

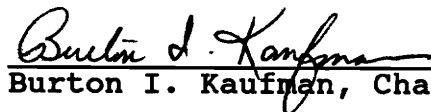
UNITED STATES NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY UNDER
PRESIDENTS TRUMAN AND EISENHOWER:
THE EVOLVING ROLE OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

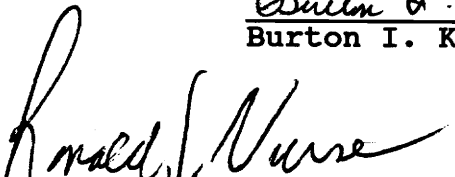
by

David L. Snead

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APPROVED:


Burton I. Kaufman, Chairman


Ronald J. Nurse


J. Dean O'Donnell, Jr.

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(ABSTRACT)

As relations deteriorated between the United States and the Soviet Union after World War II, the Truman administration faced increased pressure to preserve United States national security. One of its most important responses to this expanding Cold War was the National Security Act. Passed by Congress in July 1947, this legislation established a new, potentially revolutionary, presidential advisory body--the National Security Council.

The primary role of the National Security Council was advising the president concerning matters involving United States national security. It was not until the outbreak of the Korean War and the development of NSC 68 that Truman began to place more than minimal emphasis on the new organization's recommendations. The implementation of NSC 68 in 1950 revolutionized how United States national security policy was to be conducted. However, besides its role in the development of this one national security paper, the

National Security Council wallowed in relative obscurity throughout the Truman administration. It was not until the inauguration of the Eisenhower presidency that the National Security Council began to fulfill the role envisioned by the 1947 National Security Act.

This thesis examines the role played by the National Security Council in the development and implementation of United States national security policy during the Truman and Eisenhower administrations. It focuses specifically on the importance of the National Security Council's basic national security papers in determining policy. It concludes that from a relatively unimportant position in the Truman administration, the National Security Council developed under Eisenhower into an instrumental advisory body where national security problems were discussed, debated, and acted upon.

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INTRODUCTION

The people of the United States, in Russia and Britain, in France and China, in collaboration with all other peace-loving people must take the course of current history into their own hands and mold it in a new direction-the direction of continued cooperation.¹

Whether rhetoric or reality, President Harry S Truman spoke of the post-World War II world in terms of peace and cooperation, not struggle and war. At this pivotal stage in history, the opportunity for world cooperation fell to the wayside as the United States and the Soviet Union jostled for world power. September 2, 1945 marked the end of World War II. It also marked the beginning of the end of Soviet-American cooperation. With no common enemy, seeds of distrust sprouted within the United States and the Soviet Union. President Truman's 1945 call for the peoples of the world to unite behind the principles of cooperation met only the barriers of national governments.

Festering differences after World war II awakened old fears and created new problems. The post-war world witnessed the development of a dynamic bipolar system of power which was to dominate world affairs for years to come. President Truman expressed his hope for cooperation. Yet fundamental differences between each government ended this dream. Although cooperation depended on compromise, neither

the Soviet Union nor the United States was willing to bury their mutual antagonisms.

In an article which appeared in 1947 in Foreign Affairs, George Kennan, counselor general at the United States embassy in Moscow, postulated what would become the foundation of American foreign policy for the next forty years. "It is clear," he stated, "that any element of United States policy towards the Soviet Union must be that of a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies."² [Emphasis added] Basing their views on this principle of containment, America's policy makers began to define American foreign policy in a manner to contain the expansion of communism.

Even as the Truman administration defined American foreign policy in terms of containing communism, it recognized deficiencies within the national security decision-making process. There was simply no government body to coordinate or develop policies. In the battle with communism, the Truman administration realized the need for a new government structure to coordinate national security policy.

To remedy these problems, the Truman administration proposed what became the 1947 National Security Act. This new legislation established the National Security Council (NSC), whose functions were as follows:

- 1) "to advise the President with respect to the integration of domestic, foreign, and military policies relating to the national security so as to enable the military services and the other depart-

ments and agencies of the Government to cooperate more effectively in matters involving national security;"

2) "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;" and

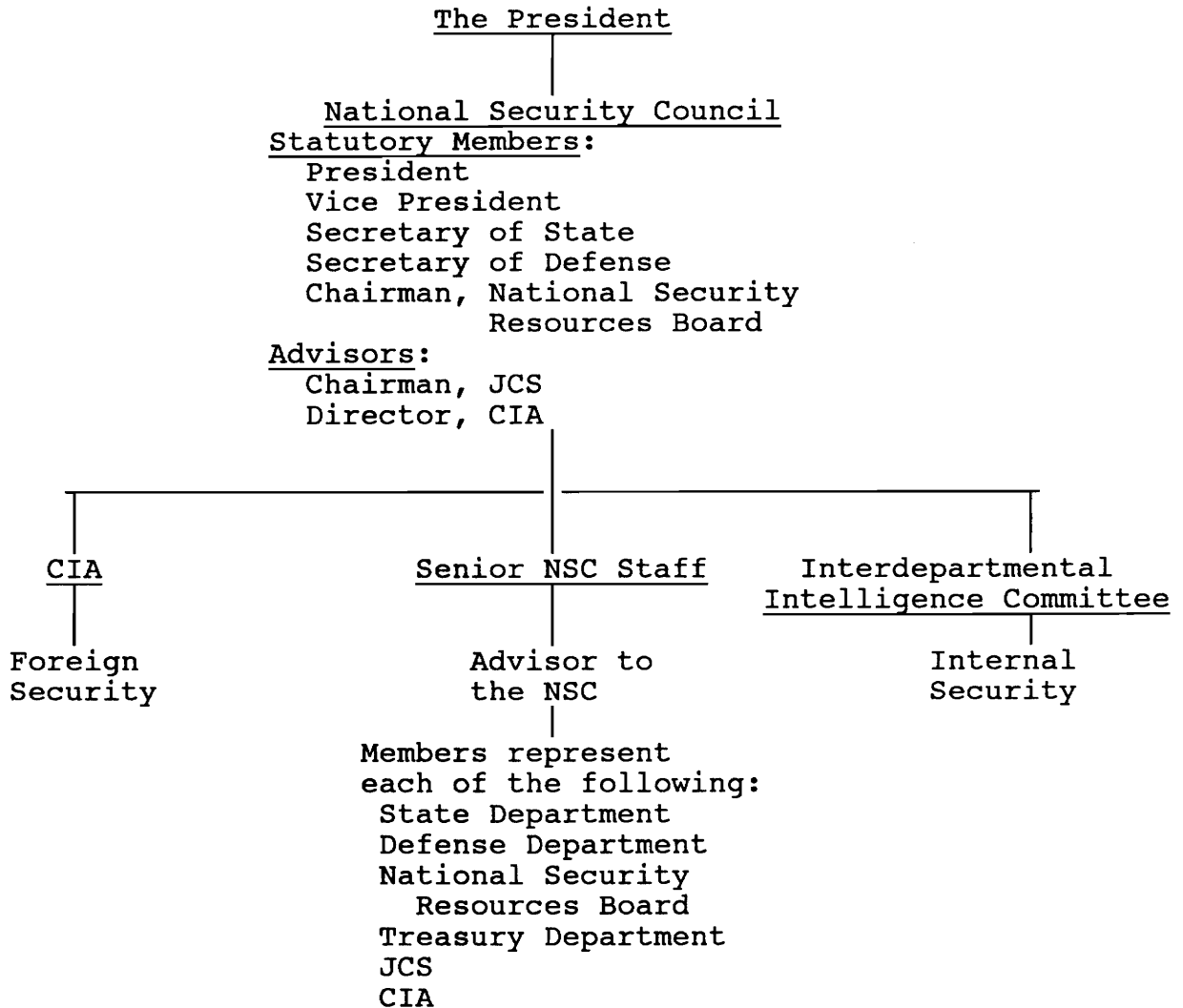
3) "to consider policies on matters of common interest to the departments and agencies of the Government concerned with the national security, and to make recommendations to the President in connection therewith."³

These provisions allow each president to use the NSC as he pleased. The system President Truman developed allocated substantial influence to the NSC and to its related structures (See Chart 1 for the NSC's Composition and Structure).⁴

Yet, the role played by the NSC in the presidential decision-making process has received scant attention by historians. The 1947 Act established the NSC to assist the president in coordinating national security policy. As a new organ of government, the role the NSC played in the Truman administration lay in sharp contrast to the Eisenhower administration. Each president saw a different need for using the NSC, and as such, established unique criteria for its operations.

Brian Duchin has masterfully traced the development of President Dwight D. Eisenhower's "New Look" foreign policy back to the Truman administration. Duchin's central thesis is that President Eisenhower's national security policy did not stray from the basic principles of the Truman adminis-

Chart 1

Composition and Structure of President
Truman's National Security Council

tration; but instead, sought to make that policy more cost efficient. In making his argument, Duchin has relied heavily on the development of national security policies by the Truman NSC. In defining the series of NSC policy papers--20, 68, 135, and 141--as the "Interim Look", Duchin established the foundation for the Eisenhower "New Look" within the Truman administration.⁵

Despite providing an accurate assessment of the development of Eisenhower's national security policy, Duchin failed to recognize a distinctively new aspect of presidential decision-making--the National Security Council. Duchin has provided a chronological history of the development of national security policy, but he has failed to establish why it was unique. The NSC is the missing element. Although a relatively undefined structure at its inception in 1947, the NSC developed into what President Eisenhower called, "the most important weekly meeting of Government."⁶ The development of Eisenhower's "New Look" provides an excellent forum to examine the evolving role of the NSC in defining American national security policy.

FOOTNOTES: INTRODUCTION

1Harry S Truman, "Restatement of Foreign Policy of the United States," Department of State Bulletin 13:331 (1945), 655.

2[George Kennan], "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," Foreign Affairs 25 (July 1947), 575.

31947 National Security Act, Statutes at Large, Public Law 253, 80th Congress, July 26, 1947, 496-97.

4"Organization Chart of the National Security Council," Record Group 59, Box 11, National Archives, Washington, D.C., 1.

5Brian Rodger Duchin, "The New Look: President Eisenhower and the Political Economy of National Security," (Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 1987), 42.

6The Eisenhower Diaries, ed. Robert Ferrell (New York: Norton, 1981), 379.

CHAPTER 1

NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY AND THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL UNDER PRESIDENT HARRY S TRUMAN

The need for a reorganization of the national security establishment grew out of the administrative experiences of World War II and was accented by the growing United States' mistrust and fear of the Soviet Union. The American command structure during the war revealed the need for a more coordinated security policy. President Harry S Truman and his military advisors recognized the importance of a unified command structure as well as a policy coordinating group. Accordingly, they proposed the 1947 National Security Act. The goal was efficiency. The result was a revolutionary new organization of policy-making.

The NSC fulfilled the Act's goal of establishing "integrated policies and procedures."¹ President Truman initially viewed the NSC as an advisory body with only limited importance. As Truman recognized the growing need for a coordinated policy, however, the NSC assumed a greater role in decision-making. In an environment of debate and critical discussion, the NSC became the organ for developing national security policies.

The NSC developed three major national security policy papers --20, 68, and 135--during the Truman administration.

Each paper represented a national security policy which reflected the most recent events and most likely future. Their common theme was the fear of communist expansion. These policy papers indicate the role played by the NSC, its importance, and how it evolved throughout Truman's two terms in office.

On July 10, 1948, Secretary of Defense James Forrestal ordered the first comprehensive review of America's national security policies. "I believe," he wrote, "that it is imperative that a comprehensive statement of national policy be prepared, particularly as it relates to Soviet Russia, and that this statement specify and evaluate the risks, state our objectives, and outline the measures to be followed in evaluating them."² With these instructions, the NSC began a sixteen week study to develop a comprehensive policy.

The NSC discussions during these weeks focused on how best to implement George Kennan's policy of containment. While serving at the American embassy in Moscow in 1946, Kennan produced a short study of the Soviet Union which revolutionized American foreign policy. The policy of containment, as drawn from his study, called for confining the Soviet Union within its existing boundaries. "World communism," Kennan argued, "is like [a] malignant parasite which feeds only on diseased tissue."³ The United States faced an enemy whose only perceived purpose was to dominate the

world. The NSC set out to meet and overcome this threat.

The summer of 1948 only highlighted the threat of Soviet aggression. On June 24 the Kremlin instituted a blockade of West Berlin.⁴ The Truman administration responded with a massive airlift of supplies to counteract the Soviet blockade. Although the airlift was eventually successful, the outcome, as of July 1948, was not so obvious. The United States feared not only the loss of Berlin, but also the continued isolation of Eastern Europe. As long as the Soviet Union continued to exhibit aggressive tendencies, the administration saw a need for a coordinated national security policy.

Beginning in February 1948, George Kennan, now director of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff (PPS), developed a national security policy paper to serve as a guide for American foreign policy. Policy Planning Staff Report #23 (PPS 23) outlined the necessity of countering Soviet communism. Kennan argued that "our operations in foreign affairs must attain a much higher degree of purposefulness ... and of disciplined coordination," as the leaders of the Kremlin "are an able, shrewd and utterly ruthless group, absolutely devoid of respect for us or our institutions."⁵ PPS 23 became the foundation for the NSC's first national policy paper, NSC 20.

Since the PPS served as the principal author of NSC 20, Kennan's role in preparing PPS 23 is essential for

understanding the development of the new security paper and Truman's use of the NSC. In PPS 23, Kennan argued the need for a much more coordinated security policy. Describing the world situation as "extremely fluid", he believed that decisions "must be determined from day to day in the light of rapidly shifting situations."⁶ Kennan's concerns were reflected in NSC 20/2.⁷ Instead of offering specific estimates for certain situations, ie. predicting when the Soviet Union would most likely launch an attack, NSC 20/2 served as a broad outline of American national security policy.

The objectives of the NSC 20 series of policy papers were,

- 1) to reduce the threat of the Soviet Union to international security; and
- 2) to attempt to change the behavior of the Soviet Union in international relations.⁸

The document concluded that the United States and the Soviet Union could not permanently co-exist under present conditions. Kennan's policy of containment only sought to prevent further Soviet expansion until Moscow modified its policies. The NSC designed the entire NSC 20 series with the goal of temporarily containing communism until it collapsed under its own weight.

