissinger was the adviser to the President and the National Security Council. There was an Under Secretaries' committee that had studied most of the issues that we were concerned with at that time. I was the Defense representative on that committee. Alexis Johnson and Elliot Richardson were the State Department representatives, and Dick Helms was the CIA representative. One of the first studies we made was to try to assess what the balance of expenditures of the Federal government should be between military and non-military programs. President Nixon was very anxious to cut back on the level of military expenditure in order to be able to do more for domestic programs. As a result of that desire, a lot of things were started in those years that built up a very large domestic expenditure level since that time. Then we addressed what might be done in Vietnam. We also looked at the Middle East, and other issues. I had a chance to become involved in those

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subjects in that way. I didn't get involved publicly very much, but I spent a lot of time working behind the scenes.

Goldberg: What was your view of the strategic threat to the United States itself when you came into office and during your period there? Did you see it the same way as some of the others did?

Packard: There was one major difference. That had to do with the antiballistic missile program. That was rationalized and put into action by the McNamara regime on the basis that while an ABM system probably couldn't deal with the Soviet threat, it could deal with a limited Chinese threat. It would therefore have some merit in protecting a country against a nuclear attack. That was a very hot issue at that time, and we spent a lot of time looking at it. I concluded, along with a lot of other people, that we did not know how to build a system at that time which could, in fact, provide protection for our entire country. It would be very difficult to design and build a system that would even work in a limited area, but we thought that would be possible. So we changed the emphasis from the role of protecting the entire country to the role of protecting the National Command Center (which means Washington D.C.) and the Minuteman fields. This looked like a reasonable role for the ABM system. That was, in a sense, a major change in our strategy. We were also, at that time, working on the MIRV program. That was a means by which you could put more than one warhead on a missile and could have those warheads independently targeted, so you could target a number of different areas from one missile. There was a lot of discussion about that, because, the argument went, we had the capability of doing it, but probably the Russians didn't. That was the argument we used many times along the line. It turned out, of course, that the Russians learned how to do it too, and that had the effect of substantially increasing the total number of warheads involved on both sides. So you can argue that that was an escalation of the nuclear level. At that time, the Soviets were building up

their forces. They had larger missiles than we had, and we felt that it was absolutely essential to maintain some level of parity. I remember in one discussion at the time a phrase, I think coined by the White House, that we should have a "sufficiency." I made a comment about that, that I didn't know what sufficiency meant, but it was a good word to use in a speech. I was amused recently that the Soviets have used the term "realistic sufficiency."

Matloff: I was going to ask you if you subscribed to the Nixon administration's program of "strategic sufficiency." The other question involved Mr. Laird's concept of "strategy of realistic deterrence."

Packard: There was a lot of discussion about the role of nuclear forces. One school held that these were primarily a means of massive retaliation, and that that was the protection that you had. Others thought that nuclear forces then should have a warfighting capability. We got the words "warfighting capability" in some of the papers at that time. That was in part driven by the understanding that the Soviets, in considering this problem, had thought that it was possible to win a nuclear war and that their whole military strategy was based on that theory. I don't think any of us felt very comfortable with that approach, but we did feel that we should use our technology and build the best equipment that we could and have a range of things because the more different types of weapons you have, the more uncertainty you put into the opposition in a successful attack, and therefore you increase your deterrence. We spent a lot of time on that. I don't think any major changes were made during that period, but there was a trend towards a little more of the warfighting approach rather than just the massive retaliation approach.

Goldberg: Do you think that the military services tended to exaggerate the threat much of the time?

Packard: I think in general they do, but at the same time it's their responsibility to be prepared for the worst; therefore, it's not unreasonable for them to build up the

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threat and make it look as serious as possible, so that they are in a better position to get the necessary means to deal with it. It's not an unrealistic approach.

Goldberg: And they are each looking at their opposite number.

Packard: That's one of the big problems. I'd put it this way: everybody had to be in on everything. In the case of Vietnam, we had the carrier task forces standing off there, using naval air power. I went out in one of those carriers; it was an impressive operation. But they could have done the same thing with just the land-based forces. They didn't need the carriers there; they didn't add very much. Right there, of course, was a tremendous duplication of effort. There was the very big Air Force base in South Vietnam, and the carrier task force standing off. Neither one did what we hoped it would do, and it was just a wasted thing. We've seen some examples of that, again, in the attack where they attempted to get Qaddafi a few years ago. They had the whole Sixth Fleet standing off, but they thought they didn't have enough offensive firepower to do the job, so they brought the F-111s down from England. That was an expensive operation to try to hit a specific target. That brings up another issue which I think is very important and is going to have to be addressed more effectively--that is, that the services are reluctant to use more modern means. When I was here, the Naval Weapons Center out in China Lake, California, developed a radio-guided missile that had a television on board that sent a picture back so you could actually see where you were going with this missile. I remember a demonstration when they fired this missile at a target 20 or 30 miles away. They had spaced a group of 50 gallon oil drums about 100 feet apart in a rectangular pattern. When I got close enough to see the oil drums, they asked me which one they should hit. They could hit that one from 25 or 30 miles away. That kind of capability should have been available in the attack on Qaddafi. It would have cost about one-tenth of a percent of what was actually expended, and it would have done the job. You can find all sorts of cases like that.

