

THE ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT
FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS:
THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ROLE
OF THIS EXECUTIVE OFFICE IN
THE DECISION - MAKING PROCESS AND
ITS IMPACT ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATION

by

George Milton Bennett

B.S., United States Air Force Academy, 1969

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of the University of Colorado in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of Political Science

1972

This Thesis for the Master of Arts Degree by

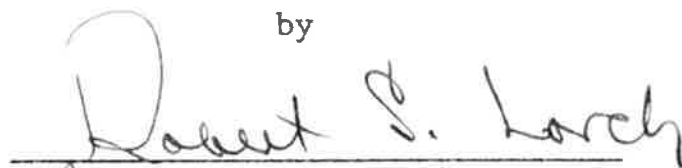
George Milton Bennett

has been approved for the

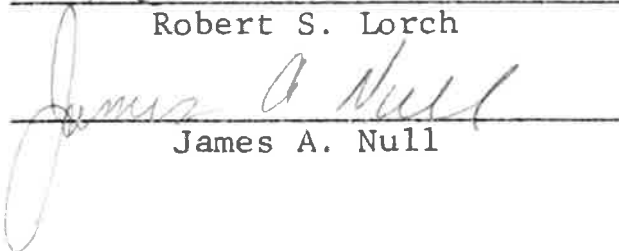
Department of

Political Science

by

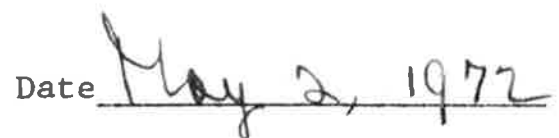


Robert S. Lorch



James A. Null

Date



Bennett, George Milton (M.A., Political Science)

The Assistant to the President for National Security
Affairs: The Development of the Role of This Executive
Office in the Decision-Making Process and Its Impact on
Governmental Operation

Thesis directed by Professor Robert S. Lorch

What developing degree of influence has been exerted
on the decision-making process by the Assistant to the
President for National Security Affairs and what portion
of the Secretary of State's traditional role in foreign
affairs has been usurped by this White House adviser?
These are the two questions that have been addressed in
the following study.

As the executive bureaucracy expanded and the
departments grew larger and larger, the members of the
Cabinet had to be appointed on the basis of two distinct
capabilities -- the ability to competently advise the
President and help mold responsible policy positions and
also the ability to efficiently manage and control a myriad
of sub-departmental offices and functions. It became
increasingly evident that department heads were finding it
difficult to give proper consideration and energy to both
roles simultaneously, and the President had to turn to new

channels to insure that the decision-making process was not neglected, and the Executive Office of the President was created in 1939.

In the realm of foreign policy formulation, World War II precipitated a candid analysis of the disorganized and haphazard conduct of foreign relations at all levels of government, and an attempt was made to consolidate the foreign policy process under the aegis of a newly created presidential instrument, the National Security Council. The mere location of this policy council in the Executive Office presented the President with the necessity to provide adequate staffing to allow him to effectively utilize the resources of this high level advisory body. The Executive Secretary of this staff evolved into a potentially powerful Special Assistant, as he was situated in a key position at the highest level of the decision-making process.

When President Kennedy assumed office, the potential power of this Special Assistant became a reality, as the new President desired to direct foreign policy personally from the White House and exhibited disdain for the traditional role of the Secretary of State. By examining the expansion of the Special Assistant's role during the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations, it was relatively

simple to understand the further delegation of authority to the Special Assistant by President Nixon, both in and out of the NSC apparatus.

In Chapter Five attention is directed to the second question of this thesis. The changing relationship between the Special Assistant and the Secretary of State is analyzed in an effort to make a determination concerning any usurpation of the power traditionally enjoyed by the Secretary of State, as the Special Assistant and his staff have, at the President's request, been providing more and more services usually required of the Secretary and his department.

Of course, the extent of influence or role usurpation can not be precisely measured, but by scrutinizing the development of the operational role of the Special Assistant, both institutionally and informally, a well-substantiated conclusion can be drawn. The evidence presented in the first five chapters of this study clearly leads to the conclusion that Presidents have been relying to a greater degree on the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs and his staff in order to operate

efficaciously in the sphere of foreign relations with a minimum of bureaucratic (and public) resistance.

Signed



Robert S. Lorch

Table of Contents

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION: THE GROWTH OF THE EXECUTIVE, PRECIPITATING AN EXPANDED WHITE HOUSE STAFF.....	1
The Decision-Making Process.....	1
Executive Reliance on a Growing Bureaucracy.....	3
Need for a Personal Staff.....	5
New Role of the Personal Staff...	8
Cabinet Limitations.....	9
The Thesis of This Study.....	11
Development of the Thesis.....	13
II. CREATION OF THE NSC AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF THE ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT (TRUMAN-EISENHOWER ERA)	14
The Eberstadt Report.....	14
The National Security Act of 1947	16
The Executive Secretary to the NSC	17
The NSC Under Eisenhower.....	18
Operations Coordinating Board....	25
The Special Assistant -- Potentially Powerful.....	25

CHAPTER

PAGE

III. THE KENNEDY - JOHNSON PERIOD,	
1961 - 1968.....	28
Kennedy's Staff Approach.....	29
The Ascendency of Bundy and	
Company.....	32
NSC Operation.....	33
NSC Staff Responsibilities.....	34
The Task Force.....	40
Change in Leadership.....	42
The Tuesday Cabinet.....	44
SIG.....	47
Summary of the Period.....	48
IV. THE NIXON APPROACH.....	51
The Nixon NSC Structure.....	52
The Council Meeting.....	56
Kissinger's Staff.....	57
The Assistant's Role As Adviser..	58
A New Era of Secrecy?.....	61
Executive Privilege.....	67
The Backgrounder.....	69
The Anderson Papers.....	70
Summary of the Nixon Approach....	71

CHAPTER

PAGE

V. THE SECRETARY OF STATE VERSUS THE PRESI- DENTIAL ASSISTANT: WHO IS NUMBER ONE?	75
The Cabinet <u>vs</u> the Staff.....	76
The Secretary of State's Dilemma.	78
The Kennedy Administration.....	81
The Johnson Administration.....	88
The Nixon Administration.....	90
Manager Versus Policy-Maker?.....	93
VI. CONCLUSION.....	98
The NSC, An Answer?.....	100
The Staff Assistant.....	101
Palace Competition.....	106
Concerning the Thesis of This Study.....	108
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	113

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: THE GROWTH OF THE EXECUTIVE, PRECIPITATING AN EXPANDED WHITE HOUSE STAFF

This study concerns two questions relating to the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs: (1) What developing degree of influence has been exerted on the decision-making process by this key member of the executive staff; and (2) What portion of the Secretary of State's traditional role in foreign affairs has been assumed by this White House adviser?

The Decision-Making Process

The weight of responsibility inherent in the American presidency especially during this twentieth century where 200 million people look to one man to lead them safely through international crises which include the potential threat of nuclear holocaust is indeed awesome, and the enormity of this responsibility causes one to wonder how a single human being can bear such a heavy burden. The President of the United States must not only

make crucial decisions affecting the collective fate of millions of Americans; he must make decisions which will affect the people of the world; and therefore, he must painstakingly insure that those decisions are responsibly made.

Responsible decision-making requires the inclusion of several basic considerations: the initial establishment of an overall goal or objective to be achieved; the collection of all relevant information; the cogent organization and analysis of this data; defining rational courses of action based on the pertinent information which is to include a consideration of capabilities; a determination must be made of the possible consequences associated with each alternative; and ultimately, a choice of action must be made and the implementing agents who will carry out this selected course must be instructed.^{1,2} When these general requirements of decision-making are examined within the context of the Executive Office of the

¹W.W. Kulski, International Politics in a Revolutionary Age (New York: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1968), pp. 629-631.

²Louis C. Gawthrop, Bureaucratic Behavior in the Executive Branch (New York: The Free Press, 1969), p.85.

President of the United States, other considerations are also included in the process. The President must also be aware of the views of the various departments, agencies, interests groups, or nations involved. He must also attempt to gain as well as maintain support for his policies in Congress, in his political party, and throughout the nation and the world. "In other words, [he must] build a consensus around Presidential proposals."³

Executive Reliance on a Growing Bureaucracy

The President obviously cannot personally follow through on all of these essentials of decision-making and still have time for other duties such as ceremonial state functions, political campaigning, or visits to other nations, and he would definitely have to forego relaxation at San Clemente or Key Biscayne and possibly would have to give up sleep altogether.

Until such time as the President is replaced by a computer, he will have to depend on a growing bureaucracy within the executive branch to meet the needs of his decision-making responsibilities. As the influence of

³Joseph I. Coffey and Vincent P. Rock, The Presidential Staff (Washington, D.C.: National Planning Association, 1961), p.16.

the United States has grown in the world throughout the last century, so has the executive expanded. In 1796 the Senate approved only 85 executive nominations; in 1948 the figure had jumped to 40,557. Under President Washington the number of departments and executive agencies was only nine, and as the first world war approached Teddy Roosevelt's administration encompassed twenty. Under Wilson the number almost doubled to thirty-nine; and improved communications, extensive industrialization, and increased global responsibilities following victory in World War II brought the number under President Truman to 69.⁴

In the State Department alone, the bureaucratic expansion was phenomenal. The office staff of Secretary of State Cordell Hull numbered only 21, but under Secretary of State William Rogers that figure had expanded to 336 staff members who served only the Secretary and his immediate deputies. In the same period the geographic and functional offices had jumped from 499 to 2,625 personnel, while the administrative personnel grew from

⁴Edward H. Hobbs, Behind the President (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1954).

433 to 3,307. Pre-World War II staffing of the overseas embassies and consulates was limited to below 2,000 people, yet today 22,000 Americans are employed by 263 diplomatic missions abroad.⁵

Need for a Personal Staff

The President's requirements for a personal staff to manage the White House affairs also enlarged in proportion to the growth of the presidency. President Washington wrote to his sister, Elizabeth Washington Lewis, on April 8, 1792, and asked her "to dispatch her son Howell to the capital to become a 'writer in my Office...at the rate of three hundred dollars a year'."⁶ Thereafter, presidential aides were usually relatives financed at the President's own expense until 1857 when Congress appropriated salaries for President Buchanan's staff. President Grant's personal staff consisted only of six people on a budget of \$13,800. A significant rise in stature for executive assistants was achieved when President McKinley persuaded Congress to

⁵John Franklin Campbell, "'What Is to Be Done?': Gigantism in Washington", Foreign Affairs, Vol 49, No. 1 (October, 1970), p. 86.

⁶Louis W. Koenig, The Invisible Presidency (New York: Rinehart and Company, Inc., 1960), p. 16.

raise the salary and the rank of White House aides to higher than that of departmental assistant secretaries and bureau chiefs. The White House staff under Coolidge had expanded to 46 on a budget of \$93,500, but as of yet had not encroached on the executive departments in the realm of presidential decision-making.

Evidence of the potentiality of such an encroachment appeared in the Brownlow Report issued from the President's Committee on Administrative Management to Congress in 1937. President Roosevelt accompanied the report with a statement which indicated that the chief executive needed organized assistance to aid him in managing the expanding bureaucracy under his purview:

...they [the committee] say, what has been common knowledge for twenty years, that the President cannot adequately handle his responsibilities, that he is overworked; that it is humanly impossible, under the system which we have, for him fully to carry out his Constitutional duty as Chief Executive, because he is overwhelmed with minor details and needless contacts arising directly from the bad organization and equipment of the Government. I can testify to this. With my predecessors who have said the same thing over and over, I plead guilty.⁷

⁷Franklin D. Roosevelt, quoted in Herman M. Somers, "The President As Administrator" from Public Administration and Policy, ed. by Peter Woll (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), pp. 117-118.

And from the Brownlow Report itself:

The President needs help...He should be given a small number of executive assistants who would be his direct aides in dealing with the managerial agencies and administrative departments of government...They would remain in the background, issue no orders, make no decisions, emit no public statements...They should be installed in the White House itself, directly accessible to the President.⁸

It is clear that the intention of the Brownlow Committee was not to install in the White House behind-the-scene centers of power which would rival the executive department heads in prestige and power and not be subject to congressional scrutiny or approval. The Committee seemed well aware of the possibility of this future development but disclaimed any such intentions, perhaps, in order to sell the committee recommendations to Congress. The new staff should consist of men "in whom the President has personal confidence and whose character and attitude is such that they would not attempt to exercise power on their own account."⁹

⁸Joseph E. Kallenbach, The American Chief Executive (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), p. 441.

⁹William H. Young, Essentials of American National Government (New York: Appleton-Century-Croft, 1969), p. 277.

The recommendations to adequately staff the presidency were finalized in the Reorganization Act of 1939 which authorized Executive Order 8248 on September 8, 1939, which created the Executive Office of the President to include: the White House Office; the National Resources Planning Board; the Bureau of the Budget; the Liaison Office for Personnel Management; the Office of Government Reports; and in the event or threat of a national emergency, such office for emergency management as the President shall determine.¹⁰

New Role of the Personal Staff

President Roosevelt further set up the office of Counsel to the President by executive order in 1941, indicating an attempt to formalize the practice of seeking advice from sources other than members of the Cabinet in order to obtain opinions from individuals who had the President's overall objectives in mind. There was some historical precedent for this move, as most preceding presidents depended on selected advisers, both in and out of the Cabinet, who had earned the President's trust and communicated in an atmosphere of intimacy.

¹⁰Hobbs, op. cit., p. 10.

Some of these inner circles of presidential confidants were known by names such as Jackson's "Kitchen Cabinet", Tyler's "Virginia Schoolmasters", Cleveland's "Fishing Cabinet", Teddy Roosevelt's "Tennis Cabinet", Harding's "Poker Cabinet", Hoover's "Medicine Ball Cabinet", and FDR's "Brain Trust".

However, "the enlargement of Roosevelt's own immediate staff has provided the mid-twentieth century President with a corps of assistants whose functions to a considerable degree supplement and to a certain degree supplant those traditionally associated with the Cabinet."¹¹

Cabinet Limitations

Certainly, the President must rely to an extent upon his Cabinet officers to provide him with information and advice, but Cabinet secretaries are, for the most part, political appointments based on impersonal factors such as geography (appealing to a certain constituency) or repaying a political debt to financial or political backers. Aptitude is, of course, an important consideration in every appointment, but those holding controversial

¹¹Kallenbach, op. cit., p. 440.

views are subject to public censure in the Senate; and therefore, the President may be forced to choose non-controversial, sometimes mediocre, men to administer the various executive departments.

