

Oral History Interview

with

John S. D. Eisenhower

conducted on

October 22, 1984

by

Dr. Maurice Matloff

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Matloff: This is an oral history interview held with Mr. John S.D. Eisenhower, at the United States Army Military History Institute in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, on October 22, 1984, at 1:15 P.M. Representing the OSD Historical Program are Dr. Alfred Goldberg and Dr. Maurice Matloff. The interview is being recorded on tape and a copy of the transcript will be sent to Mr. Eisenhower for his review.

We are going to be focusing especially on the period between October 1958 and January 1961, when you served as Defense Liaison Officer and Assistant Staff Secretary to the President in the White House. Could you tell us something about the background of the appointment? What were the circumstances, what written or oral instructions were given to you, and by whom?

Eisenhower: I would say the cause for the appointment was pure nepotism. Dad mentioned to me that I ought to have some experience in dealing at the White House level, and he thought it would be a good thing for me. On the other hand, what I could bring to him was a reliable sounding board, and I had a certain amount of background, having been with him in World War II and having served for a year in Korea and the Command and General Staff College at Leavenworth. He sent me to Joint War Plans in ODCS OPS for a year to make sure that I got some idea of how the Pentagon worked. I reported there about the first of September 1957 to October 20 of '58. The idea was always that I would come to the White House later on, but I think General Goodpaster had some influence on that, saying that I ought to get some idea of the working level before coming over

there. In October the trigger for my coming was the resignation of Sherman Adams from the White House staff and the resultant reorganization of that staff. At that time they were going to put more responsibility on Goodpaster's shoulders. I remember when Andy and I talked, and I was in the middle of a project and said, "General, I could hang around for another month or two here," and he responded, "If you're coming at all, you'd better come right now." So I reported on October 20th. I had in mind having a certain area of my own responsibility, but General Goodpaster thought that I should just have the same general duties as he, only as his deputy. It turned out that that arrangement didn't work too well. There was nothing written, but Dad did say to us one time that he wanted us to give a lot of thought to giving him advice, which I thought was a pretty big order for two people of our age and experience. It was flattering, of course. It turned out that I tended more toward my own area of responsibility, such as daily intelligence briefings. Then I became a member of the advance teams later on for presidential trips. But in theory, anyway, I was Andy's deputy and had pretty much the same responsibilities as he had.

Matloff: This was a new position? There had been no predecessor?

Kisenhower: That's correct, except that Goodpaster's position was already there, and his job was being defined and expanded. Actually Andy had two deputies. Art Minnich, who has been in the State Department recently (and is accessible in Washington), deputized for the half of Andy's responsibilities that had to do with domestic issues. Therefore

Art Minnich found himself reporting to General Persons, who had succeeded Sherman Adams, for informal coordination, whereas I tended toward my Dad's office. I was concerned almost exclusively with the national security end of Andy's job, which involved State, Defense, CIA, and AEC at that time.

Matloff: We've interviewed General Goodpaster, and he suggested that we interview you, particularly in this area.

Eisenhower: When Art went away on leave, or something like that, I would take over some of his chores. The most onerous of those I can remember was approving the routine messages sent out to private groups-- division reunions, or the anniversaries of church foundings, things like that. This involves some responsibility, because you do sign the President's name to it.

Matloff: You say that President Eisenhower mentioned that he wanted you as an adviser, along with General Goodpaster. Did the position develop that way? Did you find yourself an adviser, or "a sounding board," as you characterized it?

Eisenhower: Not much, in practice. To be honest about it, we did, with Goodpaster and me looking over his shoulder, examine the plans for the next week of U-2 flights. Also, one area I had to check was the fail-safe features of new nuclear weapons. We had to go through them and say, "If this doesn't work, then this works, then this works, then this," and finally we would conclude that a given device would be infinitely safe, then we'd go in and advise the President to go ahead

and approve this weapon. He would just look up and say, "O.K." That's in the realm of advice. But any time that I chose to open my mouth by way of broad advice was usually as a son and was also usually unwelcome.

Goldberg: You referred to the U-2 flights--did you have knowledge at that time of previous overflights of the Soviet Union by other than U-2s?

Eisenhower: No. (Persons was not cleared for the U-2 by his own choice; Goodpaster, Gordon Gray, and myself were officially cleared; Captain Evan P. Aurand, Naval Aide, got cleared for it because the Navy was using him as its penetration of the White House.) The U-2 was established in '56 after the Russians turned down the open skies proposal. When I was living on Oakcrest Drive, Alexandria, Dad came by, the Easter of 1958, before I was working at the White House. I remember sitting on the couch and his saying, "We're overflying Russia now with aircraft we don't think can be shot down." He just shrugged and let it go at that. Then I came to work in the White House, and went over to CIA, where it was arranged between Goodpaster and Dick Bissell to brief me on the "code word material" for the U-2. They showed me pictures of the wings that had to be carried on wheels, and all that stuff, so my official knowledge of it began at that time. Dad would approve of the flights periodically, each approval being for a week's duration. Then, if they didn't get their flight in, they would come back for reapproval. I think that procedure, parenthetically, is one of the things that got us in trouble, because it may be that that last mission may have been squeezed into a day when it was not most desirable.

Matloff: I take it this position called for a number of activities on your part--liaison officer with intelligence, sounding board on occasion, leg-man.

Eisenhower: The sounding board would not be written down anywhere, but I did have a cocktail with Dad every night.

Matloff: I was going to ask how often you met with him in an official capacity, or unofficially for that matter, while you were in this position.

Eisenhower: There are "black books," as they call them in Abilene, which are completely unclassified and contain the President's appointments. I would say that I averaged around one and one-half visits in his office per day--most days for the intelligence briefings, and then for other things. For example, Andy established, when he became Staff Secretary in 1954, the habit of accompanying everybody who went into Dad's office, with the exception of Secretary Dulles. (Dulles was the only one who theoretically got in there by himself.) When he died, we sneaked in with Herter, and got away with it.

Matloff: Were you also recording these meetings?

Eisenhower: With my own sort of shorthand. I would take a yellow pad and write it up. Those are all on the record.

Goldberg: Goodpaster had been doing this for years.

Eisenhower: Yes, he had been doing it, and I did it, too. As it finally evolved, with me having the other odd jobs, Goodpaster tended to take the more important ones himself, and I took the lesser. But there was no hard and fast rule about that. It depended on who was doing

what at the time. One nice thing about the White House, there's always enough to do. You're never sitting around unemployed.

Matloff: What were your relations with the members of the Cabinet and the National Security Council? Did you have any direct or indirect dealings with them, in this capacity?

Eisenhower: I myself did not have very much. I would, if I happened to be on hand when Andy wasn't there. He logically reserved for himself the responsibility to deal with the major members of the National Security Council. But if he didn't happen to be there, I was a very acceptable substitute. The one individual who would deal with anyone on the staff was Lewis Strauss. Dulles wouldn't talk to anybody; he would hardly talk to Andy. He believed in dealing through what we called in the Army "Six" Channels.* Herter would also deal with anybody. How they operated was just a question of personality. During the rhubarb over the raising of the Panamanian flag over the Panama Canal, a hot issue at a certain period of time, in late '59 or so, I was talking with Under Secretary Dillon, taking messages back and forth to Dad. Apparently the ambassador down there was giving a little trouble because he was bypassing the State Department, calling Dave Kendall in the White House. So I was there to stand in, but by and large I dealt with Arch Calhoun, who corresponded to Andy in the State Department, (in the office originally set up by General Marshall, a staff secretariat), or with Tom McElhiny, his assistant. I would generally deal at the staff level

*In a division G1-1; G2-2; G3-3; G4-4; G5-C/S; 6-Commanding General

with people who were on the National Security Council. Andy would deal with the big shots.

Goldberg: I went to school with McElhiny, a good man.

Matloff: How about the Secretary of Defense and officials in OSD? With whom did you deal there? Were there no counterparts to the people in State that you were dealing with?

Eisenhower: Sixty percent of my work was done with State and CIA. I don't know why that was, but I also think that 60% of my Dad's work was with State and CIA.

Matloff: As to the perception of the Soviet threat at the time you came into the position--what do you recall was the dominant attitude toward that threat that you found in the White House, or in the administration? Was there an agreed view or were there differences within the administration?

Eisenhower: I think that theoretically the departments were at one. It was accepted completely that the Soviet threat was dangerous, not to be trusted, but also my Dad had the ambition (and time doesn't change very much--now they are talking about the same issue) to begin a dialogue that might result in a mutual reduction of heavy weaponry, testing, and also reducing stockpiles; not because we understood the Russians, liked their system, or trusted them, but because it would be to mutual advantage. Of course, the big hangup on that was the question of mutual inspection, which the Soviets would never stand for. I believe that those two things--keep your powder dry but try to talk and develop some kind of understanding--together were accepted completely among all the departments. When it

came to the nitty gritty, such as the Berlin threat that hit at Thanksgiving of '58, and you got into sessions in the oval office on contingency planning, then the military were more prone to shoot first. Gen Norstad was all cranked up to send a combat command down the Autobahn, and State was much more inclined to stop and talk and defuse the thing. But they all subscribed to the same theory, which is more or less obvious.

Matloff: Did the President view communism as a monolithic bloc or threat at that time?

Eisenhower: Yes, he did. There was not much room for variation. Tito had not been accepted by us at that time as sort of a semi-ally, as he was later in '69 or '71 when I was in Europe.