NSC 20/2 argued that Soviet armed aggression against the United States was not very likely. But, because the Soviet Union was "seeking to achieve its aims predominantly by political means, accompanied-of course-by the factor of

military intimidation, war must be regarded ... at least as a possibility."⁹ Therefore, the United States had to prepare a defense program to cover all circumstances.

The authors of NSC 20/2 also stressed that Soviet policy would not be altered appreciably if the Kremlin obtained possession of atomic weaponry. They assumed that the Soviet Union would not possess atomic weapons for three or four years [1951 or 1952].¹⁰ Even when it acquired that capability, there would be "a certain political reluctance [by the Kremlin] to resort without provocation to methods of mass destruction aimed against civilian elements," as long as, the United States was capable of raining mass destruction in return.¹¹

NSC 20/2 concluded that there was a need for long-term United States military preparedness to deter Soviet expansion. However, it did not recommend preparing for periods of peak dangers. Kennan and the other authors of NSC 20/2 assumed there would be a lengthy confrontation between the Soviet Union and the United States.

In general ... a U.S. defense policy based on the maintenance of a permanent state of adequate military preparation meets better the requirements of the situation in so far as these arise out of Soviet policies and attitudes, than a defense effort pointed towards a given estimated peak of war danger.¹²

Even as the NSC continued its lengthy review of American national security policy, the crisis in Berlin grew more serious. Since the end of June, the Soviet Union had pro-

gressively tightened its blockade of West Berlin. Prospects of an imminent end to the crisis had waned. Soviet tactics in Berlin lent credence to the assertions in NSC 20/2 that the Soviet Union would seek to reach its goal through indirect attacks on democratic institutions. In hearings concerning the 1950 defense budget, Acting Secretary of State Robert Lovett argued that "we must recognize that the Berlin conflict has produced a worsening of [Soviet-American relations]."13

The last paper in the NSC 20 series, NSC 20/4, represented the NSC's final conclusions concerning American national security policy. The purpose of NSC 20/4 was "to assess and appraise existing and foreseeable [Soviet] threats to our national security ... and to formulate our objectives and aims ... to counter such threats."14 To achieve this goal, the authors analyzed the degree of the Soviet threat and the capabilities of the Soviet military machine. They also considered possible United States policies to counter that threat. Their conclusions guided American national security policy for almost two years.

"Communist ideology and Soviet behavior clearly demonstrate that the ultimate objectives of the leaders of the USSR is the domination of the world," the authors of NSC 20/4 stated.15 They strove to achieve that end by exploiting democratic weaknesses, attempting to export their communist philosophy, and developing the war-making potential of

the Soviet military to its fullest potential. According to NSC 20/4, the only reason Moscow had not already achieved these goals was the "vigorous measures [taken by the United States] to stiffen the resistance of western European and Mediterranean countries to communist pressures."16 NSC 20/4 claimed, in fact, that the Soviet military could seize Europe, the Middle East, and parts of the Far East within six months after launching an attack. It also stated that "Soviet capabilities [would] progressively increase and that by no later than 1955 the USSR [would] probably be capable of serious air attacks against the United States with atomic, biological and chemical weapons."17 NSC 20/4 did not argue that war was imminent. But it did argue that war had to be considered as a possibility.

Although the NSC 20 series established the national security policy of the United States, it did not result in any immediate changes in the American defense program. The primary structure for carrying out national security programs--the Department of Defense--did not refer to NSC 20 in order to justify a drastic increase in defense-spending. President Truman wanted to maintain the budget ceiling for the Department of Defense at existing levels. In what historian Robert Ferrell calls "the strait jacket of a total military budget of less than \$15 billion,"18 President Truman ordered his new Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson to preserve national security.

A review of the budget for the Department of Defense (see Appendix A) reveals an attempt by the Truman administration, at least until the outbreak of the Korean War, to keep defense spending down.¹⁹ It did not conclude that NSC 20's call for an adequate level of defense preparedness required increased defense spending. It held to the view instead that the United States monopoly over the atomic bomb was sufficient to deter the Soviet Union.

Although NSC 20/4 did not warrant increased United States defense spending, American leaders still perceived the threat of the Soviet Union to be real. In an address to the Congress in January 1949, President Truman asserted that "until a system of world security is established upon which we can safely rely, we cannot escape the burden of creating and maintaining armed forces sufficient to deter aggression."²⁰ The United States began to do just that.

One important step taken to obtain world security was the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The North Atlantic treaty, ratified by the Senate in April 1949 and signed by the President in July, signified a unified front of opposition to the spread of communism in Europe. Whether NATO was the beginning of "an era of American military, political, and economic dominance over Europe,"²¹ as historian Stephen Ambrose suggests, or simply an agreement to tie the two sides of the Atlantic together, it marked a significant change in American history. For the

first time since the American Revolution, the United States joined an entangling alliance. The consequences cannot be overstated. American security was now equated with European security. What quickly became apparent, however, was that this collective security could not be bought for \$15 billion.

Two events in 1949, the explosion of a Soviet atomic bomb and the fall of China to the communists, forever altered America's outlook on national security. Until the spring of that year, the United States had been successful in maintaining its dominant position over communism. Despite problems in Eastern Europe, the United States had "saved" Greece from communist aggression (the Truman Doctrine), begun the rebuilding of Europe (the Marshall Plan), and broken the Berlin Blockade (May 1949). Before September 1949, therefore, Americans, although recognizing the Soviet threat, felt relatively secure.²²

In a brief announcement on September 22, 1950, deliberately designed to emit a sense of calmness and stability, President Truman announced the detection of an atomic explosion in the Soviet Union. Although the announcement did not create the fear of an immediate Soviet atomic attack, it did create a mood of uncertainty. Senator Arthur Vandenberg captured the moment in a note to his wife on September 23, "this is now a different world. The new problems are appalling. Where do we go from here and what do we do about

it?"²³ Americans, everywhere, asked the same questions.

The exact effect of Soviet ownership of the atomic bomb remained unclear. Although the Soviets had developed the bomb earlier than most observers expected, the test detonation was not a surprise. George Kennan argued that "the demonstration of an 'atomic capability' on the part of the USSR ... adds no new fundamental element to the picture."²⁴ New York Times columnist Anna McCormick, asserted that "Nothing could be more foolish than to let this one factor ... deflect us for a moment from the more successful and important redoubts [Marshall Plan, NATO] we are building in defense of peace."²⁵ However, their opinions did not represent the majority view.

On September 30, 1949, the Chinese communists formally took control of mainland China. The swift collapse of Chiang Kai-Shek's nationalist forces shocked the United States. As with the Soviet detonation of an atomic bomb, most American leaders viewed the loss of China as inevitable. However, the suddenness of the collapse was unexpected. In combination with the Soviet atomic bomb, the loss of China divided the nation. The Republicans claimed that the Democrats had "lost China" and allowed the Soviet Union to obtain the bomb. The time for a re-orientation of American national security policy was at hand.

On January 31, 1950, President Truman ordered "the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense to undertake

a re-examination of our objectives in peace and war and of the effect of the objectives on our strategic plans."²⁶ Responsibility for carrying out the new examination fell to the NSC. It selected an ad-hoc committee of State Department and Defense Department personnel to carry out the presidential directive. Paul Nitze, George Kennan's replacement as the Director of the PPS, served as the chair of the committee.

The ad-hoc committee (see Appendix B for its composition) met five times in February and March. Paul Nitze established the premise of the committee meetings in a PPS paper presented to the State Department on February 8. "As the USSR has already committed itself to the defeat of the U.S.," he argued, "Soviet policy is guided by the simple consideration of weakening the world position of the U.S."²⁷ Although Kennan argued, at the same time, that there was "little justification for the impression that the 'cold war', by virtue of events outside our control, has suddenly taken some drastic turn to our disadvantage,"²⁸ his arguments fell on deaf ears.

In defining a new strategic policy the ad-hoc committee often heard from outside consultants (see Appendix B). Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert Lovett reflected the consultants' overriding view. In a presentation on March 16, he stated that "It is ... our duty immediately to bring our military competence to a higher level."²⁹ Their findings,

which became the foundation of NSC 68, received rave reviews from both civilian and defense leaders. Such descriptions as "unchallengeable," "many useful analyses," and a "magnificent job of analyzing the problem" were widespread.³⁰ The report was submitted to the NSC on April 7, 1950.

NSC 68 consisted of two parts. The first dealt with the sources of the Soviet Union's aggressive tendencies, while the second provided possible plans of action. The paper's underlying premise was the fear of Soviet Union. "Our free society," it argued, "finds itself mortally challenged by the Soviet System. No other value system is so wholly irreconcilable with ours, so implacable in its purpose to destroy ours, so capable of turning to its own uses the most dangerous and divisive trends in our own society."³¹

NSC 68 concluded that the only way to stop the Soviet Union was to maintain a strong military force. "For us the role of military power is to serve the national purpose by deterring an attack upon us ... and to defend the integrity and vitality of our free society and to defeat an aggressor."³² The authors believed this was imperative now that the Soviet Union possessed the atomic bomb. "This excess strength [in armed forces] coupled now with an atomic capability, provides the Soviet Union with great coercive power."³³ American leaders feared that the Soviet Union would soon have the capability to launch an atomic attack on the United States.

NSC 68 analyzed four possible courses of actions: 1) the maintenance of current policies; 2) isolation; 3) war; and/or 4) a rapid build-up of political, economic, and military forces. The NSC discounted the first three as infeasible. "In the face of obviously mounting Soviet military strength," it stated, "ours has declined relatively;"³⁴ therefore, neither maintaining current strength nor isolation would offer sufficient deterrent to Soviet aggression. Preemptive war was so contrary to American tradition that it was not an option. It concluded, therefore, that "a more rapid build-up of political, economic, and military strength ... is ... the only course which is consistent with progress toward achieving our fundamental purpose."³⁵

Because the military decline of the United States had been so precipitous, the authors argued that "budgetary considerations [would] need to be subordinated to the stark fact that our very independence as a nation may be at stake."³⁶ For the remainder of the Truman administration, economic stability was subordinated to national security. Prior to NSC 68, America's defense budget remained under \$15 billion. Six months after its completion, the defense budget had increased nearly four-fold.

Before the recommendations of NSC 68 could be implemented, however, Congress had to be convinced that such a rearmament program was necessary. Secretary of State Dean Acheson recalled that the administration expected a defense

budget of around \$50 billion to carry out the rearmament program.³⁷ Americans feared the Soviet Union. Yet, they were not ready to accept the consequences of such a rearmament plan--higher taxes, a large standing army, an arms race. It took an event in the Far East to turn NSC 68 into what historian Burton Kaufman calls "the United States' field manual for waging the Cold War."³⁸

Secretary Acheson claimed in his memoirs that "the purpose of NSC-68 was to so bludgeon the mass mind of 'top government' that not only could the President make a decision but that it could be carried out."³⁹ If this was NSC 68's purpose, then it needed help in order to achieve its goals. NSC 68 encountered opposition not only in Congress, from those who feared big defense spending, but also from Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson. Truman had appointed Johnson in March 1949 to keep Defense Department spending under control. Johnson so ingrained these orders that he began to oppose virtually any spending increase. As long as he was opposed to higher spending, the rearmament program recommended in NSC 68 had little chance of being approved by Congress.

If NSC 68 presented the plan for rearmament, the Korean War served as the instrument to "bludgeon" it through Congress. Before the outbreak of war in Korea, the outlook for even limited rearmament seemed minimal at best. North Korea's attack on June 24, 1950 changed this. Almost imme-

diately President Truman and the Defense Department asked for and received supplements to the \$13.5 billion fiscal 1951 defense budget. In total President Truman's defense budget for 1951 amounted to \$48.2 billion. An examination of Appendix A reveals just how dramatic the increase was.

Americans quickly rallied around the need for increased defense spending. In the White House's view, North Korea's attack only proved that the Soviet Union's goal was world domination. It was inconceivable to American foreign policy makers that North Korea acted on its own. If Americans were not persuaded of the threat of communism before June 24, their views quickly changed. An editorial in The Christian Science Monitor exclaimed, "Americans must be prepared to take strong measures if they are to repel the spearhead of Soviet aggression which has been thrust on them and at the peace of the world in South Korea."⁴⁰ The price was steep, but most Americans were now ready to pay.

Significantly, the Korean War accounted for only a relatively small percentage of the increase in defense spending. Appendix C makes clear that the cost of the Korean War accounted for less than 10% of the defense budgets for fiscal years 1951, 1952, and 1953--\$5 billion out of approximately \$50 billion for each year.⁴¹ "The focus," political scientist Paul Hammond argues, "remained on a larger purpose for rearmament than the fighting of the Korean War."⁴² In Congressional hearings concerning the

1952 defense budget, Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert Lovett explained the process of funding the Korean War as follows:

It does not appear feasible at this time to attempt to forecast the extent to which additional funds may be required to support our efforts in Korea. We propose ... that the Congress at a later date supply such funds as may be required to replace the material and supplies that may have been expended in combat.⁴³

Deputy Secretary Lovett made this statement in reference to the fiscal 1952 budget, but it held equally true for the 1953 budget. The Truman defense budgets paid for the NSC 68 rearmament program--supplements paid for the Korean War.⁴⁴

For almost two years, policy makers debated the exact meaning of NSC 68. While the public expressed concern over the "failure" of President Truman's national security policy, American leaders discussed the implications of the rearmament program.⁴⁵ These discussions and debates led to a re-examination of American national security policy. The continuation of the conflict in Korea, the possible development of the hydrogen bomb by both the United States and the Soviet Union, and the growing crisis in Southeast Asia presented problems not addressed by NSC 68. By the fall of 1951, a new evaluation of United States national security policy seemed essential.