Once a Cabinet head does take office, he is suddenly confronted with a large and unfamiliar establishment and is usually consumed by the "bureaucratic intransigence syndrome". This ailment is common to most large bureaucratic structures in that a certain allegiance to the organization is inculcated within each member, resulting in a jealousy of any other "competing" segment of the bureaucracy. Thus, the Secretary of State will advocate a "State Department position" on some particular area of foreign affairs policy which will perhaps fail to take into account presidential considerations of the whole spectrum of national interests -- say, economic or military considerations. This syndrome may also produce inefficiency and inaccuracy within the department itself, as each bureaucrat may consciously or subconsciously forward information or position papers up the hierarchical chain which will only reinforce a certain departmental policy stance. "In the upflow of information it is not unusual for subordinates to suppress, totally or partially,

that data which may place them in an unfavorable position."¹² "Information may be withheld, however, without any deliberate intention whatsoever to suppress."¹³ And as the bureaucracy grows larger, so proportionally does the affliction increase. "Decision-making can grow so complex that the process of producing a bureaucratic consensus may overshadow the purpose of the effort."¹⁴

The Thesis of This Study

Article II, Section 2 (of the Constitution) provides that the President 'may require the Opinion in writing of the principal Officer in each of the Executive Departments upon any subject relating to the Duties of their respective offices.' But it does not prevent him from requiring their opinion orally...It does not prevent him from obtaining a Cabinet member's opinion on subjects not relating to his respective office...Nor is the President prevented from seeking the opinions of those who are not principal officers of the Executive departments.¹⁵

¹²Gawthrop, op. cit., p. 112.

¹³Ibid., p. 115.

¹⁴Henry A. Kissinger, American Foreign Policy: Three Essays (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc, 1969), p. 19.

¹⁵Theodore C. Sorenson, Decision-Making in the White House (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1963), pp. 57-58.

The intent of this study is to attempt to examine the influence of one particular member of the White House staff, the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, and to determine through a careful examination of the administrations of Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon whether or not this hand-picked private adviser has indeed usurped the Secretary of State's official role as the President's chief foreign policy adviser. It has already been pointed out why the President must of necessity look to a special staff to assist him in viewing the complete spectrum of political considerations which may require consolidation of advice from several departments. Foreign affairs in the twentieth century cannot be effectively dealt with on the basis of diplomatic considerations alone. Emphasis must be given also to military posture, economic impact both nationally and internationally, and consensus building at home and abroad. The growing number of informational inputs, coupled with an expanding bureaucracy within the executive branch itself, require a comprehensive staff approach to assist the President in making realistic foreign policy decisions based on consideration of all the facts in light of each President's personal philosophical outlook. The contention of this study is that the originally non-political advisory role of the Assistant

for National Security Affairs has indeed become politically powerful within the executive branch of government to the extent of becoming a super-department conveniently exempt from Congressional, and thereby public, scrutiny.

Development of the Thesis

The development of this thesis begins with a cursory examination of the creation of the position of the Assistant for National Security Affairs and the original intent of its formation in conjunction with the National Security Council. A closer study of the Kennedy-Johnson years will reveal a definite departure from the Truman and Eisenhower Administrations' concept of the role of this staff adviser. The study of the Nixon Administration examines the ascendancy of this adviser into the role of diplomatic emissary and the President's closest confidant in foreign policy formation. In the fifth chapter the realism of the assertion that the development of the staff office of Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs has encroached upon the dominance of the Secretary of State in the realm of foreign affairs will be analyzed. Then, the thesis of this endeavor will be reexamined in the concluding chapter to determine its validity in view of the interstitial evidence.

CHAPTER II

CREATION OF THE NSC AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF THE ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT (TRUMAN - EISENHOWER ERA)

The Eberstadt Report

Following World War II, Ferdinand Eberstadt headed a committee to study the possibility of the unification of the Departments of War and Navy and made recommendations to the Secretary of the Navy James V. Forrestal on October 22, 1945. This report came to be known as the Eberstadt Report and was the predecessor of the National Security Act of 1947. One of the most important recommendations of this report stemmed from a growing awareness within the government that a new structure was needed to help the President to oversee and coordinate policy affecting the national security interests of the United States. The experiences of World War II had indicated a need for such an organization in order to approach national security problems cohesively instead of each department pursuing a separate course which may or may not have coincided with national objectives.

This top-level body was to be called the National Security Council, and

It should be charged with the duty (1) of formulating and coordinating over-all policies in the political and military fields, (2) of assessing and appraising our foreign objectives, commitments, and risks, and (3) of keeping these in balance with our military power in being and potential.¹

This proposed council of high-level advisers was intended hopefully to provide the President with a more efficacious method of formulating coordinated policy guidelines which would keep the executive morass of sub-bureaucracies moving in more or less the same direction. The Council was to be "a policy-forming and advisory, not an executive body, as the ultimate decision, and ultimate responsibility, rests with the President."²

¹Ferdinand Eberstadt, Unification of the War and Navy Departments and Postwar Organization for National Security: Report to James V. Forrestal, Secretary of the Navy (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, October 22, 1945), p. 7.

²Ibid., p. 7.

The National Security Act of 1947

The National Security Act of 1947 made official the primary recommendations of the Eberstadt Report, and even the wording was noticeably similar:

...it shall, subject to the direction of the President, be the duty of the Council...(1) to assess and appraise the objectives, commitments, and risks of the United States in relation to our actual and potential military power, in the interest of national security, for the purpose of making recommendations to the President in connection herewith; and (2) to consider policies on matters of common interest to the departments and agencies of the Government concerned with the national security, and to make recommendations to the President in connection therewith.³

In 1949 the composition of the National Security Council was amended to restrict the statutory membership to the President, the Vice President, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, and the Director of the National Security Resources Board on recommendation from the Hoover Commission which felt that the original structure allowed for too much military weight, as the Chiefs of Staff were included in NSC membership. In the 1949 amending act the National Military Establishment was discarded, and the various military departments were

³Hobbs, op. cit., p. 133.

officially subjugated to the Department of Defense. The other important provision of the 1949 act was to transfer the National Security Council to the Executive Office of the President, thus giving the President in-house control of its staffing and operation. Accordingly, the National Security Council was formally established and still exists in its original form excepting the National Security Resources Board whose name was changed to the Office of Defense Mobilization in 1953, in 1958 merged with the Federal Civil Defense Administration to form the Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization, and in 1961 retitled the Office of Emergency Planning.

The Executive Secretary to the NSC

President Truman attempted to effectively utilize the new and unfamiliar apparatus of the NSC by bringing together such minds as Dean Acheson, Robert Lovett, James Forrestal, George Marshall, John McCloy, Averell Harriman, George Kennan, Charles Bohlen, Paul Nitze, and Richard Bissell.⁴ In order to organize a meeting with such an

⁴Stewart Alsop, The Center (New York: Harper and Row, 1968).

array of distinguished governmental figures, President Truman relied upon the assistance of the Executive Secretary to the NSC, Sidney Souers. Souers handled the agenda and pre-meeting preparation and briefed President Truman every morning, but apparently Souers did not exercise any influence unseemly to his key position: "My sole job, I felt, was to be sure he got the best that we could get out of the brains he had in his government... It was not my view. I didn't try to prevail."⁵

The NSC Under Eisenhower

The National Security Council under President Eisenhower greatly enlarged its role in the decision-making process in the form of an extensive staffing agency similar to a military staff which would grind out position papers and strive for consensus among the departments. In 1953 Robert Cutler was elevated to the newly established position of Special Assistant to the President

⁵Sidney W. Souers, "The National Security Council Under President Truman" (Senate testimony May 10, 1960) from The National Security Council: Jackson Subcommittee Papers on Policy-Making at the Presidential Level, ed. by Senator Henry M. Jackson (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1965), p. 109.

for National Security Affairs. In this role Cutler also chaired the newly created Planning Board, a staffing appendage of the NSC. The function of the Planning Board was twofold. Firstly, when an agenda was proposed and scheduled for a forthcoming Council meeting, the Planning Board, consisting of assistant secretaries or equivalents from the departments interested, would prepare a policy paper based upon intelligence reports, departmental position papers, and, perhaps, interdepartmental committee reports. The Board would attempt to finalize recommendations for a certain policy approach and circulate it among the various Council members and other involved officials at least ten days prior to the upcoming meeting.⁶ Secondly, the Planning Board with the help of the NSC Staff would prepare and keep up to date position papers on nearly every country in the world.⁷

⁶Robert Cutler, "The National Security Council Under President Eisenhower" (Senate testimony May 24, 1960), ibid.

⁷Joseph Kraft, "Kennedy's Working Staff" from The Dynamics of the American Presidency, ed. by Donald Bruce Johnson and Jack L. Walker (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1964), p. 253.

What ultimately appeared before the Council was a watered-down, over-staffed policy position that usually was agreeable to everyone because consensus had already been reached at a lower level, and if there were some serious objections in the lower echelons of the various departments, they were usually "consensused out" and rarely were considered at the NSC meetings. Thus, a great power had been vested in the staff of the NSC, particularly to the Planning Board and its chairman, the power of achieving consensus before opposing issues were presented to the Council and thereby influencing to a large extent the final collective consensus of the Council and the President. Even Secretary of State Christian Herter admitted,

...it is pretty hard to generalize as to just who should have the authority in drawing the line as to what comes before the National Security Council. The Planning Board, of course, does a good deal of screening in that respect.⁸

⁸Christian A. Herter, "The Secretary of State" (Senate testimony June 10, 1960) from Jackson (ed.), op. cit., p. 151.

Robert Cutler and the NSC Planning Board

"Cutler, an amiable Bostonian, adored Eisenhower and also adored secrecy the way small boys do."⁹ Cutler was Special Assistant for National Security Affairs to President Eisenhower from 1953 to 1955 and from 1957 to 1958 (Gordon Gray and Dillon Anderson also served in this capacity under Eisenhower). Cutler felt that "I should 'keep my trap shut'. No speeches, no public appearances, no talking with reporters."¹⁰ Even though he did make himself inaccessible to the public and shrouded the functioning of his office in an aura of secrecy, he appeared not to have fully realized the potential power of his position, as he was apparently unaware of any subtle influence on presidential decision-making concomitant with his organizational function. Testifying before the Senate Subcommittee on National Policy Machinery on May 24, 1960, Cutler spoke freely about the NSC process under Eisenhower and probably did not realize that his testimony clearly

⁹Alsop, op. cit., p. 275.

¹⁰Robert Cutler, No Time For Rest (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1966), p. 296.

indicated that the President's Special Assistant, at least in the Eisenhower NSC machinery, was a potential source of executive power in the shaping of foreign policy which was not accessible to Congressional scrutiny and review:

At an NSC meeting the Special Assistant explains the reasons for submitting the paper, summarizes the high points in the general considerations, the objectives, the policy guidance, and the annexes. He asks the departments and agencies concerned to express their views on the integrated recommendations.

This is one of the most difficult tasks that we have. You must know your subject better than anyone else, in which you have been helped by getting the paper in shape. You must be able quickly and accurately to turn to the high points and thus give a rounded picture to refresh the Council's mind before it begins its argument.¹¹

Sometimes, the President will decide right in the course of the meeting on one of these doubtful or disputed issues. Sometimes, the President may make his decision a few days later when the draft formal record of action of the meeting is submitted to him for checking, modification, and approval...It is drafted initially by the Executive Secretary of the Council, working with the Special Assistant, and is circulated in advance of submission to the President to those Council members who were in attendance at the meeting for their comment.¹²

¹¹Robert Cutler, "The National Security Council Under President Eisenhower", op. cit., p. 116.

¹²Ibid., p. 117.

[If a subject is disputed] Someone has to bring about the decision. More often than not, this precipitating function is usually left to the Special Assistant. When he thinks that a consensus has been arrived at, or that most of the people think one way, while he has been busily trying to make an appropriate pencil note as to what has been decided, he elevates his voice above the argument to say, 'Mr. President, on this point I would understand that the consensus is about as follows.'¹³

Cutler appeared to be, according to the above testimony, the individual also responsible for forming a consensus at the typical Council meeting, of course, based upon the policy paper of the Planning Board. Cutler went on to say,

Some points he will leave for decision until the Special Assistant brings the draft record of action to him... I used to take the draft record of action to him... and go over it with him; it would be as I drafted it, and also with the Council members' comments.¹⁴

Governor Rockefeller, who was chairman of President Eisenhower's Committee on Governmental Organization from 1953 to 1958 and also a special assistant to Eisenhower for foreign affairs, substantiated in Senate subcommittee testimony on July 1, 1960, the influence of the Planning

¹³Ibid., pp. 136-137.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 137.

Board on NSC recommendations:

Mr. Pendleton. But the way the NSC operates now, as I understand it, it is consultative to the President. It puts before him decisions to make.

Governor Rockefeller. That is the concept. In actual practice, the Planning Board makes the decision, in the paper, and it is very seldom that the paper is substantially modified.¹⁵

The operation of the NSC under Eisenhower was widely considered "terribly formalistic" which did not allow for much relevant discussion during the regularly held meetings to which too many "interested" officials were invited to witness a simple indorsement of a Planning Board policy paper (sometimes thirty or forty people appeared so they could claim an intimacy with the top level decision-making apparatus). It was more often true that

...the President will customarily learn more about the major issues involved from the pre-briefing given him by his Special Assistant for National Security Affairs and from the latter's introduction of the draft paper at Council meetings than from the paper itself. Despite the benefits of discussions at Council meetings, the President must look largely to his immediate staff rather

¹⁵Nelson A. Rockefeller, "The Executive Office of the President" (Senate testimony July 1, 1960) from Jackson (ed.), op. cit., p. 189.

than to the mechanism of the NSC for the information he should have before making policy decisions.¹⁶

Operations Coordinating Board

On February 27, 1957, Executive Order 10700 issued by President Eisenhower established the Operations Coordinating Board as another appendage of the already bulky NSC apparatus. The Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs was to be a member of this Board which was assigned the task of following up on all decisions made by President Eisenhower through the NSC in order to assure that each decision was properly implemented at all levels of government. This body further expanded the organizational influence of the NSC by allowing NSC staff members to officially involve themselves in departmental affairs.

The Special Assistant -- Potentially Powerful

In reviewing the foregoing analysis of the role of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs under President Eisenhower and in dissecting the organizational

¹⁶Coffey and Rock, op. cit., p. 66.

structure of the National Security Council, it can be said that the newly formed office of Special Assistant for National Security Affairs was situated in a key position of government, both formally through the NSC and informally by virtue of daily association with the President as part of his own personal staff. The Special Assistant's control of the NSC agenda and his chairmanship of the Planning Board afforded him a special opportunity to deliberately or subconsciously influence foreign policy decisions. How much influence? One can only surmise the answer. Yet, when major foreign policy decisions of the Eisenhower period are scrutinized the names Cutler, Gray and Anderson rarely appear as molders of policy. Were they? The secrecy that especially Robert Cutler liked to surround his job with is perhaps some of the reason. More than likely, however, the Special Assistants for National Security Affairs under Eisenhower were not conscious architects of policy mainly because of two factors. The first was the unwieldy bureaucratic organization of their staffs vis-à-vis the NSC which hampered quick action when fast-breaking events needed immediate policy analysis such as the occurrence of an international crisis. In event of such a situation there was no time for the slow staffing process of consensus building -- consensus would be

presented to the Council after the fact. The second and probably most important reason was the presence on Eisenhower's Cabinet of a domineering Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles. Dulles, during his tenure in the State Department, was recognized to be the chief architect and moving force in the conduct of foreign affairs under Eisenhower. Perhaps, had there not been a strong Secretary of State like Dulles on Eisenhower's Cabinet, the vital access to the decision-making process enjoyed by the Special Assistant could have been more effectually utilized. A good summary of the process of formulating foreign policy during the Eisenhower administration was given by Charles E. Jacob:

Yet with all the elaborate paraphernalia of foreign policy decision making, co-ordination, monitoring, and checking that constituted the Eisenhower version of the NSC, important policy decisions appear to have been reached often outside and sometimes in spite of NSC recommendations.¹⁷

¹⁷Charles E. Jacob, Policy and Bureaucracy (Princeton, New Jersey: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1966), pp. 170-171.