Matloff: How about the impact of the Korean War? You came in after the war was over, of course, but you had served in the war yourself. From your perspective, on the White House staff in '58, what did you feel had been the impact of that war on national security policies? How did the President view the impact of that war on American military and foreign policy?

Eisenhower: When I got there, the Korean War was regarded as simply something that had been solved, so that was no problem any more. There was the little leftover problem of Syngman Rhee, who was getting more and more arbitrary at that time. In early 1960 he was deposed and fled to Hawaii. I think that the biggest impact the Korean War had, as far as his everyday work was concerned, was the attitude inculcated in

the Army, because in spite of the fact that we dropped the atomic bomb in August of '45, Korea set us back to conventional warfare-- World War II style weapons and World War I type of fighting. The Army was expanded beyond its normal peacetime size, so when Dad was going to cut it back to a reasonable size, namely the New Look, the Army balked. So there was sort of a back door effect. It was the effect of recovering from the Korean War, rather than the Korean War itself. One adjunct to that was the number of officers we had to cut back from the bloated army. That was a very difficult human thing to deal with.

Matloff: This was in the late '50s, when the theorists were not in agreement with each other about the meaning of the Korean War. Some thought that this would mean that in the future you would have to worry more about limited war. There was a big debate on whether to use tactical weapons in connection with limited war or whether the dominant policy should be massive retaliation. The theorists were not in complete agreement. Was the President following this debate in any significant way, or was he relying on his staff to keep him abreast of these currents?

Eisenhower: He had it absolutely at his fingertips. I was the devil's advocate. I guess what you're getting at is that the Korean War was the first real limited war that we've ever fought, unless you would also count the one against Spain in 1898. It had set the pattern that the Army and its bureaucratic pitches began to depend on. What happened was

that once you got the atomic weapon and preoccupation with general war (which in those days was defined as a war between the United States and Russia, in which our troops were participating and in which the national survival of either country was deemed to be at issue), the Air Force had cornered the market. Nobody could argue about the top priority of SAC, but what that really did was put the Army in competition with the Marine Corps, as to who was going to fight the banana wars. That was pretty bad going.

Gen. Taylor made quite an issue of trying to point out that limited war was the most likely thing we were going to encounter, and in that he was backed up with Henry Kissinger's book, Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy, published in 1957. So it became a question of where did the dollars go--toward the general purpose forces for limited wars, or to SAC. Everybody agreed that SAC had to come first. It was just a question of how much of the secondary funds would go into these general purpose forces. When I went over to the Army Staff, Joint War, I saw a poster on the wall showing a soldier going "over the top" with his face contorted and his rifle up, and it said "STRAC." That was the Strategic Army Command, consisting of three divisions that supposedly ate raw meat on a stick and unfortunately was a falsehood. We could hardly deploy one of them, but that was part of the game of bluff we were going through--"STRAC: the nation's answer to limited war." I said, "That poster makes limited war look like a delightful thing. Why don't we talk about deterring it? We're

not going to sell the American public on the joys of fighting a limited war." That was the psychology that went through the Army: that limited war was going to be the greatest thing since the invention of the wheel. It was silly. There was another thing on the Pershing, which we might get to later on.

Goldberg: At the same time, of course, they didn't interpret limited war as necessarily meaning a small war, because it could include a major war in Europe. Much of their planning was to that end, and certainly they would have liked more resources for that purpose, didn't they?

Eisenhower: No limited war in Europe, that was absolutely a no-no. There would be no limited war in Europe--if you stepped across the line, by God, you'd get SAC. That was the administration's thinking in those days.

Goldberg: This was the Army position too?

Eisenhower: No. I'm talking about the administration's position.

Goldberg: I'm talking about the Army position. The Army's position was that we can have a big conventional war, and therefore we need a lot of forces. The Navy backed them up on this--if we get into war with the Soviet Union, it is probably going to be conventional war first, and get big, and maybe later on become nuclear. They had to take that position in self defense, didn't they? Or so they thought.

Eisenhower: Anybody who said that in the Army was a maverick. He was not looking for friends in the administration, if he would say

anything about the possibility of a limited war in Europe. That had to be an in-house opinion.

Goldberg: Taylor said it, didn't he?

Eisenhower: I don't know, I don't remember his saying it. If he did, then I'm learning something here.

Goldberg: I think that was his position.

Eisenhower: To go a little further about Dad's knowledge about all of this: he said that the Army had five divisions in Europe and two in Korea, as I recall. We had a total of 14. Dad said, "How many divisions do they want? If we get into one more Korea, I might handle a six-division war, but if we have two of them, I'm going to let go with SAC. I'm not going to have this country bled to death by a series of limited wars." He was counting divisions, but what he wasn't aware of was that the Army, in promoting itself, couldn't admit how weak those strapped divisions were; it was saying that it was a little stronger than it was, in my opinion. We were all in the game of bluff. Our JSCP and JSOP were talking about mobilizing 44 divisions by M+6. Hall-fire, what are you going to do with 44 divisions by M+6? What kind of divisions would they be, and what would you arm them with?

Matloff: I take it then, by this line of thought, that the President was aware of the discussion and debate going on among the civilian theorists, for example, the Rand people and people like Kissinger writing in the late '50s?

Eisenhower: Yes, acutely aware.

Matloff: He was certainly following the debate over military strategy. Did he dominate the process or was he following it, inside the administration?

Eisenhower: Inside the administration he absolutely dictated it. When I was in War Plans, our big "bête noir" was Don Quarles, Deputy Defense Secretary and former Secretary of the Air Force. He knew what he was talking about; he was a very smart man. We thought that he was against the Army, but he was just pro-Air Force. We thought very poorly of him. When I left War Plans they had a little limerick: "And I wager he'll never forget the Eggman/Kimball duet; And all the quarrels that stemmed from old Quarles' obsession with everything jet." Then I got to the White House and found out that this guy was no ogre. He was doing exactly what the administration told him. Quarles was right on target with administration policy, so I had to reassess my thinking a little bit.

Matloff: Did the President regard the New Look policy as something new, or accenting trends that were begun before, in the previous administration?

Eisenhower: He visualized the New Look as going in the direction that he had always thought the United States should go--that indigenous forces either in Europe or Southeast Asia or anywhere else should supply the ground troops and that we should supply the navy and air to back them up. We were not in the business of supplying the massive

manpower to match the Soviets or Chinese. That proportion of services, or roles and missions, got thrown off temporarily (which goes back to your earlier point) by the Korean War, which was a foot-slogger's war. The British were not very much for land warfare. Even at Waterloo there were two-thirds Continentals and one-third British in Wellington's army, and Wellington had a darn good line of retreat back to the coast.

Matloff: We mentioned before the President's position on SAC. What was his attitude in general toward the use of nuclear weapons?

Under what circumstances would he have used them, if he would?

Eisenhower: He was never called on, so I don't know. In those days MAD, mutual assured destruction, was not yet believed to be a fact. That happened when we developed missile-carrying submarines. In those days we believed that whoever shot first with SAC would have something left of his country by the time a nuclear exchange was over. So it was considered an awful, terrible, but still viable military option--committing SAC before the other guy did it. There were two ways in which a general war could start, one in case the Soviets just decided to shoot first. That was certainly the least desirable or the most horrible way to start a World War III. But from a United States viewpoint if they made a massive ground attack in Europe and we had to retaliate, we'd probably come off better than if they decided to shoot the weapons first. He claimed that he would do that. The NATO treaty implies, maybe says outright, that an attack on one is an attack on all. In our war plans the basic national

security policy document said that nuclear weapons were to be considered as conventional weapons. I believe that in that evolution Dad subscribed to it in theory. We had all these courses in atomic planning, and I took a course in it at Fort Belvoir. But I do notice that in practice during the 1958 Lebanon crisis, after King Faisal had been shot in Iraq, they sent the Sixth Fleet down there. Admiral C.A.T. ("Cat") Brown let it out to the press that we had a nuclear capability on hand, and such a furor resulted that we finally had to reassure the public that no nuclear weapon would be used. So I'm not so sure about applying the theory in practice, but the theory was that they were conventional weapons.

Goldberg: That was Honest John they had there. They had nuclear warheads but no conventional ones, so they sent the nuclear ones from Europe. With reference to regarding nuclear weapons as essentially conventional in terms of possible use, your father clearly had that view in the early years of his administration. It comes through in minutes of meetings, for instance, where they're discussing nuclear weapons, he makes remarks about their possible use. There was apparently a very considerable effort on the part of the administration in those early years to propagate the idea publicly that after all nuclear weapons had reached the point where they really could be considered just an extension of conventional weapons. But I would gather from what you said just now and from what else occurred in the latter years of his administration that by then he had probably changed

his view on that, that the administration wasn't pushing that hard for it. I knew scientists who were doing this, too, at this time.

Eisenhower: I don't think that he ever came out and said that he retracted his position, but they certainly didn't push the Davy Crockett series as hard as they might have, and the neutron bomb was never pushed very hard. So I think maybe he just didn't change his theory, but perhaps his own reaction in a real world was not to use it. I think his idea was: how do you ever decide at what level you're going to stop using them, between the tactical weapons and the thermo-nuclear originally? But, I think, it had to evolve.

Goldberg: A lot happened in that 8-year period regarding the atomic weapon and the ground forces.

