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Page determined to be Unclassified  
Reviewed Chief, RDD, WHS  
IAW EO 13526, Section 3.5  
Date: JUL 24 2013

Oral History Interview

with

Admiral George W. Anderson  
Chief of Naval Operations, 1961 to 1963

conducted on

May 17, 1984

by

Dr. Maurice Matloff and Dr. Roger Trask

Office of the Secretary of Defense 5450552  
Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS aul  
Date: 01/24/2013 Authority: EO 13526  
Declassify: X Deny in Full: \_\_\_\_\_  
Declassify in Part: \_\_\_\_\_  
Reason: \_\_\_\_\_  
MDR: 13-M-1091

OSD Historical Office  
The Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20301

13-M-1091

Matloff: This is an oral history interview with Admiral George W. Anderson, Jr., held in his home in Washington, D.C., on May 17, 1984, at 10 A.M. Participating in the interview are Dr. Roger Trask and Dr. Maurice Matloff of the OSD Historical Office. The interview is being recorded on tape, and a copy of the transcript will be sent to Admiral Anderson for his review.

We shall focus on your role as Chief of Naval Operations and member of the JCS in this interview, but I should first like to direct your attention toward certain factors in your earlier background and experience relevant to the history of OSD and national security policy in the post-World War II era.

Anderson: My previous history before becoming Chief of Naval Operations was as follows: I grew up in Brooklyn, New York, and at the age of 16 was appointed to the Naval Academy, in the class of 1927. On graduation from the Naval Academy, I was assigned to the light cruiser USS CINCINNATI, a 7500 ton cruiser on duty out on the China station with the Asiatic fleet. Along with other classmates of mine, I went to aviation training at the Naval Academy that summer and then went out to the Asiatic fleet on the USS SHOREMONT, where I joined the ship and we cruised around in the Philippines and ended up in the Chinese mainland at Tsingtao and Shanghai in the autumn of 1927. I came back in the spring of 1928 on the CINCINNATI. We stopped for fleet maneuvers in Hawaii and continued to California, where we picked up a naval blue-jacket battalion to take down to Nicaragua to

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supervise the elections. Then we came around to the East Coast and became a part of the US Atlantic Fleet. In 1929 I had aviation training at the Naval Air Station in Norfolk, and then went down to Pensacola for further flight training. During the time I was on the CINCINNATI I had wide experience, both on deck at sea and in port and in the engineering department, which was to prove very valuable to me later on in my naval career. At Pensacola I flew an old stick and wire training plane and completed the training in the autumn of 1930. I was ordered to the Commander of Destroyers, Atlantic Fleet, Aviation Unit, headquartered on the USS CONCORD, and then to the USS RALEIGH. We operated on the East Coast down in the Caribbean and went around to the West Coast. From there I had a normal career in naval aviation: land-planes, sea-planes of the scouting fleet; operating with destroyers. The Commander of Destroyers at that time was ADM W. D. Leahy, later the aide to President Roosevelt.

Thereafter I was transferred to the Naval Air Station, Norfolk, where I was in the experimental flight test division and involved with the accelerated service tests of aircraft. In 1933 I was married at the Norfolk Air Station and in 1935 I went to California, where I was assigned to Fighting Squadron 2 of the USS LEXINGTON. Then I came back as a Landing Signal Officer to put the new YORKTOWN in commission. I also had duty in patrol planes at the Naval Air Station, Seattle. On my return I was assigned duty at the Navy Department in Washington,

just about the time the Germans broke into France in 1940, soon after the outbreak of the war in Europe.

I spent the first part of the war in Europe, in charge of the naval aviation aircraft program, the expansion program of both patrol planes and carrier aircraft. I worked very closely with the British in the allocation of aircraft to the allies. In 1943 I made a trip to Guadalcanal, and there I extricated myself from duty in the Plans Division in the Bureau of Aeronautics and was assigned as the navigator of the new USS YORKTOWN, the new carrier CB10. We put that ship in commission, went to the Pacific, and participated in the first aircraft operations against the Japanese. Unfortunately, at that time I was transferred to the staff of Air Force Pacific Fleet as the plans officer and then over to the staff of Admiral Nimitz, the Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, as the assistant to Admiral John Towers, who was the deputy CINCPAC--basically in charge of logistics. During the expansion in the Pacific I was very active in staff work for Admiral Towers and on behalf of Admiral Nimitz and then was transferred to Admiral King's staff in Washington, just before the end of the war. I had naturally wanted to get to sea in command of a small aircraft carrier, but Admiral Towers gave me very good advice and said, "No, go back; this war's going to be over very shortly, and at the end of the war you will be eligible for a good command in the new Navy--the post-war Navy." He was very sage in his advice. After VJ-Day I continued duty in the Joint War Plans Division of the Joint Staff,

the Plans Division of the CNO, and in 1948 I was detached and got command of the USS MINDORO, a small aircraft carrier engaged in antisubmarine warfare development in the Atlantic Fleet.

Matloff: You were back in Washington in the Navy Department at just about the time the movement for unification of the services was beginning to get rolling. With respect to that movement, after World War II, did you play any role in the period of 1945-1947 in preparing the Navy's position? Were your views consulted in any way? Were you drawn in on that problem?

Anderson: Very definitely. I was working under Admiral Forrest Sherman, in the Plans Division of the Chief of Naval Operations, and very much involved with General Norstad in the preparation of the unification plans under Secretary Forrestal. As a matter of fact, I was advisor to the staff of the conferees of the House of Representatives with the Senate in compiling the final legislation of the Security Act of 1947.

Matloff: How did you view that act as it affected military organization and the Navy's position in particular?