Goldberg: Like Grenada, where everybody had to be in on the act and just complicated it.

Packard: Yes. That gets into some of the issues we tried to address in this latest commission on Defense management.

Matloff: There had been a big debate in the McNamara era on counterforce versus countercity doctrine, in connection with the use of nuclear weapons. Were you drawn in on any of that?

Packard: Yes. That argument has gone on, and what's happened is very interesting. Everybody talks about countercity strategy, but the fact is that none of our weapons are targeted against cities. They are all targeted against military targets. The historical military approach has been that you want to destroy the other side's military capability.

Goldberg: But many of the military capabilities are close to or in urban areas.

Packard: That's correct. In any nuclear situation you have a great deal of corollary damage, through fallout if nothing else. But the basic strategy is whether you attack military or civilian installations, and historically it has been military doctrine to fight the military forces, not to attack the civilian elements. So that was a little change from historical military strategy.

Matloff: To go on to area problems and crises, first to NATO: to what extent did you as Deputy Secretary of Defense become involved with NATO policies, buildup, and strategy?

Packard: We got thoroughly involved in the NATO situation. In the first place, I visited NATO and looked at the readiness of the troops, the forward deployment of equipment, and the plans to get people over there. During the course of that, we had a lot of aircraft that were not protected in adequate shelters, and there were a lot of little things like that that we tried to improve. There was another very important issue with NATO, and that was the use of tactical nuclear weapons. I had

looked at them when I was over there and they were very crude. Some of them had to be assembled in two or three pieces at the time they were to be used; they were very inaccurate; and I concluded that the use of the theater nuclear weapons we had would probably do more damage to our allies than to the enemy. I was strongly opposed to using nuclear weapons in that field. Actually, they made some improvements in the weapons, and they were a bit better for that reason, but I think the latest decision to remove nuclear weapons from that theater is a very fortunate thing and should have been done before. We spent a lot of time talking about those issues.

Matloff: Did you have a feeling that the European allies were carrying their weight during this period?

Packard: I think, in general, I did. That was an issue that came up to some extent. There were special things, like shipping coal from here to Germany to use on our bases there. All in all, as I recall, I didn't feel that there was any serious problem over there in terms of those countries carrying their weight. This varied, of course. West Germany was in the center of it. France was aloof, and we didn't know where it really stood and we couldn't do much about it anyway. I think our relationships with Great Britain were generally good; we had good bases and good cooperation there. Both Great Britain and France added to nuclear capability. We had a more serious discussion in regard to Japan recently than we had with the European allies at that time.

Goldberg: Mike Mansfield was pushing for withdrawal of at least part of the American forces from Europe at this time, on the basis that the Europeans could and should do more. What was the Department's attitude toward that?

Packard: The real problem was that the NATO countries wanted us to have a presence. They considered that extremely important, because our nuclear capability provided an overall umbrella for them. It was more than a question of military

requirements; there was the psychological aspect of having our forces in Europe. Once you recognize that, you realize that you could reach some adjustments, but you couldn't afford to withdraw your forces.

Goldberg: So any drawdown would be out?

Packard: Any drawdown extensive enough to be a major drawdown would probably be a problem with the allies. There were some other issues that we talked about that came up in relation to basing our nuclear submarines. I visited Spain, and every year we had a discussion with Spain about the Spanish bases, and went through a lot of falderal, giving them something and getting an agreement, the annual ritual. But it looked to me as if we were going to get pressured out of Spain sooner or later. I didn't sense the same thing in Scotland; I think our relationships there were very sound. That was a concern, and one of the reasons why I felt it was very important for us to proceed with the larger submarine. It was called the ULMS at that time, and the Trident now. That was because the range of the Polaris-Poseidon boats was not long enough, so that if they were based in the United States, they would be out of range of their targets and their capability would be substantially reduced. That was an issue on which we spent some time, and that reflected back on our decisions in regard to the ULMS program.

Matloff: Did you, and do you, see the American military role in NATO as permanent?

Packard: I think that for the foreseeable future, the next four or five decades, things are going to change, but I don't think we're going to get to the point where we can dismantle NATO. That depends entirely on what happens in the Soviet Union. If the changes that Gorbachev is trying to put in place stick and turn out on the optimistic side, then it is conceivable that we could make substantial reductions in our forces in NATO, but we don't know that yet.

Matloff: How much of your attention as Deputy was taken up with the war in Vietnam?

Packard: We spent a lot of time on it. We looked at the reports every day; we looked at the casualties and tried to figure out what to do about situations; it took a lot of time.