Eisenhower: Yes. We reorganized the infantry division, supposedly so that an individual battalion could be knocked out by an atomic weapon and you put a little X-mark "battalion gone," then replace it with another self-contained unit. That idiot five-sided monster of a division we had (Pentomic) was designed so that the Army could prove that it was in the nuclear age. I don't see why they did that. They certainly did away with the Pentomic Division fast enough.

Goldberg: Because they thought they would get money. That's why they went for the missiles, too. Medaris says that quite clearly. He tried to sell them on missiles because that's where they could get the money. They weren't going to get it for tanks and trucks.

Matloff: How important did he view a civil defense program in the late 1950s?

Eisenhower: He used to say, "What are you Army people kicking about? You are going to be invaluable for reorganizing the country after a nuclear exchange." That wasn't exactly what some of our Sir Galahads had in mind as our roles and missions. I think that he was very strong on it. He had a fairly aggressive fellow, Governor Leo Hoegh, as the civil defense person, and there was a lot of push on fallout shelters. The Gaither report had been originally designed as a civil defense study, but later evolved into such a broad thing that the administration tried to suppress it. Trying to put into perspective what proportion he put into it, he probably didn't think civil defense was going to save much in case of nuclear attack but every dollar put into it was a good investment for some survival.

Matloff: By the end of the '50s, Maxwell Taylor was already thinking and writing about the possibility of a flexible response strategy. Did this have any impact at all on the dominant trend in strategic thinking in the administration? Nothing got carried out until the next administration, when Kennedy came in, but Taylor was certainly, even in the late '50s, thinking about flexible strategy. Did it have any impact on the more dominant notion of massive retaliation?

Eisenhower: I won't say that it didn't, but I was not aware of it.

Matloff: Did you ever hear discussions on it in any of the meetings at the White House, possibly with John Foster Dulles?

Eisenhower: No. After all, Dulles died in May 1959. His funeral was the day that the ultimatum on Berlin was supposed to run out. On a low level, I met Gordon Gray in the hall one day in late 1960. (I think

Gordon Gray thought that I was a terrible young Turk.) I said, "Wouldn't it be nice to have enough army that we could fight those Russians off without having to use atomic weapons?" He didn't like that much, and responded, "It so happens that the former generation, not yours, is in charge." I said, "Yes, but mine (Kennedy) has been elected in." I think that was a new idea that needed a new man to promulgate it.

Goldberg: Am I not correct in remembering that there was renewed emphasis on conventional capability during the last couple of years of the administration? My impression is that there was more attention, partly because of Berlin, being paid to conventional responses in Germany and elsewhere and because of that some increased emphasis on conventional forces. So that there are a lot of people who studied this period who believe that a lot of the elements of the Kennedy/McNamara policy of conventional response were already beginning in the last few years of the Eisenhower administration.

Eisenhower: I would say now, I don't know, but probably should agree with you. But I don't believe that that type of thinking got to the White House level. It may have been in the Pentagon. There's always two different things going on, like the Bay of Pigs, where no plan ever got to the White House during the Eisenhower administration, but may have been under consideration in the Pentagon. In the Berlin crisis we did send additional troops to Europe to flesh out logistical units and fill up the companies. The immediate purpose, I am quite sure, was to give a "signal", because we purposely let it be "discovered." We weren't going to broadcast it. That would emphasize that we were

taking this thing seriously; but it was not done because my Dad believed in a conventional war. It was a diplomatic move, rather than an indication of a real conviction that we would fight on the ground.

Goldberg: But there was a lot of contingency planning by State and Defense, all in conventional terms.

Eisenhower: In Europe?

Goldberg: Yes, with particular reference to Berlin. I remember seeing the plans at the time and since, for that matter, and have been impressed with the fact that it seemed to me that the trend was already setting in in '59 and '60 in the Eisenhower administration in this direction. They were getting more money, for one thing. The Army was getting more money in those last couple of years than it had been getting before.

Eisenhower: I don't contest that, but I just was not witness to it.

Matloff: The question of limited wars in peripheral areas--how were those going to be met? Was there any provision made for the outbreak of another Korea in the Asiatic world?

Eisenhower: I think our supporting war plans were probably all right. There were 14 divisions when I went to the White House. As I recall, we lost one during 1958, from 15 to 14. I think that Dad thought that out of that you ought to be able to get a conventional force. Then they converted the training divisions, really replacement trainee centers (RTC's), into more respectable organizations along infantry division lines, which is not as efficient for training, but is for employment.

Matloff: Let's turn to the budget and manpower problems in Eisenhower's second administration, when you were on the White House staff. Were you drawn in on any of those discussions on how much money was to be set aside for Defense? Who was setting the ceilings for Defense and how were the figures being arrived at? What were the dominant influences and who was being primarily influential in this area?

Eisenhower: Dad believed that three legs of the stool, the military, morale, and economics, constituted the basics for national strength. Therefore he felt very strongly that the military should not get a bigger piece of the pie than its share. There was the famous George Humphrey reaction in '57 to the \$38 billion budget for Defense--he always insisted that that was too much, that we couldn't continue with that large a level. Dad believed in the balanced budget. Therefore he believed in keeping the military down to a necessary level, with some degree of military risk. On the other hand, he was very sensitive to the charge made in some quarters that he was willing to jeopardize the United States to save a buck. That becomes a very difficult adjustment, to get enough but no more. He was the last president to have the understanding, I believe, really to give any sort of a judgment on that himself. Of course, what they've done right now is ask the Pentagon for its laundry list, then give them all the toys they request.

Goldberg: He'd certainly be incredulous now, wouldn't he?

Eisenhower: Yes, I should say so.

Matloff: He was strongly dedicated to the idea of a healthy economy, and not a massive defense buildup.

Eisenhower: Yes. Somebody wrote that he was the last president who could tell the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs that he was "out of his tree" and go home and sleep peacefully. There was substantially that tug of war between the economy and the Pentagon, and I believe he was satisfied that he had dealt reasonably with this problem.

Matloff: Did he see nuclear weapons as possibly saving the use of manpower?

Eisenhower: Yes. He said that we wouldn't have gotten away with building ourselves up the way we have economically, and building up Europe and so forth, if we didn't have the protection of the atomic weapons. I think that up to a certain point he considered atomic weapons as a positive force in preserving world peace. I don't know, when things began to get tougher toward the end, whether he still felt that way or not. On March 6 and 7, 1959, in sessions with the Congress, Dad was cutting the Army by 30,000 at that time, when the Berlin crisis was at its height, and Lyndon Johnson came over from the Senate and said, "Can't we do something?" Dad responded that he had everything he wanted. And he went through with it.

Matloff: What was his general attitude toward such things as UMT, the draft, and the volunteer Army?

Eisenhower: The volunteer Army was unthinkable. He had pushed for UMT very hard as Chief of Staff of the Army. That was now a dead

issue. The draft was there and it was going to stay. I don't think that issue ever bothered him.

Matloff: Admiral Burke, when we interviewed him, mentioned that, when he came to see the President about the needs of the Navy, the President reversed himself on the need of a draft. Burke wanted the draft to be applied to the Navy, too, and the President reluctantly gave in to him. Did he ever discuss this subject with you?

Eisenhower: It sounds backward to me. I would think that Dad would be pushing for the Navy to take draftees and that the Navy would be resisting it.

Matloff: Burke had a very clear recollection that one of his very first acts when he became CNO was to go to Wilson, the Secretary of Defense, and tell him what he was going to do. Wilson reluctantly agreed to go along with him to the White House. They met with the President, who listened to Burke's side of the story, looked at Burke balefully and eventually said, "O.K." Then, as Burke was leaving, the President called him back and said, "Don't you ever do this to me again." This is the Burke story and I am paraphrasing it.

Eisenhower: Because he caught him off balance?

Matloff: Because he made him reverse himself, according to Burke's point of view. I guess that was before your time.

Eisenhower: Burke was the most magnificent naval politician as far as Dad was concerned. He was articulate and pleasant, and if personality has anything to do with the amount of resources a service gets, he was ideal for that. Dad was very fond of him.

Matloff: Burke has indicated that the President would use him as a sounding board on occasion, even for Army problems.

Eisenhower: I imagine that he would, because he had a way about him that sort of made you trust him. He had a sense of humor, which Dad appreciated. He was such a bad public speaker, so the story goes, that he considered taking public speaking lessons. One of his staff said, "Admiral, if you do that, you will just become average. This way you are outstanding." But he would tell the story on himself.

Matloff: How serious a problem was interservice rivalry for the White House?

Eisenhower: Very serious, and very disturbing.

Matloff: Were there any efforts made in the White House to foster interservice cooperation?

Eisenhower: Yes. I believe if you go to the record that Dad had at least one or maybe more sessions at which there were no civilians present. He sat with just the Joint Chiefs and talked to them. I think all that he got were their usual litanies. He was a little disappointed. He did make that effort. There is one element--I'm sure that you've covered this many times before with other people--the theory of the responsibilities of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Dad believed that the members of the JCS should take the responsibility for asking only for what the national economy could bear. General Ridgway was the personification of the other point of view, that the Chiefs are completely professional and they should give their opinions

on their professional judgment only. You could make a point for that. In defense of Dad's side, when the Joint Chiefs of Staff asked for \$57.4 billion in FY '59, whereas \$38 billion was the ticket, Secretary McElroy threw the damn document out and the services didn't have a say in what was going to be done. So they turned themselves into a bunch of small boys, as far as Dad was concerned.

Matloff: Did he ever tell them anything about their public positions, going public with their differences?

Eisenhower: He hated that.

Matloff: Did he put any inhibitions on them?