As with the earlier examinations of national security, the PPS served as the principal authors of this NSC study. Between October 1951 and July 1952, they researched and

developed a new policy paper. The NSC 135 series reiterated the basic goals of the NSC 20 and 68 papers: 1) to develop the strong points of the capitalist, free society; 2) to contain further Soviet expansion; and 3) to sow seeds of discontent within the Soviet system.⁴⁶ NSC 135/1 also argued that "the free world for its own protection must take measures to improve active and passive defenses ... but nevertheless must probably accept a substantial degree of vulnerability."⁴⁷ As with NSC 68, NSC 135 had high goals but low expectations.

The thesis of the NSC 135 series was that the Soviet Union could not tolerate a time of relaxed tension. "Preoccupied with the problem of maintaining iron discipline over the captive peoples," it stated, "the Soviet rulers are obliged to justify such disciplines by the bogey of 'capitalist encirclement' and the stated goal of world revolution."⁴⁸ Because of the need to justify totalitarian control, the Soviet regime had to maintain the illusion of a capitalist threat. The authors of NSC 135 did not rule out the possibility of peace, but they considered that chance to be slim. They, therefore, recommended the continuation of the NSC 68 rearmament program.

The most important innovation of the new policy came in the final paper in the NSC 135 series, NSC 135/3. This paper argued that the United States should be willing to cooperate with its allies and to use collective military

action in areas where such force is necessary. The concept of collective security as a principle of United States' national security policy was growing in importance. However, what was truly unique was a qualifying statement concerning the use of military force. The reliance on collective action "is not intended to preclude the possibility of the use of our military forces unilaterally when under the particular circumstances it is in our best interests to do so."⁴⁹ The possible unilateral use of military force was now a part of official United States national security policy.

The NSC 135 series was the last comprehensive review of national security policy developed during the Truman administration. The basic reiteration of the principles contained in NSC 68 precluded any great alteration in United States policy. After the initial increases in the fiscal 1951 defense spending (see Appendix A), the cost of defense hovered around the \$50 billion mark for the remaining years of the Truman administration. As the 1952 presidential election approached, the United States found itself in the midst of a massive rearmament program. The threat of the Soviet Union was seen as real as ever, and the likelihood of a trend towards peace seemed very dim indeed.

The Eisenhower administration thus inherited a national security program which was based on fear of Soviet communism. From the end of World War II to January 1953,

the United States experienced one crisis after another in foreign affairs. The Cold War turned warm in Berlin and hot in Korea. Nineteen forty-nine marked the end of the United States monopoly on the atomic bomb and also the "loss" to communism of the most populated country in the world. The perceived deterioration of the position of the United States in relation to the Soviet Union was clearly evident in the series of National Security Council papers dealing with national security. The Soviet Union represented the threat that the NSC sought to overcome.

George Kennan defined the threat of communism in 1946 and created the plan to confront that threat in 1947. This strategy of containment, which to this day influences American foreign policy, established the need to thwart Soviet expansive thrusts when at all possible. To meet the challenges posed by the Soviet Union, the United States needed a coordinated policy to resist the spread of communism. President Truman and his advisors accepted Kennan's strategy and sought the means to implement it. That led to the formation of the NSC.

In his memoirs, President Truman wrote, "the new organization [the NSC] gave us a running balance and a perpetual inventory of where we stood and where we were going on all strategic questions affecting the national security."⁵⁰ The NSC served as an important advisory board for the President. Within this group, analyses of the Soviet threat were

created, discussed, and acted upon. The NSC served as the first presidential advisory group designed to develop and coordinate national security policy. Under its auspices, national security policy became more coordinated and relevant to the defense of the United States.

During the Truman administration, the NSC developed three independent national security policy papers--20, 68, and 135. The common theme of each paper was the belief that the Soviet Union was bent upon world domination. The NSC, more aptly the PPS, developed plans to confront the Soviet menace. Directed initially by George Kennan (1947-1949) and later by Paul Nitze (1949-1953), the PPS developed the national security policy papers which were discussed at the NSC meetings. Each NSC paper was preceded by several PPS studies. The influence of either Kennan or Nitze was present in all of them.

PPS papers 23, 33, and 38, proposed under Kennan's directorship, laid the foundations for the NSC 20 series. The development of NSC 68 and NSC 135 was supervised by Paul Nitze. The final policy papers of the NSC bore the influences of the PPS. The NSC ordered the development of national security studies, discussed alternative strategies, and recommended specific policies, but it was the PPS which did all of the preliminary work. American national security policy was the creature of the PPS not the NSC.

Despite the prominent role of the PPS, the importance

of the NSC should not be taken lightly. The primary purpose of the NSC was to serve as a forum for the discussion of different alternatives for guaranteeing American national security. The PPS provided the papers for NSC discussions. The NSC used the papers as the basis for debate and ultimately for making recommendations to the president. This role cannot be underscored too much. Presidents now had at their disposal a group designed specifically to make recommendations regarding national security policy.

The importance of the NSC to Truman grew in his two terms in office. NSC 20, the first national security policy paper, set in writing the national security policy which had existed since 1946--the Soviet Union was an aggressive country whose goal was to destroy what the United States represented. The policy paper did not result in any major alterations in existing national security policy. The fact that it did not do so does not undermine its importance as a concrete statement of American national security policy. However, it did no more than re-enforce the established position of the Truman administration.

Truman began to see the NSC differently in light of the changing world situation. After the Soviet detonation of an atomic bomb and the fall of China, Truman placed a greater emphasis on the role of the NSC. He increased his attendance at the NSC meetings dramatically and placed an increased importance on their policy recommendations.⁵¹ This

new emphasis is seen in the development and approval of NSC 68. Although offering a few modifications, NSC 68 simply expanded the arguments of NSC 20. The most important innovation, expanded spending on national security, captured Truman's approval. The fact that the defense budget increased nearly four-fold revealed just how important this document was. The NSC assumed a position of importance which it did not have earlier in the Truman administration.

The NSC's importance lay not only with the decisions it rendered, but also in how Truman used it. The 1947 National Security Act explicitly stated that the purpose of the NSC was "to advise the President with respect to the integration of domestic, foreign, and military policies related to the national security."⁵² Yet the Act left the procedures for using the NSC undefined. It provided a structure to assist the president; but, it was left to the president to use it in the manner he saw fit.

President Truman viewed the NSC as a body where issues could be discussed without any impediments. Secretary of Defense James Forrestal clearly summarized the role of the NSC during the Truman administration in the following diary entry. "I regard it [the NSC] ... not as a place to make policies but certainly as a place to identify for the President those things upon which policy needs to be made."⁵³ The NSC served President Truman well in this capacity, and its position as an integral part of the presidential decision-

making process was now firmly entrenched.

President Truman developed a distinctive role for the NSC, but it was not the one envisioned by Dwight D. Eisenhower. President Eisenhower viewed the NSC as a place for vigorous discussion and debate and gave it greater importance in defining national security needs and objectives. He wanted it to become more integrated in the development of national security policy. He also placed great importance on establishing a set schedule of meetings at which he would preside. Eisenhower began his administration with the goal of involving the NSC more in formulating policy. The National Security Council would serve at the forefront of the United States' foreign policy in meeting and overcoming the seemingly ever-present threat of communism.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER 1

1National Security Act, 496.

2"Memorandum by the Secretary of Defense (Forrestal) to the National Security Council," Papers Related to the Foreign Relations of the United States 1948 [hereafter abbreviated FRUS] 1:2 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office [hereafter abbreviated GPO], 1976), 591.

3"Telegram," FRUS 1946 1:1 (GPO, 1969), 708.

4The four major allies in W.W. II--the United States, Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union--divided Germany and Berlin into four zones and four sectors, respectively. Each section was under the control of one of the allied powers. By 1948, West Berlin included the American, British, and French sectors.

5"Review of Current Trends U.S. Foreign Policy," FRUS 1948 1:1 (GPO, 1976), 528.

6"Memorandum by the Director of the Policy Planning Staff (Kennan) to the Secretary of State and Under Secretary of State," FRUS 1948 1:2 (GPO, 1976), 599-600.

7National Security Council papers were classified in series. As each paper was revised, it was given a new number. For instance, the first paper in the NSC 20 series was NSC 20, the second was NSC 20/2, and it kept increasing until the final paper was completed.

8"Report to the National Security Council by the Department of State: Summary of Conclusions," FRUS 1948 1:2 (GPO, 1976), 609.

9"Factors Affecting the Nature of the U.S. Defense Arrangements in Light of Soviet Policies," FRUS 1948 1:2 (GPO, 1976), 619.

10"Report to the NSC," 552.

11"Factors Affecting," 620.

12Ibid., 624.

13"The Acting Secretary of State to the Secretary of State in Paris," FRUS 1948 1:2 (GPO, 1976), 650.

14"Report by the National Security Council on U.S. Objectives With Respect to the USSR to Counter Soviet Threats to U.S. Security," FRUS 1948 1:2 (GPO, 1976), 663.

15Ibid.

16Ibid., 664.

17Ibid., 665.

18Off the Record, ed. Robert Ferrell (New York: Penguin Books, 1980), 154.

19Ben J. Wattenberg, The Statistical History of the United States (New York: Basic Books, 1976), 1114-16; "Report to the National Security Council by the Executive Secretary (Lay)," FRUS 1952-1954 2:1 (GPO, 1984), 27; and Robert J. Watson, History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff 5 (GPO, 1986), 86.

20Harry S Truman, "Message of the President to the Congress," Department of State Bulletin 20:498, 75-76.

21Stephen Ambrose, Rise to Globalism (New York: Penguin Books, 1988), 103.

22When asked whether they believed there would be another war within a year, 32% of Americans in September 1948 believed there would be, while only 15% in May 1949 believed so. Although not feeling completely secure, Americans felt more so in 1949. The Gallup Poll 1 and 2, ed. George H. Gallup (New York: Random House, 1972), 759 and 817.

23The Private Papers of Senator Vandenberg, ed. Arthur H. Vandenberg, Jr. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1952), 518.

24"Draft Memorandum by the Counselor (Kennan) to the Secretary of State," FRUS 1950 1:1 (GPO, 1977), 161.

25Anna O'Hare McCormick, "The Atom Bomb Is Only One Weapon in the New Armory," New York Times September 24, 1949, 12.

26"The President to the Secretary of State," FRUS 1950 1:1 (GPO, 1977), 141-42.

27"Study Prepared by the Director of Policy Planning Staff (Nitze)," FRUS 1950 1:1 (GPO, 1977), 145.

28"Draft Memorandum by the Counselor (Kennan) to the Secretary of State," FRUS 1950 1:1 (GPO, 1977), 160.

29Most of the consultants were chosen because of their expertise in the field of atomic energy. The ad-hoc committee wanted the recommendations of the individuals best qualified to discuss the implications of atomic weapons. "Record of the Meeting of the State-Defense Policy Review, March 16, 1950," FRUS 1950 1:1 (GPO, 1977), 197.

30The ad-hoc committee sent their final report to various State Department officials for their comments. Among those receiving the report were Dean Rusk, George Kennan, Charles Bohlen, Raymond Hare, and several other assistants and deputy assistants to the Secretary of State. "Memorandum by the Under Secretary of State (Webb)," FRUS 1950 1:1 (GPO, 1977), 213-26 .

31"A Report to the President Pursuant to the President's Directive of January 31, 1950," FRUS 1950 1:1 (GPO, 1977), 240-41.

32Ibid., 244.

33Ibid., 249.

34Ibid., 253.

35Ibid., 282.

36Ibid., 285.

37Dean Acheson, Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1969), 377.

38Burton I. Kaufman, The Korean War (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1986), 28.

39Acheson, Present, 374.

40"Stand Firm and Keep Calm," Christian Science Monitor June 27, 1950, 18.

41U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Appropriations, Department of Defense Appropriations for 1952: Hearings Before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, 82nd Cong., 1st sess., 1117; U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Appropriations, Urgent Deficiency Appropriations

Bill, 1952: Hearings Before the Committee on Appropriations, 82nd Cong., 1st sess., 60; U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Appropriations, Department of Defense Appropriations for 1952: Hearings Before the Subcommittee of the Committee of Appropriations, 82nd Cong., 2nd sess., 33; U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Appropriations, Department of Defense Appropriations for 1954: Hearings Before the Subcommittee of the Committee of Appropriations, 83rd Cong., 1st sess., 213; U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Appropriations, Department of Defense Appropriations for 1954: Hearings Before the Subcommittee of the Committee of Appropriations, 83rd Cong., 1st sess., 107.

42Warner R. Schilling et al, Strategy, Politics, and Defense Budgets (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), 356.

43U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Appropriations, Department of Defense Appropriations for 1952: Hearings Before the Subcommittee of the Committee of Appropriations, 82nd Cong., 1st sess., 5.

44The following chart reveals the breakdown of costs for the Department of Defense for fiscal years 1950, 1951, and 1952. Expenses for the Korean War more than likely are included in section IIIc. "Report to the National Security Council by the Executive Secretary (Lay)," FRUS 1952-1954 2:1 (GPO, 1984), 27.

Category Distribution of U.S. Armed Forces Costs
Fiscal 1950, 1951, and 1952
(in millions of dollars)

	1950	1951	1952
I. Military Personnel Costs	4558	8154	10385
II. Operation & Maintenance	3749	11443	12051
III. Procure't & Produc'n Costs	2567	22696	29431
a. Aircraft	(1894)	(9655)	(14941)
b. Ships & Harbor Craft	(45)	(769)	(1945)
c. Other	(628)	(12272)	(12545)
IV. Acquis. & Const. of Real Prop.	348	2426	3994
V. Civilian Components	739	844	703
VI. Research & Development	612	1175	1471
VII. Industrial Mobilization	94	312	143
VIII. Establishment-wide Activities	380	1131	1224
Totals-	13048	48182	59403

45There was widespread concern that Soviet possession of the atomic bomb severely altered the balance of the Cold War. A Gallup Poll in January 1951 revealed that approximately 3 out of 4 Americans believed that the Soviet Union

was winning the Cold War. Time argued that, "the U.S. is now paying for the folly of its hasty demobilization five years ago and its refusal to start the buildup of its armed forces in 1948 ... If the U.S. is again unwilling to meet the cost of defense ... then its blast in any war to come will quickly pass away." Gallup, Gallup 2, 963. "Why Was the U.S. Unarmed?," Time October 2, 1950, 19.