Matloff: Did you meet often with the Vietnam task force set up by Mr. Laird?

Packard: I was involved in that. I wasn't in the active front of that, but I was involved to some extent. In respect to Vietnam, Mr. Laird and I came out with very close to the same conclusion, that we should do everything we could to help the Vietnamese develop their capability and let them defend their country, and we should get out. That philosophy was not agreed to by Kissinger and Bill Rogers, but we felt very strongly that that was what should be done. The first few weeks I was there the casualties were two or three hundred a week, and toward the last months there were one or two a week or none at all. There was a big change in the whole situation.

Matloff: What led Mr. Laird and you to this conclusion? In Mr. Laird's case, did any political considerations, such as Mr. Nixon's coming up for reelection in 1972, play any part in his pushing Vietnamization as his first priority?

Packard: I think that people sensed that we were not achieving what we were trying to do there and that our military approach had not been very effective. President Nixon felt very strongly that we should not just voluntarily withdraw, in his term, "like a helpless giant." I think that it was pretty clear that the military approach we were using was not likely to be effective, partly for the reason that there were limits on what we could do. They were calling the strategy here from Washington that should have been determined on the battlefield. I am sure that if we had had a freer hand, we could have done better there, but whether we could have made a decisive change or not, nobody knows. We were constrained by public opinion here

at home and the attitude of the Congress and just a strong anti-Vietnam feeling, and anybody with any political sense realized that they had to deal with that. I went over there a couple of times, and we had a briefing almost every day. We spent a lot of time trying to figure out what we could do. We encouraged the services to do what they could, and it involved pacification as well as fighting. That was to make the area safe for the village chief. One of the rules was that if the village chief could stay in the village overnight, that village was safe; if he couldn't, it wasn't safe. We got into all sorts of problems like that.

Goldberg: Did you and Laird come into office already thinking that it was desirable to get out as soon as possible?

Packard: I had not thought that seriously about the Vietnam situation. I was worried about other things closer to home. I didn't have any strong feeling, but like many other Americans, I felt that if we were in this war we ought to win it. We got in the middle of it and found it a much more complicated problem.

Goldberg: How about Mr. Laird, when he came in?

Packard: I am sure he had a much better understanding of it, because he had been dealing with it up on the Hill. I think he generally felt that we had to get out. There was the domino theory, that if Vietnam fell, then the rest of Southeast Asia would fall, and we would lose the whole thing. It didn't turn out that way.

Matloff: Did you buy it, at the time?

Packard: I probably went along with that; it was a common feeling among a lot of people. At that time we didn't know what the attitude in China was. If we had known that, it would have made a big difference. It was a little too late when they got the approach [?] from China. Then we knew the Chinese were not very enthusiastic about the Soviets and they didn't have much interest in joining up with us. We didn't know enough about the situation.

Matloff: As Deputy Secretary of Defense, were you consulted on possible initiatives and operational measures to end the war in Vietnam?

Packard: Yes. As a matter of fact, we knew that they were bringing supplies in through Cambodia. We also knew they were bringing supplies down the trail in Cambodia and Laos. We spent a lot of time talking about what to do in those areas. We found that there were some big base camps in there and we authorized some bombing across the border. No one found out about it until quite a bit later.

Goldberg: By contrast with some Deputy Secretaries, you apparently were involved in more than some of the others were, because of the different conception of the role that both the Secretary and the Deputy Secretary had in any particular administration. You were closer to being an alter ego, it seems to me, of the Secretary than many of the Deputy Secretaries have been.

Packard: That could be. I think that it was fortunate that Mel and I had very much the same philosophy about a lot of things. That made it easier to work together and we had good communication. We had lunch together two or three times a week and we had a general understanding about the division of responsibility. I remember that during the first few weeks I was there, when he had a press conference and they would ask him about something, he would say, "I'm going to let Packard handle that." I was assigned about everything in the press conference in the early days. But we got along very well.

Matloff: Did you get involved, at least indirectly, in the negotiations with North Vietnam?

Packard: No, not in any significant way.

Matloff: In view of this emphasis on Vietnamization, why, in your view, did the South Vietnamese later on fail to preserve their independence?

Packard: There are two theories on that. One is that they were incompetent and couldn't have done it in any case. The other theory was that after we got them

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started, Congress didn't provide enough money to give them the munitions and equipment to do the job when we turned it over to them. I was always an optimist. I thought that the Vietnamization would work and that we could get them to take the responsibility. Most of our military people just didn't think they were up to it. That was, I think, partly because of the conservative military view that they realized it was a tough job and had trouble doing it, and so how could the South Vietnamese do it. But I was optimistic about it and spent some time there looking at the training and a lot of things they were doing. I think that if the country and Congress had been fully behind us, we might have been able to make it work. But I don't think it is easy to decide what the balance of factors was; they were both in play.