Eisenhower: No, I don't think so. That is, of course, a very tough line that any military man has when he doesn't agree completely with an administration. He tried in the Reorganization Bill of 1958 to get rid of all the service secretaries, because they didn't have the inhibitions of people in uniform. They were more free to talk to the Navy League, the Marine Corps League, and what not, than the guys in uniform were. He didn't succeed, so you've got three useless service secretaries now, as far as I'm concerned.

Matloff: Was he aware of the frustrations that Gen. Taylor and Gen. Ridgway were having? This is the period that Taylor has characterized as the Army's "Babylonian captivity."

Eisenhower: I think that it is a pretty good term, because in my book, Strictly Personal (1974, Doubleday), I talked about the low morale of the Army at that time, and I think that it was legitimate and that

Dad probably expected too much of the Army. He expected them to be too understanding, and say, "Our old friend Ike is in trouble there, and it's up to us to take our lumps." He was a little unrealistic in his expectations. I'll inject myself in this a little bit. When I went over, the young Turk, I told him what the morale of the Army was. I said, "It ain't good. If you look up to our "great men" who are running the armed forces, what commands does the Army have? Do we smell bad, or is there something wrong with us? All we have is CINCARIB down there, a lieutenant general, and that's the only unified command we've got in the whole globe. Everybody else is run by sailors and fly boys. Even Europe." Dad said, "Norstad is the best man for the job over there." I replied, "O.K., maybe some Army general is the best man for CINCPAC, too." He said to me, "Twining wants to retire early, and when Taylor retires, I'm going to get Lemnitzer and make him Chairman quick." I take credit for that, probably unjustifiably, but that has something to do with the informal advisory capacity you were talking about.

Goldberg: I suppose you would say that this attitude on his part, which resulted in effect in that sort of downgrading of the Army during this period, was really the result of his view of atomic weapons and the strategy that flowed from that.

Eisenhower: Partly. Remember Robert Townsend's book Up the Organization? He said that the manager does worse in the area that he comes up through. I think Dad knew too much about the Army. He knew individuals.

e would get sore at Gavin, when Gavin would make some statement. Also, on the White House staff he had people who had prejudices--not venality or malice. The Navy put an extremely capable naval aide there, P. Aurand, the son of one of Dad's favorite West Point classmates--personality all over the place, a carrier pilot, smiles, downplayed everything. He accompanied Dad every noon from the Oval Office to the mansion, subtly singing "Anchors Away" all the way up the elevator, telling little Navy stories. He kept Dad "Navy conscious." Jim Hagerty had two sons in the Marine Corps. Jim tried to keep Dad from visiting Fort Benning on the 1st of May, 1960. I screamed at that, and Dad went. These guys could just see to it that he was going someplace else. He'd take his relaxation aboard a naval vessel, he'd go to Newport, RI, in the summer, and could stay under their influence all the time. The Army didn't have that kind of plush accommodations, that could take care of his creature comforts when he got sick. Maybe I'm overplaying this a little bit, but not too much. Dad was influenced by the advent of the atomic weapon but also by just plain old politics; and the Army's politics were pretty weak then. I had only a certain amount of money in the bank to expend on this issue, Goodpastor tended to play a more objective role.

Matloff: Turning to NATO and other area problems--what was his attitude toward the role of the American ground troops in the alliance?

Eisenhower: He believed that NATO was a permanent thing and should be preserved at all costs, but that the U.S. ground commitment should

reduced. When he first went to NATO, it was understood that we'd be reduced to one division--enough to show the flag--and that would be all. He was frustrated that he hadn't gotten the U.S. Army out of the NATO force structure in Europe by the end of his administration. Herter said that that would "scare the hell out of the Europeans" and Dad said, "All right, make 18 German divisions instead of 12." They then said that would "scare the hell out of the French."

Matloff: Did he feel the Europeans were carrying their weight?

Eisenhower: No, but he didn't have any answer for it. And nobody's found one since then.

Matloff: How did he see the future of the alliance? Some possible suggestions other people have considered: should NATO be regarded primarily as a fortress, a bastion against which the Russians could not move? Or should it be a forum, basically, where different countries could discuss their mutual problems, both within the confines of the European/Atlantic area as well as the problems that they have outside? Later on there was even talk about NATO as possibly an instrument of detente. Did any of these questions about the future of the alliance come up?

Eisenhower: I can just give you an opinion on that. I believe that Dad thought of it as primarily military and regional. In 1958, when DeGaulle first came in, he wanted to set up a triumverate to run the free world--the U.S., Britain, and France. That, of course, didn't go over. Dad did not believe in extending NATO to other parts of the

world. For example, CINCNELM, (those admirals had three or four different hats, one of them a completely U.S. hat and non-NATO hat). During the Eisenhower administration the Sixth Fleet was not assigned in peacetime to NATO. The Sixth Fleet stayed under U.S. control. Thus, when we sent the troops to Lebanon, that was all under U.S. command, not NATO command. I believe that he thought that NATO belonged right there. As to the concept that NATO should become an intellectual and diplomatic forum, and so forth, as Norman Cousins was advocating in those days, I think that Dad tolerated that but it didn't excite him. He thought that if we kept NATO doing its original job of holding back the Russians, that was about all we could expect of it. However, he was strong on the Western European unity inside there, and very strong on the Common Market and a United States of Europe some day, if that could be done.

Matloff: By the late '50s, the nature of the Russian threat had changed, because there was no longer the fear of an overt ground attack, but more concern about the northern and southern flanks, because the Russians were building up the navy, air force, and so on. Did this in any way affect his thinking about the role and problems of NATO? Was he aware or at all sensitive to any of these currents?

Eisenhower: Just an opinion--the Russian ground threat was not diminished in his time, because, after all, if they took over our troops in Berlin that was the same thing as running across the border toward France. So with that exposed position out there, that was our real

Achilles heel. As far as taking care of the rest of the world, I think Dad considered that a U.S. responsibility--insofar as we could play that role--and not a NATO one. He didn't put all of his eggs in that NATO basket.

Matloff: Was he at all concerned about the rearmament of Germany in view of its past history?

Eisenhower: No, as long as the Germans had no atomic weapons, he couldn't worry less.

Matloff: What about the handling of the Berlin crisis, in the fall of '58 and the spring of '59? What were his tactics or strategy?

Eisenhower: That was masterful, and he's never gotten the credit for that. It started out with the Russians closing down that access road, the Autobahn from Hannover into Berlin. There was a little fuss for a few days, some sword rattling. But then around Thanksgiving time in '58, Khrushchey backed off to the extent that he said that we had to be out six months from then. Foster Dulles was still alive, but may have been in Europe--Herter was standing in for him. I took all these messages and went down to Augusta and briefed Dad and he called Herter, or Dulles, one of the two. Of course, it was a temporary relief that we had six months to work this thing out. Then the strategy after that was to make it easy for the Russians to retreat, and the idea of how to do that was to keep your powder dry but muddy the water by lots of talking and lots of arguing and sidetracking. There was one meeting in Washington with the Joint Chiefs, with what

I used to call the "crap games." There would be six to eight people in the Oval Office, in contrast to the NSC where nothing was ever done, really. The people who were really needed were in these small meetings. I've got it in my book, Strictly Personal, which gives a much better account than my memory serves. They talked about the first contingency plans. That's when the immediate action thing came up, we'd do certain preliminary actions, take it to the U.N., and so on. It wasn't until September of '59, when Khrushchev came over and went to Camp David, that he took off the immediacy of the solution of the Berlin crisis. The foreign ministers had been meeting before the 6th of May, which was the end of the six months. That was also the day that Foster Dulles died. There had been enough talking going on that that date was not noticed and we were damn glad; we wanted to avoid putting the Russians in the position of having to explain their retreat. MacMillan had come over in the meantime, and the Foreign Minister's meeting was the big thing. At that point Dad said, "I'll put you all in an airplane and send you up and won't let you down until you come up with some answers"---that sort of banter. What they did was talk about all of European security and not just Berlin. The Berlin issue included the future of Germany and European security. Then things were really looking good, although the "Spirit of Camp David" was not what Khrushchev pictured it as being. It wasn't lovey-dovey, but was sort of a modus vivendi. Dad had been to Europe to see Adenauer, De Gaulle, and MacMillan in early September before Khrushchev came, to

put their minds at ease about his meeting with Khrushchev. Then Khrushchev issued his invitation to come to Moscow and he even sent Dad a note of Bon Voyage when Dad took off on his trip to India in December 1959. Things were looking good before the U-2, except that just before May began to approach, we began to wonder what would happen when the coming summit produced nothing concrete and everybody was disappointed. As far as Berlin was concerned, they were able to defuse that thing even after the May 20th "summit that never was." In Paris Khrushchev said, "I won't do any more until Ike's successor comes in," and looked like he, Khrushchev, was the one getting the last word and putting the Old Man down. But the thing is that it all started with the Berlin crisis of November 1958, the ultimatum had been dropped. It was really a tremendous job of diplomacy, I think, the way Dad talked the Russians down. But the Russians didn't want a war any more than we did.

Matloff: You mentioned the President's opposition to De Gaulle's idea of the triumvirate. I take it his attitude toward De Gaulle and DeGaulle's handling of his position in NATO was not favorable either.