46 "Draft Statement of Policy Proposed by the NSC," FRUS 1952-1954 2:1 (GPO, 1984), 81-82.

47 National Security Council, "Reappraisal of U.S. Objectives and Strategy for National Security," Record Group 273, File NSC 135, National Archives, Washington, D.C., 15.

48 "Annex to a Report to the National Security Council by the Executive Secretary (Lay)," FRUS 1952-1954 2:1 (GPO, 1984), 92.

49 "Report by the Secretaries of State and Defense and the Director for Mutual Security on Reexamination of United States Programs for National Security," Record Group 273, File NSC 141, National Archives, Washington, D.C., 92.

50 Harry S Truman, Memoirs: Years of Decisions 2 (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1955), 59.

51 President Truman presided over 12 of the first 57 meetings (September 26, 1947 through June 23, 1950) and 62 of the last 71 meetings (June 28, 1950 through January 9, 1953). James S. Lay, Jr. and Robert H. Johnson, Organizational History of the National Security Council during the Truman and Eisenhower Administrations (GPO, 1960), 5 and 16.

52 See footnote 3.

53 The Forrestal Diaries, ed. Walter Millis (New York: The Viking Press, 1951), 316.

Chapter 2:

The National Security Council and the Development of President Eisenhower's New Look Foreign Policy

Russia is definitely out to communize the world-- where it cannot gain complete control of territory ... it promotes starvation, unrest, anarchy, in the certainty that these are breeding grounds of their damnable philosophy.¹

Dwight D. Eisenhower recorded this assessment of the Soviet Union in his diary on September 16, 1947. A full five years before his election as President of the United States, Eisenhower had clearly accepted the position that the United States and the Soviet Union were in a potentially deadly struggle. However, he did not advocate unlimited spending on defense. In a letter to long-time friend, Swede Hazelett, on April 27, 1949, Eisenhower argued that "since a democracy must always retain a waiting, strategically defensive, attitude it is mandatory that some middle line be determined between desirable strength and unbearable cost."² Thus, Eisenhower established the theme of his national security policy--maximum defense at the most affordable cost-- years before he came to office.

Until the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950, Eisenhower generally supported President Truman's national security policies, including his defense budgets of around

\$15 billion.³ This changed very quickly as the Truman administration implemented NSC 68. The general became particularly critical of the lack of coordination within the defense organization. By November 1950, he doubted Truman's ability to implement an effective national security policy. "Poor HST [Harry S Truman]," Eisenhower lamented, "a fine man who, in the middle of a stormy lake, knows nothing of swimming. Yet a lot of drowning people are forced to look to him as a lifeguard. If his wisdom could only equal his good intent."⁴

Eisenhower won the 1952 presidential election pledging a strong stand against communism and a balanced budget. These twin goals were not just empty campaign promises. At a Republican rally in Baltimore on September 25, 1952, Eisenhower explained the relationship between a balanced budget and a strong defense. "The problem is to build this defense with wisdom and efficiency. We must achieve both security and solvency. In fact, the foundation of military strength is economic strength. A bankrupt nation is more the Soviet goal than an America conquered on the field of battle."⁵

Eisenhower's criticisms of the Truman administration focused on its lack of a coordinated national security policy. Since the NSC was created to serve as the coordinator of policies, Eisenhower directed much of his attention to making this group more effective. His interest in a well-defined policy stemmed from his experience in the army.

Before he made his decisions, he wanted well-defined recommendations. The NSC would serve as the forum for making these recommendations. Robert Cutler, a member of Eisenhower's election team and later his Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, wrote in his memoirs that "Eisenhower sought an integration of views which would be the product of continuous association between skilled representatives of all elements of Governments germane to the national security."⁶

In his first message to Congress on February 2, 1953, Eisenhower expressed the importance of the NSC. "In these days of tension," he argued, "it is essential that this central body [the NSC] have the vitality to perform effectively its statutory role."⁷ One of the first actions taken by Eisenhower as President was to order Cutler to examine the NSC and to make recommendations to improve its functions. For two months, Cutler studied the National Security Council and on March 16 sent his recommendations to the President.

While performing the study of the NSC, Cutler sought the advice of others to discover ways to strengthen the NSC's operations. Paul Nitze sent a ten page memorandum to Cutler recommending specific changes in the NSC. A comparison of Nitze's memorandum and Cutler's final recommendations to the President indicate just how influential Nitze was in changing the NSC. Nitze made the following recommendations:

- 1) the creation of a committee to formulate papers for the

NSC, 2) the presentation of both majority and minority opinions in the committee's reports, and 3) the limitation of statutory membership on the NSC to the original members prescribed in the 1947 National Security Act.⁸ All of these recommendations were included in Cutler's presentation to the President.

Following Nitze's lead, Cutler recommended three major changes in the operations of Truman's NSC. First, the president should attend and serve as chairman of as many NSC meetings as possible. Unlike the Truman administration, Cutler saw the president as an integral part of the NSC. Second, a Planning Board should be created to replace the Senior Staff as the principal body for developing policy papers. Finally, the NSC should develop policy papers which reflected the view of the president's advisors. If they did not agree on a particular problem, Eisenhower wanted to see the different opinions.⁹

The Planning Board came to be the most important of Cutler's innovations. Cutler believed that the role of the Planning Board should be to assist the NSC in formulating policies by identifying possible alternatives, discussing differences, avoiding unnecessary compromises, and drafting recommendations.¹⁰ Simply put, the Planning Board's purpose would be to produce the policy papers that would be discussed in the NSC meetings. The significance of this activity cannot be overemphasized, as these papers laid the

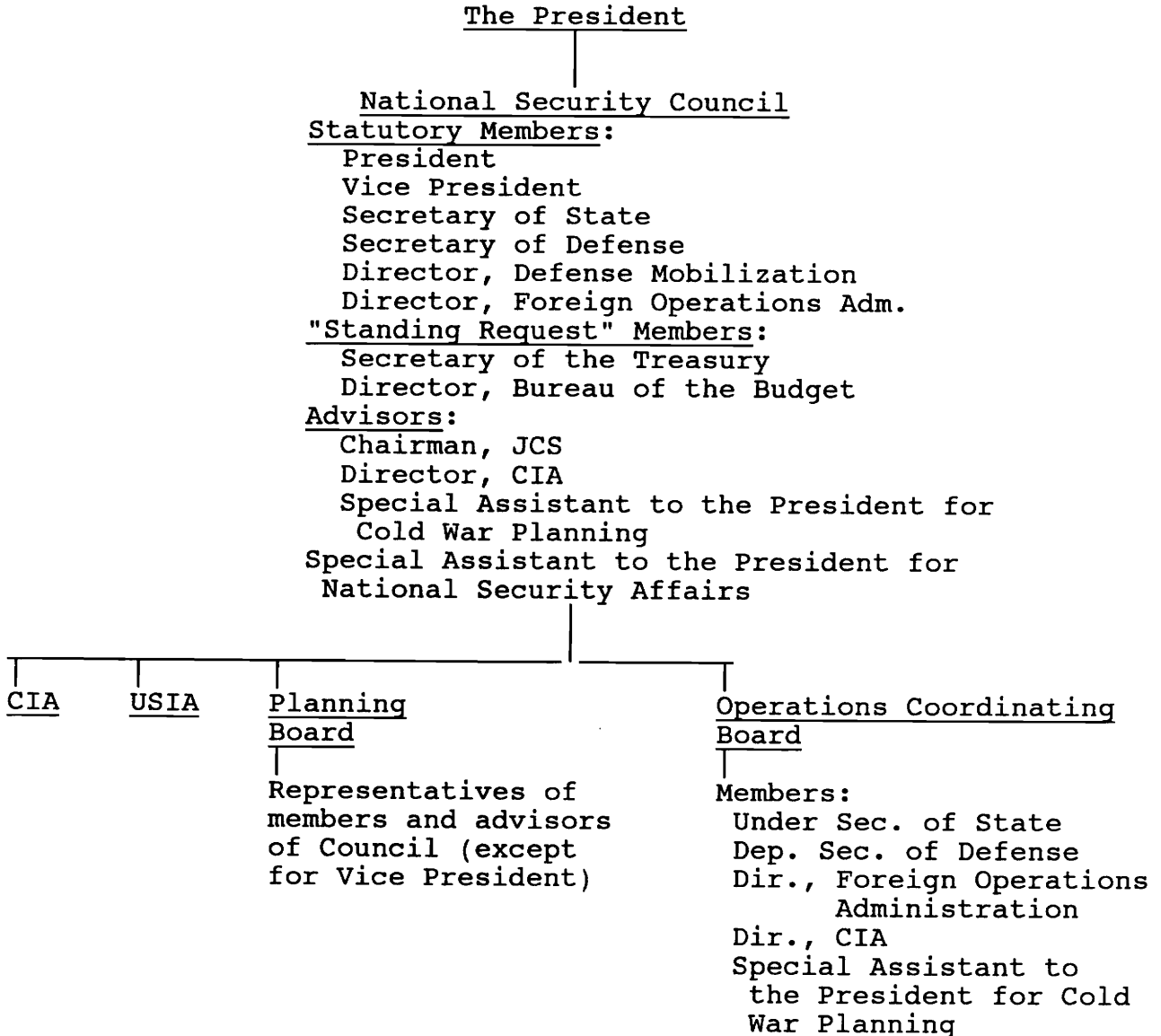
foundation for statements of American national security policy during the Eisenhower administration.

On March 17, Eisenhower approved Cutler's recommendations without alteration.¹¹ A few days later, he disclosed the new NSC to the public in a White House statement (See Chart 2 for the NSC's composition).¹² Throughout the Eisenhower administration, the NSC followed these recommendations. Whether through weekly meetings or policy recommendations, the NSC became the structure Cutler envisioned.

The NSC's principal role in Eisenhower's first year in office was to examine the nation's national security policy and make recommendations to improve it. The policy which Eisenhower inherited called for the build up of military forces to a level that would thwart the Soviet Union in 1954--the supposed year of maximum danger. In a message to Congress on April 30, Eisenhower stated, "We reject the idea that we must build up to a maximum attainable strength for some specific date theoretically fixed a specific time in the future."¹³ Rather, Eisenhower sought a policy based on a long-term struggle with the Soviet Union. After a meeting with his key advisors at the White House solarium in the early spring, he ordered the creation of three task forces--A, B, and C--to study possible national security policy alternatives.¹⁴ The study became known as Project Solarium.

The Truman administration had presented a final NSC paper, NSC 141, to the Eisenhower administration as a sum-

CHART 2

COMPOSITION AND STRUCTURE OF PRESIDENT
EISENHOWER'S NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

mary of United States national security policy. Eisenhower's NSC recommended that the document "be used to provoke discussions from which the Council may evolve changes to current policies and programs for their implementation."¹⁵ To develop the guidelines for the study, the NSC created the Directing Panel of Project Solarium.¹⁶ The Panel ordered Task Force A to assume the position advocated by NSC 141--the continuation of Truman's containment policies--and to recommend a national security policy based on that alternative. The Panel assigned Task Force B the task of creating a national security policy based on explicitly stating the areas which the United States would automatically defend against a Soviet attack. The Panel ordered Task Force C to develop a policy based on "rolling back" communism.¹⁷

The Directing Panel, with Eisenhower's approval, selected seven members for each task force (See Appendix D for the members.)¹⁸ The members were brought to the National War College (outside Washington, D.C.) for a six week study of their respective alternatives. The details of Project Solarium were of the highest confidentiality. George Kennan, the chairman of Task Force A, stated years later that "It was all highly secret--you have no idea how well this was protected; nobody knew [about Project Solarium] the whole summer despite the fact that fifty to a hundred people were involved in it."¹⁹

The Directing Panel ordered each task force to make recommendations based on three possible courses of Soviet action:

- 1) The Soviets may seek a military decision with the West at any time, based either on a determination to resort to war as an instrument of policy or upon a miscalculation as to free world intentions.
- 2) The Soviets may maintain, at some risk of general war, aggressive pressure, continuously or interspersed with active phases of "Peace Offensives", to extend their control and weaken the free world coalition.
- 3) The Soviets may accept a defensive posture in order to consolidate the present position of the Soviet bloc and to avoid a risk of general war, relying upon and encouraging the divisive forces within the free world.²⁰

With these instructions, each task force began their study in early June. Kennan described, in his memoirs, how "Day after day, in the heat of midsummer, we slaved away in the basement floor of the National War College."²¹

On June 26 the three task forces made preliminary presentations to the NSC. The purposes of these reports were to familiarize the Council with the general arguments which would be made by each task force and to let each task force know what the others were doing. As could be expected, the recommendations followed the basic arguments assigned to each task force. However, a common theme did develop between them. The theme, best stated in Task Force A's report, was that "On the question of the relation of our defense effort to domestic economic problems, the position will be stressed that the U.S. economy can stand for a con-

siderable length of time a higher level of defense expenditures than the currently operative ones."22

On July 16 the task forces presented their full reports at the 155th meeting of the NSC. Cutler allotted each task force two hours to present their arguments. At the end of the last presentation, the members of the NSC were allowed to ask questions, make recommendations, and obtain more information. The NSC used the reports to develop a revised national security policy.

Under the direction of George Kennan, Task Force A recommended a continuation of the policies advocated by the Truman administration. It viewed the principal goal of United States national security policy as the "the repair and cultivation of our own relations with the governments of the non-communist world generally and the promotion of an atmosphere of confidence and purposefulness and hope throughout the area."23 It believed that if the non-communist countries felt comfortable in a democratic world, they would resist Soviet expansion. The means to obtain a more confident non-communist world were developing a stronger and more flexible United States military and rallying the free people of the world around the cause of democracy.