Matloff: On the American side of this war, do you regard Vietnam as a failure of American national policy, of military policy, failure to take into account American public opinion in a protracted limited war, or what?

Packard: I think that it was a failure of our national policy. I think that we asked the military to do something that was not really realistic in terms of the problems over there. One of the troubles, of course, was that our forces had been designed around the needs for a massive, conventional thrust through central Europe, and we had equipment that was designed for a big all-out war. We were not equipped for guerrilla warfare, and we had no training in those areas. I am sure that General Westmoreland felt that conventional strategy and tactics, the massive bombing and thrust, would eventually prevail, but that turned out to be wrong. In that kind of country you just can't operate that way. We didn't realize that.

Goldberg: And there wasn't the inclination to adapt, apparently. They had time; they could have trained for that kind of war; they could have presumably adapted their tactics; but they presumably didn't want to.

Packard: We did have some good special forces groups, and we had that McNamara line of electronic gear to tell who's here and so forth; but nobody really came up with a good strategy. I remember talking to Herman Kahn about it. He was very thoughtful, and had a solution for everything. We explored a lot of ideas and finally decided to send him over to Vietnam to meet with General Abrams. The conversation started out by Herman Kahn saying, "I can think of five or six ways you can win this war, and only one way you can lose it, and that's what you're doing."

Matloff: The leak in publication of the Pentagon Papers occurred in June of 1971. What was your reaction to that?

Packard: I was in the middle of that. When they were preparing for the case, they had all the papers down here in an office somewhere, and one weekend I came down and spent a whole day going through them. I concluded that there wasn't anything in the papers that warranted that much trouble. I was in favor of going ahead and publishing them, and not think anything about it. There were some embarrassing things in it for some people, and that was the big incentive for them to keep it covered up. I thought that was a mistake. I remember looking up the law, and it said that there had to be a clear and imminent danger to the security of the United States for the classification to apply, and I couldn't see any clear and imminent danger in anything in the Pentagon papers. I was on the other side of that one. I obviously didn't want to come out publicly on it.

Matloff: To come back to the areas of China and Japan, did you or Secretary of Defense Laird, to your knowledge, play any role in the initiatives to China undertaken by Nixon and Kissinger? Were you informed in advance of any of their moves?

Packard: No, we did not. That was very closely held. I don't know whether Laird knew about it in advance. Laird was very close to the President in the first year or so, and they got separated a little bit later. The discussions were largely with Henry

Kissinger, the President, and a few close associates. I did not know about the initiatives ahead of time.

Matloff: How about the build-up of Japanese defense forces? Did you favor that or take part in anything along that line?

Packard: All of us felt that Japan should make a larger contribution to the security of the Western Pacific, and we talked to them about it. They were limited by that one percent of the GNP that is in the figure. We encouraged them to do more. I don't think I got to the point that I came to later on. I spent the better part of a year on a U.S.-Japan Advisory Commission for George Shultz, and I learned a lot more about the Japanese and their thinking. I came to the conclusion after that that Japan should play a larger role. Given the ability of the Japanese to make high quality technical products inexpensively, we should rely upon that capability. We should get them to do a lot more. They have been moving in that direction, slowly.

Matloff: Mel Laird turned up in Japan. Did you get there?

Packard: No.

Matloff: As I recall, Mr. Laird wasn't quite sure what the reactions of Nixon and Kissinger were to his turning up in Japan, because they were busy trying to get relations with China going. He felt that that was a very necessary thing to do. One question about the Cold War: how effective was military aid, on the basis of your experience, as a tool for political leverage in the Cold War?

Packard: That's a question that varies a great deal. I can think of a few examples. Obviously, we use military aid to try and get some concessions on a number of things, like more participation by our NATO allies. If you look at Korea, our whole relationship with that country was driven to a large extent by our level of military aid for it, not only the equipment, but also the level our forces there. Obviously, those countries did their best to get what they could out of us, to get whatever

leverage they could, so I think they consider that a factor in the overall relationships with the United States, and it is a two-way street, in that sense.

Matloff: On arms control and disarmament, did you have any other views that differed, in any way, from those of Laird, Nixon, or Kissinger?

Packard: I was very strong for trying to get some reduction in nuclear arms. Jerry Smith was a negotiator at that time. I remember one time, I think it was my suggestion that Elliot Richardson, Richard Helms, Jerry Smith, and I spend a day somewhere to figure out some solution, without all the other people around. So I was very supportive of trying to make some progress in the arms control area.

Matloff: Did you get involved in the strategic arms limitation talks leading to SALT I?

Packard: Paul Nitze, my predecessor, had been involved in the arms control business. We invited him to join us and be our consultant, which he did. We spent quite a bit of time discussing that issue and we have kept in touch since. He has been involved over a long period of time.

Matloff: Have your views on arms control and disarmament changed in any way since your tenure as Deputy Secretary of Defense?