Anderson: We had very strong support up in the Congress from Congressman Stub Cole, and we arranged for the safeguards for naval aviation and the Marine Corps, which were incorporated in that act. I was not particularly enthusiastic about the creation of the separate air force, but felt that the Navy's position was safeguarded in the protection of our role.

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Matloff: How about such institutions as the National Security Council?

Anderson: I thought that the broad aspects of the act were very good, including the incorporation of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Matloff: Is this what brought you into contact with Secretary Forrestal, first in the Navy, and possibly in Defense? Did you have any relations with him in both those capacities?

Anderson: Yes.

Matloff: Searching the background of your record, I learned that in 1951 you were assigned at the request of General Eisenhower, the top commander in NATO, to the new alliance as the senior American officer for plans and operations on the staff of SACEUR. This was a rather unusual assignment, for a naval officer to be chosen by the top Army people for that position. Do you recall the background of that appointment and how that came about?

Anderson: Yes. General Eisenhower had not yet been appointed as SACEUR, and I was the operations officer of the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean, which was a very enviable job for a young captain at that time. General Gruenther, who was working for the Army at that time in Washington, contacted Admiral Sherman and said that he wanted a very good officer to report to the staff of the Supreme Allied Commander when appointed. Admiral Sherman said, "I'll give you the best one I can," and ordered me detached from my duty as operations officer to the Sixth Fleet. I remember that occasion very well. It was a Sunday morning and I was going down to Naples. I was in Rome and

came out of an audience with the Pope and found out there was a message detaching me from my duty as staff operations officer and ordering me to report immediately to Admiral Gerald Wright in Brussels, Belgium. A qualified relief would be appointed to relieve me as soon as practicable, and I was assigned to duty on the staff of the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe when appointed. I went to Brussels on the day the announcement was made that General Eisenhower was going to take over as SACEUR. I got in an airplane and went to Paris with General Gruenther. He said, "General Eisenhower will be over here in January, and there will be officers reporting for the staff. You've got to set this thing up and help the people coming in." We set up the staff during the Christmas holidays. About that time the Chinese came into Korea. We worked on the organization of SHAPE, at that time in the Hotel Astoria, Paris, and then we moved down to the new headquarters when it was established. I was very close to General Eisenhower, and when he was relieved by General Ridgway in 1952, I was detached at the same time. I got command of the FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, a large aircraft carrier, and went down to the Sixth Fleet in that command.

Matloff: Had you known General Eisenhower before?

Anderson: I made a trip over to Europe with him in 1942, before he was appointed to SHAEF.

Matloff: During World War II, before he went over to head the ETO theater?

Anderson: Yes.

Matloff: In your association with General Eisenhower in his capacity as SACEUR--did you ever have any discussions with him about his views of the alliance? Did he see this alliance as long term, as permanent?

Anderson: He was very strong behind the alliance and the augmentation of U.S. forces in Europe. A large augmentation was to be temporary, until we could get the reorganization and the rearmament of Germany, which was essential to the whole operation, and then we could reduce U.S. forces over there.

Matloff: He didn't see it as a long-term, large-scale American commitment with troops?

Anderson: He figured that the large American commitment would be reduced as the Europeans recuperated from World War II damage, reorganized, and built up their own strength.

Matloff: How did you see the threat to NATO, when you went over as plans and operations officer? Where did you see the primary threat to the alliance?

Anderson: We saw a threat to the alliance through the north German plain, but also through the flanks. General Eisenhower's view was that we could build up strength in the flanks. He would have the Sixth Fleet of the U.S. Navy in the Mediterranean, the British fleet in the North Sea area, and other allied forces up there.

Matloff: You saw it as more than the overt threat of the Russian army going against the center?

Anderson: Yes, but the defense of it was to be through the flanks.



Matloff: Did you have any dealings with top officials in OSD in your capacity at SHAPE? Anyone in particular that you remember dealing with?

Trask: General Marshall for a while, and then Mr. Lovett as Sec/Defts?

Anderson: They all came over to Europe.

Matloff: Any important problems or differences with the allies in that period that you got drawn in on?

Anderson: Yes. We had the problem of getting the command straightened out in the Mediterranean and southern Europe, which was a problem with the British. General Eisenhower got very annoyed with the parochial aspirations of all the allied commanders over there. As a matter of fact, he said that if he had to kow-tow to all the selfish demands of those people, the thing wouldn't work. They had to subordinate their parochial interests to the common good.

Matloff: A little further along in your career, in 1953, when Eisenhower had become President, and Admiral Radford was the new Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, you were selected to be Radford's special assistant. I'd like to focus on some of the relationships in JCS and OSD in that period. What was Radford's relationship, as you saw it, with Secretary of Defense Wilson?

Anderson: Very close. I thought the relationships of Radford with the White House and with the Secretary of Defense were excellent.

Matloff: How about with the Joint Chiefs of Staff?

Anderson: First of all, he had problems with Ridgway of the Army. Eisenhower had gotten the good new chiefs together before they took

office and they agreed to a general concept. Then, when they took office, particularly Ridgway, who was Chief of Staff of the Army, said that those agreements had to be reconsidered because he had his statutory responsibilities as Chief of Staff of the Army. So it was a little difficult.

Matloff: How about Radford's relationship with Secretary of State Dulles?

Anderson: Excellent.

Matloff: Who was influencing whom in the period of talk about brinkmanship, massive retaliation, and the like?

Anderson: We never heard much of the term "massive retaliation" at that time.

Matloff: How about the question of splits that came up in the JCS? What was the attitude of Radford and Wilson towards splits in the JCS? How were those handled? Whom did they back usually?