Eisenhower: It wasn't, but bear in mind that De Gaulle did not pull France out of NATO during Dad's time. I then realized that, although I had always gone along with the "conventional wisdom" that Dad and DeGaulle were always at loggerheads (and they had their times during World War II), that they had harbored a mutual admiration society. They were quite fond of each other. Actually, Dad was De Gaulle's

best friend among the Americans and British in World War II because he at least recognized that De Gaulle could control the Resistance. De Gaulle had remembered Dad's calling on him on August 27th, 1944, in Paris, which de facto recognized him as the head of the French government. When De Gaulle came back from retirement in 1958, I said to Dad, "That is too bad, isn't it, De Gaulle coming back?" Dad looked up and said, "No, it's about time the French are told what to do for a while," and went back to what he was doing. When we went to Paris in early September, trying to time it to coincide with the August 27th call, exactly 15 years earlier, De Gaulle had lost interest. He apparently didn't want to be reminded of that particular event. But he turned out the red carpet and couldn't have been nicer. In the meetings De Gaulle told what he didn't like about NATO, French soldiers fighting under somebody else's flag, but did not take any action to pull out of NATO during Dad's administration.

Matloff: How about De Gaulle's pushing for the independent nuclear force of France, the Force de Frappe? He was already pushing in that direction; in fact, he had inherited the whole movement in France toward the development of the bomb. He didn't start it, but he certainly pushed for it. Was the President disturbed by that trend in France?

Eisenhower: I can't answer that because I don't remember anything about that.

Matloff: I'd like to pose a question about two crises together, the Suez crisis of '56 and the Lebanon landing of '58. Why was the

President willing to intervene with American force in Lebanon when he had opposed British, French, and Israeli attacks in the Suez affair?

Eisenhower: It looks like he's talking out of both sides of his mouth.

Matloff: How do you explain the differences in the handling of those two crises?

Eisenhower: On the surface it's obvious, because we went into Lebanon at the request of a duly constituted government. The British and French were going into the other against the duly constituted government, in an issue in which Dad believed the Suez belonged to the Egyptians, and so they didn't have much of a leg to stand on. What they did by going in there was to get Dad off the hook pretty handily because the Egyptian/Israeli war of '56 had already started, right at election time. He was in a fix, if he was going to do anything to restrain the Israelis, from an election point of view. He was going to do it, but when the British got in, the waters got so muddy that he didn't come off as a direct antagonist to Israel. It actually helped the election because people "rallied behind the president."

Goldberg: That took some heat off the Hungarian business, too.

Matloff: Ambrose makes the point in his recent book, Eisenhower the President, that the President was ambiguous about Nasser. Does that sound correct to you? Even though he intervened in this case, against the tripartite landing, later on he tried to bring Nasser around in other ways.

Eisenhower: Yes, they had a very friendly meeting in the Waldorf Astoria in September of '60. (I was quite complimented when Nasser came to the door and I was introduced and he said, "Oh, yes, I recognize him." I thought, "Boy, I'm something, Nasser knows who I am.") Dad was never one to carry a feud with anybody. I think that he probably thought that Nasser was the aggrieved party in that Suez thing, although Nasser certainly pulled off a diplomatic victory from the whole business. It certainly did damage U.S./British/French relations for some time.

I believe he thought the Lebanon thing was clear cut. Perhaps somebody looking at this thing a little deeper below the surface might say that he had decided that maybe the British and French had something on their side, that there was indeed a role for force in the eastern Mediterranean, and evolved in his thinking a little bit. Bear in mind, I was not in the White House at that time. Maybe he would not have gone to Lebanon quite the same way before the Suez affair, I don't know. One fellow giving us fits at that time was Kasseem in Iraq, that madman. It seems to me I had something to report every day regarding his latest action.

Goldberg: Did the President feel that he had been perhaps deceived and there was much ado about nothing in the Lebanon business?

Eisenhower: No.

Goldberg: He felt there was a genuine crisis and he continued to feel that way until the end of it?

Eisenhower: He did. I don't recall anything coming up where he felt he had to defend himself, or that he had been deceived. I think that he felt that the landing was necessary. I do know that he was really irritated with Eden for Eden's role in the Suez affair. Later, at Acapulco in February of '59, when Eden was down there for his health and writing his memoirs, the two of them got together for the first time since '56. Afterwards Dad said, "At least Anthony admitted that I told him what I was going to do." That was as close as they ever came to reconciliation. On Lebanon nobody ever nailed him to the wall.

Goldberg: Did you agree with him on Lebanon?

Eisenhower: Yes.

Goldberg: Afterward, also? In retrospect?

Eisenhower: Yes. I haven't studied it; I drafted his point of view for the memoirs, but I'm not a student of it. I guess a lot of people feel that it might have settled itself anyway. I am sort of surprised to see that old man Chamoun is still around, who was the cause of the trouble there by trying to get himself reelected for another term. Maybe, in more sophisticated thinking, we were being used by a faction there.

Goldberg: This is an interpretation of what happened.

Eisenhower: I can see how people would say that, but I think Dad's point of view, which may have been simplistic--but it was those days, not these days--was that we sent troops in, pulled out, they had an election, and things settled down. How good can you have it? We got the troops out in a hundred days.

Goldberg: Just that given what we know about Lebanon now, and have known for some time, believing that it was in effect a scam on the part of Chamoun could be valid.

Eisenhower: That Arab general was elected.

Goldberg: But Chamoun was the president that called for the intervention in July.

Eisenhower: Right, but then when the elections were held, Chebab was the guy they elected. When this Lebanon thing came last year, they said that the Christians still ran the country, and I said, "I thought they were thrown out in '58." They said, "Only temporarily."

Goldberg: They went back and forth.

Eisenhower: Still, by the constitution the Christians had the number one spot, the presidency.

Goldberg: And the premier was usually Muslim.

Eisenhower: I'm not certain that Dad wasn't deceived, but I'm sure that he never thought he was.

Matloff: We'll skip the Guatemalan crisis, as it was before your time, unless you want to add something on that subject.

Eisenhower: No, I think we would get as good a lawyer's brief for that as we can in Dad's memoirs.

Matloff: Let's turn to the Cuban problem developing by 1960, just before the transition to the new administration. Were you at all involved in any of the discussions that were going on in the White House; and how far had the President gone by January '61 in preparing for the operation that eventuated in the Bay of Pigs affair?

Eisenhower: Let me go back just a minute to some things I want to add for the record. A National Security Council meeting in late '58 was the first time that Alan Dulles had ventured that maybe this Castro was not so wonderful as we thought; after all, he had a brother who was a communist. Dad hit the roof. He said, "What have you boys been telling me? You told me Castro is the good guy and Batista is the bad guy, and now you're beginning to backtrack." He was furious about this change in position. Then the first of January, 1959, was the day that Castro came in. I remember hearing about that the morning after New Year's. Then, of course, came the problem of Castro's coming to the States and Dad not seeing him, and so forth. Dad cut off diplomatic relations about January 10, 1961, because he wanted to take the onus himself for a nasty thing and not leave it for the next president to have to face. It was over the sugar quotas, I think, or at least it resulted in cutting off the sugar quotas. I think that Dad has gotten a bum rap on two charges. One is the Hungarian affair, where there was nothing we could do. They said that he opted not to intervene, but there was nothing we could do. The other one is on the Bay of Pigs, which has something to do with the planning going on in the Pentagon and in the State Department that they didn't know about in the White House. There were no plans that ever got to the political level, the White House level, for the Bay of Pigs. Training in Guatemala and searching for a leader--that was known. I think the guy they finally came up with had been the first titular president.

Castro first took the title of Minister of Defense in the new government. The landing, selection, or planning were absolutely unknown to Dad. When Kennedy came in and they were looking for somebody to blame for the Bay of Pigs, immediately Kennedy said, "I take full responsibility." It's an old trick. However, Bobby Kennedy, Stewart Udall, Senator Joe Clark from Philadelphia--all were talking about the "Eisenhower plan." Bullshit. There was none, except to train people. People in the woodwork over there can say there was, because when I was in War Plans we were ginning up contingency plans for invading every place. But as far as I'm concerned, like the umpire says, "It ain't nothing until I call it." Nothing had come to the White House on that. At Gettysburg, in 1962, I wanted Dad to say publicly, "I don't run no bad invasions." But he wouldn't do it.

Matloff: Let me pose you this question, right out of the Ambrose book, a reference to General Goodpaster. He's raised the question: Did General Goodpaster warn the President at the time that "the operation was building a momentum of its own which would be difficult to stop?" Does this ring true to you? If it does, why then did the President keep the operation alive?

Eisenhower: If Goodpaster says he said that, he's an honorable man, and I'm sure he did. I was not privy to anything of that nature.

Goldberg: That's not all that portentous a remark, really, is it? All he's saying is, "O.K., this thing is moving along and it might be difficult to stop it," but there wasn't any talk about stopping it.

It was at the training and leadership level, and presumably more would follow after that. So, I don't see that this is as significant as Ambrose may think it is.

Eisenhower: Ambrose is an opinionated historian.

Matloff: I'm just using this as a way of eliciting your own thinking about the period. In connection with the transition to the new administration, were you in on the briefings about this operation to the new team coming in?

Eisenhower: No.

Matloff: Any idea how carefully the new group was being briefed on the planning up to that point?

Eisenhower: We didn't even know where the Bay of Pigs was. But I can't answer with authority because I wasn't in the briefing sessions.

Matloff: Let me shift to another area of the world, Indochina, which everyone has to ask you about, I'm sure. The President's attitude toward American involvement in Indochina--did he express any views about this? What was his attitude, for example, towards the French involvement?