Task Force A criticized the rapid demobilization of American forces after World War II and warned that a similar policy in 1953 would provide "the most likely invitation to aggression."24 It therefore advocated a policy of maintain-

ing military forces at the level needed to fight the Soviet Union in a general war. It cautioned, however, that the United States "should not press the enemy too hard against a closed door unless we are prepared for and willing to accept the possible consequences."²⁵ Flexibility was Task Force A's military strategy. The United States needed the capability to meet any Soviet aggressive move with an appropriate response.

The second objective of Task Force A was to rally both Americans and non-Americans to the strategy of containing the Soviet Union. The task force believed that the public had to understand what was being done to deter the Soviet threat. It placed considerable importance on regaining European support for the United States. Although the authors believed that Americans would support a new strategy, there was doubt that Europe would. "A strong, vitalized and cohesive free Europe, orientated towards the same general objectives of the United States," the task force stated, "would be most important, if not decisive, factor in the successful resolution of the Soviet threat."²⁶ The United States needed worldwide support to overcome communism.

The last issue addressed by Task Force A concerned a topic of special interest to Eisenhower. He asked each task force to predict the probable costs of their policy recommendations. Task Force A developed elaborate charts which

indicated defense spending of \$43-44 billion for each of the first two years (1954 and 1955) and then a gradual decline in cost to approximately \$35 billion per year. The task force recommended a defense tax to offset costs if necessary, but believed that the United States economy was capable of meeting the extra burden of defense spending. In a final analysis it argued that "The United States can afford to survive."²⁷

The Directing Panel assigned Task Force B the alternative of drawing a line beyond which any attack by the Soviet Union would precipitate a general war with the United States. It defined a general war as "a war in which the U.S. ... would apply its full power--whenever, however, and wherever necessary to defeat the main enemy."²⁸ It established this line around the countries outside the existing Soviet bloc. It argued that explicitly stating the policy would allow for the most coordinated and economically sound policy.²⁹

Task Force B argued that the United States must expand its military forces, especially in the area of strategic weapons. "Our policy will bring into focus the central fact that U.S. strategic power is the ultimate military deterrent to Soviet aggression," it concluded.³⁰ It also asserted that Truman's policy of containment deprived the United States of the initiative in its security programs. By relying on the nuclear deterrent, the United States would be able to deter

the Soviet Union at a bearable cost.

In addressing the costs of Alternative B, the task force assumed a position similar to Task Force A. It assumed that, regardless of the cost, the United States had to address the Soviet threat. "Whatever the evils of inflation, whatever the economic problems involved in efforts to control it," the task force argued, "these cannot be weighed in the same scales with the grave danger to our national survival."³¹ The risk it portrayed was the risk of nuclear destruction. It summarized its position by asserting that "Alternative B is in effect an announcement that the United States and the Free World will accept the risk of annihilation before they accept Soviet domination."³²

The Directing Panel ordered Task Force C to develop a national security policy based on the alternative of "rolling-back" communism. This alternative proposed using every means available, except military force, to undermine communist controlled countries. Task Force C stated its broad objectives as "ending Soviet domination outside its traditional boundaries, destroying the communist apparatus in the Free World, curtailing Soviet power for an aggressive war, ending the Iron Curtain, and cutting down the strength of any Bolshevik elements left in Soviet Russia."³³ It believed that the only way to achieve these goals was to take the foreign policy initiative away from the Soviet Union.

Alternative C required the United States to assume a much more aggressive policy. Assuming that the United States had forfeited the initiative by only reacting to Soviet actions, it argued that the way to regain the initiative was "by waging a political offensive." Stated more explicitly the task force asserted that "we must proceed to bring about the political subversion and liquidation of the conspiracy against us."³⁴ Gaining the initiative was the key. The country which maintained the initiative would be able to determine the direction of the Cold War and therefore would be winning that war.

To regain the initiative, Task Force C proposed two strategies--subverting communism and a military build-up. Subversion was the policy of action, the military build-up was the insurance if subversion failed. Task Force C recommended that

In carrying out this policy [of subversion], we recommend that this Government aggressively, both overtly and covertly, attack the Communist apparatus wherever it be found in the world ... What we seek to do is to harass and hound every conceivable Communist activity using all available political, legal, financial and economic devices in our possession.³⁵

The task force realized that this policy embodied a greater risk of war but argued that the only way to win the Cold War was to be aggressive. Building a strong and effective military would protect the nation, if the policy failed.

Task Force C's evaluation of the cost of their policy presented a greater initial cost than either alternatives A

or B but a smaller cost in the long term because the Cold War would have ended in victory. It expected a cost of \$60 billion for each of the first two years (1954 and 1955) and \$45 billion each year thereafter until the United States won the Cold War.³⁶ It argued that the cost was worth the benefits of victory. By assuming this policy, the possibility of ending the Cold War and being on the winning side were real.

Each task force presented its proposed policy before one of the largest NSC meetings ever (at least 60 people were present). After the presentations, questions were asked concerning the specifics of each policy. George Kennan recalled with some amusement and admiration the activities of that day. "I derived," he stated,

a certain amount of amusement from it, because I had to present our whole task force's report personally, and Foster Dulles sat at my feet and was thus instructed on what the policy ought to be toward the Soviet Union. Since it was only three months since he had fired me ... this gave me a certain satisfaction ... I could talk, and he had to listen.

He later remembered being impressed by Eisenhower's understanding of the arguments of each task force. He stated that

The President ... spoke ... with a mastery of the subject matter and a thoughtfulness and a penetration that were quite remarkable. I came away from it with the conviction ... that President Eisenhower was a more intelligent man than he was given credit for being.³⁷

After the meeting the task force reports were sent to the Planning Board to form the basis of a new NSC policy paper.

The Planning Board established an ad-hoc committee composed of representatives of each of the statutory members of the NSC. For three weeks the committee studied the three task force reports. Robert Bowie, the Director of the Policy Planning Staff and the State Department representative on the Planning Board, stated that "the planning board worked on this ... and attempted to build on what had been in the task force reports, particularly Task Force A which was pretty much recognized as the principal basis on which the president had come down."³⁸ The Planning Board presented the draft statement to the NSC on September 30. It was issued as NSC 162.

The NSC 162 series of policy papers evolved through three broad stages: NSC 162, 162/1, and 162/2. As already mentioned, the Planning Board and its ad-hoc committee analyzed the task force reports and developed a policy statement, which was distributed to the various members of the NSC a week prior to the meeting in which it would be discussed. Any differences in the Planning Board paper were noted as "splits".³⁹ At the 165th Meeting of the NSC on October 7, the NSC debated the proposed policy statement vigorously. An analysis of the memoranda of NSC discussions reveals that the debate focused on whether economic solvency or national security should be the focus of the study, the actual cost of security, and whether atomic weapons would be used in a war.

The NSC was divided between those who believed that economic considerations should share equal weight with national security and those who wanted to place national security above economic concerns. Secretary of Treasury George Humphrey and Director of the Bureau of Budget Joseph Dodge believed that there should be equal emphasis on economic solvency and national security. Budget Director Dodge argued that "the threat to the economy was part and parcel of the Soviet threat." Secretary of Defense Charles Wilson, who wanted a much greater emphasis on national security, stated explicitly that "he could not agree with Mr. Dodge's position."⁴⁰ The debate became so heated that Secretary Humphrey supposedly exclaimed, "The military ought to be so damned dollar conscious that it hurts."⁴¹ The President solved the dilemma by moving a paragraph in the middle of the report which stressed both concepts to the opening statement.⁴²

The debate over defense spending focused on how to meet the costs of national security. Secretary Humphrey and Budget Director Dodge argued that a balanced budget was almost as important as a strong military. Secretary of State Dulles, representing the NSC members other than Humphrey and Dodge, argued that a balanced budget was an ideal goal but that it should not be reached at the cost of national security. He believed that the position of the Treasury Department and the Bureau of Budget "would be

interpreted as an absolute commitment to balance the budget and ... felt such a commitment at this time to be very dangerous."⁴³ The debate ended when Secretary Humphrey agreed to place a greater emphasis on national security, with the understanding that a balanced budget was still the ultimate goal.

At the 166th meeting of the NSC on October 13, the Council members debated whether the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of Defense should make military plans based on the assumption that atomic weapons would be used in a time of conflict. Admiral Radford argued that "unless we could use these weapons in a blanket way, no possibility existed of significantly changing the present composition of our armed forces."⁴⁴ Although their position seemed to be supported at the meeting, the NSC made no firm statement on this issue.⁴⁵ The NSC returned NSC 162 to the Planning Board with its recommendations and ordered the Board to develop a revised national security policy.

On October 29, the Planning Board submitted a revised national security policy paper, NSC 162/1, to the NSC for discussion. The revisions consisted of alterations recommended at the earlier NSC meetings. The changes made at the next NSC meeting dealt almost strictly with semantics.⁴⁶ The focus of discussion was on whether atomic weapons would be the central basis of the United States defense strategy. The military representatives wanted the emphasis of the

strategy to be on a variety of deterrents, not just atomic weapons. The other members of the NSC asserted that the policy paper already stated this position and that there was no need for a change in wording. Eisenhower ended the debate by concluding that "we should state what we propose to do, namely, to keep the minimum respectable posture of defense while emphasizing [the United States' atomic] offensive capability."⁴⁷

NSC 162/2 established the basic goal of the United States as meeting the Soviet threat, while avoiding economic ruin.⁴⁸ Although a clear emphasis was placed on Task Force A, the new policy paper incorporated recommendations from each of the Solarium task forces. The policy paper did not accept the Solarium studies without some modification. The modifications were the result of the NSC discussions. NSC 162/2 viewed the world as a struggle between East and West just as the Solarium studies, but it placed a much greater influence on economic solvency than had any of the task forces.

To achieve its national security goals, NSC 162/2 established three requirements:

a. Development and maintenance of:

- 1) A strong military posture with emphasis on the capability of inflicting massive retaliatory damage by offensive striking power;
- 2) U.S. and allied forces in readiness to move rapidly initially to counter aggression by Soviet bloc forces and to hold vital areas and lines of communication; and

3) A mobilization base, and its protection against crippling damage, adequate to insure victory in a general war.

b. Maintenance of a sound, strong and growing economy.

c. Maintenance of morale and free institutions and the willingness of the U.S. people to support the measures necessary for national security.⁴⁹

These requirements embodied most of Task Force A's recommendations. The difference comes in placing equal emphasis on military strength and economic solvency.

The NSC adopted the principle, recommended by each task force, that both tactical and strategic atomic weapons would be used in a time of war.⁵⁰ Although each task force offered differing views as to the degree of dependence on atomic weapons, they all recommended a greater reliance on them in case of a military conflict. Accepting this premise, NSC 162/2 argued that "The major deterrent to aggression against Western Europe is the manifest determination of the United States to use its atomic capability and massive retaliatory striking power if the area is attacked."⁵¹ It stated further that "In the event of hostilities, the United States will consider nuclear weapons to be as available for use as other munitions."⁵²

Although NSC 162/2 stressed that the effectiveness of atomic deterrence was limited, it argued that if the Soviet Union was clearly told that there were certain actions which would automatically result in a United States retaliatory

strike, then it would work. This concept of declaring specific responses to Soviet action is reminiscent of Task Force B's "drawing the line".⁵³ The idea in NSC 162/2 was not to define an entire policy around this concept but to clarify the United States' position. If the United States explicitly stated its position regarding Soviet aggressive moves, it would allow the military to develop plans without restrictions.

In addressing the policy of "rolling-back" communism, NSC 162/2 concluded that there was little likelihood of detaching a country from the Soviet bloc. However, it did recommend that the United States "Take overt and covert measures to discredit Soviet prestige and ideology as effective instruments of Soviet power."⁵⁴ NSC 162/2 accepted Task Force C's premise that communism could be overcome in countries not firmly in the Soviet bloc. The idea was to undermine the governments of countries which had communist leanings, but at the same time, were not directly tied to the Soviet Union.

NSC 162/2 represented the Eisenhower administration's definition of a New Look foreign policy. It placed a greater emphasis on atomic weapons, authorized the use of both overt and covert operations to achieve its goals, and recognized the importance of economic solvency. The paper also stressed the importance of the rest of the world to United States security. The United States was part of the

world community, and the loss of one country to communism could undermine the entire free world. The policy paper stated that "The assumption by the United States, as the leader of the free world, of a substantial degree of responsibility for the freedom and security of the free nations is a direct and essential contribution to the maintenance of its own freedom and security."⁵⁵ These basic principles guided the Eisenhower presidency for the remainder of its years in office.

Although the importance of NSC 162/2 is obvious, the importance of the NSC still remains unclear. Was the NSC's role essential to the development of the new policy? Did the NSC devise the premises of the policy or did it just bring together and coordinate already existing strategies? If the NSC did not think of the strategies, what group or individuals did? According to recent historiography, Eisenhower was in complete charge of his administration, and his decisions were the nation's decisions. Were the reports of Project Solarium and NSC 162/2 the ideas of Eisenhower or others? Although answers to these questions are not entirely clear; an examination of Eisenhower's NSC offers some possible explanations.

The emphasis on economic solvency almost certainly reflected Eisenhower's views. Between World War II and his election, Eisenhower referred on numerous occasions to the need to balance military spending with economic costs. Typ-

ical of his statements is one he made in his diary in October 1952: "we can have security without paying the price of national bankruptcy, if we will put brains in the balance."⁵⁶ He campaigned on this promise and selected his advisors to meet it.

However, on other arguments in the New Look his influence is not so obvious. Throughout his first year in office he made comments like "Communist guns have been aiming at an economic target no less than a military target."⁵⁷ Yet he rarely discussed particular strategies. An examination of his public papers, memoranda of NSC meetings, letters, and diary fail to reveal a predetermined national security policy. Broad ideas for what a policy should emphasize might have originated with Eisenhower, but most of the policy came from elsewhere.⁵⁸

Four groups appear to have influenced the formation of the New Look foreign policy: the military (both the Defense Department and the Joint Chiefs of Staff), the State Department, the Treasury Department (including the Bureau of the Budget), and Congress. Each group, except Congress, held key roles on the NSC, was represented by individuals Eisenhower personally selected, and would be affected by any policy change. The groups, not surprisingly, represented their specific interests, ie. defense wants a stronger military, the treasury wants fiscal austerity.