Packard: I was in favor of the ABM treaty; I think that was a logical procedure. It was an interesting issue, because the final deal was made on the basis that we could protect the command center with a one-Minuteman field there. That was a compromise agreement. I remember particularly that I thought it was a foolish arrangement because there was no incentive for us to provide protection for Washington, but the Soviets had a very strong desire to protect Moscow. I was not surprised we did not go ahead with the Senate in Washington, and, looking back, I think it was a good thing that that whole business got put off at that time.

Goldberg: Were you amused that they seemed to value their leadership higher than we valued ours, perhaps?

Packard: I thought facetiously that if these clowns there didn't want to be protected, I wasn't going to worry about it.

Goldberg: They also had a substantial protection system in place around Moscow already.

Packard: Yes, they had. Their history is entirely different from ours. We haven't had a ground force threaten our country, and so we don't have that kind of concern.

Matloff: In connection with the negotiations with Russia, was it your belief that we could negotiate best with the Russians from a position of nuclear superiority, parity, sufficiency, or whatever the phrase?

Packard: I think that we all felt very strongly that we had to deal with the Soviets from a position of strength. On the Hill, Muskie wanted us to withdraw some forces, and I accused him of proposing unilateral disarmament, which I thought was a serious mistake.

Matloff: Did you get a chance to brief your successor, Kenneth Rush?

Packard: I stayed on for a couple of months informally after my official term expired at the end of 1971 in order to help Mel in the transition. I spent quite a bit of time with Ken Rush. Later on, when Bill Clements was there, I spent quite a bit of time with him, also.

Matloff: What are your perspectives on OSD organization and management? As a result of your experience and reflection, do you feel that the Deputy Secretary of Defense should be a general manager, a chief administrator, an alter ego, an analyst, or what?

Packard: My basic theory on what the organization at the Pentagon should be is that the Office of the Secretary, which would include the Deputy and most of the Assistant Secretaries, should have the responsibility to establish overall policy. Those policies should relate to all aspects of the military operation and should be uniformly enforced over the entire system. Implementation of the work to be done should be

done by the organizations out in the field, the services, and the defense agencies. What happened over the years is that the Office of the Secretary had gotten too deeply involved in administering policy instead of establishing it. I thought that was the basic mistake. I was also troubled by what seemed to me to be a lack of effort in thinking about overall military strategy. The services, themselves, were divided: the Navy had two different strategies; the Air Force too--whether it should be deep interdiction or close air support. We didn't have a rational way of putting together an overall strategy. Not having an overall strategy that was thoroughly accepted made it very difficult to make good decisions about what weapons should be acquired, because those weapons should be supportive of whatever your strategy should be. I felt that was a serious weakness. It was really that feeling that came into the work of our recent Commission, in which we established a procedure which was intended to make it possible to establish a better international policy, and the military strategy to support that policy; and from that the weapons and force complement you need to support that military strategy. I thought that whole procedure was missing. I think that probably the most important work of the Commission was that we got that changed, with the support of Goldwater and Nichols on the legislation.

Matloff: Would this affect the position of the Deputy Secretary of Defense?

Packard: Yes, because that established an Under Secretary for Acquisition, which essentially said that the Deputy job should be divided into two pieces; one relating to acquisition and the other relating to the other aspects of the job. That is in place. It gave the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs authority to be the sole military advisor to the President. It established a Vice Chairman, who had, among other things, a responsibility to represent the unified commands around the world, because those unified commands were out there to do the fighting but didn't have any mechanism to input into the forces or the equipment. That whole area that we recommended

restructuring in this latest Commission was in large part related to some of my concerns that I had when I was there.

Goldberg: Do you think it possible to develop any kind of guidance that would delineate the province of OSD versus the military services? Drawing that line has been the problem from the beginning.

Packard: It's difficult to do, but I am optimistic. I think that they are moving in a better direction now. It is interesting that the services buy some of this, not all of it; but they also recognize that if they were given more flexibility and better guidance, they could do a better job. A lot of the details that we talked about are still being supported over there--the two-year budget cycle, for example. That was something that everybody in the Department realized was a big improvement, because they go over the same thing every year and it is a complete waste of time to do it that often. I think that some improvements are being made, but it is a big bureaucracy, and the services have a long tradition, especially the Navy. You're not going to revolutionize it overnight.

Goldberg: It's not overnight; it's over forty years.

Packard: I think the hopeful situation now is that we have a change in the worldwide confrontation between the Soviets and the United States; between communism and freedom. I think that movement is permanent; I don't think it's going to go back. It is going to take some time for that to change, too. As I see it, President-elect Bush has an unusual opportunity to make an important contribution here, and I hope that he will support some movement in that direction. Looking back at the work of the Commission, I think we realized that it would not be easy to make a change during an administration, for the reason that people over there had been working hard and doing the best job they could. For a bunch of outsiders to come in and tell them they ought to do something else, it is not realistic to expect them to accept that.