CHAPTER III

THE KENNEDY-JOHNSON PERIOD, 1961-1968

Robert Cutler found that "a peculiar virtue of the National Security Act is its flexibility...each President may use the Council as he finds most suitable at a given time."¹ President Eisenhower had formalized the organizational structure of the NSC and had used his Assistant for National Security Affairs as a staff coordinator, and some government observers viewed the intricate staff network that had acquired attributes characteristic of a large bureaucracy to be an efficient managerial device providing supportive background research. One such observer was William Carey who lauded the Eisenhower organization and described "the post-Eisenhower arrangements [as being] a cross between administrative touch

¹Robert Cutler, quoted in McGeorge Bundy, "Kennedy Administration's Organization for National Security" from Johnson and Walker (ed.), op. cit., pp. 328-29.

football and a permanent cattle stampede."² If the analogy is somewhat obscure, be assured that the method of handling foreign affairs under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson was a distinct departure from the practices of the preceding Republican Administration.

Kennedy's Staff Approach

President Kennedy had not, like Eisenhower, stepped directly from a military career into public office. His experiences with his Senate staff did not lead him to organize his personal White House staff, or Cabinet for that matter, along the more formalized lines associated with a military staffing approach. Kennedy did not rely on formal structures or hard and fast groupings of individuals under categorical titles. He instead developed

... a reliance on individuals, specific individuals, rather than on groups of individuals, reliance on the individual to develop a plan and reliance on the individual to carry out that plan -- in contrast to reliance on a committee to develop a plan or to monitor the action under the plan.³

²William D. Carey, "Presidential Staffing in the Sixties and Seventies," Public Administration Review, XXIX, No. 5 (1969), p. 457.

³Robert S. McNamara, "The Secretary of Defense" (Senate testimony August 7, 1961) from Jackson(ed.), op.cit., p.328.

Kennedy felt that if he could trust the members of his staff and if they were intimately aware of his personal views and general philosophy, then he could be assured of their unsupervised ability to function on his behalf.

He required a personal staff, therefore -- one that represented his personal ways, means and purposes -- to summarize and analyze those products and proposals for him, to refine the conflicting views of various agencies, to define the issues which he had to decide, to help place his personal imprint upon them, to make certain that practical political facts were never overlooked, and to enable him to make his decisions on the full range of his considerations and constituencies, which no Cabinet member shared.⁴

The Kennedy approach affected the foreign policy machinery within the sphere of the White House in several ways. The dependency on a few individuals required a considerably smaller executive staff to achieve desired results than did the more extensive White House sub-bureaucracy as set up by President Eisenhower. The staff of the Assistant to President Kennedy for National Security Affairs ranged from thirty to forty members

⁴Theodore C. Sorenson, Kennedy (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 258.

(substantive officers numbered only from fourteen to sixteen).⁵ Secondly, due to President Kennedy's disbelief in the usefulness of formal bodies in the decision-making process, the National Security Council was relegated to a secondary role in the formulation of foreign policy and was used more often as a staging area to announce important presidential initiatives in foreign affairs that usually were decided by a smaller group outside of Council meetings.

Kennedy cut its meetings back to every three weeks or so, and tended to use them either as briefing sessions or to rubber-stamp previously agreed-on decisions.⁶

Lastly, the staff consolidation and the diminishment of the role of the National Security Council served to enhance the role of the Presidential Assistant for National Security Affairs.

⁵William Y. Smith (member of NSC staff 1963-1964), private interview, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, August 21, 1971.

⁶Patrick Anderson, The President's Men (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1968), p. 265.

The Ascendency of Bundy and Company

The invasion of Cuba on April 17, 1961, and the subsequent Bay of Pigs disaster was a crushing blow to the diplomatic prestige of the Kennedy Administration. Kennedy admirers have attempted to account for this political catastrophe by claiming that President Kennedy had relied too heavily on established sources of information and was never really in control of the situation. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., in particular, felt that Kennedy was resolute to preclude the possibility of a similar misfortune.

In the future, he [Kennedy] made sure that he had the unfettered and confidential advice of his own people.⁷

But, if the National Security Council played a diminishing role, the National Security Council staff was indispensable.⁸

Bundy was moved over from the Executive Office Building to the West Wing of the White House and given new authority as a coordinator of security affairs within the White House. He [Bundy] instituted regular morning meetings for National Security Council Staff, to which he

⁷Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., A Thousand Days (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965), p. 297.

⁸Ibid., p. 421.

invited other members of the White House group involved in foreign affairs...as well as representatives from State, Defense, CIA and USIA. This valuable innovation provided the White House a point of information and control below the top and strengthened Bundy's services to Kennedy.⁹

President Kennedy had great confidence in McGeorge Bundy, a Yale intellectual and New Frontier "whiz kid". Kennedy gave Bundy the responsibility of streamlining the NSC staff organization; and soon thereafter, upon Bundy's recommendation, Kennedy dissolved by Executive Order the cumbersome Planning Board and Operations Coordinating Board established by President Eisenhower.

NSC Operation

Bundy had the responsibility of scheduling the agenda for all National Security Council meetings. The source of items for consideration was usually either the President, the various department heads or their under secretaries, or Bundy himself who would schedule issues which he felt the President would deem necessary to discuss. Papers concerning the topics to be discussed

⁹Ibid., p. 297.

would be circulated and coordinated in advance by Bundy's staff. The meetings were usually short in duration, and invitations were only extended to, other than members, those crucially involved in the discussions. Usually, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Attorney General, the Director of the CIA, and sometimes the Chairman of the JCS were in attendance in addition to the statutory members. During the meetings, the President usually addressed the senior officials as Mister so-and-so but called his own aides ("Mac" Bundy) by their first names.¹⁰

NSC Staff Responsibilities

Bundy set up the basement of the West Wing of the White House as a "Situation Room" into which flowed all incoming intelligence data via the various communications centers in the Departments of State (Operations Center) and Defense (Defense Intelligence Agency) and the Central Intelligence Agency. The White House center was staffed around the clock, and Bundy organized his staff along geographic lines, utilizing men expert in a particular geographic region to include a thorough knowledge of the diplomatic customs, economic life, history, social values,

¹⁰Sorenson, Kennedy, op. cit., p. 284.

culture, language, and religion indigenous to different parts of the world. Whereas, in a more formalized system, his predecessor, Gordon Gray, saw President Eisenhower only three or four times a week, Bundy was in constant contact with President Kennedy and conferred with him on the average of four or five times a day.¹¹ Bundy, with the help of his staff, would screen all incoming cables and earmark only those which he felt would be of interest to the President. This job alone, attempting to identify what he (Bundy) felt required presidential action, involved a certain amount of decision-making on the part of the President's Assistant and could possibly influence Presidential decision-making which is based upon the information that is set before him. Bundy's occupation of this key place in the stream of intelligence also allowed him to be the first aide asked for advice during a fast-breaking crisis situation. "As the man who usually reached the President first with news of a crisis, he usually got in the first word of advice on how it should be handled."¹² Schlesinger observed that "...Kennedy,

¹¹Charles Roberts, LBJ's Inner Circle (New York: Delacorte Press, 1965), p. 70.

¹²Ibid., p. 70.

Bundy and the White House staff preferred to interpret intelligence themselves."¹³ This intimate reliance on the capabilities of the Special Assistant and his staff served, to some extent, to isolate the White House as a semi-self-sufficient center for conducting foreign affairs.

From this position at the hub of information, Bundy could, utilizing his staff as a presidential instrument, oversee policy planning activities as well as direct operational follow-through.

Already it has been made plain, in a number of cases, that the President's interests and purposes can be better served if the staff officer who keeps in daily touch with operations in a given area is also the officer who acts for the White House staff in related planning activities.¹⁴

"It was already apparent that the key men around the President, so far as policy was concerned, were Theodore Sorenson and McGeorge Bundy."¹⁵ Sorenson was responsible for protecting the President's interests in

¹³Schlesinger, op. cit., p. 428.

¹⁴McGeorge Bundy, "The National Security Council in the 1960's" (Senate testimony September 4, 1961) from Jackson(ed.), op. cit., p. 278.

¹⁵Schlesinger, op. cit., p. 207.

the area of domestic policy, and Bundy had to make sure that the government, including the bureaucracies of the several departments, met presidential exigencies in the complete scope of foreign affairs. Bundy's office could not be confined to a single viewpoint, such as a military or a diplomatic outlook, but, instead, had to consider the full range of governmental activity and the ramifications and implications of each presidential decision. From their White House vantage point Bundy and his staff were given the job of "putting together policies that [could not] easily be constructed in any other place -- the American stand on bomb testing, for instance."¹⁶

The growing involvement in Southeast Asia was also a prime concern of the Bundy staff, as the situation had evolved from the Eisenhower's Administration's "limited-risk gamble" to a "broad commitment" under President Kennedy. Bundy, who was "often described as principal architect of U.S. Vietnam policy", acting on behalf of the President, was very much in the center of the management of the U.S. role in South Vietnam -- including the

¹⁶Kraft, op. cit., p. 255.

coup of November, 1963.¹⁷ The Pentagon Papers disclosed a constant series of cablegrams between Bundy and the U.S. Ambassador in Saigon, Henry Cabot Lodge, immediately prior to the actual coup. It appears that Lodge was well aware of the plans to overthrow President Diem, and the following is an excerpt from the last minute instructions issued from Bundy in the White House:

We are particularly concerned about hazard that an unsuccessful coup, however carefully we avoid direct engagement, will be laid at one door by public opinion almost everywhere. Therefore, while sharing your view that we should not be in position of thwarting coup, we would like to have option of judging and warning on any plan with poor prospects of success. We recognize that this is a large order, but President wants you to know of our concern.¹⁸

We believe that...you should take action to persuade coup leaders to stop or delay operation which, in your best judgment, does not clearly give high prospect of success.¹⁹

¹⁷Neil Sheehan, Hedrick Smith, E.W. Kenworthy, and Fox Butterfield, The Pentagon Papers (Toronto: Bantam Books, Inc., 1971), p. 630.

¹⁸McGeorge Bundy, "Bundy's Reply on Coup Hazards" (cablegram to Ambassador Lodge, October 25, 1963) from Hedrick Smith, ibid., p. 219.

¹⁹McGeorge Bundy, "Further Bundy Instructions to Lodge on Contingency Plans" (cablegram to Ambassador Lodge, October 30, 1963), ibid., p. 230.

The casual and extensive use of the words "we" and "our" suggests that the Special Assistant had more than a little influence on the final United States position during a critical period in the enlarging U.S. commitment to thwart communism in Southeast Asia.

The NSC staff, in line with their responsibility for monitoring all aspects of foreign policy, was a clearing-house for most major presidential statements on foreign policy and also helped prepare the President for news conferences and other public and private exposure.

Finally, the NSC staff was responsible for finalizing presidential decisions, not in elaborate policy position papers, but in short National Security Action Memoranda (NSAM) for dissemination to the various segments of the government concerned. These NSAM's merely stated that the President had considered a given issue and decided so and so.

In all, Bundy was to use his staff to aid a particular President in a particular way. "My problem is to try to find a way of using the Council and the Council staff that will conform to the style of this President."²⁰

²⁰David Wise, "Scholars of the Nuclear Age" from The Kennedy Circle, ed. by Lester Tanzer (New York: Van Rees Press, 1961), p. 38.

In fulfilling this commitment to this particular presidential style, Bundy recognized that "the business of the National Security staff goes well beyond what is treated in formal meetings of the National Security Council" and, with presidential authorization, became a key figure in the Kennedy Administration in his effort "to meet the President's staff needs throughout the national security area."²¹

The Task Force

This great reliance on individuals by President Kennedy led to an extensive use of the concept of a "task force" to replace formal NSC operation. President Kennedy would simply direct an individual (staff member, Cabinet member, under secretary -- it could be almost anyone) to head up a small group to analyze certain elements of policy and report back to him with alternative courses of action and substantiated recommendations on the advantages and disadvantages of each. This task force leader was to canvass the views of other members of government who were affected by the plan or study. This sometimes meant that a

²¹Bundy, "The National Security Council in the 1960's", op. cit., p. 277.

presidential staff member would have to bypass department heads and go directly to the men working closest to the information -- say, Bundy might call up the Assistant Secretary for European Affairs in the State Department or even one of his subordinates for information on a particular matter. "Departmental participants in the task forces were not altogether enthusiastic about the contribution of their White House colleagues," as they were not sure if the staff members were speaking for the President or for themselves.²² This kind of circumvention of senior department officials by White House aides was not confined to task force matters alone, and President Kennedy to a degree was responsible for this practice, as he sometimes would communicate directly with a lesser department official in order to get first-hand knowledge without incurring any bureaucratic delays.²³ Sometimes, "it was noticeable that White House aides were beginning to move in on the bureaucracy to the extent of issuing direct instructions to subordinate officers."²⁴ Why this was allowed by the

²²Louis W. Koenig, The Chief Executive (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1968), p. 173

²³Sorenson, Kennedy, op. cit., p. 282.

²⁴Carey, op. cit., p. 454.

department heads will be discussed in Chapter Five.

Change in Leadership

After assumption of the Presidency following the unexpected tragedy in Dallas in 1963, Lyndon Johnson was faced with running the Kennedy Administration according to the Johnson style. Most of the Kennedy men in the White House were soon replaced with the exception of McGeorge Bundy, who remained in his post as Assistant for National Security Affairs. The White House Situation Room remained in operation, and Bundy and members of his staff still had direct access to the President on an around-the-clock basis. Only five of the top ten White House staff members enjoyed the status of a private line directly connected to President Johnson's 24-button telephone console, and Bundy was among this intimate few.²⁵

Many of the former Kennedy staffers could not understand how Bundy could work compatibly for both Kennedy and Johnson, as Johnson's style differed considerably from that of Kennedy. Bundy, however, appeared to make the

²⁵Roberts, op. cit., p. 46.

transition with little discomfort, but some adjustment was evidently necessary. Even though a White House staffer must, of necessity, maintain close contact with the President, including participation in the decision-making process, it is the President who decides what will be the extent of that participation, and "under President Johnson, the White House staff [was] far less active on a full-time basis in the formulation of policy."²⁶ President Johnson expected his staff to help define issues, to articulate his views, and to protect his freedom of movement, yet he did not want anyone attempting to exert overt influence on him.²⁷ President Johnson was a strong-willed individual who expected to be backed up -- not put down. Some observers have projected this interaction between the President and his staff more vividly: "They Johnson's staff are to be at the beck and call of Daddy at all times and all places, and, above all, Daddy always knows best."²⁸

²⁶Joseph Kraft, Profiles in Power (New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1966), p. 184.

²⁷Koenig, The Chief Executive, op. cit., p. 177.

²⁸Alsop, op. cit., p. 50.