The two most important people or groups representing

the military were the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS). Eisenhower selected Charles Wilson as his first Secretary of Defense because of Wilson's prowess as chief executive at General Motors. Wilson's biographer, E. Bruce Geelhoed, argues that Eisenhower specifically selected Wilson to implement the policies that were developed elsewhere. "Because Eisenhower and Humphrey had taken the lead on developing policy," Geelhoed asserts, "Wilson became a spokesman and a management specialist for the administration on the specific issue of national defense."⁵⁹

Secretary Wilson's participation in the NSC discussions concerning NSC 162/2 supports Geelhoed's argument. Wilson argued that "What [the government is] trying to do is to ascertain and reach a reasonable posture of defense over a long period. If we can do this within a balanced budget, fine. If not, we will simply have to postpone balancing the budget." His argument met staunch resistance.⁶⁰ Secretary of Treasury Humphrey argued that a balanced budget could be achieved without sacrificing national defense. The President questioned how continued high spending on defense would affect American democracy. "We could lick the whole world," he argued, "if we were willing to adopt the system of Adolph Hitler."⁶¹

The Joint Chiefs of Staff played a much greater role in the planning of the New Look, but in reality, probably had no greater influence than Secretary Wilson. The reasons

were two-fold. First, Eisenhower replaced the entire JCS in August when the terms of the old JCS members expired.⁶² Second, the military wanted to increase defense spending, not cut it. In March, Eisenhower ordered the JCS to develop a tentative plan for defense spending for FY 1954 and 1955. The program which became known as the interim look called for annual defense spending of approximately \$45 billion. The NSC rejected the programs as too expensive and directed the Defense Department to make another review.⁶³ According to the a memorandum of a March 1953 NSC meeting, "When the Chiefs of Staff had finished their oral presentation [concerning the consequences of reductions in the mutual security programs], the President observed that perhaps the Council should have a report as to whether national bankruptcy or national destruction would get us first."⁶⁴ [Emphasis added]

Eisenhower gradually filled the positions on his JCS during May and almost immediately ordered his new appointees to recommend a new military strategy.⁶⁵ Because of budget constraints (a limit of \$40 billion), the new JCS recommended the redeployment of troops, currently abroad, back to the United States to strengthen continental defense. Neither General Matthew Ridgeway nor Admiral Robert Carney completely supported the JCS plan, but they went along with it as the best plan under the restraints of the economy.⁶⁶ The NSC tentatively accepted the plan until it completed the new

national security policy paper.

In the creation of the NSC 162 series of papers, therefore, the JCS's role was a limited one. Admiral Arthur Radford's emphasis on atomic weapons provided the most lasting influence. Even concerning the question of relying on atomic weapons, the JCS lacked a consensus. General Ridgeway, in a speech only a week after the adoption of NSC 162/2, questioned the reliance on nuclear weapons. He argued that

notwithstanding new weapons with immensely increased destructive power, notwithstanding the developments in transportation which have brought all points on the earth's surface within a few hours of each other, the ultimate determinant of military victory still is the trained fighting man with his feet on the ground.⁶⁷

Secretary of State John Foster Dulles played an active role in formulating the New Look foreign policy. His concern, of course, was how changes in United States foreign policy would affect United States relations with other countries. He was particularly concerned about how the United States' European allies would respond. Dulles considered two issues--the use of atomic weapons and the redeployment of troops from Europe to the United States--to be potentially volatile. He argued that "unless this redeployment were handled with greatest delicacy and under the cover of another and larger operation, the redeployment could bring about the complete collapse of our coalition in Europe."⁶⁹

Dulles wanted the new security policy to reflect the

importance of collective security to the United States. The redeployment of American troops stationed in Europe would have undermined the very essence of the security program he advocated. Fortunately for Secretary Dulles, the President agreed. "We must not lose sight of the political and moral problems which would be involved in any abrupt change and redeployment of our forces," Eisenhower argued.⁶⁹ Dulles' influence is clearly seen in NSC 162/2 conclusion that the security of the free world was directly related to the security of the United States.

Of all cabinet officials Secretary George Humphrey and Budget Director Robert Dodge played the most fundamental roles in formulating the New Look. Both Secretary Humphrey and Budget Director Dodge advocated a national security policy which reflected fiscal responsibility. Secretary Humphrey, echoing Budget Director Dodge's views, delivered a speech in Philadelphia on October 30 which emphasized balancing defense spending with budgetary restraints. "What must be sought is this," he argued,

The finding of the ideal middle way between extremes which--on the one side--would stupidly cheat our defenses to save money, and--on the other side--would amass weapons and strength with an abandon that would wreck our economy--and hence our nation--

Throughout the preparation of the budget during 1953, Budget Director Dodge played an instrumental role in developing the ceilings for defense spending. On March 4, Dodge and his assistants proposed defense budget of \$41.2 billion

and \$34.6 billion for FY 1954 and 1955 respectively.⁷¹ These goals became the guidelines for formulating policy. Eisenhower accepted these goals as reasonable for achieving an effective military while at the same time balancing the budget.

Although Budget Director Dodge played an important role in developing the budget figures, it was Secretary Humphrey who represented the fiscal standpoint at the NSC meetings. Throughout the discussions concerning NSC 162 he continuously argued that "Treasury and Budget were indeed seeking a suitable posture of defense that would square with what the country could afford to pay for."⁷² Humphrey's arguments served as a balance for the Defense Departments call for increased spending. This balance formed the basis of Eisenhower's decisions on the New Look.

Eisenhower did not support Humphrey's arguments without question. Secretary Humphrey proposed a more immediate withdrawal of American troops currently stationed in Europe. Eisenhower immediately questioned the possible savings originating from the troop withdrawal at the expense of the political and military problems it would cause. "The presence of our troops there," he argued, "is the greatest single morale factor in Europe. You cannot therefore make a radical change so quickly."⁷³ However, he did not question Humphrey's emphasis on fiscal responsibility. He concluded that "the Joint Chiefs could start right now on computing

force levels on a genuine austerity basis."74

Secretary Humphrey's and Budget Director Dodge's arguments were not accepted without qualification, but their influence is clear. Their fiscal ideas certainly reflected Eisenhower's own beliefs, therefore, they carried extra weight in the NSC discussions. The equal emphasis given fiscal policy and national security in NSC 162/2 is a reflection of Secretary Humphrey's persistence in the NSC discussions.⁷⁵ The influence of the Treasury Department and Bureau of Budget on Eisenhower's New Look foreign policy marks a unique feature of the NSC.

Article 1, section 8 of the United States Constitution states that "the Congress shall have the power to raise and support armies ... to provide and maintain a navy, and to make rules for the government and regulation of the land and naval forces." Despite these explicit powers, Congress played a relatively minor role in the formulation of the New Look. In the areas of foreign policy and national security, over 63% of both Republican and Democratic senators supported most of Eisenhower's policies. A further 13% of each party supported over half of Eisenhower's policies. The percentages for the House of Representatives were similar.⁷⁶

A review of the hearings before the House and the Senate confirm a general lack of debate concerning the proposed new security policies. An excerpt from hearings before the Senate Committee of Appropriations reveals the strong Con-

gressional support for the New Look.

Admiral Radford: In view of certain misunderstandings, I would like to take just a moment here to assure you that: Our planning does not subscribe to the thinking that the ability to deliver massive atomic retaliation is, by itself, adequate to meet all of our security needs ... We are fully agreed that we must have strong, mobile, combat-ready units capable of being projected wherever required.

Senator Ferguson: Admiral, I want to say at this time that I think you have presented to the American people this morning in a very clear way what the military of this country, what the Defense Department and the President have in mind ... People feel that if we are only going to have hydrogen bombs--this question has been presented, how are you going to put out brush fires with hydrogen bombs. I think you clearly show that you are planning for all kinds of wars, economic wars, propaganda wars, large or small wars ... that America and the free world may be safe.

Senator Maybank: I want to add my appreciation to the admiral's clearcut statement.

Senator Hendrickson: Mr. Chairman, I, too, want to commend the admiral ... Admiral, this is a very remarkable statement.⁷⁷

As can be seen from this excerpt, Congress, at least at the committee level, did little more than listen and commend. Although there were points of contention, in particular the reduction of the number of Air Force wings, the proposed New Look budget passed with only minimal debate.

No department or individual dominated the formulation of the New Look. Eisenhower definitely established the broad guidelines--United States security would be better prepared than under Truman, but at a lower cost. Beyond this theme, however, Eisenhower showed a willingness to take into account the recommendations of his advisors before making his decisions. In formulating the limits of defense

spending, Eisenhower relied most heavily on the advice of Secretary Humphrey and Budget Director Dodge. He listened to other advisors, most importantly John Foster Dulles, but he always balanced their views with the need for economy. Eisenhower was the key player on his team, but then again, he was only one player among many.

The Eisenhower administration developed its national security program based on one criterion: the highest possible degree of military preparedness consonant with what the nation could afford. Eisenhower announced plans to make the NSC his central national security policy formulating body and ordered Robert Cutler to recommend changes in the NSC to best serve this function. The NSC became a much more influential body under Eisenhower than under Truman. It met more frequently, it was chaired by Eisenhower himself, and it coordinated policy rather than simply approving it. The NSC pulled together differing views and, as historian Anna Kasten Nelson states, "contributed long-range planning and brought into discussion those representatives of the executive departments and agencies whose understanding and support were essential for the formulation of coherent policy."⁷⁸

Cutler's recommendations included the proposal to rename and transform the NSC Senior Staff. With its new name, the Planning Board became a more effective policy formulating body. Along with the Planning Board, Cutler recom-

mended the appointment of a Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs. Cutler, by the direction of the President, assumed the new position and chaired the Planning Board. In this new role, Cutler directed discussion and helped create policy papers for the NSC. Unlike the Senior Staff under Truman, the Planning Board was not dominated by the State Department (Kennan and later Nitze), and therefore, it could make more effective recommendations to the NSC.

The NSC's involvement in the creation of the New Look lasted six months and evolved through various stages. The development of NSC 162/2 clearly indicates the growing importance of the NSC. The creation of this one document involved consultation with ad-hoc committees, studies by various government departments, revision after revision by the Planning Board, and several discussions at the NSC meetings. The NSC served as the forum where President Eisenhower could hear the pros and cons of various arguments and make his final decisions.

Footnotes: Chapter 2

¹The Eisenhower Diaries, ed. Robert Ferrell (New York: Norton, 1981), 143.

²Ike's Letters to a Friend 1941-1958, ed. Robert W. Griffith (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1984), 54.

³Diaries, 157.

⁴Ibid., 181.

⁵"Text of Eisenhower Address on 'Famine or Feast' Defense Policy," New York Times September 26, 1952, 12.

⁶Robert C. Cutler, No Time for Rest (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1965/66), 296.

⁷Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953 [hereafter EPP, 1953](GPO, 1960), 18.

⁸"Letter from Paul Nitze to Robert Cutler," Record Group 59, Box 11, National Archives, Washington, D.C., 1-10.

⁹"Report by the Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs," FRUS 1952-1954 2:1 (GPO, 1984), 245-257.

¹⁰Ibid., 252.

¹¹"The President to the Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs," FRUS 1952-1954 2:1 (GPO, 1984), 257.

¹²EPP, 1953, 120-21. See also George A. Wyeth, Jr., "The National Security Council," Journal of International Affairs 8:2, 191.

¹³EPP, 1953, 242.

¹⁴William B. Pickett, "The Eisenhower Solarium Notes," Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations Newsletter 16 (June 1985), 2-3 .

15"Minutes of the 131st Meeting of the National Security Council," Record Group 273, File 131st Meeting, National Archives, Washington D.C.

16The members of the Directing Panel were General James H. Doolittle (chairman), Robert Amory, Jr., Lt. General L.L. Lemnitzer, Dean Rusk, and Admiral Leslie C. Stevens. "Memorandum for the Record by the Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs," FRUS 1952-1954 2:1 (GPO, 1984), 327.

17Ibid., 325-26.

18A working committee composed of Walter Bendall Smith, Allen Dulles, and Robert Cutler probably selected the members of the task forces with the President's approval. The evidence is not conclusive, however. "Memorandum by the President to the Secretary of State," FRUS 1952-1954 2:1 (GPO, 1984), 349-50. "Minutes of the 155th Meeting of the National Security Council," FRUS 1952-1954 2:1 (GPO, 1984), 395-96.

19"Project Solarium," Princeton University: John Foster Dulles Centennial Conference, February 27, 1988, 3.

20"Paper Prepared by the Directing Panel of Project Solarium," FRUS 1952-1954 2:1 (GPO, 1984), 361.

21George F. Kennan, Memoirs, Vol. 2, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1972), 182.

22"Notes Taken at the First Plenary Session of Project Solarium," FRUS 1952-1954 2:1 (GPO, 1984), 389.

23"A Report to the National Security Council by Task Force 'A' of Project Solarium," Record Group 273, File 157th Meeting, National Archives, Washington, D.C., 13.

24Ibid., 22.

25Ibid., 20.

26Ibid., 83.

27Ibid., I-1, 46, and 56.

28"A Report to the National Security Council by Task Force 'B' of Project Solarium," Record Group 273, File 157th Meeting, National Archives, Washington, D.C., 2.

29Ibid., 7 and 18.

30Ibid., 13.

31Ibid., 20.

32Ibid., I-4.

33"A Report to the National Security Council by Task Force 'C' of Project Solarium," Record Group 273, File 157th Meeting, National Archives, Washington, D.C., 16.

34Ibid., 9.

35Ibid., 22.

36Ibid., 62.

37"Project Solarium," Dulles Centennial, 5-7.

38Ibid., 22.

39When a split occurred, the Planning Board presented both opinions so that the NSC could compare them closely.

40"Memorandum of Discussion at the 165th Meeting of the National Security Council," FRUS 1952-1954 2:1 (GPO, 1984), 516.

41Ibid., 521.

42Ibid., 522.

43Ibid., 524.

44"Memorandum of Discussion at the 166th Meeting of the National Security Council," FRUS 1952-1954 2:1 (GPO, 1984), 547.