Goldberg: That is the way it usually is with commissions. They are outsiders, and they are appointed because they are outsiders.

Packard: And that's why they don't ever do any good. Major change can be made on the change of administration, if they set these things up right to begin with. If they don't, then not much is going to change. For that reason I've been able to talk with President-elect George Bush about this and encourage him to get the structure top side and get a commitment to do these things. If the President backs this and makes it a major priority, something can be done. Weinberger made a legalistic approach, to put in more inspectors, inspector generals, and auditors, and root out the waste and fraud. The trouble is, that stuff is relatively unimportant in terms of the big things they're throwing money away on.

Goldberg: He didn't even want an Inspector General to begin with.

Matloff: How did you get selected to head the Blue Ribbon Commission on Defense Management? What was the background of your appointment?

Packard: The general background was that there was a great deal of concern about the way the Pentagon was handling affairs. There were stories of waste; the contractors were unhappy; the people on the Hill were unhappy. Cap was able to get a substantial amount of money out of Congress during the first four years. It was a good thing that he did, because it increased our strength by about 50 percent in the real level of the defense budget and that, without a doubt, made it possible for us to make some progress in our negotiations with the Soviet Union. I am not critical of Cap in terms of his overall contribution. I think that he did a very important job. But he didn't manage it very well; that was my concern. He turned the services loose and that made the competition, if anything, worse than it was before. The services, particularly the Navy, threw their weight around, and put in some second sources and did some other things that probably will cause trouble later on. The whole thing was not very well done.

Matloff: Did you receive any instructions or directives from the President when you took this position?

Packard: The President and Cap wanted the Commission to come in, look things over, and tell everybody that everything was fine and not to worry. If we had done that, we would have had no credibility whatsoever. I concluded that if we were going to make any contribution, we had to find a constructive contribution to make. We approached it with the idea that we ought to look at the problem, and it turned out that a lot of those high-priced spare parts weren't all that important and didn't add up to a lot of money compared to a lot of other things. I think that probably the Commission did get the public attention off some sensational things and on to some more important things. The opinion of the public about the Defense Department is not very favorable. The general public thinks that 40-50 percent of the money is wasted. That's a fact of life and it is very difficult to change that.

Goldberg: Who was responsible for your appointment to the Commission?

Packard: I don't know. I wasn't terribly enthusiastic about it, but the President asked me to do it and it was something I couldn't refuse.

Matloff: Let me give you some quotes from the reports that the Commission put out. For example, the February 28, 1986, Interim Report said, "the present structure" [of DoD] was established by President Eisenhower in 1958" [but that] "His proposed reforms. . . were not fully accomplished." Reference was made to President Eisenhower's "sound purposes." In what sense were they not accomplished?

Packard: Remember that in his farewell address he made reference to the dangers in the military industrial system. What he was referring to was the fact that the services and the contractors were ganging up together and pushing weapons in which they had a special interest. Those weapons were generally not designed properly for a unified operation, and it was President Eisenhower's feeling that all

military operations in the future would be unified operations, not individual service operations. Therefore, the structure should be such as to integrate the service planning into an overall strategy. That wasn't done. The Navy was strong enough to get Congress to refuse to go that far, at the end of the Eisenhower administration, and so they didn't get the organization set up properly. That's what we tried to do; to get that corrected to what I thought it should have been in the first place. I think the rest of the Commissioners were generally supportive. We talked to some of the people who had worked with President Eisenhower at the time, and I think we had a fairly good feeling of what he wanted to do and what he did not get done. That had an influence on what we tried to do.

Matloff: There's an interesting statement in the final report of June 1986, in reference to Congress's review and oversight of the Defense budget:

"Congressional focus is myopic and misdirected." Do you recall why that was put in?

Packard: I think some of the members of Congress feel the same way about it, the Senate Armed Service Committee in particular, and Goldwater, Nunn, and the others. It really had to do with the fact that they look at all the detailed line items in the budget, and they don't have an opportunity to give consideration to overall strategy and the more important issues. There were two ways in which we thought that could be improved. One was by having this procedure so that the President would look at the overall international objectives of the country and establish through this procedure the military policy and the military forces. But we also thought that the two-year budget would help in this and that that would enable the committees in Congress to look at the details one year and at the overall larger issues in the intermediate years. That seemed to me to be a way to eliminate some of the problems that have been built up over time and get the Congress out of micromanagement, let them think about the larger issues, and let the management be done over at the Pentagon.

Goldberg: A third approach is to have the Senators and Representatives cut their office and committee staffs by about two-thirds. That would help a great deal on the micromanagement side.

Packard: You are absolutely right. The committees were not too bad when I was there; we got along fairly well with them. There were the four committees--the Armed Services Committee, the Appropriations Committee, the Foreign Affairs committees, and some others. With the number of reports and hearings these days, people don't have time to do anything else.

Goldberg: The size of these committees and staffs has grown enormously in the last 20 years. They have multiplied five times over.