Anderson: They usually contacted the President and backed the Chairman.

Matloff: In your own capacity as special assistant, did you have any dealings with officials in OSD?

Anderson: Yes. They had Struve Hensel down there, and Roger Keyes was the deputy.

Matloff: What was the nature of your dealings with them?

Anderson: Primarily reconciling all the conflicting views and preparing position papers for the Chairman.

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Matloff: Were you still in the post when the French were having their trouble with Dien Bien Phu in Indochina? At the time of that crisis, who recommended what, among the Joint Chiefs of Staff? There was apparently a difference of views between Ridgway and Radford at that time. Can you shed any light on what those differences were?

Trask: Isn't it reported that Radford, for example, favored U.S. intervention with military forces?

Matloff: Even with an air strike. Ridgway apparently disagreed.

Anderson: That's right.

Matloff: Did you have any feelings on that question? on what the American role should be, if any, in connection with the Dien Bien Phu crisis? Eventually the question got up to the presidential level and the President had to make a decision.

Anderson: We were going over to one of the SHAPE exercises in Paris. I went with Admiral Radford, and he met with Dulles and with the French Chiefs of Staff. Then we went to London and met with the British Chiefs of Staff and had their views. Basically the position of the United States was that we would not get involved in the affair, unless there was going to be full support of our allies.

Matloff: I gather that this was the position taken by the President?

Anderson: Yes.

Matloff: The question is whether he was influenced by General Ridgway in this case. The General says that he had sent over a team of logistics experts. He thought that if there had been a carrier air strike

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against Dien Bien Phu, ground troops would have been drawn in inevitably. That's why he was opposing the carrier air strike that, I gather, Admiral Radford favored. This logistics team reported that it would not be feasible to support a large-scale ground operation to help the French, and therefore he recommended against it. His feeling, like yours, is that the fact that the allies, particularly the British, were not interested in coming in swayed the President.

Trask: Did your visits to the British and French Chiefs of Staff really determine their position and was that influential in Eisenhower's decision? This was the major input that he had, wasn't it?

Anderson: Also, we met with Churchill one night. The night before we were to come back, we met with the British Chiefs of Staff and Admiral Radford and I had dinner at Chequers with Winston Churchill. I'll never forget that dinner. Churchill said that he always knew how to take care of things until this "thing" came along (the "thing" was the fusion weapon, the hydrogen bomb), and that the only way to solve this problem was for him (Churchill) and Ike to sit down with the Russians and solve the whole thing, because very soon Winston was going to have to meet his maker. I had to dictate the report of this whole conversation in the airplane coming back to Washington, and the conclusion was that the last thing the United States wanted was to have Churchill, in the frame of mind where he's going to have to meet his maker, at a summit meeting.

Matloff: Your visit with Churchill was directly related to the Dien Bien Phu crisis? Was the Secretary of State along or was it handled purely from military channels?

Anderson: Military.

Matloff: In regard to your assignments in the Pacific in the 1950s, when you were back to duty with the ships. In 1955, as commander of the Taiwan Patrol Force and Chief of the Joint Staff of the Pacific Theater Command were you wearing two hats?

Anderson: No, the latter followed.

Matloff: Then in 1957 as Chief of Staff to the Commander in Chief, Pacific theater?

Anderson: That's right.

Matloff: Here we're in the period where we were operating with unified commands in the theater. What conclusions did you draw as a result of your experiences in these capacities about the operations of unified command in the theater? Were they working? Were the directions from Washington effective? Was there any difficulty in the channels of control and direction?

Anderson: I felt very strongly that the Commander in Chief, Pacific, should not at the same time be the Commander in Chief, Pacific fleet. Admiral Stump, who was CINCPAC, was also CINCPAC Fleet. This was a disturbing factor to the Army and the Air Force, and, furthermore, it made him take more of a parochial view on the role of the Pacific commander than he should have had. It put too much influence out in the

fleet duties. As a matter of fact, when we moved from the headquarters at Makalapa, which was the fleet headquarters, to Camp Smith, the joint headquarters, Admiral Stump went on sort of a sit-down strike and we couldn't get him to move up.

Matloff: How about relations with the Defense Department in Washington--did the coordination seem to be working effectively?

Anderson: Yes.

Matloff: Did you come away from those experiences with any conclusions about the role of the Pacific in United States policy and strategy? How important was it going to be? What kind of warfare the United States might have to be prepared for? What role the Navy might have to play in such warfare?

Anderson: Yes, and I think the Pacific command was set up on that basis. We had local commanders who would concentrate on the so-called ground and local air defense; and then the fleet, which was in a more mobile position, would be flexible to swat any particular area from Korea on down to Indochina. I think that the command relationships held up very well in subsequent operations.

Matloff: Let me take you to 1958 now. At this point you leave the Pacific and are back in the Mediterranean as Commander of Carrier Division Six.

Anderson: Yes. When I was made Vice Admiral as Chief of Staff, CINCPAC, I told Admiral Burke that when that duty was over, I wanted to revert, get command of a carrier division, and get back into the

Mediterranean, which was Carrier Division Six. I had at that time a very serious physical problem and came back to Bethesda and was reverted in rank from Vice to Rear Admiral. When I got clearance from the hospital, I was very happy to get command of Carrier Division Six, and went to Europe and took over Carrier Division Six down in the Sixth Fleet with my flag on the Saratoga and the Essex. I was down there at the time of the intervention in Lebanon.

Matloff: You almost immediately became involved in the Lebanon landings. What was your role in preparing and executing those landings?