The Tuesday Cabinet

President Johnson continued to work outside of the formal National Security Council meetings, as did his predecessor, yet an informal gathering which took place nearly every Tuesday at noon was regularized and more clearly represented the status of the Assistant for National Security Affairs. Those usually in attendance for this informal luncheon, other than the President, were the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, and the Assistant for National Security Affairs. Sometimes, the Chairman of the JCS, the Press Secretary, and the Director of the CIA were invited on an ad hoc basis. Many major foreign policy positions were discussed and formulated at these Tuesday meetings, and due to the informal nature of these discussions, the Special Assistant enjoyed the opportunity of participating with the two members of the Cabinet on an equal basis.

McGeorge Bundy not only contributed valuably to the Tuesday Cabinet meetings, but also was given other important tasks by President Johnson above and beyond his NSC staff duties. In February of 1965, Bundy visited Vietnam on a presidential fact-finding mission, and following the U.S. marine landings in the Dominican Republic in April, 1965, Bundy headed a team to Santo Domingo to help

negotiate a new government. Members of the latter task force included Under Secretary of State Thomas Mann, Deputy Secretary of Defense Cyrus Vance, and Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs Jack Vaughn. This subordination of members of the departments to a White House adviser clearly indicated that the informal status of the Special Assistant outranked senior bureaucratic officials largely due to the fact that his boss was the President of the United States.

In 1966, McGeorge Bundy resigned from his post to become the president of the Ford Foundation, yet his opinion was still highly respected by President Johnson, as Bundy was called back to Washington during the crisis period of the Arab-Israeli six day war in June of 1967 to assume the post of Executive Secretary of a Special Committee of the National Security Council for the Middle East Crisis.

Walt Whitman Rostow, Bundy's deputy under President Kennedy, served on the State Department Policy Planning Council prior to succeeding Bundy as Assistant for National Security Affairs in 1966. He continued to utilize the system formulated by Bundy which involved a breakdown of his staff into specialty areas, Africa, Europe, Latin

America, Southeast Asia, international economics, and science and defense.²⁹ Rostow also, of course, became a participant in the Tuesday Cabinet meetings, and even though he was primarily an executive assistant supposedly removed from the decision-making process, "the Rostow voice grew steadily during his tenure" -- the President was listening.³⁰ Walt Rostow became a conspicuous figure in the direction of foreign affairs from the White House and was an able replacement for Bundy, as he carried on the newly established tradition of moving forcefully behind the scenes on behalf of the President. The dependency of the President upon this relationship can be observed in the particular instance of the crisis precipitated by the outbreak of hostilities in the Middle East on June 5, 1967, as President Johnson conversed with Rostow fifteen times though talking with the Secretaries of State (Rusk) and Defense (McNamara) only three times each by phone. Especially in a fast-breaking crisis situation, the

²⁹Koenig, The Chief Executive, op. cit., p. 178.

³⁰John P. Leacacos, Fires in the In-Basket (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1968), p. 144.

President must immediately rely upon his more accessible Special Assistant who operates at the center of the executive bureaucratic network.

SIG

On March 4, 1966, President Johnson promulgated National Security Action Memorandum 341 which created the Senior Interdepartmental Group (SIG). The SIG was chaired by the Under Secretary of State; other permanent members were the Deputy Secretary of Defense, the Administrator of AID, the Director of USIA, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Director of the CIA, and the Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs. The purported objective of the SIG was to coordinate policy between the various executive agencies concerned with national security affairs. As the Kennedy staff system sometimes caused individuals to be overworked and policy actions to be somewhat disorganized and uncoordinated, President Johnson attempted to give some order to the system by a semi-return to the days of the Eisenhower Planning Board. Even though the SIG was chaired by the Under Secretary of State, White House influence in the form of the President's Special Assistant was still evident, and task forces, by no means, became extinct.

Summary of the Period

The trend of the new Kennedy approach to foreign affairs was established when the Planning Board and the Operations Coordinating Board were dismantled in favor of a reliance upon individuals and task forces instead of an institutionalized decision-making framework centered in the National Security Council. Consequently, the influence fell into the hands of the individuals who were both accessible to the President and intimately trusted by him. In the realm of foreign affairs the "principal architect of all foreign policy" was said to be the Assistant for National Security Affairs, McGeorge Bundy.³¹ As Bundy was not tied to any formal planning apparatus, he and his small staff could utilize, at will, the resources of the executive departments on "behalf of the President."

The NSC staff operation remained relatively unchanged during the Johnson Administration although the new President attempted to rein in for himself most of the power within the executive branch, and in doing so, he

³¹Kraft, Profiles in Power, op. cit., p. 65.

"did not often solicit dissenting opinions."³² An attempt was made to organize and control the wide-ranging influence of the White House staff (the SIG) but without much permanent success.

Due to the vital positioning of the Special Assistant and his staff in the flow of communications (the Situation Room), Bundy and later Rostow both occupied a strategically influential station in the decision-making process from assimilating of data to rendering advice. Whether or not any conscious advantage was taken of this function in order to give credence to a certain policy stance that the Special Assistant felt to be the best course for the President to endorse is a matter for speculation; but when an adviser has the opportunity to screen cables, act as presidential overseer of that segment of the bureaucracy involved in foreign affairs, and give advice through the development of close daily contact with the chief executive, then it must be assumed that no matter how sincere or aboveboard the intentions of the Special Assistant a certain amount of subconscious and incidental

³²John Franklin Campbell, Foreign Affairs Fudge Factory (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1971), p. 96.

influence on presidential decisions is to be expected.

And if the President actually solicits the adviser's personal opinion, then the amount of influence in the final determination will increase commensurately. Under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson the stature of the Assistant for National Security Affairs in the process of formulating American foreign policy was enhanced considerably, and a new era in presidential decision-making had begun.

CHAPTER IV

THE NIXON APPROACH

The White House staff in Nixon's early months grew larger than ever before and seemed to fall somewhere between the highly structured arrangements favored by Eisenhower and the informal patterns under Kennedy and Johnson.¹

President Nixon gave very careful consideration to the selection of those men who would aid him in managing the now enormous executive bureaucracy. Normally, the man whose appointment is given closest consideration by any new President is the Director of the Bureau of the Budget who must be able to effectively manage executive resources to insure proper financing of any policy decision made by the President -- from foreign affairs to domestic policy, but "President Nixon's appointments to his personal staff preceded those of his Cabinet and, more surprisingly, his

¹Laurin L. Henry, "Presidential Transitions: The 1968-69 Experience in Perspective," Public Administration Review, (September-October, 1969), p. 478-79.

Budget Director."² This emphasis on obtaining a highly competent and trustworthy personal staff can be more easily understood by examining the new National Security Council structure and the role played by the President's White House staff, especially his Assistant for National Security Affairs, Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, in the policy-making process both inside and outside of the NSC framework.

The Nixon NSC Structure

Edward Kolodziej's analysis of the NSC structure, based on Department of State Foreign Affairs Manual Circular No. 521, February 6, 1969, provides a comprehensive view of the formal organizational operation of the Council apparatus.

The NSC Interdepartmental Groups (IGs) are the foundation of the Nixon NSC. The IGs are chaired by an appropriate Assistant Secretary of State and include as members representatives of the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, the Secretary of Defense, the Director of the CIA, the Chairman of the

²Harold Seidman, Politics, Position, and Power (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 71.

JCS, and other agency officers as invited. These IGs are organized along regional and functional areas of concern. The IGs are broken down regionally into the areas of Latin America, Near East and South Asia, Africa, Europe, and East Asia and the Pacific and functionally into the areas of foreign aid, trade policy, strategic posture, monetary problems, military-political issues, etc. The primary functions of these Interdepartmental Groups are threefold: to discuss and decide other than major interdepartmental issues that can be handled at the Assistant Secretary level; to prepare NSC contingency papers for potential crisis situations; and to prepare basic NSC policy papers. The IGs submit these policy papers and contingency plans directly to the NSC Review Group in a form called National Security Study Memoranda (NSSM).

The Review Group, which is headed by the Special Assistant, screens the NSSMs in preparation for the NSC agenda. This Review Group may also receive agenda inputs directly from an executive agency or from an Ad Hoc Group (task force) established by the President. The Review Group is also responsible for insuring a presentation of alternatives of action and cost data on each specific issue

as well as to include the views of each agency concerned.³ The Review Group itself is subdivided to handle IG, Ad Hoc Group, and agency papers more efficiently: the Senior Review Group deals with issues of general diplomatic nature; the Defense Program Review Committee includes an analysis group to give attention to any issues requiring fiscal guidance; the Verification Panel deals with issues currently under negotiation such as the SALT talks or the negotiations concerning mutual balanced force reductions in Europe; the Washington Special Action Group (WASAG) is concerned with the coordination and planning of U.S. positions and actions in crisis situations; and the Vietnam Special Studies Group deals with special problems associated with the conflict in Southeast Asia.⁴ Each subgroup of the Review Group is chaired by the Assistant for National Security Affairs and includes representatives from the State Department, the Defense Department, the CIA, the JCS, and other agency officers as invited. In the final

³Edward J. Kolodziej, "The National Security Council: Innovations and Implications", Public Administration Review, XXIX, No. 6 (1969), pp. 574-76.

⁴Jeanne Wilson Davis, (staff secretary and director of the Secretariat of the National Security Council under President Nixon), private interview, Executive Office Building, Washington D.C., August 9, 1971.

briefing book prepared by the Review Group for meetings of the NSC on a certain issue the following sections are standard: the original IG, Ad Hoc Group, or agency paper; an analytical summary by the Review Group staff and the Senior Review Group; various talking points to facilitate discussion; and written statements by other departments or agencies involved if there is considerable divergence among viewpoints.⁵

The other formal branch of the Council apparatus, as charted by Kolodziej, is the Under Secretaries Committee which is chaired by the Under Secretary of State, assisted by the Under Secretary for Political Affairs, and includes as members the Deputy Secretary of Defense, the Assistant for National Security Affairs, and other ranking agency officers as invited. Matters of an operational nature which cannot be settled at the Interdepartmental Group level are passed on to the NSC Under Secretaries Committee. Other operational matters referred by either the Secretary of State or jointly by the Under Secretary and the President's Special Assistant and those referred by the Review Group are also dealt with by the Under Secretaries Committee.⁶

⁵Ibid.

⁶Kolodziej, op. cit., pp. 575, 577.

The Council Meeting

The National Security Council usually meets, on the average, once every three weeks under President Nixon which is a marked departure from the Kennedy-Johnson period when NSC meetings were held less frequently. Apart from the statutory members, regularly invited members are the Special Assistant, the Director of the CIA, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Under Secretary of State. Other comparatively regular attendants are the Attorney General and the Secretary of the Treasury.

The meetings always begin with an intelligence briefing usually delivered by CIA Director Richard M. Helms, as President Nixon places great emphasis on facts. Then the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, Dr. Henry Kissinger, briefly summarizes the high points of the issue under discussion and the proposed options for action. The various attendants have each received their briefing books well in advance and are then asked, in turn, for their respective opinions. At the conclusion of the meeting which usually lasts about two hours, Kissinger will summarize what has been discussed and what consensus, if any, exists. No final decision is made by the President at the meeting; he usually discusses it further with Dr. Kissinger, various Secretaries, and,

perhaps, other advisers in private. When the final decision is made, the Review Group under Kissinger will formulate a National Security Decision Memorandum (NSDM) which outlines the decision and its method of implementation and then directs it to the Under Secretaries Committee for action.

Kissinger's Staff

The new Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs has enlarged his staff to a force of between fifty and fifty-five substantive officers which easily triples the number of professionals working for McGeorge Bundy and Walt Rostow. This enormous expansion can be partly explained by the increased responsibilities of the Nixon NSC system. Of the fifty-some officers assigned to Kissinger only twenty-eight are on the White House payroll, and the rest are detailed from various executive agencies. Kissinger's staff functionally breaks down into five offices: (1) the basement of the West Wing of the White House (the Situation Room) is the office of Kissinger and his deputy, Alexander Haig, and also serves as a distribution point for all incoming communications as well as housing an officer in charge of NSC liaison with Press Secretary Ronald Ziegler, an officer experienced in intelligence, and officers assigned to special projects;

(2) the Operations Staff is further segmented into geographic and functional areas where specialists deal with various regions of the world as well as economic and scientific matters related to foreign affairs and issues related to the United Nations; (3) the Program Analysis Staff utilizes a systems approach to present clearly defined options to the President on matters such as the SALT talks, etc; (4) the NSC Planning Unit assists Dr. Kissinger in duties associated with the NSC Review Group; and (5) the Executive Secretariat of the NSC includes the staff secretary and serves as the point of official liaison with the other executive departments.⁷

The Assistant's Role As Adviser

Dr. Kissinger's staff secretary and director of the NSC Secretariat, Jeanne Wilson Davis, estimates that the Special Assistant is equally divided, timewise, between his duties relating to NSC matters and his duties as an adviser to the President on foreign affairs in general.⁸ And Dr. Kissinger is probably well aware of the potential power of influence inherent in his position of presidential confidant

⁷Davis, op. cit.

⁸Ibid.

reflecting on a statement made by him in the spring of 1968:

Most of our elective officials had to spend so much of their energy getting elected that they can give relatively little attention to the substance of what they are going to do when they get elected. And therefore you get the curious phenomenon of people deciding to run for high office first and then scrambling around for some intellectuals to tell them what their positions ought to be. In many cases it is not that the intellectuals are used merely as speech writers for positions that the policy-makers already have; it is literally the case that you are starting with a tabula rasa, and that the position the political leader takes is much influenced by the type of intellectual that sometimes quite accidentally winds up in his entourage.⁹

At that time Kissinger could hardly have guessed that he was to be one of those intellectuals winding up in President Nixon's entourage, but it was to become apparent that he was to have a great amount of influence on American foreign policy and that President Nixon evidently was not dissentient to such an arrangement.

Kissinger met Nixon for the first time in December of 1967, and being a friend of Nelson Rockefeller and

⁹Henry A. Kissinger, "Bureaucracy and Policy Making: The Effect of Insiders and Outsiders on the Policy Process" from Bureaucracy, Politics, and Strategy, ed. by Henry A. Kissinger and Bernard Brodie (Los Angeles: Security Studies Project, University of California, 1968), p. 14.

other Republican liberals, Kissinger did not develop a close relationship with the future President. Nixon, however, was a great admirer of the intellectual achievements of Kissinger and, during the 1968 presidential campaign, invited Dr. Kissinger to join his foreign policy advisory committee. Kissinger declined but after the November election agreed to a meeting with the President-elect and accepted the presidential staff appointment. Kissinger found himself to be very close to the new President ideologically, and soon they developed a close and intimate relationship. "His influence is probably strong because basically he and the President have a real empathy."¹⁰

Kissinger usually meets with President Nixon two or three times daily, while in Washington, in addition to numerous telephone contacts. The Special Assistant has apparently gained the President's implicit confidence, as he has been assigned various diplomatic duties not normally associated with his position as Executive

¹⁰Alexander M. Haig, quoted in Allen Drury, Courage and Hesitation (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1971), p. 76.