Packard: And the staffs dictate a lot of the things that the committees do.

Matloff: You mentioned the warning by General Eisenhower about the military-industrial complex. Did you share his concern?

Packard: As a matter of fact, there is a problem there, without any question. You could see this in a lot of the individual programs, where certain contractors worked more closely with certain services: Grumman worked closely with the Navy, Lockheed with the Air Force, and so on. There was almost what you could call collusion between the service people and the contractors. A certain amount of communication is very important, but there is a tremendous pressure to try to get that next contract, because these companies have big organizations and it takes a lot of money to keep them going. They have a big incentive to push their own ideas and get their program adopted rather than somebody else's program. A lot of the new weapons designs come from the contractors. They are the ones that know how to make the equipment; they have access to the technology. So there is a problem there.

Matloff: It strikes me, in my reading of the report of the commission, that the changes would affect the role and functions of not only the DoD but also the President, Congress, the NSC, the whole national security apparatus.

Packard: We didn't want to leave anybody out.

Matloff: To date, have you been satisfied with the results of the implementation in Defense?

Packard: Obviously, it hasn't been implemented to anywhere near the extent that I hoped it might be. I realize that there are a lot of commissions and not very many of them do any good, anyway. Perhaps it has been a little bit better than some of the other commissions. I am hopeful that President Bush will give us support. He said he would, in the campaign, and I have talked with him since. I think that he can bring about some improvements.

Matloff: Did you leave the Deputy SecDef position with any disappointments, possibly with any things that were left unfinished?

Packard: I guess that there were a lot of disappointments. If I had known as much when I began as when I left, I probably could have done better.

Matloff: How would you characterize the styles, personalities, and effectiveness of the top officials with whom you worked during your service in the Department; for example, SecDef Laird--what was it like to work with him?

Packard: As he himself said, he is a professional politician. That probably defines his style as much as anything else. He spent a long time up on the Hill and had a very good relationship with his associates on both sides of the aisle. He had a pragmatic approach to things, I think, and realized that everything in Washington has a political dimension. I didn't understand that in the beginning, perhaps as well as I might have.

Matloff: How about the JCS Chairmen, Gen. Wheeler and Adm. Moorer?

Packard: I thought that I had a good rapport with the Joint Chiefs. Gen. Wheeler and I worked together on a lot of things and I came to have great respect and admiration for him. I thought that he was an outstanding gentleman and very capable in every way. Tom Moorer had a bit more fire and energy. We had some concern about whether Tom would be the best choice for the chairman, but he turned out very well. I got to know the Joint Chiefs and liked them all personally. I used to invite them to California for a hunting weekend with me; we had a good relationship.

Matloff: You had General Westmoreland, Admiral Zumwalt, and McConnell and Ryan in the Air Force.

Packard: They were all different. I got well acquainted with all of them. I didn't always agree with what they were doing, and I am sure they did not always agree with what I wanted to do, but we got along fairly well.

Matloff: Do you have any comments about previous Secretaries of Defense with whom you may have had some dealings? How about Gates, McNamara, or Clifford?

Packard: I knew Tom Gates to some extent, because he had been involved in the Business Council, and I knew Neil McElroy also, before him. They were older than I, and I looked up to them. I didn't really know McNamara at all well. I knew him mainly by reputation, not by personal contacts. Clifford was there for a short time. We talked about a number of issues, and he met with Mel and me and discussed what programs we thought he might go ahead with and which ones we might have. We had a good relationship with him. He and Paul Nitze were helpful in getting us started.

Goldberg: Clifford was certainly favorably disposed toward Vietnamization of the war, wasn't he?

Packard: I don't think that we got into that issue very much, but I think that McNamara and the others were generally supportive of Vietnamization by that time. I think that they all realized that we had made a mistake of some kind.

Matloff: How about Secretary of State William Rogers?

Packard: I didn't know him before I came back here, but we got well acquainted. He was a charming and capable man. He had not had very much experience in international affairs and Henry Kissinger kind of called the tune in that period.

Matloff: How about your relations with Kissinger? What were your impressions of him?

Packard: I developed a very high regard for Kissinger. He had been a scholar of international relations for a long time. He had his own theories, which seemed to me to be reasonably rational. He was very thorough in the work he did. I was particularly impressed that when we addressed a subject, he wanted to be sure we knew all we could about it before we made up our minds. I developed a great respect for him.

Matloff: Can you shed any light on the Laird-Kissinger relationship?

Packard: I think that got a little bit off the track, partly because Mel wanted to proceed with the withdrawal of troops faster than Kissinger wanted to. They would make a decision over at the White House about the next troop withdrawal package that we presented to them, and Mel would push it as far as he thought he could get away with. Kissinger, Rogers, and the President thought that they were going to be able to conclude the war by negotiation, and I did not agree with that. I didn't think that could be done, but that was their approach. They didn't want the Vietnamization to be pushed too hard because they thought that it might undercut their negotiations. I took a different view, because I was quite sure that if we could get Vietnamization to the point where it looked like it was going to work, then it would help our negotiation, rather than otherwise. That was a difference in views,

and I'm not enough of an expert.