Anderson: To be able to support the Marines and Army troops that went into the landings down there. The carrier division was to provide reconnaissance, photograph, and furnish ground support to the troops. Actually, we didn't have to fire any weapons.

Matloff: Had there been much pre-planning before the landings took place? Had there been much contingency planning for such an operation?

Anderson: I would say not a great deal.

Matloff: Any relations with CNO and OSD during those landings?

Anderson: No. I would say that as far as those operations were concerned, they were pretty well handled by the military.

Matloff: As you look back on it, how do you account for this successful example of "gunboat diplomacy" as it's called, in contrast to the debacle of the British and the French in the bungling at Suez just two years before? Why was this one carried off so well, and the other one bungled?

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Anderson: I never thought about it.

Matloff: On then to when you became commander of the Sixth Fleet in 1959. You've moved up to the top post.

Anderson: I came back and received orders to command the Sixth Fleet and I went over and took command of that fleet in June of 1959.

Matloff: In the Sixth Fleet you were getting involved again with NATO. What problems did you encounter in connection with the alliance?

Anderson: The thing that always stands out in my mind is that, whether we were running U.S. or NATO exercises, we always went to exactly the same spot. So the Russians had very adequate ideas of what the United States would do in an emergency. That's not what we were going to do. That was the lesson I had learned from Curt LeMay one time, when he was in command of the strategic air operations of the 20th Air Force.

Matloff: Did you have any relations with the Secretary of Defense or other top officials of OSD in this capacity as Sixth Fleet commander? Do you recall any dealings on any problems with them at all?

Anderson: No, except they always wondered about how the fleet would survive. One reason that it would survive was that we weren't going to do things exactly the way the Russians expected us to do them. We weren't always going to run every time right to the center of the Ionian Sea.

Matloff: Now to the main focus of our attention in the rest of the interview: the role as Chief of Naval Operations and member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. First, the question of the background of the



appointment as Chief of Naval Operations. What were the circumstances of that appointment? How did you first learn about it, and what instructions, or directives, written or oral, were given to you and by whom?

Anderson: I got a directive from Admiral Burke to be prepared to come back to Washington to appear before the Secretary of Defense. We'd all heard that they were going through this process of selecting who was going to be the new Chief of Naval Operations to relieve Admiral Burke. I came back with Admiral Page Smith, who was my immediate U.S. boss in London, in the spring of 1961. I was called to meet John Connally, the Secretary of the Navy, and go up to meet Mr. McNamara, the Secretary of Defense; then went back to my job over at the Sixth Fleet. I got a personal message from Admiral Burke telling me to be prepared to turn over the Sixth Fleet and come back to Washington, where I was going to be the Chief of Naval Operations as his relief in June. I came back and met the Secretary of the Navy, who asked me, "Who should be the Commander of the Sixth Fleet?" I nominated Admiral McDonald, whom I had known over there. I went through the local preparations of getting briefed as CNO.

Matloff: Who in particular had recommended you for the post? Burke has written that he didn't want to give one name; that he refused. You were on a very select list that he had.

Anderson: I think that influential in this was the fact that Paul Fay, the Under Secretary of the Navy, had come over from Washington

to the Sixth Fleet. While the subject didn't come up with me, I was informed that he telephoned back to Washington and said that Anderson was the guy he wanted. Of course, he was very close to President Kennedy.

Matloff: In orienting or briefing you on the new assignment, did the President have anything to say to you directly? Was it handled by the Secretary of Defense? or the Secretary of the Navy?

Anderson: The Secretary of the Navy, primarily.

Trask: Did you see the President at any time during this period when the appointment was being made?

Anderson: Not that I recall.

Matloff: Had you known the President before?

Anderson: That was the first time.

Matloff: How about Secretary of Defense McNamara?

Anderson: I had not known him before.

Matloff: Connally also?

Anderson: I more or less knew Connally.

Matloff: You had been elevated over ten senior admirals to be CNO, which is quite an unusual occurrence. Do you know how Kennedy reacted to this recommendation, that came both from the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of the Navy, that you be given the position?

Anderson: No.

Matloff: Were any conditions asked of you when you took over the post?

Anderson: No conditions were asked of me at that time.

Matloff: Did you set any conditions?

Anderson: No.

Matloff: About the role itself--what problems did you face when you took over and what priorities did you set for yourself or were possibly set for you by higher authority in handling your functions?

Anderson: The first year I was to be CNO I set as a goal for myself to make everything we had work to its full potential. The second year it was that everything is important, that every person and every job are important--to have teamwork.

Matloff: Were any priorities handed down to you, either by the Secretary of Defense or Secretary of the Navy, or even by higher authority?

Anderson: Yes. Unfortunately, John Connally telephoned me about Christmas-time, saying he wanted me to know first that he was going to leave as Secretary of the Navy and run for governor of Texas. He said that he was very sorry because he thought that we could work very well together, which we did. Connally was a very bright man. He knew Washington thoroughly. He would always defer to the CNO for military advice, and we got along fine together. Then he said that he thought I would be very pleased by his relief, who was going to be Fred Korth. I felt that McNamara was sort of pleased to have Connally out of the way, because Connally knew Washington very well and knew he could handle the situation very well, and he did. Connally was very frank with me. He said about McNamara's attitude, for example, that McNamara expected me to keep track of LeMay, to keep the Air

Force under control. I said that I had a big enough job to do running the Navy, without trying to get involved in the Air Force operations. Also, I had very little regard for the integrity of McNamara because, only about three weeks after I had been in the office, I found out that McNamara's concept of the truth was not what those in the military had--over a relatively minor, inconsequential matter. So I had no personal respect for McNamara in terms of integrity.