45Ibid., 535-49.

46"Memorandum of Discussion at the 168th Meeting of the National Security Council," FRUS 1952-1954 2:1 (GPO, 1984), 575-76.

47Ibid., 573.

48"Statement of Policy by the National Security Council," FRUS 1952-1954 2:1 (GPO, 1984), 578.

49Ibid., 582.

50War, as defined here, meant a general conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. Conflict in

peripheral areas of the world, ie. Korea, were classified differently.

51"Statement of Policy by the National Security Council," FRUS 1952-1954, 585.

52Ibid., 593.

53Ibid., 581.

54Ibid., 595.

55Ibid., 584.

56Ferrell, Diaries, 202.

57EPP, 1953, 307.

58See also Robert J. Watson, History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Vol. 5, (GPO, 1986), 4. He argues that "There was no trace in [Eisenhower's] speeches of what was later to emerge as one of the key elements [of the New Look]: a greater reliance upon atomic weapons, with their enormous firepower, to make possible a reduction in conventional forces and a corresponding cut in costs."

59E. Bruce Geelhoed, Charles E. Wilson (Detroit: Wayne University Press, 1979), 19.

60"165th Meeting," 520.

61Ibid., 519.

62Watson, JCS, 14-15.

63Watson, JCS, 66.

64"Memorandum of Discussion at the 138th Meeting of the National Security Council," FRUS 1952-1954 2:1 (GPO, 1984), 260.

65Although Eisenhower appointed his new JCS members in May, they were not officially sworn into those positions until August. In the intervening three months, the new JCS members carried out the study.

66Watson, JCS, 16-21.

67"Ridgeway's Address," Army-Navy-Air Force Journal 91:11 (1953), 310. See also Watson, JCS, 36. He concludes that "the evidence indicated that [the JCS's] role was secondary."

68"165th Meeting," 526-27 and 533. See also "Memorandum by the Secretary of State to the President," FRUS 1952-1954 2:1 (GPO, 1984), 550.

69"168th Meeting," 571.

70George H. Humphrey, "The 'middle way'," in The Basic Papers of George H. Humphrey, ed. Nathaniel R. Howard (Cleveland, Ohio: Western Reserve Historical Society, 1965), 137.

71Watson, JCS, 6.

72"165th Meeting," 518.

73"166th Meeting," 548.

74Ibid., 549

75"Statement of Policy by the National Security Council," FRUS 1952-1954, 578.

76Gary W. Reichard, The Reaffirmation of Republicanism (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1975), 189. See also Ibid., vii.

77U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Appropriations, Department of Defense Appropriations for 1955: Hearings Before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, 83rd Cong., 2nd sess., 89-91. See also U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Appropriations, Department of Defense Appropriations for 1955: Hearings Before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, 83rd Cong., 2nd sess., 4-5, 62-62, and 82; Edward A. Kolodziej, The Uncommon Defense and Congress, 1945-1963 (Ohio State University Press, 1966), 252; and Walter Millis, Arms and the State (New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1958), 398 .

78Anna Kasten Nelsen, "The 'Top of the Hill': President Eisenhower and the National Security Council," Diplomatic History (Fall, 1983): 324.

Chapter 3:

The National Security Council and the Implementation of President Eisenhower's New Look Foreign Policy

The New Look was both a doctrine--that is, a set of ideas and concepts concerning the mobilization, deployment, and use of force as an instrument of deterrence and defense, and the striking of a balance between the competing demands of national security and economic welfare--and a set of actual changes and planned changes in the military establishment.¹

Political Scientist Glenn Snyder aptly assesses the true meaning of the national security strategy established by the Eisenhower administration in NSC 162/2. The New Look represented a distinctive approach for pursuing United States national security. The Eisenhower administration had decided to implement a strategy which emphasized both strategic and tactical nuclear weapons. Questions arose, however, over whether this strategy was militarily sound, over how to implement the strategy, and over who would implement it. As with the development of NSC 162/2, the National Security Council played an instrumental role in answering these questions.

The role of developing and implementing the military strategy of the New Look fell to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In an October 1953 policy directive to Admiral Radford, the chairman of the JCS, Secretary of Defense Wilson ordered the

development of a military strategy based on the guidelines of NSC 162/2 and a manpower limit of between 2.5 million and 3.0 million men. The JCS appointed an ad-hoc committee, the Everest Committee, to design the new strategy. The strategy they devised reflected budgetary and manpower restrictions which no one in the military completely supported.²

The final report of the Everest Committee, adopted by the JCS as JCS 2101/113, tentatively supported the recommendations of NSC 162/2. "The strategy and other estimates in these papers," it argued, "reflect our agreed recommendations under the assumption that present international tensions and threats remain approximately the same."³ The emphasis was on unchanging conditions. The JCS did not want to become locked into a strategy which would limit their options in a time of crisis. They considered JCS 2101/113 the best strategy considering the limited resources.

JCS 2101/113 established two basic requirements for implementing its new strategy. First, it required a "provision of tactical atomic support for U.S. or allied military forces in general war or in a local aggression whenever the employment of atomic weapons would be militarily advantageous."⁴ Second, it proposed the creation of a mobile reserve in the United States.⁵ Although not accounting for all possible crises, this strategy represented the best plan under the circumstances. The use of nuclear weapons, both tactical and strategic, served as a deterrent to aggression.

The development of a mobile reserve placed the military in the position to respond most effectively to flare-ups in the world.

The Everest Committee developed the new strategy based on reaching its manpower goals by FY 1957. The committee planned on reducing manpower from approximately 3.5 million to 2.8 million troops.⁶ Most of the reduction, about a half million men, would come from the army. The remaining 200,000 men would be reduced from the other three services (see Appendix E for the breakdown of personnel strengths from 1953 to 1957).⁷ The NSC did not question how the JCS allotted its manpower as long as the allotments met the basic requirements of NSC 162/2. JCS 2101/113 established the military goals of the New Look at least until 1957.

The reduction in manpower levels coincided with the NSC's emphasis on economic responsibility in its military strategy. As the manpower levels declined, the costs, accordingly declined. However, as much as the decline in costs reflected the goals of the Eisenhower administration, it was how the money was apportioned that was most significant. The percentage of Defense Department expenditures for the army declined from 37.9% in FY 1953 to 24.3% in FY 1956, while that for the air force increased from 34.7% in FY 1953 to 46.8% in FY 1956 (See Appendix F for a breakdown of expenditures for each branch).⁸ The military strategy of the New Look undertook not only a reduction in manpower but a

completely new emphasis in policy.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the military strategy of the New Look was not supported by everyone in the military. General Ridgeway questioned the nation's reliance on nuclear weapons at the expense of manpower requirements. A series of editorials in the Army-Navy-Air Force Journal during November and December 1953 also questioned the proposed cuts. Vice Chief of Staff of the Army General Charles L. Bolte argued, "America must not as a nation be deceived again into the false belief that victory in war can be won without fighting for it, that machines can every [sic] really replace men on the battlefield."⁹

Despite this criticism, Admiral Radford continued to champion the program. He argued that "In this day and age, the military must be realistically concerned about keeping our national economy strong as an indispensable bulwark of the free world."¹⁰ Even General Ridgeway conceded that "Neither of the great power groups in the world today can expect to maintain indefinitely both a dominant offensive capability and an assured defense."¹¹ The military establishment was simply divided over how much security was actually necessary. Some, like Admiral Radford, believed that the budgeted funds were sufficient for adequate security, while others, like General Ridgeway, thought the nation could afford more. As the limitations of the New Look became evident, the debate in the Eisenhower administration

became more intense.

The questioning of the new strategy was not limited to the military. James Reston, a columnist for the New York Times, asked in late October 1953 how the placing of greater reliance on nuclear weapons would affect such issues as arms control and the fighting of limited wars.¹² Although not showing a detailed knowledge of the New Look, he understood its basic guidelines. While the public did not have access to the most sensitive information, the general trend of the New Look was clear.

The American public generally supported the cuts made by the Eisenhower administration in defense spending. A Gallup poll in July 1953 revealed that only 17% of those polled believed that the United States' safety was being threatened by the cuts, while 55% believed only waste and extravagance had been cut.¹³ A similar poll taken in October 1954 indicated that 64% of those polled believed the United States was in a better position to defend itself than under the Truman administration.¹⁴ Although there were questions concerning the defense cuts, the public responded favorably.

Although many statements were made concerning the new strategy, none has received more attention than Secretary of State John Foster Dulles' address to the Council on Foreign Relations on January 12, 1954. In this speech he propounded the doctrine of massive retaliation, which became synonymous

with the New Look. Dulles argued that "Local defenses must be reinforced by the further deterrent of massive retaliatory power. A potential aggressor must know that he cannot always prescribe battle conditions that suit him." [Emphasis added] He further added that "the way to deter aggression is for the free community to be willing and able to respond vigorously at places and with means of its own choosing."¹⁵ Unfortunately, the media placed unwarranted emphasis on the concept of massive retaliation and failed to realize that nuclear weapons only comprised one part of the New Look.

The NSC did not remain inactive as the military and the public debated the soundness of the new strategy. In March 1954, the NSC discussed the objectives of the United States in the event of war with the Soviet Union. Since it assumed that a war with the Soviet Union would be a nuclear war, the NSC debated the results of winning such a conflict. Eisenhower himself concluded that "every single nation, including the United States, which entered into this war as a free nation would come out a dictatorship. This would be the price of survival."¹⁶ At an earlier NSC meeting concerning the same topic, he argued that "By and large ... the main purpose served by this paper [NSC 5410] was to emphasize how vital it was to avoid a third world war."¹⁷ Although there would be a reliance on nuclear weapons, the administration had grim fears about using them.

As the debate swirled around the reliance on nuclear

weapons, the Planning Board developed guidelines for implementing NSC 162/2 in the FY 1956 budget. The NSC discussed the new policy paper, NSC 5422, throughout the summer of 1954. The NSC intended the guidelines to provide direction for the military in developing plans for FY 1956. However, as with NSC 162/2, the military was not completely satisfied with the finished product. Although NSC 5422/2 argued that "Planning should be on the assumption that, if general war should occur, the United States will wage it with all available weapons," the JCS remained unconvinced.¹⁸ They argued that it still did not clarify the role of nuclear weapons.¹⁹

The JCS further argued that NSC 5422 "falls short of accomplishing the intended purpose in that it fails to delineate, in terms of specific courses of action, an affirmative national program holding reasonable promise of accomplishing the security aims of NSC 162/2."²⁰ The rest of the NSC, including Eisenhower, questioned this assertion. Although he understood the importance of maintaining balanced forces, Eisenhower firmly believed that the sanctioning of the use of nuclear weapons was perfectly clear. He argued that "We had never proposed to strip ourselves naked of all military capabilities except the nuclear weapon. It was ridiculous to imagine anything of this sort."²¹

At the 204th meeting of the NSC Secretary Dulles described a further concern about NSC 5422. He argued that "creeping Communist penetration and wide distrust of U.S.

strategy among our allies ... are whittling the influence of the United States."²² The United States allies, especially in Europe, feared the destruction which would result from a nuclear exchange. Instead of emphasizing nuclear capability, they wanted to stress nuclear disarmament. The Soviet Union's recent peaceful gestures only strengthened the view that the United States was being unreasonable. NSC 5422/2 sought to overcome the allies apprehension by convincing them of the ingenious of United States policies.²³

Beyond the issues of using nuclear weapons and cooperating with the European allies, the focus of attention in the NSC debates was arms control. The JCS stated its position firmly: "Until the USSR, by positive action, demonstrates a basic change of attitude ... the United States should refrain from further attempts through negotiations to arrive at agreements with the Soviet Union on the subjects of disarmament, atomic energy, or any other of the world issues."²⁴ Eisenhower concluded that "it would certainly be to the net advantage of the United States to agree to nuclear disarmament alone if such nuclear disarmament were sure and enforceable. It was nevertheless impossible to see how it could be secured in the foreseeable future."²⁵

The NSC discussions of NSC 5422 indicated a continued acceptance of the security programs advocated by NSC 162/2. The debate focused on the clarification of questions that had already been addressed. What role would nuclear weapons

play in a crisis situation? How would the United States' European allies be accounted for? Would the United States participate in arms control talks? The NSC provided broad guidelines for the various governmental departments to follow, but did not define specific policies. It was left to the departments, especially the military, to continue to refine and implement the New Look.

NSC 5422/2 did not end the discussion concerning the New Look. Debate still raged as to whether the reliance on nuclear weapons inhibited the ability of the United States to fight limited wars. Those who held this view believed that the United States military was in the position to do only one of two things in a time of crisis--use nuclear weapons or do nothing at all. This view was only enhanced by speeches like the one presented by John Foster Dulles to the Council on Foreign Relations and by interviews, such as one performed by Newsweek. In that interview, Newsweek asked General Alfred Gruenther, NATO's Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, whether Europe could be defended without atomic weapons. General Gruenther responded that "It might be theoretically possible but only at enormous cost."²⁶

The unfortunate perception that the New Look represented a reliance on nuclear weapons at the expense of conventional forces was widespread. The critics of the strategy failed to realize that the military budgets of the Eisenhower administration still averaged two and a half

times those of the Truman administration before the Korean War.²⁷ The greater reliance on nuclear weapons was what Admiral Radford called "a matter of emphasis. We are putting emphasis on our advantages ... on modern air and naval power on new weapons, on a highly mobile and offensively equipped strategic reserve."²⁸ Nuclear weapons were essential to the strategy, but so was the maintenance of conventional forces.

The JCS remained split on the effectiveness of the New Look. Admiral Radford remained its chief proponent, General Ridgeway, its chief opponent. General Ridgeway became disillusioned with the military strategy of the New Look. He claimed that the United States was "subject again to the same dangerous delusion, the misty hope that air power, armed with the fission or fusion bomb, could save us in time of trouble."²⁹ He became so frustrated with the direction of the New Look that he resigned from the JCS in June 1955.