Assistant. For example, in July of 1971, Kissinger was dispatched on a round-the-world fact-finding mission by President Nixon which took him to South Vietnam to discuss accelerated U.S. troop withdrawals with President Thieu. He also discussed the idea with U.S. Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker and with General Creighton Abrams, the U.S. military commander in Vietnam.¹¹

A New Era of Secrecy?

The question, "how much should the government keep secret from the public?", is pertinent to the politics of the seventies. The release of the "Pentagon Papers" by Dr. Daniel Ellsberg served to partially illuminate the clandestine side of the decision-making process with respect to policy in Southeast Asia during the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations, and it appears that the Nixon Administration is not averse to the same practice today. Of course, certain information should be kept confidential in order to protect the national interest, but where does

¹¹"Kissinger Meets With Thieu, Heads for Paris," The Sun (Colorado Springs), July 6, 1971, p. 1.

one draw the line?

If the citizen and his representatives in Congress must accord the President considerable latitude in the disclosure of information, an equal obligation exists for the President and his advisers to make public as much information as national security permits, even when such information reveals incompetence among executive officials or widespread failures within the executive branch to deal with national policy questions successfully.¹²

Traditionally, the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, as other members of the executive staff, works behind the scenes and is not subject to public scrutiny through Congressional committee hearings or the press to which the Department Secretaries must respond. Yet, with this arrangement of public immunity comes the tacit understanding that the Special Assistant will not place himself in the position of international statesman and personally conduct business of a diplomatic nature, as the original intent of the establishment of his position as Executive Assistant was to advise the President, not to represent the United States on his behalf. Even though there is some precedent for such activities (Bundy to the Dominican Republic in 1965, etc.), the tacit understanding was by and large observed until Dr. Kissinger took

¹²Cecil V. Crabb, Jr., American Foreign Policy in the Nuclear Age (2nd ed.; New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p.49.

control of the foreign policy machinery within the White House.

Kissinger felt in 1968 that the element of secrecy was fundamental to diplomatic and political success and believed that "the only way secrecy can be kept is to exclude from the making of the decision all those who are theoretically charged with carrying it out."¹³ The most obvious example of this theory in practice was, of course, the arcane journey to the People's Republic of China from July 9 to July 11, 1971.

Only a dozen men in the entire Administration had been aware of the plans to send Kissinger to Peking. They included Secretary of State William Rogers and several of his assistants, Kissinger and three of his aides, and Ellsworth Bunker, Ambassador to Saigon. Among those kept in the dark were Defense Secretary Melvin Laird, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Vice President Agnew.¹⁴

Not only were key Congressional leaders not advised of this momentous expedition, the Secretary of Defense and the Vice President, both statutory members of the National Security Council, and the Chairman of the JCS, an advisory

¹³Kissinger, op. cit., p. 15.

¹⁴Jerrold Schecter, "Nixon's Coup: To Peking for Peace," Time, Vol. 98, No. 4 (July 26, 1971, p. 1.)

member of the Council, were not included in the decision-making process. Surely, the President had good cause not to expose such a highly sensitive policy move to the apparatus of the NSC, yet it leaves one to ask the question, "How many other decisions are made completely aside from the elaborate NSC organization that was supposedly set up to remedy similar transpirations of the Kennedy-Johnson period?"

The discussions between Kissinger and Premier Chou En-lai lasted for some sixteen hours and resulted in an invitation to President Nixon to visit China in February of 1972. Kissinger's role as the top presidential emissary was established, and "at the height of a brilliant career, he enjoys a global spotlight and an influence that most professors only read about."¹⁵ Dr. Kissinger himself agreed that "It was a very moving occasion. It is not often one can say he has participated in turning a new page in history."¹⁶

The aftereffects of the trip were many, and some were truly significant. Due to a weakened U.S. position in the eyes of the world with relation to the two Chinas,

¹⁵Ibid, p. 11.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 11.

Taiwan was expelled from the U.N., and the People's Republic of China was seated. Dr. Kissinger assumed the role of public spokesman in a press briefing in early December in Washington where he announced the date of President Nixon's visit to China and provided a glimpse of the proposed agenda. "The briefing was another sign of Kissinger's emergence as one of the stellar figures in the Administration" -- "the Nixon Administration's own Marco Polo."¹⁷

President Nixon seems to relish the method of negotiating secretly through his Special Assistant and then to make an announcement of the results at a time which is politically expedient. Alexis de Toqueville implied that one advantage a despotic government might have over a democracy would be a great latitude of movement in the diplomatic sphere due to its ability to use the efficacious instrument of secrecy.¹⁸ "The 'system' works more smoothly if unexposed to questioning."¹⁹ President Nixon's

¹⁷"On to China", Time, (December 13, 1971), p.22.

¹⁸Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America, ed. by Richard D. Heffner (New York: New American Library, 1956), p. 101.

¹⁹Stuart Symington, "Making Military Policy: Congress's Right to Know," Current (October, 1970), p. 37.

utilization of Dr. Kissinger in this secretive role has proven to be both diplomatically and politically successful.

The television announcement of an extensive Vietnam withdrawal plan and peace proposal by President Nixon on January 25, 1972, was predicted upon secret diplomatic negotiations with the North Vietnamese government again handled by his Special Assistant, Dr. Henry Kissinger. It was revealed that in the thirty months beginning August 4, 1969, and ending October 25, 1971, Dr. Kissinger had surreptitiously flown to Paris twelve times to negotiate with top North Vietnamese leaders supervenient to the Paris Peace Talks.²⁰

Although the executive branch was able to move with greater latitude under a shield of secrecy, some felt that such political leverage was not conducive to the well-being of a democratic form of government. One outspoken critic of this executive tactic was Senator Stuart Symington.

Executive secrecy surrounding the conduct of our foreign policy and its associated military operations is, I am convinced, endangering not only the welfare and prosperity of the United States but

²⁰"Nixon Offers Withdrawal Plan: Immediate Negotiation Proposed," The Sun (Colorado Springs), January 26, 1972, p. 1.

also, and most significantly, the national security.²¹

Executive Privilege

President Nixon, as did Kennedy and Johnson, has been able to effectively achieve diplomatic and political gains by relying more and more on individuals within the White House to work behind the scenes, keeping certain issues out of the public eye altogether or at least controlling the amount of information leaked. The reason for the success of this tactic is the artifice of "executive privilege." As the President is exempt from testifying before Congress, so also are his executive assistants and all members of the Executive Office; and therefore, the concern of Congress is real with respect to power transferred from the executive bureaucracy to presidential aides -- out of reach of Congressional subpoena and, consequently, public regulation.

On November 6, 1971, the White House announced a reorganization of the intelligence community elevating Richard Helms, the Director of the CIA, to head all intelligence operations. Concurrently, Dr. Kissinger was

²¹Symington, op. cit., p. 36.

named to head a special National Security Council committee that would work closely with Helms on intelligence matters. It was not clear what the relationship would be, but Congressional leaders (notably Senators Stuart Symington and William Fulbright) were concerned that the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs was to be in control of the U.S. intelligence community under the new arrangement.

How can the integrity of the intelligence product be assured when responsibility for the most critical aspects of intelligence analysis is taken out of the hands of career professionals and vested in a combination of military professionals and the White House staff?²²

[It is] a further erosion of congressional control over the intelligence community.²³

Actually, in view of the previous observations in Chapter III of the operation of former Special Assistants, this new White House reorganization only served to formalize an existing, although informal, practice.

²²Stuart Symington, quoted in "Senators Critize Intelligence Change," The Sun (Colorado Springs), November 11, 1971.

²³J. William Fulbright, quoted in ibid.

The Backgrounder

An offshoot of the executive privilege enjoyed by the Assistant for National Security Affairs is the tacit agreement with members of the press that information could be candidly passed on to reporters, but when put in print, it was to be attributed vaguely to "official circles" or informed sources". The use of this technique by Executive Assistants enabled them to subtly relay information to other governments or to sound out public opinion before making "official" policy statements. This tacit agreement was broken by the Washington Post in December of 1971 when Kissinger had hinted that President Nixon might call off his planned trip to Moscow in the spring of 1972, and the Post attributed the remark directly to Kissinger. The Administration's initial response was one of anger, and Press Secretary Ronald Ziegler quoted President Nixon as saying, "Fine, then let's not have any more backgrounders."²⁴ Even though the backgrounders are likely to continue, the curtain of secrecy now surrounding the White House foreign policy process will probably be drawn tighter, and as it is so drawn tighter, more influence can be wielded by the

²⁴"Busted Backgrounder," Time, (December 27, 1971), p. 53.

President's Assistant.

The Anderson Papers

A further stimulus to tighten security within the White House orbit was provided in early January, 1972, by Columnist Jack Anderson who somehow procured classified documents from three secret meetings of the aforementioned Washington Special Action Group (WASAG). By revealing the comments of Kissinger and other officials concerning the pro-Pakistan position pursued by the United States during the India-Pakistan war, the documents discredited earlier Administration statements that had evidently deceived the public as to its real policy stance (on December 7, 1971, Kissinger had told newsmen that the Administration was not "anti-Indian"). In addition to publishing the actual text of these deliberations, Anderson has commented on the total scope of Kissinger's activities.

In short, Henry Kissinger has been running U.S. foreign policy out of his basement office in the White House. The final decisions, to be sure, have been made by the President. But Kissinger has guided the President's thinking and directed the implementation of his policies... Yet Kissinger has been able to operate in almost total secrecy.²⁵

²⁵Jack Anderson, "Kissinger Playing Lone Policy Hand," The Sun (Colorado Springs), January 9, 1972, editorial page.

Summary of the Nixon Approach

President Nixon from the beginning of his Administration placed considerable emphasis on the selection and subsequent operative role of his Executive Assistants, especially the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, Dr. Henry A. Kissinger. The President allowed Kissinger to supervise the reorganization of the National Security Council in an attempt to revive the Council to assume the function of the principle forum through which foreign policy issues are presented to the President for decision. The new Council structure served to organizationally enhance the influence of two individuals in the decision-making process, the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs who chairs the Review Group which screens reports from the Interdepartmental Groups for the NSC agenda and the Under Secretary of State who chairs the Under Secretaries Committee and devotes much of his time to NSC related duties vis-à-vis his responsibilities to the Secretary of State.

The Special Assistant is thus vested with a great deal of responsibility within the new formalized NSC system. In defining more clearly the alternatives for action based on the IG reports, the Review Group operates according to "Kissinger's Law" which requires an odd number of

alternatives for presidential scrutiny, including extreme measures, with the one in the middle of the spectrum usually being the most feasible course of action in light of the personal bias of the President.²⁶

The Special Assistant's control over the Review Group also allows him to operationally influence the government by recommending certain issues to the Under Secretaries Committee for consideration, and by working closely with the Under Secretary of State, the Special Assistant can utilize virtually all of the resources of the departmental bureaucracies.

The department bureaucracy has recognized the fact that 'Henry' is indeed a surrogate, speaking and acting for the President along lines and through organizational channels that Nixon conceived for himself and authorized Kissinger to implement in structural detail.²⁷

A good example of this would be the operation of the Washington Special Action Group (WASAG) which is also chaired by Dr. Kissinger as a subcommittee of the Review Group. During a crisis, the Special Assistant can immediately assemble high level officials and operationally

²⁶Davis, op. cit.

²⁷John Osborne, The Second Year of the Nixon Watch (New York: Liveright, 1971), p. 4.

control U.S. policy by acting as the middleman between the WASAG and the President.

The range of influence of the Special Assistant in the Nixon Administration has been extended well beyond his responsibilities with relation to the NSC machinery. Operating with a large staff, the Special Assistant has assumed the diplomatic role of presidential emissary and established himself as another channel of negotiation with foreign leaders, bypassing the formal hierarchy of diplomacy which includes U.S. Ambassadors and the Secretary of State. Included in this new role is an affinity for secrecy which the President has apparently condoned as part of his personal approach to the conduct of foreign affairs and, probably, other areas as well.

Kissinger in his role of personal adviser to the President has also been in a key position of influence because he is trusted and liked by the President and because President Nixon apparently places a great deal of stock in his advice. The President has, of course, implicitly condoned the ascendancy of the role of his Special Assistant, but perhaps more significantly, the President's Secretary of State, William Rogers, has abdicated his responsibilities as a Cabinet member and a departmental manager (see Chapter Five). What we have

now is a strategically positioned presidential aid who has access to the expertise of the departments through the National Security Council apparatus; who has become a personal presidential envoy to foreign capitals; and who, although directing the complete spectrum of foreign affairs on behalf of the President, is not hindered by the responsibility of public accountability as is the Secretary of State and other Cabinet members.

CHAPTER V

THE SECRETARY OF STATE VERSUS THE PRESIDENTIAL ASSISTANT:

WHO IS NUMBER ONE?

Referring to the preceding chapters, it is evident that the developing role of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs has penetrated into the domain traditionally controlled by the Secretary of State, and the reversal of this process does not appear to be probable in the foreseeable future. The question of "who is number one?" is relevant to this discussion because it is necessary to determine the extent of any role usurpation in order to understand how the executive branch of government would benefit by such a transfer of power from a figure very much in the public eye, the Secretary of State, to an individual who is accountable only to the President for his actions, the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs. It will also be interesting to analyze presidential disclamations of this power transference in order to better understand the political ramifications of such a readjustment in the style of government operation.

The Cabinet vs the Staff

In no event shall the administrative assistants be interposed between the President and the head of any department or agency or between the President and anyone of the divisions in the Executive Office of the President.¹

This excerpt from Executive Order No. 8248, issued on September 8, 1939, clarifies the original intent of the function of those working within the Executive Office of the President; and moreover, the Hoover Commission was firm in its recommendation that "statutory authority over the operating departments would not be vested in any staff or staff agency of the President's Office."²

Nevertheless, a private management firm, conducting a survey of the federal bureaucracy in 1960, identified seventy-five dominant positions of power in the government; eight of those were located in the Executive Office of the President:

Only two or three Cabinet members rival some members of the White House staff in influence and authority. Collectively, the White House staff probably outweighs any other group in the government, not excepting the Cabinet, and the National Security Council.³

¹Seidman, op. cit., p. 70.

²Somers, op. cit., p. 124.

³Kraft, "Kennedy's Working Staff," op.cit., p.253.

And in the late sixties Richard Neustadt observed that "Presidential aids outrank in all but protocol the heads of most Executive departments."⁴

Why shift from the intent of the original theory of the purpose of the Executive Office staff to the quite different practice of staff interposition between the President and the various executive departments? As was mentioned in Chapter I, each Cabinet member is

...bound by inherent limitations. He was not necessarily selected for the President's confidence in his judgement alone -- considerations of politics, geography, public esteem, and interest-group pressures may also have played⁵ a part, as well as his skill in administration.

The Cabinet is handicapped, first, by being chosen for reasons other than that of an adviser and, second, once in office, by falling prey to the "bureaucratic intransigence syndrome":

The President may ask for a Secretary's best judgement apart from the department's views, but in the mind of the average Secretary (and there have been many notable exceptions) the two may be hardly distinguishable.⁶

⁴Neustadt, "Approaches to Staffing the Presidency", op.cit., p. 11.

⁵Sorenson, Decision-Making in the White House, op.cit., p. 68.

⁶Sorenson, Decision-Making in the White House, op.cit., p. 69.