Matloff: Did your conception of your role change with the leaving of Connally? Did that affect your role, as you saw it?

Anderson: I had greater responsibility then. I realized that I had to stick up for the Navy more than I did when Connally was there because Korth was sort of a weak individual.

Matloff: So there was a change in your conception of your position.

Anderson: I had to be in a stronger position.

Matloff: Let me take you now to service differences during the period of CNO. How serious a problem was interservice rivalry for you during your tenure as CNO?

Anderson: I didn't think the interservice problem was particularly serious to me. I got along very well with LeMay.

Matloff: How about the question of roles and missions? Were there differences of views among the service chiefs about the roles and missions of the respective services?

Anderson: They were relatively quiescent at that time.

Matloff: This is then different from the period when Taylor had been Army Chief of Staff. He had talked about the "Babylonian captivity" of the Army. You weren't encountering any such problems?

Anderson: I would sit across the table from LeMay and Taylor, and Taylor was deaf in one ear and LeMay deaf in the opposite ear and they would have two separate conversations going on. It was sort of amusing. The only trouble was that Taylor was so vain that he'd never wear a hearing aid. LeMay would go to the White House and he'd put on a hearing aid.

Matloff: Let's talk about the budget and its impact on the services. Who set the budgetary ceilings for Defense in this period, when you were in charge of the Navy? I'm trying to arrive at the power of the Secretary of Defense, whether there had been any change in this matter of setting budget ceilings. Were you aware of any changes that had gone on in this period with McNamara in charge? Was the Bureau of the Budget playing a heavy role? the White House?

Anderson: I think that it was McNamara.

Matloff: What were the dominant influences playing upon McNamara in setting that budget?

Anderson: The dominant influence was the infallibility of McNamara. The only time that he'd ever admit making a mistake was when he took the advice of someone against his own better judgment, and made these arbitrary decisions.

Matloff: How about the role of the cost effective techniques and the systems analysis which began to come in with McNamara. Were you beginning to feel the repercussions of that type of analysis?

Anderson: It caused a great deal of work for the Navy staff and detracted from its ability to carry on its regular job, answering the numerous questions posed by the cost analysts in the Department of Defense.

Matloff: How did the Navy get its budget? How were the budget figures of the Navy arrived at? Were you drawn in on that question?

Anderson: Yes, very much so. A particular case was when we felt we would prefer to have a carrier that was to be a nuclear carrier but the cost of duplicating the ENTERPRISE was so high. The important thing was to get a new carrier deck, so I reluctantly accepted the idea of having a non-nuclear carrier, in order to get the deck. In the meantime, the Naval Reactors Branch in the Navy Department developed a four reactor carrier rather than an 8-reactor ENTERPRISE. We could get it cheaper. So I recommended then that we change it to a nuclear carrier, which the people down below in OSD felt was my plan all along.

Matloff: Were you able to get it?

Anderson: No.

Matloff: That was overruled?

Anderson: Yes.

Matloff: How about as a corporate body--did the JCS play any role in connection with the budget? Were they brought in on the process as a group at any point?

Anderson: It was primarily a service problem.

Matloff: In connection with some of the controversies that began to come up, you mentioned the carrier. How about the differences with the Air Force over the B-70 bomber? What were the differences at the time? This, too, got involved with the budget problems as well. Do you remember the position taken by you and the Navy on the B-70 bomber?

Anderson: People tried to get me to take a position on the B-70 and I said that it was up to the Air Force to justify that. I was justifying the Navy programs, and I was not going to oppose the Air Force.

Matloff: Who was trying to make you take that position? Was this coming from a higher level, the Secretary of Defense, specifically?

Anderson: Yes.

Matloff: Let me turn directly to Defense relationships--first, your relationships with OSD. You've touched on McNamara. I'd like to ask in connection with your relations both with McNamara and Deputy Secretary of Defense Gilpatric, and other top officials in OSD--how often did you meet with them?

Anderson: We met with them in McNamara's office, I guess they called it the Armed Forces Policy Council, once a week. They had these little termites in the Office of the Secretary of Defense--Adam Yarmolinsky,

Dieter Schwebs, Alain Enthoven--who were generating all the problems for the Navy staff, the interminable detailed questions that went down. In many cases these people were not properly cleared for the information that they wanted answers on.

Matloff: Were these meetings with McNamara and Gilpatric worthwhile, effective exchanges? Or were these directives being handed down, or what?

Anderson: I didn't get the impression that too much attention was being paid to the views of the services. They had their minds made up ahead of time.

Matloff: How close was McNamara with the Joint Chiefs?

Anderson: He's come down every Monday afternoon to meet with the Joint Chiefs.

Matloff: It's been said that you had a "honeymoon period" with McNamara the first year, and after that problems began to arise--does that tally with your recollection? We might just tick off such issues, if you recall what those were. We mentioned the case of the B-70. How about the TFX, the F-111?

Anderson: That was a very serious problem, because they had an established procedure, and the Joint Air Force/Navy board of experts that evaluated the so-called TFX made a recommendation. Then, without any interim consultation whatsoever, an arbitrary decision was made by the Secretary of Defense against the joint Air Force/Navy recommendation and we were told what the decision was. It was the wrong decision.



They bought a more expensive plane, a less effective plane. It was an expensive decision that caused a great deal of controversy. It was just done arbitrarily. I believe with due regard for the political situation in Texas--Vice President Johnson, of course, was from Texas--that that was probably a factor in the decision, but I still don't know.

Matloff: Some of the other differences: military compensation--did that arise as a problem between the Secretary of Defense and the Navy?