Matloff: How about the Nixon-Laird relationship? Were you aware of any differences of views there?

Packard: I was aware of that, because during the first few months we were there Laird would talk to the President on the phone almost every day. Kissinger got in between them somehow, and that's about what happened. I don't look on that as any serious problem.

Matloff: How about your impression of Nixon as a director of national security policy and as a commander-in-chief?

Packard: Nixon had a lot of experience in international affairs before he came to the presidency, and he was probably as well prepared in that field as any recent president. I think that he understood the relationship with the Soviet Union, the allies, and the whole international field. He was a difficult person to get to know. I saw him fairly often, sometimes on some direct negotiations, but I never felt that I got to know him too well. I think that his personality was a little bit aloof. He didn't like criticism, which is also true of a lot of other people. He was particularly concerned about the opposition of some scientists to his policies, and he downgraded the scientific inputs partly for that reason. He was an unusual person; however, I think history will record him as being very capable in the international field and with making some important contributions, particularly the opening up of relationships with China and the whole detente approach with the Soviet Union, which I think was the right way to go. All in all, I think he made a good contribution, but the Watergate affair got everything all confused in that period.

Matloff: You were away by the time that broke, out of the Department.

Packard: I was glad that I was.

Matloff: Would you comment on any of the other Presidents with whom you had dealings, including the recent one, in connection with national security policy, particularly?

Packard: I have some impressions, for what they are worth. I thought that Jimmy Carter was very naive about the whole international environment, particularly when he came to office. I think that he found that the Soviets are tough people to deal with and changed his approach toward the end of his regime. Reagan came in with a very strong anti-communist background. He talked about "the evil empire" and came in with a very hard line. They killed that big tractor deal with the Soviet Union and got some hardliners in there, particularly Richard Perle in the Defense Department. They went overboard, I think, in the other direction, and now, at the end of his regime, he's come back again, too. So I guess one thing you can conclude from that is that recent presidents, with the exception of Nixon, have not come into office with a very good understanding of all aspects of international involvement. Bush should probably be a little better in that regard; he's had contact with it over a longer period of time. Reagan did not; he came in with a different viewpoint. I don't think there is anything you can do about that. The president has certain virtues that get him elected, and sometimes they match the needs of the day and sometimes they don't.

Matloff: Could you judge how President Reagan reacted to the Blue Ribbon Commission report? Did you find him interested and knowledgeable?

Packard: He was interested, and, as you know, he instructed the administration to implement the report. I don't think that he really got involved in enough details to know very much about what we were recommending. A president can't be involved in all the details. But I think that he recognized that there were some good recommendations and that he did try to implement them.

Goldberg: Secretary Weinberger didn't react favorably at all, did he?

Packard: Not at that time, but I notice that since then he has come out recommending some of the recommendations be implemented. I think it was largely that Cap looked on this as personal criticism. I talked to him about this, and he was very sensitive about being criticized. I tried very hard to phrase our introductory letters to give him credit, and not blame him personally for these problems, because he wasn't personally responsible for them. But he wanted us to come in and tell everybody that there weren't any problems and forget about them. That would have been a disservice to him, I am sure.

Goldberg: He has been remarkably singleminded in defending his whole tenure in office and everything that was done.

Packard: He takes the position that the United States should be able to afford the military capability needed to meet the threat. He even goes further and says that we have the responsibility to provide that military capability. The problem is: how do you define the threat, and who defines it? That is the big issue. If you take the position of the services in their most conservative approach, it makes the threat look pretty big. So it is a different problem than that, and there are limits to what we can do. Our economic strength is important, and our influence around the world is not determined solely by our military capability, but also by a lot of other things.

Goldberg: Eisenhower would be looking at these last eight or ten years with amazement, wouldn't he, considering his approach to all that?

Packard: It is interesting, if you go back and read about General Marshall and about Eisenhower, they were fooled by the Soviets, too. During the blockade of Berlin, Marshall thought if he could only go over and talk to Stalin, they could get it settled. Marshall also went over to China thinking that he could talk to people over there and solve the problems.

Matloff: He came away from his experience in China very disillusioned.

Packard: We were all badly fooled by the Soviets after the war. President Roosevelt particularly--that whole Yalta agreement--he was taken to the cleaners.

Matloff: Marshall approached the China question as if they were Republicans and Democrats--if he could get them all together, some way or other, they would have a viable system.

Are there any other questions that we should ask you about your administration in the Deputy Secretary's role or other aspects of your work in national security affairs that we have not asked?

Packard: I think you have asked enough.

Matloff: I speak for both of us, then, in thanking you for your cooperation, insights, and recollections.

Packard: It's always interesting to talk about these things.

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