On the other hand, the presidential staff is able to move freely throughout the executive branch relatively unhindered by the demands of a bureaucratic constituency, the demands of protocol, or the demands of Congress and the public. The staff members are thus enabled to view governmental operation with omniscient candor in order to fulfill their sole responsibility -- ensuring that the President gets the most out of his resources, both real and potential.

An alert staff can help him by watching for potential or future problems, by seeing that these are neither buried within the departments nor lost in the jungle or interdepartmental committees, and by arranging for the consideration of these matters at the presidential level if necessary.

The Secretary of State's Dilemma

In the realm of foreign affairs the Secretary of State has had to cope with not only a Presidential Assistant but also with a formal, centralized agency established to function within the Office of the President -- the National Security Council. The very nature of this fairly recent addition to the Executive Office requires a substantial staff to administer its operation and also dilutes the power of the Secretary of State as he becomes merely a part

⁷Coffey and Rock, op. cit., p. 61.

of a higher scheme which has been deemed necessary to include consideration of all aspects of foreign policy such as military, economic, and intelligence viewpoints. The process of transferring the detailed coordination of foreign affairs from the State Department to the White House began under President Eisenhower who "referred most questions of 'arms and diplomacy' to the N.S.C. and not to the Cabinet."⁸ Even though the prestige and power of the Secretary of State was consummate under the strong-willed John Foster Dulles, Eisenhower "because of his almost total disinterest in administration...permitted some reorganizations which...substantially weakened the Department."⁹ The organization chiefly responsible for setting the precedent which would weaken the role of the State Department and, subsequently, the Secretary of State was, of course, Eisenhower's National Security Council and its cumbersome staff apparatus.

⁸Richard F. Fenno, Jr., "Now is the Time for Cabinet Makers" from Johnson and Walker (ed.), op. cit., p. 235.

⁹Charles W. Yost, "The Instruments of American Foreign Policy", Foreign Affairs: An American Quarterly Review, Vol. 50, No. 1 (October, 1971), p. 62.

With this need for an extension of the White House staff the development of a powerful Special Assistant was a natural consequence, and the Secretary of State had to grapple with a new fact of life:

...the existence of a Presidential Special Assistant for National Security Affairs and a small professional National Security Council staff means that there are people among the President's closest aids who are looking at these problems from the Presidential viewpoint, who can advise the President accordingly if they feel that the departments are avoiding issues or diluting them, and who can force issues to be raised to the Council level even if the member departments oppose doing so.¹⁰

It was evident from the inception of the idea of a handpicked executive staff that the growth of the departments into massive bureaucratic entities was causing the departments heads, sometimes quite unknowingly, to cater to two constituencies, their respective departments and the President, and, consequently, to become less effective in an advisory capacity. "Departmental Secretaries, despite their assumed loyalty to the President, frequently behave as though they were in business for themselves."¹¹

¹⁰The Brookings Institution, United States Foreign Policy (study prepared at the request of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate) (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, January 13, 1960), p.47.

¹¹Jacob, op. cit., p. 121.

Some observers both in and out of government feel, however, that even though inadequacies may exist in the President-Secretary relationship,

To interject into this refreshingly simple situation a new and separate staff for the N.S.C. itself, as has been done, only complicates without improving... But a separate staff cannot add knowledge, which remains in the departments, or responsible advice to the President, which is the duty and right of his Cabinet Secretaries.¹²

Nevertheless, following the Truman-Eisenhower treatment of the National Security Council and the development of a separate staff, the center of the day-to-day conduct of foreign affairs gravitated from the State Department and the Secretary of State to the White House and the President aided by the Assistant for National Security Affairs.

The Kennedy Administration

When President Kennedy moved into the White House, it became immediately clear that he intended to give United States foreign policy a very personal touch. This personal touch required reliance on individuals trusted by the President to run the government -- not bureaucratic

¹²Dean Acheson, "Thoughts About Thoughts in High Places", The New York Times Magazine, October 11, 1959, p. 88.

institutions, and the natural consequence of this approach was the development of a highly competent and wide-ranging staff under the leadership of McGeorge Bundy.

Formally, "Kennedy...made clear that [Rusk] -- not McNamara, Bundy or any of the many he consulted on foreign affairs -- was his principal advisor and agent in foreign relations."¹³ Schlesinger wrote that "The Special Assistants were not to get between the President and the operating chiefs of the departments and agencies"; Sorensen claimed that "We [the staff] wielded no secret influence. We did not replace the role of Cabinet officers, compete with them for power or publicity, or block their access to the President"; and Bundy testified that "It is enough if I say that the President has made it very clear that he does not want a large separate organization between him and his Secretary of State."^{14, 15, 16}

¹³Sorensen, Kennedy, op. cit., p. 270.

¹⁴Schlesinger, op. cit., p. 688.

¹⁵Sorensen, Kennedy, op. cit., p. 258.

¹⁶Bundy, "Kennedy Administration's Organization for National Security" from Johnson and Walker (ed.), op.cit., p. 330.

Even though there was a constant denial of any interposition of a staff between the President and the Secretary of State in the decision-making process, the opposite proved to be the case in practice. Schlesinger admitted that "they [the staff] were to make sure that the departmental and agency recommendations took full account of the presidential and national interest", and Bundy conceded that "If his Cabinet officers are to be free to do their own work, the President's work must be done -- to the extent that he cannot do it himself -- by staff officers under his direct oversight."¹⁷, ¹⁸ Obviously, two different stories were being told by the same people in the same breath, and upon closer observation it could be seen that, under the Kennedy style of individualistic trouble-shooting, the personalized and informal staff machinery within the White House was employed in a fashion that resulted in the maturation of pockets of power at the expense of the executive departments.

¹⁷Schlesinger, op. cit., p. 688.

¹⁸Bundy, "Kennedy Administration's Organization for National Security" from Johnson and Walker (ed.), op. cit., p. 330.

Staff members would watch over the work of the Departments and agencies, and pull issues into the White House before they had worked their way up the bureaucratic ladder. In that sense, the staff served as a kind of super-Cabinet.¹⁹

Thus, under the rubric of "helping the President", with the condonation of the chief executive, the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, McGeorge Bundy, could wield a considerable amount of informal power and influence merely by acting at all levels of government on "the President's behalf". Among other things, Bundy: met with foreign diplomats (and sometimes was, instead of State Departments officials, sought by these foreign emissaries); headed task forces responsible for advance planning of significant foreign policy measures; digested and summarized for presidential review the endless flow of reports and memoranda relating to foreign affairs matters which were produced by the various departments and agencies concerned; directed his own staff to investigate and research selected policy areas by utilizing any or all of the bureaucratic resources of the executive branch; screened any legislative proposals relating to foreign policy which originated at the executive level; briefed the President

¹⁹Kraft, Profiles in Power, op. cit., p. 13.

on daily developments in foreign relations; gave candid advice on the various positions taken by the department chiefs -- especially those opinions of the Secretaries of State and Defense; prepared or screened all public statements made by the Administration on important foreign policy issues; prepared the agenda for the infrequent National Security Council meetings; made several excursions to various parts of the world in a fact-finding (sometimes to seriously negotiate with foreign leaders) capacity; alerted the President of crisis developments and usually headed a crisis team to monitor these developments; and, perhaps most importantly, was constantly available to render advice to the President on subjects which did (and sometimes did not) relate directly to the national security posture of the United States.

The mere fact that the Special Assistant is "helping the President" in so many ways would probably perturb a Secretary of State who jealously guarded his traditional position as chief foreign policy adviser -- such as a Dean Acheson or a John Foster Dulles. Acheson observed that

The Secretary (of State) should not be alarmed if the President seeks advice from other quarters, but should protect his position as first

advisor by frank, forthright, and vigorous
counsel.²⁰

As was mentioned in Chapter Two, the presence of a dominant Secretary of State served to limit any great influence that the Assistant for National Security Affairs might have enjoyed in the Eisenhower Administration. President Kennedy "was determined to be his own Secretary of State, and he required an operations man," and "Dean Rusk may have known...that the one thing Kennedy did not want was a man who might rival him in the field of foreign affairs."^{21,22} It appears in retrospect that Kennedy did not want a forceful or flamboyant character as Secretary of State who would want to act individualistically on the international stage. President Kennedy apparently wanted the role of international statesman to himself, as he enjoyed engaging in cold war diplomatic maneuvers more than attending to domestic issues. Into this policy gap,

²⁰Dean Acheson, quoted in Ronald J. Stupak, The Shaping of Foreign Policy, (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1969), p.86.

²¹Jack Bell, The Presidency: Office of Power (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc.), p. 13.

²²Aaron Wildavsky, "The Two Presidencies" from The Presidential Advisory System, ed. by Thomas E. Cronin and Sanford D. Greenberg (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), p. 182.

created by the President's relegation of the Secretary of State to a secondary role, stepped McGeorge Bundy, the President's man in the White House.

Where McNamara and Dillon would forcefully and articulately assert the interests of their departments in impending foreign policy decision, Rusk would sit quietly by, with his Buddha-like face and half-smile, often leaving it to Bundy or to the President himself to assert the diplomatic interest.²³

With the creation of the Situation Room in the White House, Bundy became an overseer of day-to-day developments in foreign policy which further undermined Rusk's position as the "chief foreign affairs adviser to the President." Bundy was well aware of the translocation of power, but he was not the type to "hold back or refrain from plunging into a situation because he might risk stepping on someone else's toes."²⁴ As Bundy operated with presidential endorsement, Rusk adjusted to President Kennedy's staffing concept and essentially praised it: "We would be greatly crippled if that staff were not there."²⁵ Perhaps,

²³Schlesinger, op. cit., p. 435.

²⁴Wise, op. cit., p. 13.

²⁵Dean Rusk, "The Secretary of State" (Senate testimony August 24, 1961) from Jackson (ed.), op. cit., p. 273.

"The gentle, gracious Rusk...deferred almost too amiably to White House initiatives and interference."²⁶

The Johnson Administration

The untimely death of President Kennedy and the assumption of leadership by Lyndon Johnson did not dramatically alter the relationship between Bundy and Rusk. However, under Johnson "Rusk's authority [was] subtly enhanced at the expense of Bundy."²⁷ As has been shown in Chapter Three, President Johnson relied less on the informal and wide-ranging policy capability of his personal staff than did Kennedy; therefore, the degree of Rusk's enhancement was probably a function of the diminution of the Special Assistant's direct role in the decision-making process, as the President sometimes required support for a particular decision rather than an array of alternatives from which to make a decision.

President Johnson attempted to bring the Secretary of State back into the "inner circle" by requiring a daily

²⁶Sorensen, Kennedy, op. cit., p. 270.

²⁷Roberts, op. cit., p. 75.

report from Rusk to be included in the President's night reading, by instituting the SIG chaired by Rusk's Under Secretary, and by including Rusk in the Tuesday luncheon ritual.

Nevertheless, the combination of Rusk's demure personality and the key location of the Special Assistant forced the President, out of necessity, to continue to rely heavily on the services of his Special Assistant and his NSC staff. Another Special Assistant to President Johnson, Bill Moyers, reaffirmed the continuance of Rusk's acceptance of the influence of the Assistant for National Security Affairs and his staff: "He [Rusk] never seemed to resent any White House assistant bringing to the President viewpoints with which Mr. Rusk disagreed."²⁸

The succession of Bundy by Walt Rostow did little to effect the role interaction of the Special Assistant and the Secretary of State, even though Rostow made the usual statement to keep up appearances and perpetuate the official facade:

²⁸Bill Moyers, "The White House Staff vs. the Cabinet" (interview with Hugh Sidey) from Inside the System, ed. by Charles Peters and Timothy J. Adams (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), p. 33.

A man in this job under no circumstances should consider himself at the Cabinet level... The advice of a White House aide cannot rank with that from a responsible Cabinet official.²⁹

Nonetheless, the intense and influential activity of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs and his staff continued unabated.

The Nixon Administration

This controversial issue confronted the Nixon Administration almost from the outset, as now the Special Assistant was given organized legitimacy as a key figure in the decision-making process due to his formal positioning in the apparatus of the National Security Council and the unprecedented enlargement of the Assistant's personal staff. The President attempted to allay suspicion among the Congress and the press that Dr. Kissinger had been elevated to supra-Cabinet status when he officially indorsed the new NSC functional role in a White House statement on February 7, 1969:

The President has indicated that the Council will henceforth be the principal forum for the consideration of policy issues on which he is required to make decisions...

²⁹Walt Rostow, quoted in Leacacos, op. cit., p.167.

An explicit aspect of the above arrangements was the President's designation of the Secretary of State as his principal foreign policy advisor.³⁰

Yet, it was well known that the selection of a Special Assistant for National Security Affairs was more crucial to President Nixon than the selection of a Secretary of State to manage the department bureaucracy. William Scranton had been Nixon's first choice as Secretary of State, but after Scranton declined, "Rogers was selected without much deliberation" mainly on the basis of an old friendship.³¹

As the operation of the Nixon Administration unfolded over the next two years, it became evident that Dr. Kissinger was the prime mover in the direction of foreign policy, yet in a news conference held on March 4, 1971, President Nixon still attempted to perpetuate the myth. The text of his response to Congressional critics, who had charged that Dr. Kissinger had violated the

³⁰U.S. Senate Subcommittee on National Security and International Operations of the U.S. Senate Committee on Government Operations, The National Security Council: New Role and Structure(Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, February 7, 1969), pp. 1-2.

³¹Rowland Evans, Jr., and Robert D. Novak, Nixon in the White House: The Frustration of Power (New York: Random House, 1971), p. 24.

principle of "executive privilege" by acting as a "White House Secretary of State" free from public accountability, is extremely interesting:

I not only respect his (Rogers) ability and take his advice in the field of foreign policy; I also ask his advice and often take it in many domestic concerns as well. He is the foreign policy advisor for the President. He is the chief foreign policy spokesman for the President. He participates in every decision that is made by the President of the United States. He will continue to participate in those decisions.

Now, the role of Dr. Kissinger is a different one. He is the White House Advisor to the President. He covers not only foreign policy but national security policy; the coordination of those policies. He also gives me advice, just as Secretary Laird gives me advice in matters of defense. I would say that I respect his advice as well.

As to whether either Secretary Rogers or Dr. Kissinger is the top advisor, as to who is on first, the answer to that, of course, is very simply that the Secretary of State is always the chief foreign policy spokesman for the administration.

At the same time, the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs does advise the President, and I value his advice very much.³²

It is interesting to note from the above statement that great emphasis was placed on the Secretary of State's

³²Richard Nixon, "The President's News Conference of March 4, 1971" from Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, Vol 7, No. 10 (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Federal Registrar, March 8, 1971), pp. 425-26.

role as "chief foreign policy spokesman for the administration". This distinction serves to illuminate the Nixon style in government by protecting his Special Assistant's freedom of movement to handle affairs amenable to secret diplomacy and at the same time to stifle critics who would like to see the Special Assistant held responsible to the public for any undertakings traditionally conducted by the Secretary of State. However, more recent developments prelude the possibility that the Secretary of State may become the "number two chief foreign policy spokesman for the administration", as Dr. Kissinger has been allowed by the President to hold press conferences of his own on important topics such as the mission to the People's Republic of China.