Anderson: No.

Matloff: Any other issue that came up that we should be aware of?

Anderson: I remember that a very fine officer, formerly head of the Bureau of Supplies and Accounts, Admiral James Bundy, was called back on a matter of standardization. He came in and said, "George, you can't imagine what they just told me. They've standardized on the beans. They're eliminating the Navy beans and they are going to standardize on Army beans." I said, "What?" With all the big problems they had, that was their first standardization--the commonality problem.

Matloff: About how much time did you spend on JCS business, separate from the CNO role? I raise this question because apparently when Admiral Burke took over as your predecessor, Eisenhower told him that he regarded the JCS role more important than the CNO role. I'm wondering whether you ran up against that problem. Did you find you had to spend more time on JCS business, or less time?

Anderson: It worked out all right. I spent a lot of time on JCS business. I didn't feel it detracted particularly from my Navy responsibilities at all.

Matloff: Did you spend most of your time on strictly naval, CNO business?

Anderson: I don't think it detracted too much.

Matloff: How about the role of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs on split issues in the JCS, when you were CNO?

Anderson: I was very satisfied with General Lemnitzer, the first Chairman. He was excellent--a very fine, honest, sincere man. The Chiefs always talked very frankly with Lemnitzer. He was very fair. When Taylor came in, we had an entirely different situation.

Matloff: A change in the handling of this problem, particularly on split issues? How did it operate differently under Taylor from under Lemnitzer?

Anderson: I felt that Lemnitzer took a much broader view of things.

Matloff: Whom did the Secretary of Defense back when there were splits in the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Anderson: Usually the Chairman.

Matloff: How deep were the splits in JCS? Did you feel that they were very deep on some of these questions that we've already raised, for example, the TFX, the B-70 bomber?

Anderson: I didn't consider them that way. My view was that the B-70 bomber was LeMay's problem and not the Navy's problem. There was

a lot of feeling within the Navy staff against the B-70, but I was not about to get involved in that.

Matloff: Did you run into problems when you were trying to hold out for the carrier—any opposition to that from the Joint Chiefs?

Anderson: No, not particularly.

Matloff: Right after the Bay of Pigs, Kennedy issued instructions to the Joint Chiefs asking them to look at questions transcending purely military considerations. Were you and the Joint Chiefs comfortable with those instructions?

Anderson: I had no problems or objections.

Matloff: Did you think this was good and proper advice?

Anderson: Yes, I think so.

Matloff: Apparently later on this gave General Collins of the Army some problems. He wasn't quite so certain that this was a good idea. He once said that he was not an economist, that he shouldn't be given such questions to deal with. About relations with Congress, how did you handle the problem when you appeared before congressional committees when your original view of an issue differed from that, let's say, of the Secretary of Defense or the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs? If you want a specific case, the TFX hearings for example, before McClellan's subcommittee on investigations in 1963. How did you handle this problem, when your own view, your original position, differed?

Anderson: My view was that we had to answer the questions of the Congress as truthfully and straightforwardly as possible. Along

around Christmas-time each year, when the new budget was being "put to bed," as they would say, we would meet with Kennedy, usually at Palm Beach, and with the Secretary of Defense, and we'd have certain issues; the size and composition of the naval shipbuilding program, for example. OSD had made certain decisions. My view was that it would be much better for them to say just how many funds were going to be made available to the Navy and I would make the decision, or the Navy would make the decision, of how those should be apportioned, particularly in regard to attack submarines. Kennedy asked one time how we felt about the budget, and I said, "I feel that the apportionment of the budget, what is available to the Navy, should be based primarily upon our judgment, military/naval judgment, rather than a decision at the OSD level." Kennedy smiled. McNamara looked very sour at that. The decision was what McNamara's recommendation had been. So when I went up to Congress, naturally I had to support the decisions that were made. They asked questions. I remember Jerry Ford, on the Appropriations Committee, said, "Admiral, how does this suit you?" I said, "This doesn't represent my best judgment." "Why not?" "I think the shipbuilding should go more for increased procurement of submarines." "Did you make that known?" "Yes." "Did you reclama it?" "Yes." "Did you reclama it to the President?" "Yes." "To the Secretary of Defense? What happened?" "It stayed as their judgment." He said, "Well, Admiral, you did everything you could." Matloff: Then you felt that your position in these matters in speaking frankly to the congressional committees was completely consistent

with the principle of civilian control? You felt that there was no violation of that principle? You spoke at the Press Club, on 4 September 1963, in connection with your thoughts on the transmission of the service chiefs' views to the President and the Congress. You used an expression in that speech, that you thought those recommendations "should not be dulled in any way in transmission." Do you remember that phrase? Do you want to elaborate on what you meant by that?

Anderson: In other words, from the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Defense the service views should not be played down at the expense of the Office of the Secretary of Defense's view.

Matloff: You mentioned your dealings with President Kennedy in connection with an issue that came up--what were your relations with President Kennedy? Did you have direct access to him, or did you have to go through the Secretary of Defense, or the National Security Council Advisor? Could you lift up the phone and call him if you were so moved? How freely did you feel that you could deal with the President?

Anderson: I felt that on a matter of real importance I could always have access to him.

Matloff: Did you actually at any time do that, on any issues that came up?

Anderson: Yes. It was in connection with our success in having Russian submarines surface during the Cuban missile crisis. I wanted

to emphasize the degree to which the Russians were trying to put submarines in the Cuban area. I was giving a talk in New York on that and I wanted to mention that.

Matloff: This is during or after the Cuban missile crisis?

Anderson: After.