Eisenhower: Anything I can say about that comes from writing Dad's memoirs. I drafted that chapter. But his reluctance to go in there was not so clear cut as some people who, in retrospect, try to picture it. He was not adamant about not going in; there were certain conditions. The two he insisted on (that the French would not meet) were, first, that we wouldn't just break up U.S. units and put them under

French command, as we did in World War I on the Marne (which they would insist on with the Navarre Plan and all their grandiose ideas). The other was that the French would come out with a clear cut assurance to the Indochinese that they would be free once they had suppressed the Vietminh, and say it in such a way that the Indochinese would believe them. The French wouldn't allow that they ever intended to turn Vietnam free. Since the French would not meet those conditions, our intervention was just out. As to the writing about Dien Bien Phu and whether you could drop atomic weapons around it, you could, but the fallout would probably kill all the people in the perimeter, too.

Matloff: Did he ever discuss the Dien Bien Phu crisis with you?

Eisenhower: No, and I just have to take Dad's word for it that he warned the French not to occupy that static position. (There may have been a little bit of convenient memory there, I don't know.) In writing that chapter I could not find any document where Dad wrote down, "Hold back." He said that he told the French somehow that it didn't look very good to him. I presume that he warned them against it. The big thing that held him from intervening was the political factor and committing troops. After all, he sent out there combat soldiers for whom he had a lot of respect, for example, "Iron Mike" O'Daniel. Maybe O'Daniel wasn't the man for the job; he was a tremendous division commander in World War II, but there he was commanding all straight-leg U.S. GIs rather than trying to deal with Malaysians or Indochinese. So

maybe he wasn't up to managing the job. I think Joe Collins went out there for a while, too.

Matloff: On the Dien Bien Phu crisis there have been various interpretations put forth as to why he did not intervene. One was that he wouldn't do it unless he had other allied aid, i.e., if the British would come in. Another was that it wasn't a good place for American troops to fight. Ridgway talks about having sent out a logistics team to look over the ground which reported to the effect that American troops just couldn't do a good job in that area logistically, and not to invest American ground troops because it would build up to a tremendous number. Ridgway uses a figure of about 500,000 that it would have built up to. But he's rather modest as to whether that report had any effect on the President's thinking. He doesn't know.

Eisenhower: I think it's good on his part to be modest, because when I was researching this matter, Ridgway's book, Soldier, had come out, and I looked through all the records to see some effect that his position within the Joint Chiefs had on Dad directly, and I couldn't find it. I talked to some scholars working on this and they are coming up with some indirect ways that Ridgway's views got to Dad. One problem is that Radford didn't bother giving anybody else's views on the Joint Chiefs. He gave Dad his own views.

Matloff: Did your dad believe in the domino theory?

Eisenhower: Yes. He did in public. Look in his press conferences. I always take offense when people criticize it because I consider him as the inventor of the domino theory.

Goldberg: And he believed it in private also?

Eisenhower: Yes. What he was saying was that if Vietnam falls, Laos falls, Cambodia falls. He's right to that extent. I think he would probably expect it to go on to Thailand, but I don't know if Thailand is in danger now or not. He would expect it to go faster than this.

Matloff: To return to the U-2 for one moment--the Powers' flight. In his latest book Ambrose says that "the flight Powers made was one that Eisenhower instinctively wanted to call off, but one that his technologists insisted was necessary. In this case . . . he allowed the advice of his technical people to override his own common sense." Does that make sense to you?

Eisenhower: I believe that such a statement is exaggerated. I remember attending the briefing for that flight and for others. Dad always had some skepticism, because we knew that someday the U-2 was going to be shot down. I don't recall his saying anything like, "It doesn't look so good to me, boys, but if you say so, I'll go along with you." All of Dad's regrets in his life were times when he didn't follow his instincts. I remember that Twining was very anxious for that U-2 mission. I think that the problem was that the flying weather was going to degenerate after the 1st of May. Maybe in the summertime it gets hazy or something.

Matloff: Did both Defense and CIA want these flights?

Eisenhower: Yes, it was a question of Dad keeping a lid on. Of course, in Dad's defense also, John Foster Dulles always said that the

Russians would never admit that spy missions had been occurring, even if they shot them down. Then Alan Dulles said categorically that no man would ever be taken alive. If Powers had not been taken alive, we could have written off everything else as a normal spy "cover story." But they gave Powers a parachute! Wow--that's one place where I got taken to task for my voluntary advisory. I said, "You ought to fire that guy [Alan] Dulles; he's let you down too many times." Dad told me to sit down and shut up.

Matloff: A general question on the president's way of reaching decisions in times of crisis, particularly international crises--could you generalize about the way he did it, what was his method, his philosophy in handling crises with the Soviet Union, how he reached a decision, and where he got his information and advice?

Eisenhower: It was almost a pattern, for every crisis that came up: to have a small group, never NSC (it's too large)--four, five, six or seven. He'd hear everybody out and never say anything himself. Sometimes Radford and Dulles had a way of butting heads, usually on a question of departmental precedence and priority. If it was a fluid situation, Dad would make only as much decision as was necessary at that time. Then he'd wait for another meeting for a change of events, especially with that Berlin affair, because it was so fluid and so dependent on the last thing that Khrushchev said, that you couldn't make a policy and carry it through six months. He would decide what should be done but only what was necessary at the moment,

and then have another meeting. He never could commit himself before everybody else did.

Matloff: To go on to the question of Sputnik--do you recall the impact that this had on the President's thinking and policies? This is getting into the whole question of the rise of the so-called missile gap.

Eisenhower: The missile gap was a bad piece of work, and Stu Symington never got his head beat in enough for it. It was absolutely the figment of his imagination. He claimed his source was Tom Lamphier. It was a political gambit. One month after Kennedy came in they decided there was no missile gap.

Goldberg: Symington got his information from the Air Force.

Eisenhower: Tom Lamphier was supposedly his big source of information, from General Dynamics, or some place.

Goldberg: Yes, but Lamphier wasn't official.

Eisenhower: The Air Force had to have been feeding him [Symington] something.

Goldberg: Sure, the Air Force concocted most of it. They counted all of the medium intermediate missile sites, added them, and called them all ICBM.

Eisenhower: Dad knew better because of the U-2, but he couldn't say.

Matloff: Did he ever authorize any steps to counter this notion of a missile gap while he was still in office?

Eisenhower: No, he just said, "You have to take my word against theirs." But he never said that the U-2 was his source.

Goldberg: He didn't admit to the U-2 at that time.

Matloff: Did sputnik have any immediate impact on him?

Eisenhower: Dad made an error there, in underestimating public reaction to sputnik. He was looking at this thing from a completely engineering point of view, and the engineers had told him about the IGY, which I think went through '57-'58, or an 18-month geophysical year.

Goldberg: 1956-57 was the period.

Eisenhower: I don't believe so, because we weren't due to put up a satellite as of October '57. Then the Army put up Explorer about January 20, 1958. I thought we made our commitment to the IGY to put one up.

Goldberg: What we were planning to put up was not the Army missile, but something entirely different.

Eisenhower: But in response to the question, there was an article in the New York Times several days before sputnik that the Russians were about to put a satellite up and Dad didn't believe that the American people would go to pieces the way they did. They had to have a series of "chin-up" speeches. The year 1957 was a bad year for Dad, anyway, with a stroke, Little Rock, and the recession. Look out for the year after a president is reelected. It affected his thinking because he had to put through educational bills, and he organized the Science Advisory Committee, with Killian heading that up, and George Kistiakowsky later. It affected his thinking more in connection with public relations than with respect to hardware. Dad

never realized how much you have to beat on things and how little the public listens to you. In his office they once said, "You've got to tell them this, Mr. President," and he responded, "Oh, baloney, I told them that six months ago." He thought everyone sat in front of the television with a yellow pad taking notes to which they would refer before his next speech--which they didn't. That was his problem in World War II, with the British and the taking of Paris, and with the Montgomery promotion--all these were underestimating what the civilian population was going to think. He would say it was routine, all planned, and did not realize how excited people could get.

Matloff: Did the President believe that containment was a realistic policy?

Eisenhower: Yes, he was really sold on it.

Matloff: Was he pessimistic or optimistic about eventually dampening down the threat with the Russians.

Eisenhower: He really was very enthusiastic and looked with urgency on the cultural exchanges. That's why he put so much into that cultural exchange in 1959, when the Russians had the exhibition up in New York and we sent ours to Moscow, where Nixon had his debate with Khrushchev. Dad contributed a painting of his and had a fight over the artistic values. He was really strong on that. I remember his talking to Norman Cousins about that in the oval office. Cousins had just made a trip to the Soviet Union. He said later on that his two biggest disappointments were (1) that he had failed to bring about a better

understanding with the Russians during his time, and (2) Nixon's defeat in 1960.

Matloff: Were you drawn in at all on the discussions on arms control and disarmament? How far he was willing to go in this direction?

Eisenhower: Only peripherally, to this extent--Goodpaster and I went with Norris Bradbury, Edward Teller, Bob Woods, and a pretty distinguished group of nuclear scientists to Europe in November of '58, just after I had reported to the White House. Later on Goodpaster and I went to see the last of the shots in the air out at Frenchman's Flat. That may have been early '60. Teller is a forceful man, and he used any avenues he could to get his way. He used to corner me and tell me about what was going to happen to Livermore Laboratory if the tests were stopped. I believe that Lewis Strauss did something of the sort, but I did not pass on any of this stuff. I was always pretty keen to avoid being an avenue for anybody to get the word to the President through me. Let them get it through channels.