Manager Versus Policy-Maker?

The executive departments continue to expand in size requiring more and more administrative supervision; modern foreign policy includes realistic appraisal and coordination of all elements of the national interest (defense, economics, etc); and the establishment of a formal National Security Council, coupled with a new trend in presidential styles, necessitates extra-bureaucratic controls from within the White House. All of these factors,

and more, have contributed to the increased responsibilities of the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs and served to relegate the Secretary of State to the status of manager-administrator yet still acting as a diplomatic figurehead in order to avert nagging public pressures.

The Truman and Eisenhower NSC staffs did not seriously hinder the prosecution of the traditional duties of Secretary of State by dominant figures like George C. Marshall, Dean G. Acheson, or John Foster Dulles, but they were organizationally weakened by an Achilles' heel in the form of a National Security Council within the Executive Office and its supportive staff.

President Kennedy is the most important link in the evolution of this recent phenomenon, as he brought with him a desire to be his own Secretary of State and a personalized and expanded staffing approach. President Kennedy did two things which were to have a great impact on the decision-making process: first, he virtually discarded the National Security Council as a primary facet of the presidential advisory system yet retained and enlarged the scope of the NSC staff through an informal delegation of authority; and second, the President sanctioned the functioning power of this staff by assuring that his Secretary

of State was not opposed to such an arrangement and even supported it. Thus, the informal operation of the Special Assistant throughout the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations transgressed to a large extent upon the realm of responsibility traditionally controlled by the Secretary of State.

For although everyone agrees that State should take the lead in coordinating and arbitrating government-wide efforts in foreign affairs, State has not done so, and the initiative has often passed to the White House staff.³³

The setup under the Nixon Administration organizationally justifies Congressional objections to the increased power of the Special Assistant by formalizing in the National Security Council machinery the informal influence enjoyed by Bundy and Rostow under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson. The present structure clearly assigns control of the foreign policy process to the White House and the Special Assistant. "With one motion the White House assigns responsibilities to the Secretary of State, but with another reassumes them through the NSC."³⁴ The new NSC apparatus effectively places State Department resources under the direction of the Special Assistant who

³³Anderson, op. cit., p. 267.

³⁴Kolodziej, op. cit., p. 578.

is acting with presidential indorsement.

Another significant development, promulgated by the Nixon approach to government, is the more extensive utilization of the Assistant for National Security Affairs as an unofficial point of contact for foreign governments which is definitely an infringement upon the Secretary of State's traditional role.

Foreign ambassadors in Washington and American ambassadors abroad are even at times encouraged to believe they can obtain satisfaction of their requirements more easily from the National Security Advisor than from the Secretary of State.³⁵

This transference of status and power has, under President Nixon been accomplished both through the formal NSC composition and informally via influential counsel and secret diplomacy. "The roles of the Secretary of State and the President's National Security Affairs Assistant are tending to be reversed."³⁶

What has been occurring has not been that the White House advisers have edged the foreign office out of functions being competently performed but that they have been needed to do what is not being

³⁵Yost, op. cit., p. 65.

³⁶Kolodziej, op. cit., p. 579.

done anywhere to the satisfaction of the man responsible, the President.³⁷

The President has much to gain in the way of political leverage by allowing the Special Assistant, protected by executive privilege, to efficiently and centrally direct the management of a wide range of issues vital to the interests of the United States (as well as those being politically crucial to a President seeking reelection). In spite of the expected denial of such a practical design, the evidence overwhelmingly substantiates such a transference of influence and power from the Secretary of State and his department to the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs and his staff.

³⁷ Dean Acheson, "The Eclipse of the State Department," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 49, No. 4 (July, 1971), p. 605.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

It appears as if new and formidable stresses have been imposed on the chief executive in the area of foreign policy decision-making that require the expenditure of an inordinate amount of energy at the executive level. Some of these added stresses not faced, to any great degree, by early presidents are:

1. The decisions that queue up for resolution by a President increasingly involve high stakes and risks, and consequently a President's miscalculations and mistakes are conspicuous and exceedingly hard to retrieve.
2. Science and technology add complications and uncertainties to presidential policy making, as technological opportunities press for hot pursuit.
3. The modern President must cope with shortened decision intervals and reaction times, and his responses to...foreign challenges must be immediate and certain.
4. Lastly, the presidency must somehow be conducted under the glare of a new and relentless social criticism that...tends to force a President's timing, priorities, and choices.¹

¹Carey, op. cit., pp. 450-51.

Confronted by these pressures and also dealing with the far reaches of the ever-expanding executive bureaucracy, the modern chief executive cannot hope to make competent and responsible foreign policy decisions without turning to reliable and accurate sources of information and advice.

However, the departmental sources have weakened, in the last decade especially, because "When the bureaucracy is large and fragmented as it is, decisions do not get made until they appear as administrative issue. One cannot convince a high official that he has a problem until it appears unambiguously in the form of an administrative conflict."² As intra-bureaucratic conflict is the primary method of producing reliable sources of information pursuant to competent foreign policy formulation, the previously discussed "bureaucratic intransigence syndrome", symptomatic of any large bureaucratic structure, tends to dampen the chances that any executive department can be effectually relied upon by a responsible President on other than an intermittent basis. "Many of the most important decisions are taken by extra-bureaucratic

²Kissinger, op. cit., p. 3.

means. Some of the key decisions are kept to a very small circle."³

The NSC, An Answer?

Recognizing that a growing bureaucracy was only serving to create serious problems of executive management and control in the comprehensive process of modern American foreign policy formation, Congress, upon executive suggestion, approved the organization of a supra-departmental body, the National Security Council, to allow for realistic coordination of foreign policy at the executive level. When the NSC was situated under direct executive jurisdiction and control in 1949, it also became subject to presidential discretion as to its degree of utilization and subsequent effectiveness and, consequently, to the necessity of a supportive staff responsible only to the President. As the President could use the NSC according to his personal style and taste, the original intent of its establishment was, therefore, corruptible.

...the exact use or nonuse of the NSC -- or any other permanent council -- is probably largely irrelevant to policy outcomes. Presidents must

³Kissinger, ibid., p. 5.

have expert advice and each President will seek advice in his own way; hence it is unrealistic to expect that the sources of advice can be completely institutionalized.⁴

The Staff Assistant

As has been observed in Chapters Three and Four, the Presidents since Eisenhower have chosen to seek advice, not only in their own way, but through the relatively new and increasingly overt technique of utilizing a trusted and personal aide, the Assistant for National Security Affairs, to oversee the complicated network of policy machinery encompassing the conduct of foreign affairs. Congress at first condoned this practice apparently unaware that it was to undergo a transformation which would threaten the traditional power and prestige of the Secretary of State and also remove a vital portion of the foreign policy decision-making process from the public eye.

The President should at all times have the help and protection of a small personal staff whose members work 'outside the system', who are sensitive to the President's own information needs, and who can assist him in asking relevant questions of his departmental chiefs, in making suggestions for policy initiatives not emerging from the

⁴Jacob, op. cit., p. 171.

operating departments and agencies, and in spotting gaps in policy execution.⁵

As Presidents began to rely more heavily on the services of the Executive Assistant and his elite White House staff, they turned to the Cabinet less and less as a formal body (even in the organization of the NSC), and, for a variety of reasons, the advice of the Special Assistant was treasured more and more by these harried present-day chief executives.

To his most intimate assistants the President is especially prone to turn when he doesn't want to consult his cabinet or his party, but seeks to make major innovations of policy with a minimum of obstruction and a maximum of constructive assistance.⁶

One of the foremost reasons for this increased reliance on the Special Assistant is, of course, the effective degree of mobility enjoyed by a staff assistant who is not confined by formally defined channels of operation. The presidential aide can maneuver in a relatively

⁵Henry Jackson, "The National Security Council" (a staff report of the Senate Subcommittee on National Policy Machinery) from Problems of National Strategy, ed. by Henry A. Kissinger (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1965), pp. 441-42.

⁶Koenig, "The Invisible Presidency" from Johnson and Walker (ed.), op. cit., p. 251.

unrestricted manner behind the scenes, and girded with implicit presidential authority and trust, his unobstrusive movement at the executive level is undeniably important to the finality of any presidential decision.

Working ordinarily as 'lone eagles', these advisors are free from the bane of cabinets and committees which, in their quest for the lowest common denominator of agreement, are apt to emerge with a pallid image of what the President needs and wants.⁷

The mere fact that the Assistant for National Security Affairs role is not institutionalized, except within the framework of the National Security Council, points out one reason that this Special Assistant has enlarged his scope of influence since the 1947 National Security Act. As the Secretary of State's functions have been specified by both organization and tradition, the Special Assistant has been able to operate, at the direction of the President, in a multitude of non-institutionalized yet influential capacities. "The less specific the role norms for any position in an organization, the

⁷Koenig, The Invisible Presidency, op. cit., p. 23.

more power that position is said to have."⁸ Pierre Salinger substantiated the existence of this locus of power by asserting that "...collectively, outside the President, the 'center of power' is his staff."⁹

Of course, it is nearly impossible to isolate power and influence functions accrued by any one man, but by examining the practices of past Administrations carefully, patterns have developed leading to the belief that particular men in particular positions (such as the Assistant for National Security Affairs) can exert a considerable amount of power and influence in the decision-making process.

No one of them however, can remotely be considered the power behind the President ... Yet in any organization, even one as vital and effervescent as the White House today, there is always one man on whom the boss relies particularly ...¹⁰

The importance and influence of the White House staff in the conduct of foreign relations is real and not

⁸Dennis J. Palumbo, "Power and Role Specificity in Organization Theory", Public Administration Review, XXIX, No.3 (1969), p. 238.

⁹Pierre Salinger, (introduction) Roberts, op.cit., p. 13.

overemphasized. The ability of the staff to work unhampered along vaguely defined guidelines, coupled with the phenomena of the "bureaucratic intransigence syndrome", has facilitated the transfer of a significant amount of governmental power and influence from the departments to the Executive Office.

...the size of the White House and Executive Office staffs and, above all, the rank of White House staff members, grows in direct relationship to the inability of the more rigid cabinet system to meet growing complexities in the management of governmental programs. The White House staff now comes closer to governing the country than ever before.¹¹

In the area of national security affairs we have witnessed this growth over a period of three Administrations from fourteen to sixteen substantive officers under McGeorge Bundy to over fifty substantive officers under Henry Kissinger.

Yet this larger, more institutionalized staff can not always be construed as a presidential asset.

There is also the chance of increased rigidity, a more Washington-centered view of the world, and greater political misjudgment or misinformation about foreign events implicit in

¹¹John R. Steelman and H. Dewayne Kreager, "The Executive Office As Administrative Coordinator", Law and Contemporary Problems: School of Law, Duke University, Vol XXI, No. 4 (1956), p. 699.

isolating a President even more than he is already isolated from diplomatic expertise.¹²

Palace Competition

The close proximity and personal intimacy with the President sometimes puts him at a disadvantage, for in an attempt to incur the President's favor, these advisers may give him a false sense of security by shielding him from reality.

Since they are the only people a president sees on a day-to-day basis, they become to him the voice of the people. They represent the closest approximation that he has of outside contacts, and it is inevitable that he comes to regard them as humanity itself.¹³

It is true of any executive at the top of a large organization that he becomes "almost totally dependent upon subordinates ... in an effort to minimize the degree of uncertainty associated with complex problem situations."¹⁴

¹²Campbell, Foreign Affairs Fudge Factory, op.cit., p. 92.

¹³George E. Reedy, The Twilight of the Presidency (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1970), p. 95.

¹⁴Gawthrop, op. cit., p. 12.

And as the "President's favor is unremittingly courted, positions are jockeyed for, ideas are pressed", the President may fail to get the full benefit of advice that may be unsavory but accurate.¹⁵

Not only in the final stages, but in every step along the way, the advisor may advocate a viewpoint or an interest, if not openly, then by subtle indirection. The priority he gives the matters he sets before his chief, his verbal colorations, his inflections and gestures, his omissions and elaborations are standard tactical weapons in the drive to get what he wants.¹⁶

Even though the intent to influence may be subconscious, it is only human, and Alexander Hamilton in The Federalist Papers cautioned against too much reliance on any one source of advice:

A council to his magistrate, who is himself responsible for what he does, are generally nothing better than a clog upon his good intentions; are often the instruments and accomplices of his bad, and are almost always a cloak to his faults.¹⁷

¹⁵Koenig, The Invisible Presidency, op. cit., p. 21.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 44.

¹⁷Alexander Hamilton, The Federalist Papers, No. 70 (New York: The New American Library, 1961), p. 430.

Concerning the Thesis of This Study

Irrespective of the many admonitions against the pitfalls of competitive advice, the process continues and appears to be on the upswing. In the realm of foreign policy the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs has evolved to a position in the policy process that clearly rivals that formally held by the Secretary of State. In the mechanism of the National Security Council, the Special Assistant, abetted by the Under Secretary of State, virtually controls the formal foreign policy decision-making process in the name of the executive interest.

Adjunctive to his NSC duties, the Special Assistant has infringed upon the traditional right of the Secretary of State to conduct affairs of state at the diplomatic level, and the Special Assistant has also, on occasion, been projected into the role of public spokesman while retaining the protection of executive privilege.

... the key to his success in the interpersonal and inter-institutional interaction aspects of the foreign-policy process unquestionably is found in his ability to win and retain the confidence and respect of his chief, the President of the United States.¹⁸

¹⁸Stupak, op. cit., p. 92.

This trend of a growing reliance by the President on the services of his Assistant for National Security Affairs and his staff in the area of foreign policy is very likely to continue, and the Secretary of State's role will be proportionally diminished. "As a matter of law, the President cannot delegate his statutory functions to a member of the White House staff", but he can and has and will delegate operational authority to effectively enlarge his control over governmental activity.¹⁹

Although the degree of influence of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs has been enhanced considerably over the last two decades, it must, nevertheless, be understood that "the fanciest White House think tank adds nothing to the balance unless it is going to be used by a President bent on exercising policy planning in an anticipatory way to influence futures."²⁰ At no point in this study was the allusion made that the President was not in complete control of the foreign policy process (at times it may have appeared in doubt), for it is the President who chooses his officers and authorizes their conduct.

¹⁹Seidman, op. cit., p. 80.

²⁰Carey, op. cit., p. 452.

Obviously, the President cannot decide all the issues emanating from the depths of the executive bureaucracy. President Kennedy observed:

... something that President Eisenhower said to me on January 19th. He said 'There are no easy matters that will ever come to you as President. If they are easy, they will be settled at a lower level.' So that the matters that come to you as President are always the difficult matters, and matters that carry with them large implications.²¹

Therefore, influence can be exerted at two levels -- at the level of everyday management of the endless details of foreign policy and at the level of critical decisions which will decide the careers of assistants and the greatness of presidents. But at either level the President alone is responsible in the final analysis for the degree of influence he allows to be exerted by any adviser.

Whenever critics do not like existing foreign and defense policies, they are likely to complain that the White House staff is screening out divergent views from the President's attention... but... Presidents remain in control of their staff as well as of major foreign policy decisions.²²

²¹John F. Kennedy, "The Presidency and the Responsibilities of Power" (interview with William H. Lawrence, 1962) from The American President, ed. by Sidney Warren (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967), p. 46.