Matloff: Did you have the feeling that the President was impartial toward the military services?

Anderson: I thought President Kennedy was a very fine man.

Matloff: Did you find him knowledgeable about the Navy, as an old Navy man? Did he know about carriers, submarines, and the like?

Anderson: Yes.

Matloff: You didn't have to try to educate him?

Anderson: No.

Matloff: Did he ever seek your advice on other than naval issues? I raise this because apparently during Admiral Burke's tenure (your predecessor) General Eisenhower would suddenly pop a question at him about Army divisions, and Burke would always be surprised by the question. Apparently Eisenhower used to use his Chiefs as sounding boards on questions dealing with the other services. Did Kennedy do it?

Anderson: No.

Matloff: How about his views on split JCS papers? Did he ever express himself one way or another?

Anderson: Not to me.

Matloff: Any expressions of views or impressions of his reactions when you appeared on the Hill in strong defense of the Navy budget, let's say, in opposition to the Secretary of Defense's position? Did you get any reactions one way or another from the White House on that?

Anderson: No, as a matter of fact I got pretty good reactions from President Kennedy. When I appeared on Meet the Press--this was about the time of the TFX situation--they asked me a question, and I said, "I'll testify to the Congress on that if I'm asked, and I am not going to take that to the public." I got a telephone call from the President saying that he'd watched me on Meet the Press and was very much impressed.

Matloff: With reference to the State Department, did you have any dealings with Secretary of State Dean Rusk during the period when you were CNO and member of the Joint Chiefs?

Anderson: Nothing that stands out particularly in my memory at that time.

Matloff: Do you recall the dominant attitude toward the Soviet threat when you assumed office in DoD? about what the nature of the threat was? Was there a feeling that the communist threat was a monolithic bloc, or something else? How serious a threat did you think it was? What was the nature and form of the threat?

Anderson: Yes, we felt it was very definitely monolithic, controlled by the Russians.

Matloff: Were there any differences of views within the Joint Chiefs or between the Joint Chiefs and the Secretary of Defense on this matter?

Anderson: I don't think so.

Matloff: Did you change your views in any way about dealing with the threat, as a result of your becoming involved in various crises?

Anderson: I felt more and more that the Russians were a very diabolically clever group, creating exploitable situations to pose to the opposition, which was the United States--situations characterized only by unpleasantries, risks, disadvantages, expenses, and controversy.

Matloff: To turn to strategy and strategic planning--at various points in your career you were certainly involved with strategy. But, again, primarily as CNO here, who in the DoD was primarily influential in strategy making during this period? Was it the Joint Chiefs? the services? the Secretary of Defense? Where was the primarily influential role being played in the strategy-making business?

Anderson: It had been primarily with the Joint Chiefs of Staff. As time went on, it seemed to me that it was being taken over more and more by the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

Matloff: Do you relate to this the coming of the cost analysis and systems analysis influences, brought in by the management reforms of McNamara?

Anderson: I would say so, yes.

Matloff: What did you see as the role, if any, of systems analysis in connection with strategy? Did you see any part that it could or should play? At what point in the strategy making process should or could systems analysis make a contribution?



Anderson: Not so much when I was CNO. I think more so later, during the Vietnamese war.

Matloff: You didn't get any heartburn on this question in connection with strategy, then?

Anderson: No, I don't think so.

Trask: Did you feel that McNamara was really the strategist at that time? Was he the most important influence?

Anderson: Yes, sure.

Trask: So you would really center it on him, more than the systems analysis people per se.

Matloff: On the question of the role that the Secretary of Defense was playing in the strategy making process, I gather your impression is that he was playing a very influential role.

Anderson: Very influential.

Matloff: Did you get the impression that the President was following the development of military strategy closely? I take it McNamara was, but how about the President?

Anderson: No, I don't think so.

Matloff: We're into the period particularly when General Taylor became Chairman of the Joint Chiefs in 1962, and when his advocacy of flexible response became adopted by the Kennedy administration. Did you go along with that? Did you feel that was a good approach to strategy? We've left the massive retaliation period of the Eisenhower/Dulles era and we come now to a new wrinkle. Did you go along with that and agree with the military strategy of flexible response?

Anderson: I would say yes, more or less so.

Matloff: That didn't give the Navy any problem? How about the limited war option for the President, which was being pushed as part of this flexible response strategy? Did you feel that it was important for the President to have such an option?

Anderson: Yes.

Matloff: Did the experiences with the Korean War or the Vietnam War in any way change your feeling about that?

Anderson: I think that it certainly changed later on, with McNamara's conduct of the Vietnamese war.

Matloff: Did you have any feeling that there were differences among the services with reference to strategic planning? Were the services in disagreement over what the strategy should be?

Anderson: No, I don't think so.

Matloff: How about your own attitudes toward the buildup and use of nuclear weapons? Were your feelings and those of the Chiefs in any way different? What was your attitude toward nuclear weapons. Did you see that nuclear weapons had a role to play? We're talking about tactical or strategic weapons, either way.

Anderson: Yes. There was a tremendous advantage to the side that used nuclear weapons first.

Matloff: In other words, the preventive use of nuclear weapons--you would have favored that? How about the other chiefs, would they have gone along with that?

Anderson: For planning purposes; for consideration.

Matloff: Did you have any strong feelings between nuclear versus conventional defense? Here we get back to the flexible response strategy again. Was there a role for both?

Anderson: I think that there was a role for both.

Matloff: This is also the period when counterinsurgency planning becomes important, when particularly Taylor was pushing for that. Did the Navy's view on preparing for brushfire wars and counterinsurgency planning differ in any way from Taylor's?