Matloff: On the basis of your experience, how satisfied was he with the workings and effectiveness of the Department of Defense?

Eisenhower: He was quite triumphant over the success of the '58 reorganization, with the exception of his failure to do away with the service secretaries.

Matloff: Why did he feel strongly about that?

Eisenhower: He thought they were lobbying for their own services and didn't have any functions. I don't know what functions they have now, anyway. As far as I can see, they just make work in those damn places.

Goldberg: Did he feel that way at the beginning of his administration, too?

Eisenhower: Dad was always for more unification than we had at a given time.

Goldberg: If you remember the Reorganization Act in 1953, No. 6, the secretaries were put in the chain of command. The unified commanders went through the secretaries, not through the service chiefs or the Joint Chiefs. And he went along with that.

Matloff: That came out of the Rockefeller Committee Plan.

Eisenhower: My guess would be that was before his ox got gored by the service secretaries going to Congress. What he wanted to do was cut down service lobbying to Congress. That's why he was so anxious to get rid of the service secretaries.

Matloff: He was more concerned about the secretaries than about the service chiefs going to Congress?

Eisenhower: He was in Washington in the '30s when Gen. MacArthur was fighting the Army's battles, and in those days the Secretary of War corresponded to the Secretary of Defense to a large extent. I think he felt that, in purest terms, the military chief had a duty to go and testify. If he could not testify reasonably in support of what the administration was doing, he had the obligation to resign. His ideas on unification when he was the Chief of Staff of the Army were quite radical.

Matloff: How far would he have gone with unification? Did he feel that it had gone far enough?

Eisenhower: There's always a difference about how far you say you'll go and how far you actually will. He talked about everybody in one uniform for a while. I was there when he said that to the cadets at West Point in 1945. That was just after the war and he was riding high and saying outrageous things. He said that the big brass hats wouldn't go along with that. The Navy kept on not being under the orders of theater commanders up until 1958. That was one of the big things, that the Navy no longer would "supply forces" to the allied commander in the extent of such and such. Now the Navy forces came under the command of the theater commanders. When Dad was theater commander in NATO in '51, Truman, to his credit, put the Sixth Fleet under Dad's command. Then they slithered away from that. They started to write their poopsheets after that, and make up these green papers with the red stripes on them and got the Sixth Fleet out from under SACEUR in peacetime. The Navy forces were included in theater commanders' forces as of 1958. Dad had a rather specialized experience. His entire experience in World War II was as a unified commander. He commanded U.S. troops, but that was his secondary hat to supreme commander, in every job he had. He therefore looked at it a little differently from the way Gen. Bradley did.

Matloff: Aside from his attitude toward the workings and effectiveness of DoD, how about his judgment of the overall structure and working relationships in national security--the question of the NSC, for example? Was he satisfied with the way it was operating?

Eisenhower: Yes, but he used it in a very limited way. He used it as more or less of a briefing mechanism. He was very strong on making sure everybody was aboard. When you look back on that administration, we had a very small number of gaffs of people who were talking against the administration outside of school. The one that comes to mind the most is: George Humphrey's "depression will curl your hair" (1957). There weren't very many. He used the Cabinet even more as a briefing medium. There was one time when he pretended to make a decision in NSC. It was on a conventional carrier, even after we had a nuclear carrier. Dad was looking at the dollars and cents that the Navy wanted. Nuclear powered, it was going to be awfully expensive. He looked at it in the Oval Office and went back and forth and finally decided the Navy should have that conventional carrier but didn't say anything about it. We had an NSC meeting, and he made Arleigh Burke get up and make all this elaborate presentation and then to his surprise said, "All right." So he looked like he was making a decision in NSC but he wasn't; he'd already decided before that. Generally speaking, the decisions were made in the small meetings back in the Oval Office.

Goldberg: The general viewpoint is that he did use the NSC, that it operated on a larger scale and more effectively under him than under anybody else--Truman or Kennedy or probably anybody else since then. Really, that the NSC and all of the auxiliary organizations associated with it, such as the OCB, operated probably more effectively under Eisenhower than anybody else.

Eisenhower: I think that he was more dedicated to getting everybody's viewpoint than anybody else was. He wouldn't pull this business of getting a telephone call in the middle of the night and calling off the air support for the Bay of Pigs. He tried his very best to avoid allowing the last guy in to get his way. So he used the NSC for that. I'm not saying that he didn't get a lot of knowledge, a briefing for him as well as briefing for others, because after all he had the Secretary of the Treasury in the NSC. So he would get the fiscal impact of Defense and national security problems. He probably learned a lot from the NSC, but that's not where he made his decisions. Dad had a motto of "Never make a mistake in a hurry," which has to do with the procedures in these crises--and "Don't decide any more than you have to at the time." He would mold things.

Goldberg: But because he was so organization-minded he did establish this substantial structure, didn't he, for NSC, OCB, and the whole apparatus?

Eisenhower: A planning board, then OCB going back down, and somewhat the same cast of characters for both but not quite.

Matloff: Was the system effective from your perspective?

Eisenhower: Yes. I thought there was an awful lot of hot air in those things. A lot of people were being clever and there were rather informal meetings in the OCB and the planning board but I think that they pretty well implemented what Dad wanted. The danger was that, if you had a small meeting and you didn't nail people down, they might

not do what you say. I'll call attention to mid-August 1957, on the subject of the Pershing missile. The cast of characters in the Oval Office included Wilson, Radford (who had retired), Twining, Quarles, Lemnitzer, Brucker, and me. Goodpaster was on leave. I set up the meeting at Army's request to talk about the Pershing and the list of participants kept growing and growing. For a while Lemnitzer was going to be the only representative of the Army in the whole place, but I got the appointment secretary to invite Secretary Brucker to come also. Dad said at that point very emphatically that he didn't want any service restricted from developing a weapon just because it shot too far. This was taking off the 200-mile limit that had previously been imposed on the Army. I felt that the Secretary of Defense was not going to pay any attention to what Dad said, so I drew up an excerpt from the meeting and took it to Dad and got his signature and sent it to the Secretary of Defense. Quarles looked at me and chuckled when they were going out the door. Charlie Wilson never spoke to me again for the rest of his life. I think that that meeting could have gone on and nothing would have been done in the Department of Defense if some action hadn't been taken. They were now forced to allow the Army to develop the Pershing with more than a 200-mile range. Nothing ever gets solved in one meeting. When Goodpaster came back from leave, he told me that they had had some more hassles before they finally got it settled. But that shows that you'd better make sure it's on paper, and they can't deny it. Of course, Radford was so

anti-Army that I think one reason Jupiter-C was delayed was that Radford couldn't stand to have the Army put up a satellite. I've read that Radford had Charlie Wilson figured the same way. Radford was the guy that Dad said fought service unification at one time but had changed completely. He had been against unification, Dad thought, but now saw the light. He never saw the light; he saw a job that he wanted. Goldberg: Your father must have believed him if he made him Chairman of the Joint Chiefs.

Eisenhower: Dad was naive; he got taken on that.

Matloff: Did the President ever indicate his views about the styles, personalities, and effectiveness of certain officials? Brief characterizations would do here; for example, people like Wilson?

Eisenhower: I'll have to say one thing about Dad: he changed, he was very changeable. At the risk of being too long-winded--in 1958, when he was trying to get that reorganization bill through, he said, "If Carl Vinson would just die, we would get this thing through." The next year, when Carl Vinson was introducing legislation to restore his five-star rank, Dad said, "Don't worry about it, my great friend Carl Vinson will get this done." He didn't carry grudges, but everybody had to prove himself every day. You can't say that any one thing that Dad said was his considered, life-long opinion about anybody. I personally think that he was disappointed in Charlie Wilson. Wilson stayed a long time but Dad didn't want to be his own Secretary of Defense and, with Wilson, he had to.

Matloff: This is the usual criticism that has been made.

Eisenhower: Regarding Neil McElroy--I never understood to save my neck why Dad would ever accept a Secretary of Defense that laid down a condition before he came that he would stay only two years. It takes about that long to find the latrine. The result was that Don Quarles ran the Defense Department. Neil McElroy was a good friend to me, a personable guy, dynamic, but he didn't stay around long enough to learn the job. He said to Dad one time, "You have to be your own Secretary of Defense." He probably said the wrong thing there, though Dad didn't seem displeased.

Matloff: How about Thomas Gates?

Eisenhower: He came off very well, and I'll tell you why. He was able to rise above his former job as Secretary of the Navy. When he took over as SecDef (he had a very short time there, unfortunately), they set up this thing at Offutt Air Base to coordinate the fire plans of the Navy and the Air Force, those of Polaris (just coming in), and SAC.

Goldberg: The Joint Strategic Targets Plan.

Eisenhower: Tom Gates's old Navy buddies gave him the devil for that. To them he was a traitor; Benedict Arnold was a patriot compared to him. I saw him one night on the SEQUOIA when over a couple of drinks his former Navy associates lit into him. He was a very open guy. He stuck by his guns. So far as I can see, he was the most ecumenical, broadest, all-inclusive of any of the SecDepts they had, even though he had a background as Secretary of the Navy.

Matloff: Did the President ever comment on any other Secretaries of Defense, even those who had not served during his period?