²²Wildavsky, op. cit., p. 182.

Of course, the Secretary of State as well as other members of Cabinet still participate in the decision-making process, but as has been shown, the role of the Assistant for National Security Affairs has definitely been expanded at his expense. The exact amount of influence is, due to the nature of the system, not given to accurate measurement. The presidency "is mysterious because the essence of the ultimate decision remains impenetrable to the observer -- often, indeed, to the decider himself," yet the examination of certain "indicators" in Chapters One through Five has helped to shed light on the developing transformation of this process and illumine the ascendancy of the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs into a position threatening the historic preeminence of the Secretary of State.²³

Although Presidents are, supposedly, in control of this metamorphic development in the conduct of foreign affairs, "The man who can build better foreign policies will find Presidents beating a path to his door," and

²³John F. Kennedy, foreword in Sorensen, Decision-Making in the White House, op. cit., p. xi.

the trend of placing this man in the most influential position in the executive foreign policy process (out of the public eye to insure greater freedom of movement) -- that of the Assistant for National Security Affairs -- is most likely to continue in the near future.²⁴

²⁴Wildavsky, op. cit., p. 184.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

- Adams, Sherman. Firsthand Report. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961.
- Alsop, Stewart. The Center. New York: Harper and Row, 1968.
- Anderson, Patrick. The President's Men. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1968.
- Bell, Jack. The Presidency: Office of Power. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1967.
- Bundy, McGeorge. "Kennedy Administration's Organization for National Security." The Dynamics of the American Presidency. Edited by Donald Bruce Johnson and Jack L. Walker. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1964.
- _____. "Bundy's Reply on Coup Hazards: Cablegram to Ambassador Lodge on October 25, 1963." The Pentagon Papers. Written by Neil Sheehan, Hedrick Smith, E.W. Kenworthy, and Fox Butterfield. Edited by Gerald Gold, Allan M. Siegal, and Samuel Abt. Toronto: Bantam Books, Inc., 1971.
- _____. "Further Bundy Instructions to Lodge on Contingency Plans: Cablegram to Ambassador Lodge on October 30, 1963." The Pentagon Papers. Written by Neil Sheehan, Hedrick Smith, E.W. Kenworthy, and Fox Butterfield. Edited by Gerald Gold, Allan M. Siegal, and Samuel Abt. Toronto: Bantam Books, Inc., 1971.
- _____. "The National Security Council in the 1960's". The National Security Council: Jackson Subcommittee Papers on Policy-Making at the Presidential Level. Edited by Senator Henry M. Jackson. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1965.
- _____. The Strength of Government. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1968.
- Campbell, John Franklin. The Foreign Affairs Fudge Factory. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1971.
- Cater, Douglass. Power in Washington. New York: Random House, 1964.

Coffey, Joseph I., and Rock, Vincent P. The Presidential Staff. Washington, D.C.: National Planning Association, 1961.

Crabb, Cecil V., Jr. American Foreign Policy in the Nuclear Age. Second edition. New York: Harper and Row, 1965.

Cutler, Robert. No Time For Rest. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1966.

_____. "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower." The National Security Council: Jackson Subcommittee Papers on Policy-Making at the Presidential Level. Edited by Senator Henry M. Jackson. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1965.

De Toqueville, Alexis. Democracy in America. Edited by Richard D. Heffner. New York: The New American Library, 1956.

Drury, Allen. Courage and Hesitation. New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1971.

Evans, Rowland, Jr., and Novak, Robert D. Nixon in the White House: The Frustration of Power. New York: Random House, 1971.

Fenno, Richard F., Jr. "Now Is the Time for Cabinet Makers." The Dynamics of the American Presidency. Edited by Donald Bruce Johnson and Jack L. Walker. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1964.

Gawthrop, Louis C. Bureaucratic Behavior in the Executive Branch. New York: The Free Press, 1969.

Graff, Henry F. The Tuesday Cabinet. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970.

Halperin, Morton H. "The Gaither Committee and the Policy Process." The Presidential Advisory System. Edited by Thomas E. Cronin and Sanford D. Greenberg. New York: Harper and Row, 1969.

Hamilton, Alexander; Madison, James; and Jay, John. The Federalist Papers. New York: The New American Library, 1961.

Herter, Christian A. "The Secretary of State." The National Security Council: Jackson Subcommittee Papers on Policy-Making at the Presidential Level. Edited by Senator Henry M. Jackson. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1965.

Hobbs, Edward H. Behind the President. Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1954.

Jackson, Henry M. "The National Security Council." Problems of National Strategy. Edited by Henry A. Kissinger. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1965.

Jacob, Charles E. Policy and Bureaucracy. Princeton, New Jersey: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1966.

Kallenbach, Joseph E. The American Chief Executive. New York: Harper and Row, 1966.

Kennedy, John F. "The Presidency and the Responsibilities of Power." The American President. Edited by Sidney Warren. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967.

Kissinger, Henry A. "Bureaucracy and Policy Making: The Effect of Insiders and Outsiders on the Policy Process." Bureaucracy, Politics, and Strategy. Edited by Henry A. Kissinger and Bernard Brodie. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968.

_____. American Foreign Policy: Three Essays. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1969.

Koenig, Louis W. The Invisible Presidency. New York: Rinehart and Company, Inc., 1960.

_____. The Chief Executive. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1968.

_____. "The Invisible Presidency." The Dynamics of the American Presidency. Edited by Donald Bruce Johnson and Jack L. Walker, New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1964.

Kraft, Joseph. "Kennedy's Working Staff." The Dynamics of the American Presidency. Edited by Donald Bruce Johnson and Jack L. Walker. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1964.

_____. Profiles in Power. New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1966.

Kulski, W.W. International Politics in a Revolutionary Age. New York: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1968.

Leacacos, John P. Fires in the In-Basket. Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1968.

McNamara, Robert S. "The Secretary of Defense." The National Security Council: Jackson Subcommittee Papers on Policy-Making at the Presidential Level. Edited by Senator Henry M. Jackson. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1965.

Neustadt, Richard E. "Approaches to Staffing the Presidency." The Presidential Advisory System. Edited by Thomas E. Cronin and Sanford D. Greenberg. New York: Harper and Row, 1969.

_____. "Some Observations on Basic Issues in National Security Staffing and Operations." The Dynamics of the American Presidency. Edited by Donald Bruce Johnson and Jack L. Walker. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1964.

Osbourne, John. The Second Year of the Nixon Watch. New York: Liveright, 1971.

Otten, Alan L. "What Do You Think, Ted?" The Kennedy Circle. Edited by Lester Tanzer. New York: Van Rees Press, 1961.

Price, Don K., Jr. "The Executive Office of the President." The National Security Council: Jackson Subcommittee Papers on Policy-Making at the Presidential Level. Edited by Senator Henry M. Jackson. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1965.

Reedy, George E. The Twilight of the Presidency. New York: The World Publishing Company, 1970.

Roberts, Charles. LBJ's Inner Circle. New York: Delacorte Press, 1965.

- Rockefeller, Nelson A. "The Executive Office of the President." The National Security Council: Jackson Subcommittee Papers on Policy-Making at the Presidential Level. Edited by Senator Henry M. Jackson. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1965.
- Rostow, Walt Whitman. View From the Seventh Floor. New York: Harper and Row, 1964.
- Rusk, Dean. "The Secretary of State." The National Security Council: Jackson Subcommittee Papers on Policy-Making at the Presidential Level. Edited by Senator Henry M. Jackson. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1965.
- Schlesinger, Arthur M., Jr. A Thousand Days. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965.
- Sheehan, Neil; Smith, Hedrick; Kenworthy, E.W.; and Butterfield, Fox. The Pentagon Papers. Edited by Gerald Gold, Allan M. Siegal, and Samuel Abt. Toronto: Bantam Books, Inc., 1971.
- Sidney, Hugh. "The White House Staff vs. the Cabinet." Inside the System. Edited by Charles Peters and Timothy J. Adams. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970.
- Somers, Herman M. "The President As Administrator." Public Administration and Policy. Edited by Peter Woll. New York: Harper and Row, 1966.
- Sorensen, Theodore C. Kennedy. New York: Harper and Row, 1965.
- _____. Decision-Making in the White House. New York: Columbia University Press, 1963.
- Souers, Sidney W. "The National Security Council under President Truman." The National Security Council: Jackson Subcommittee Papers on Policy-Making at the Presidential Level. Edited by Senator Henry M. Jackson. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1965.
- Stupak, Ronald J. The Shaping of Foreign Policy. New York: The Odyssey Press, 1969.

Wildavsky, Aaron. "The Two Presidencies." The Presidential Advisory System. Edited by Thomas E. Cronin and Sanford D. Greenberg. New York: Harper and Row, 1969.

Wise, David. "Scholars of the Nuclear Age." The Kennedy Circle. Edited by Lester Tanzer. New York: Van Rees Press, 1961.

Young, William H. Essentials of American National Government. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1969.

Periodicals

Acheson, Dean. "Thoughts About Thoughts in High Places." The New York Times Magazine, October 11, 1959.

_____. "The Eclipse of the State Department." Foreign Affairs, Vol. 49, No. 4 (July, 1971).

Campbell, John Franklin. "'What Is To Be Done?': Gigantism in Washington," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 49, No. 1. (October, 1970)

Carey, William D. "Presidential Staffing in the Sixties and Seventies." Public Administration Review, XXIX, No. 5 (1969)

Henry, Laurin L. "Presidential Transitions," Public Administration Review, (September/October, 1969).

Kolodziej, Edward J. "The National Security Council: Innovations and Implications." Public Administration Review, XXIX, No. 6 (1969).

Mansfield, Harvey C. "Federal Executive Reorganization: Thirty Years of Experience." Public Administration Review, (July/August, 1969).

Palumbo, Dennis J. "Power and Role Specificity in Organization Theory." Public Administration Review, XXIX, No. 3 (1969).

Schechter, Jerrold. "Nixon's Coup: To Peking for Peace." Time, Vol. 98, No. 4, July 26, 1971.

Steelman, John R., and Kreager, H. Dewayne. "The Executive Office As Administrative Coordinator." Law and Contemporary Problems: School of Law, Duke University, XXI, No. 4 (1956).

Symington, Stuart. "Making Military Policy: Congress's Right to Know." Current, October, 1970.

Yost, Charles W. "The Instruments of American Foreign Policy." Foreign Affairs: An American Quarterly Review, Vol. 50, No. 1 (1971).

Reports and Documents

U.S. President. Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States -- Richard Nixon, 1969. "President's News Conference of February 6, 1969." Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1971.

Senate Subcommittee on National Security and International Operations. "Department of State Foreign Affairs Manual Circular, No. 521, February 6, 1969'." The National Security Council: New Role and Structure. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1969.

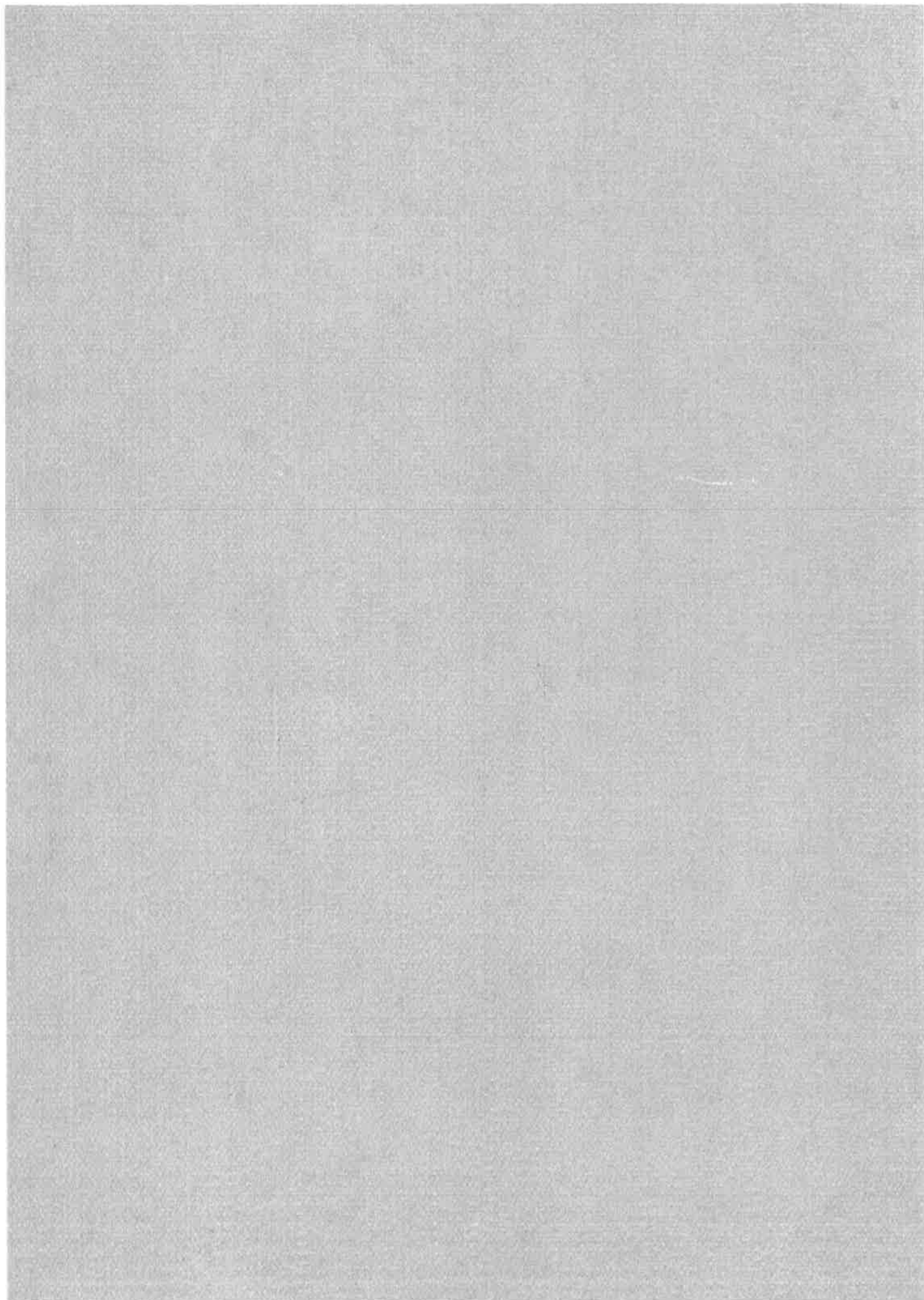
_____. "White House Announcement of the Structure, Role, and Staff of the National Security Council, February 7, 1969." The National Security Council: New Role and Structure. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1969.

The Brookings Institution. Study Prepared at the Request of the Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate. United States Foreign Policy. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1960.

Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents. "The President's New Conference of March 4, 1971." Vol. 7, No. 10. Washington, D.C.: Office of the Federal Registrar, 1971.

_____. "The President's Letter to Dr. Henry A. Kissinger on Dr. Kissinger's Decision to Remain With The Administration." Vol. 7, No.3. Washington, D.C.: Office of the Federal Registrar, 1971.





Manuscript Theses

[illegible]