Anderson: I don't think so.

Matloff: You mentioned the nuclear powered submarine before. How did you see the role of the nuclear powered submarine and the aircraft carrier in national strategy? What roles could they play?

Anderson: Very definite roles. Each had a role to play in support of the total military effort.

Matloff: In Europe, Asia, and the Pacific?

Anderson: Yes.

Matloff: I know that as a student of naval strategy you had studied Mahan and had strong views about his doctrine. What did you regard the impact of the changes in technology and international relations on the legacy that had come down from Mahan? Did you see that in any way his doctrine was to be modified or changed?

Anderson: Not that I can recall.

Matloff: He had not gotten into the submarine area and he had preceded the carriers, so these represented a new ball game. He was the old

battle fleet, surface fleet man. And, of course you were in a different international situation by the time we get to your period.

Let me take you to NATO and some of the other alliances during your period as CNO. We have already touched on your earlier relations with it. When you were CNO, how far did you get involved with NATO policies, buildup, and strategy? Were you drawn in on those questions in the early 60s?

Anderson: A buildup of conventional force in Europe, very definitely.

Matloff: A buildup of American or allied forces?

Anderson: Allied forces---to get the Germans involved.

Matloff: By 1955 the Germans had come in, and the question was to get them rearmed. Did you have any misgivings about the rearmament of Germany, given Germany's past history?

Anderson: No, except that I felt that the British and the French were very justified in their thoughts about nuclear weapons of their own in their own security vis-a-vis the Germans. There was a lot of mistrust there.

Matloff: How about nuclear weapons for the British and the French vis-a-vis the Russians? Did you feel that they had a case to make, building up their own independent nuclear deterrents?

Anderson: I felt that it was more in their view in regard to the rearming of Germany than it was to the Russians. And, of course, the question was the degree to which they could trust the United States to use the weapons.

Matloff: You think they had some rationalization.

Anderson: Yes.

Matloff: Alistair Buchan wrote once that the British bomb was aimed at Washington, to make sure that Washington would help. And later on when the French got the bomb, he said that the French bomb was aimed at Washington and London. Would you go along with that?

Anderson: I never felt that way.

Matloff: How about the strategy of NATO, did you feel that that was realistic during the period when you were CNO? It was beginning to change over to flexible response, too, and later on it would change even more, after you had left the post. The adoption of flexible strategy was a kind of delayed reaction at NATO, but it was adopted eventually. Did you have any feelings about the NATO strategy in the period when you were CNO?

Anderson: To defend as far to the east as possible.

Matloff: The Germans wanted that; you felt that made sense. Did you have any strong feelings yourself about how long the American troop commitment in NATO should be? Did you feel that the troops should be brought back eventually, or sooner or later?

Anderson: My feeling was basically this: Each nation should contribute to the NATO forces that which that nation is most capable of providing. Basically the ground defense of NATO should be provided by the continental Europeans. So too, should the local air defense and the local naval defense. The United States should provide those

types of forces which the other countries were not as well equipped to provide. They would complement one another.

Matloff: Did you feel that the allies were pulling their weight?

Anderson: We felt very much that there were these parochial differences, jealousies, and historical problems that prevailed, for example, between the Greeks and Turks. Those differences had to be subordinated for the common good.

Matloff: Coming back to the British deterrent, some of this involved the buildup of the navy in Britain with the Polaris submarine. Were you drawn in on helping the British to build up an independent deterrent in that respect?

Anderson: Yes.

Matloff: Did you favor that?

Anderson: Yes.

Matloff: How about in the rebuilding of the German navy? Did you get involved with that?

Anderson: I felt that the rebuilding of the German navy should be primarily for the exits of the Baltic and the North Sea area and they should not get involved in trying to send German naval forces down into the Mediterranean, which they were always anxious to do, and operate with the Sixth Fleet. Their area was up in their own backyard, so to speak.

Matloff: Did you get involved at all in the question of rebuilding the Japanese navy?

Anderson: Not to any great degree.

Matloff: How about in acquiring overseas bases? The services had gotten in on this earlier. Were you drawn in on acquiring any of those? Admiral Carney remarked, when I interviewed him, that he had gotten drawn in. Did you find yourself having that as a problem?

Anderson: No particular problem.

Matloff: Coming now to the various area problems and crises which arose during the period when you were CNO, let me just touch on one. As I recall, soon after you took over, you ran right smack into the Berlin crisis of 1961. What was your role and that of the Joint Chiefs during the Berlin crisis of 1961?

Anderson: McNamara's attitude was that we had to do something every week to show what the United States was doing. As a result, they wanted to call up reserves, and the measures being proposed were not in the interest of the overall situation for the country. They called up certain aircraft squadrons and reserve ships. Doing that really ruined our reserves for a while. We should not press the reserves into active duty until there is actual shooting.

Matloff: Did you support the call-up of the reserves?

Anderson: No, not at that time.

Matloff: The same question would come up later about the Vietnam War. Apparently the experience with the Berlin call-up may have influenced in part President Johnson's decision later on. Did the President consult directly with the Joint Chiefs during this crisis?

Anderson: No, he was doing that principally through McNamara and Gilpatric.

Matloff: What did you take away as lessons, if any, of that crisis in connection with the Soviet threat? Did this in any way influence your view of the threat? Did it change it, or did it perhaps intensify your feeling about the threat?

Anderson: Not particularly.

Matloff: How about the American dealing with this crisis--did you feel that the national security apparatus had worked well in handling this crisis?

Anderson: I suppose reasonably well.

Matloff: We'll stop at this point in order to let you go on to your ceremonies.