Eisenhower: He was very close to Forrestal. He developed an obsession from Forrestal's suicide that when you start getting too tired, get away. He attributed that suicide to the theory that Forrestal just ground himself down, that he was too conscientious. Dad was a great admirer of Forrestal--he described him as "a philosopher." He didn't say much about Louis Johnson. Johnson didn't have very many friends. He talked very highly of Lovett.

Matloff: Any of the service secretaries that particularly impressed him?

Eisenhower: I think the Brucker thing was unfortunate. Brucker was so loyal to the Army vis-a-vis all the rest that he finally became a voice in the wilderness and a sort of pariah for the rest of them. I'm sure that they withheld his Medal of Freedom when the administration went out of office. Dad sent four over to the Pentagon and said for Gates to present them to anyone he wanted--and they didn't give one to Brucker. The fellow never got over it, either. In later years Gen. Bruce Clark was still trying to send me directives, trying to get me to support a move to have the Medal of Freedom awarded posthumously to Brucker. It's too bad.

Goldberg: How about Quarles?

Eisenhower: Quarles died during that period and there were a lot of accolades and very sad people. I think Quarles was good. With persons reflecting Dad's view, Quarles' stock was extremely high.

Matloff: How about the Joint Chiefs? people like Radford?

Eisenhower: I talked about general philosophy, about whether the JCS would assume responsibility for considering the national economic pie when making their military recommendations. He was disappointed in his Joint Chiefs all the time. He kept trying to bring them along, but there was not much more he could do.

Matloff: On the views of the Eisenhower presidency there has been a great shift in recent years. The original notion immediately after the ending of the presidency was that this had been a fairly inactive, passive presidency. In recent writings, authors go the other way, and say that the president was very active behind the scenes--the "hidden hand" presidency, as Fred Greenstein argues. How do you view this? Who's closer to the truth, from your perspective?

Eisenhower: I think that two terms is too long, and I personally think the country was really ready for somebody else by the time Dad left office. This is no discredit to him. We have never had another two-term president under the 22nd amendment. I think that his experience was an argument against the 22nd amendment. As a result, the country's trend was liberal by the time Dad left office. Harvard was in. It was sort of a relief to have old Von Hindenburg out of office so the kids could now start to use their own wings a bit. Plus the fact that the only evidence the academics had to go on was the New York Times. The papers coming out showed that Dad was inarticulate, when actually he stood number one in his English class at West Point.

He wrote very well, a lot better than I do. That, plus a more conservative trend in the country. But you can't make things of him that he wasn't. He was hired as president because we were afraid of the Russians in '52, not for his liberal views on social security and slum clearance. They weren't hiring for that. Maybe with a parliamentary system he would have been let out in 1958, as every prime minister is inevitably let out when his particular job is finished.

Goldberg: It has been suggested that in his press conferences he was often deliberately inarticulate or seemed to be so, or wandered around because he didn't really want to answer the questions. That was his way of disposing of it.

Eisenhower: I think there is something to that. He was terribly security conscious. He was always worried about whether he was divulging something that was security classified, and that made him hesitant. I don't believe his stroke had much to do with his occasional hesitancy, but his mind ran much faster than his tongue. The way I'm digressing today he would digress in a press conference.

Matloff: Of what was he most proud during his presidential years?

Eisenhower: Dad was not an introspective guy, looking back. He told about his disappointments, because that's what Walter Cronkite asked him about on his TV program. Those two things he said to Walter Cronkite--the fact that he was not able to establish a real lasting peace in his eight years, and, of course, the defeat of Richard Nixon, which he considered a reflection on his whole administration. He

honestly believed that fiscal responsibility went out the gate with the election of Kennedy, and I think he had a point. He also realized that he had some age on him and felt that the presidency was a duty--which he didn't mind. He liked the panoply, even though he claimed he didn't. On the morning of Nixon's defeat, Dad mused, "I could have been having fun these eight years"; he meant it. He was probably proudest that he kept us out of war during that very touchy time when the guy who shot his atomic arsenal first might win. He kept peace, a decent economy, and theoretically no loss of territory to the enemy, although I don't know how they overlooked Cuba, when they were saying that.

Matloff: I can't resist asking you about that farewell address. I'm sure that you have been asked many times before about the origins of the military/industrial complex talk--whether this was a sudden inspiration or the product of long reflection. What were the origins?

Eisenhower: One time when I got really sore was when I saw this Henry Steele Commager on TV and he said, "Eisenhower didn't write that; we only associate it with him." God almighty, Dad was completely consistent in that speech with what he had been doing for eight years. He'd been trying to keep the lid on the military, not to deprive them but to keep them within reasonable bounds. It was an uphill fight. He had never verbalized it before, and probably would not have, but his brother Milton brought the idea of verbalizing it to him. So he took the ball and ran with it. Of course, Dr. Malcolm Moos was his speech

writer at the time, but Malcolm always insisted that he was a carpenter, not an architect. So it was really Dad talking, but I think that Milton put him up to it. It certainly was near and dear to him.*

Matloff: Let me turn it to you now, to wind up. What do you regard as your major achievements during your tenure as Assistant Staff Secretary? What did you learn about the national security apparatus and did you leave with frustrations from that post?

Eisenhower: The only frustration that I had in that post was that I didn't feel that the Eisenhower administration as a whole was appreciated. It was pretty hard to take after eight years (of course, I only beat my brains out for two and a half years)--to have it bandied all over the countryside that Dad had been doing nothing during the whole time. Getting off a little bit, I think Dad made a mistake there. Hagerty listed the president's appointments for the next day but never published who had actually seen him the day before. I felt that I made some contribution to Dad's effectiveness, but that's about all I can say. I certainly could never have had any accomplishments of my own, but I think I was a fairly decent servant.

Matloff: How about the role that you played during the transition? Was this an effective device, to have one administration's team briefing the next? Was the next team receptive?

Eisenhower: I was in charge of the physical parts of that--putting on the ceremonies and honors. I was not involved in the substantive

*I mentioned this to Milton after the interview. He disclaims credit.

briefings. I was very much involved at that time in preparing for Gettysburg.

Matloff: For the return to private life.

Eisenhower: Yes, and getting together such books as the public statements of the Secretary of Defense from Rudy Winnacker, and what not.

Matloff: Just a short question on your role as Ambassador to Belgium almost ten years later--did you get involved at all with OSD in that capacity?

Eisenhower: No. That ambassadorial job was nothing, a blank spot in my career. It gave me a title, but what problems did we have with Belgium? You know the biggest problem that I had with Belgium?--Sabena landing rights in Chicago. Early in his administration Nixon gave KLM of Holland landing rights in Chicago but didn't give the same to Belgium. The Belgians were on my back for the whole two and a half years about that. I couldn't get anybody with any stature above CAB in the United States even to listen to me about it. It was terrible. The Foreign Minister would get up in front of Parliament and say, "I gave the American Ambassador hell today." He didn't know that the American Ambassador couldn't talk to anybody but the CAB back home. As a matter of fact, I wasn't so sure the Belgians were right anyway.

Matloff: Is there any question I should have asked you about the President in his role as Commander in Chief or anything about his national security role that you would like to add?

Eisenhower: I think the one lasting impression is that one must have a certain amount of sympathy with Mr. Reagan regarding these

embassies being blown up. I think the hardest thing about the presidency is being held responsible for things over which you have no control. In Dad's case, when Khrushchev came to the United States in September of '59, we had had a reconnaissance plane shot down at Azerbaydzhani on the Soviet borders, and people were missing and there had been no news of them. Of course, all the families wrote in to Dad and said that when Khrushchev came, he had to put the heat on. Dad put on all the heat he could, but was nevertheless held responsible for those nine deaths. The responsibilities that you're carrying that you really can't do anything about constitute the toughest part of the job. That's mostly commander in chief stuff.

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

Eisenhower: I talked a lot.

Goldberg: That's the whole idea.

Administration)

October 18, 1985

Ambassador John S. D. Eisenhower
P. O. Box 278
Kimberton, Pennsylvania 19442

Dear Ambassador Eisenhower:

Thank you for reviewing the transcript of your interview with representatives of the OSD Historical Office and for returning it with your emendations. I am enclosing for your files a copy of the final version, incorporating the changes that you made in the transcript. This letter is also to confirm that we shall follow your wishes expressed in your letter of September 27, 1985 in the matter of future access to the transcript of your interview.

We appreciate very much the time and thought you have given in your review of the transcript and your cooperation with this project. Your recollections and observations will add a valuable contribution to the record and to the OSD oral history program.

Sincerely,

15)
Alfred Goldberg
OSD Historian

Enclosure
as stated

Page determined to be Unclassified
Reviewed Chief, RDB, WMS
HW 10 13526, Section 3.5
Date: MAR 06 2014

John S. D. Eisenhower

P. O. Box 278

Kimberlin, Pennsylvania 19442

September 27, 1985

Dr. Alfred Goldberg
OSD Historian
ODASD(A)/History
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Dr. Goldberg:

Here is the transcript of the oral history. Some of my editing was done in the back of a car on the way to New York, so the penmanship may not be too good, but I think it's legible.

At first I didn't notice that p. 16 was out of sequence (between 29 and 30). Hence the remark, "I don't understand," etc. I think that my revised corrections are understandable, but I would like to call attention to the STET at the top of p. 17.

~~For the moment, I would like to leave this interview in category 3 - open only to DoD historians. If you or your representative desire to change it to category 2 or even 1, I would like the opportunity to go through it again. This time I was concerned only with clarity, not propriety. Many thanks.~~

Sincerely,

John Eisenhower

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