Before his resignation, however, General Ridgeway presented his view to the NSC. The NSC's response was generally negative. Secretary of Treasury Humphrey claimed that "General Ridgeway was arguing in favor of all kinds of forces designed to fight all kinds of war at all times. For the United States to maintain such forces was absolutely impossible." Eisenhower added that "Since we cannot keep the United States an armed camp or a garrison state, we must make plans to use [and rely on] the atom bomb if we become

involved in a war." Governor Harold Stassen, Director for Foreign Operations, concluded that "he doubted the entire validity of General Ridgeway's thesis."³⁰

Despite the negative response to General Ridgeway's arguments, the NSC was sympathetic. The United States could not afford to maintain the forces necessary to insure security against all challenges. The New Look represented what the NSC and most military advisors believed to be the best plan under the circumstances. The NSC's reluctance to support General Ridgeway reflected its purpose of devising a strategy for the entire nation, not just one military branch. Ridgeway's and the other critics' disenchantment with the New Look reflected their lack of understanding of the complexities of the entire national security program.

After the approval of NSC 5422/2 in August 1954, the NSC began the initial stages of re-evaluating the United States national security policy. The United States faced new threats in Indochina and the Taiwan Straits. The United States allies were willing to take advantage of the Soviet Union's less aggressive policy to call for reduced tensions. The State Department and the CIA expressed concern that the United States might lose the full support of its European allies. CIA Director Allen Dulles argued that "we must expect that our Allies will show increasing reluctance to engage in diplomatic or military action which seems to involve a risk of war."³¹ The State Department concluded

that "A prolonged period of cold war with a reduced fear of overt aggression will severely test the stability and cohesion of the free world."³²

A National Intelligence Estimate (NIE 11-4-54), prepared by the Intelligence Advisory Committee, argued that the Soviet Union's less aggressive policy was a carefully calculated plan to divide the free world. It assumed the Soviet Union would act in the manner from which it expected to obtain the best results. Although the Soviet Union was following a more peaceful policy, NIE 11-4-54 argued "that the Kremlin will revert to more aggressive and threatening conduct whenever it feels that such conduct will bring increased returns."³³ With this type of advice, the NSC found it necessary to revise the New Look to encompass the changing world situation.

In November 1954, CIA Director Allen Dulles echoed the concerns of the intelligence estimate. He argued that "the US today must take seriously, as a potential threat to the cohesion and the determination of the free world, every situation of weakness that develops any where in the non-communist world from Chile to Vietnam."³⁴ In essence, Dulles was expressing what came to be known as the domino theory. The United States faced an enemy whose goal, more than ever, was to exploit and divide the free world. The NSC needed to address this most pressing threat.

As the NSC received the new intelligence estimates, it

was becoming more clear in the government leaders' public announcements and private writings that the New Look remained the administration's strategy. Secretary of Defense Wilson, although neither supporting the extreme austerity of the Treasury Department nor the excessive requests of some of his military advisors, argued in the New York Herald Tribune: "We have reached an era when it is more important than ever that military strength must be measured in terms of combat effectiveness. Combat effectiveness, if it is to exist at all, must be based on efficiency."³⁵ Eisenhower summarized in his diary:

It seems to one that the great emphasis that we now should put on national defense should be centered on two main objectives: (1) massive retaliation which simply means the ability to blow hell out of them in a hurry if they start anything and (2) a system of advance warnings developed through our radar system to minimize any such attack.³⁶

After receiving the new estimates of the world situation, the NSC reviewed NSC 162/2 and NSC 5422/2. The new policy paper, started in November 1954 as NSC 5440 and completed in January 1955 as NSC 5501, reflected a growing awareness that the United States and the Soviet Union had reached a new stage in their relations--co-existence. The premise of the paper was that the United States would not in the foreseeable future change the goals and behavior of the Soviet Union. The NSC had come to realize that the concept of the "long pull" in the New Look would indeed be true.

NSC 5501 addressed four major concerns for United

States national security. First, the balance of nuclear weapons between the United States and the Soviet Union had reached a stage where war might destroy the world. Second, despite the destructiveness of nuclear weapons, they remained essential for the defense of the United States and the free world. Third, the decline in United States power relative to the Soviet Union had made the loss of any country to communism possibly catastrophic. Fourth, the United States' and the free world's security was threatened as much by economic collapse as by the Soviet military.

NSC 5501 recognized the growing nuclear stockpiles of the United States and the Soviet Union as a serious threat to the world's existence. It argued that "a situation is approaching in which a total war involving use by both sides of available weapons would bring about such extensive destruction, as to threaten the survival of both Western civilization and the Soviet system."³⁷ The document did not offer any alternatives to this doomsday prognosis, but asserted that the United States' leaders must be aware of the weapon's terribly destructive nature.

Despite the warnings of their destructiveness, NSC 5501 stressed the importance of nuclear weapons to United States national strategy. It argued that it was necessary for NATO to maintain a sufficient combination of conventional and nuclear weapons to deter communist aggression.³⁸ It also stated that "The U.S. must develop and maintain its

effective nuclear-air retaliatory power, and must keep that power secure from neutralization or from a Soviet knockout blow, even by surprise."³⁹ Nuclear weapons, even with their destructive power, were becoming more and more integral to the United States national security policy.

As crises arose throughout 1954 in Indochina, the Taiwan Straits, and Guatemala, the NSC perceived a growing threat of communist expansion. Accordingly, NSC 5501 adopted CIA Director Dulles' argument that any expansion of the Soviet Union could have dire consequences to the free world. It argued that

As the lines between the Communist bloc and the Western coalition have come to be more clearly drawn over the last few years, a situation has arisen in which any further Communist territorial gain would have an unfavorable impact with the free world that might be out of all proportion to the strategic or economic significance of the territory lost.⁴⁰

The NSC, in this policy paper, turned Dulles' warning into the expression of the domino theory.

Although NSC 5501 expanded on the New Look's reliance on nuclear weapons, it did not call for increased defense spending at the expense of the national economy. The continued influence of Eisenhower and the Treasury Department was clear. NSC 5501 argued that "The level of expenditures for national security programs must take into full account ... the basic soundness of the U.S. economy or of the continuing expansion of the U.S. economy under a free enterprise system."⁴¹ Economic responsibility was to remain a central

feature of American national security policy.

In its final form, NSC 5501 was remarkably similar to NSC 162/2. Although it was more specific in its emphasis on nuclear weapons and expressed a greater concern for the consequences of Soviet expansion it did not result in any major alteration in the United States national security policy. The United States entered 1955 guided by the policies established by NSC 162/2. The United States would rely on nuclear weapons, smaller, but more flexible conventional forces, and a more defined military strategy for its security during the remainder of the Eisenhower administration.

Every six months the NSC developed status reports to monitor the progress of its national security programs. The reports included the evaluations of any participating agency's or department's involvement in a security program. As the New Look was implemented and the military branches experienced the budget reductions, the status of many military programs came into question. As the new programs were implemented throughout 1954, the degree of readiness of the military branches changed.

NSC 5509, the status report as of December 31, 1954, revealed a steady decline in the combat readiness of the army, a small increase in the readiness of the navy, and a steady increase in the readiness of the air force. The emphasis on the air force is clear as the number of wings increased from 112 to 121 during 1954 alone. The number of

wings rated as of high readiness increased from 67 to 76 during the same year. In contrast, the number of army divisions decreased from 20 with four at reduced strength to 19 with eight at reduced strength. The number of these divisions rated at a high level of readiness also decreased from 14 to 11.42

A report by a planning committee of the JCS confirmed the reported decline of the army, and made similar assertions about the navy. In several different assessments throughout 1954, the committee argued that "the planned Army force is considered unacceptable."⁴³ Despite an improvement in the overall readiness of the navy, the same committee reported that "our [naval] forces are not now adequate to support our world-wide commitments, and the reduced manning levels of our operating forces further lowers their combat readiness."⁴⁴ Although the New Look was supported by many in the military, including JCS chairman Admiral Radford, the support was not widespread.

The question arises as to why the JCS had so little influence in developing and implementing the New Look military strategy. The NSC told them what financial ceilings they had and what limits they had to place on manpower.

General Ridgeway argued in his memoirs that

The fact is the 1955 budget was a 'directed verdict,' as were Army budgets for 1956 and '57. The force levels provided in all three were not primarily based on military needs. They were not based on the freely reached conclusions of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. They were squeezed between the

framework of arbitrary manpower and fiscal limits.⁴⁵

The Defense Department during the Eisenhower administration faced the unenviable task of preparing a military program at a time when economic health was viewed as equal in importance to military security. Unlike the last two years of the Truman administration, when the military could spend almost at will, it experienced tighter reins under Eisenhower. The New Look program offered less money, a different emphasis, and a need for more efficient operations--none of which the military was too familiar.

Not surprisingly, the army reacted the most vehemently against the cuts in defense spending. Its manpower levels were cut from 1.5 million men in June 1953 to 1.0 million in June 1956. Expenditures decreased from \$16.6 billion in FY 1953 to \$8.7 billion in FY 1956.⁴⁶ The loss of that many men and that much funding resulted in a decline in the army's ability to meet effectively the scope of its commitments, as well as in its influence in developing and implementing the military's strategy. General Ridgeway correctly argued that the reductions strained the army's ability to meet its world commitments, but as Secretary Wilson argued at the end of 1954, "even if our Army had been twice as large as it was ... we probably wouldn't have done a darn thing different than we had done in the last year and a half."⁴⁷

General Ridgeway wanted an army which could meet the

challenges of any crisis. The army he proposed, almost 50% greater than the one presented by the New Look, served no greater purpose than a smaller more efficient army.⁴⁸ The only possible advantage gained by a larger army was if the Soviet Union launched an attack. However, since the NSC and Eisenhower assumed that the United States would respond with nuclear weapons if such an attack occurred, there was no need for a larger army. This strategy did not eliminate the army's role in a possible conflict, but it reduced the army's responsibility. The NSC realized that the added security provided by a larger army would not compensate for its economic costs.

The navy and the marines experienced a smaller budget cut than the army. Reductions in these branches truly reflected Secretary Wilson's call for a more efficient military. While the number of ships in the navy decreased from 1,129 in June 1953 to 973 in June 1956, the number of warships only decreased from 409 to 404 in the same period. The navy eliminated excess support and non-combat ships. The marines absorbed small manpower reductions but maintained their combat strength.⁴⁹ These branches accepted the risk that the savings resulting from the reductions would offset any costs to national security.

The NSC placed primary responsibility for implementing the New Look on the air force. The air force received a progressively greater share of the military budget and

increased its number of wings from 106 1/3 in June 1953 to 131 in June 1956.⁵⁰ Of course, these increases gave the air force a greater influence in implementing policy. In essence, the Eisenhower administration received "more bang for its buck." The reliance on air power, coupled with nuclear weapons, allowed for substantial reductions in other areas of the military. The New Look provided savings without costing security.

The NSC allowed the military to implement the New Look as it saw best. Unfortunately from the military's standpoint, the NSC left it with very limited resources. The army, often supported by the navy and marines, claimed that the reductions of manpower and equipment reduced the overall effectiveness of their respective branches. However, the NSC's continued adherence to the New Look, as reflected in NSC 5422/2 and NSC 5501, revealed its determination to obtain the most security at the most affordable costs. The military had to adjust their programs to the reality that economic soundness was as important as military preparedness.

Footnotes: Chapter 3

1Glenn H. Snyder, "The 'New Look' of 1953," chap. in Strategy, Politics, and Defense Budgets (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), 383.

2Watson, JCS, 27-28.

3"Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense," National Archives, Record Group 218, Box 32, File CCS (1-31-50) Section 32, National Archives, Washington, D.C., 1079.

4Ibid., 1085.

5Ibid., 1083-87.

6Ibid., 1080.

7Watson, JCS, 82.

8Ibid., 86. See also "Status of United States Programs for National Security as of December 31, 1954," Record Group 273, File NSC 5509, National Archives, Washington, D.C., 55 and 72.

9"Address by General Charles L. Bolte," Army-Navy-Air Force Journal 91:16, 462. See also "Economy and Effectiveness," Ibid. 91:13.

10"Admiral Radford 'New Look' - Air Power Stands Out," Ibid. 91:16, 471.

11"Address by General Matthew Ridgeway," Ibid. 91:11, 310.

12James Reston, "U.S. Plan to Reduce NATO Force Denied," New York Times October 21, 1953, 1.

13Gallup, Gallup 2, 1158.

14Ibid., 1274.

15John Foster Dulles, "The Evolution of Foreign Policy," Department of State Bulletin 30:271, 108.

16"Memorandum of Discussion at the 190th Meeting of the National Security Council," FRUS 1952-1954 2:1 (GPO, 1984), 642.

17"Memorandum of Discussion at the 187th Meeting of the National Security Council," FRUS 1952-1954 2:1 (GPO, 1984), 636.

18"Statement of Policy by the National Security Council," FRUS 1952-1954 2:1 (GPO, 1984), 718.

19Watson, JCS, 45.

20"Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense," Record Group 218, Box 32, File CCS 381 U.S. (1-31-50) Section 43, National Archives, Washington, D.C., 1424.

21"Memorandum of Discussion at the 204th Meeting of the National Security Council," FRUS 1952-1954 2:1 (GPO, 1984), 690.

22Ibid., 695.

23"Statement of Policy," FRUS 1952-1954, 720.

24Watson, JCS, 46

25"204th Meeting," FRUS 1952-1954, 689.

26"Interview with General Gruenther," Newsweek 43:23, 46.

27"The Secretary quizzes himself," Basic Papers of George H. Humphrey, 180-81.

28U.S. Congress, Senate, Foreign Relations Committee, Foreign Policy and Its Relation to Military Programs: Hearings Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 83rd Cong., 2nd sess., 50.

29Matthew B. Ridgeway, Soldier (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956), 273.

30"Memorandum of Discussion at the 227th Meeting of the National Security Council," FRUS 1952-1954 2:1 (GPO, 1984), 805-6.

31"Elements of Intelligence Entering Into a Review of Policy Vis a Vis The Soviet Bloc," Record Group 273, File NSC 5440/5501, Washington, D.C., 2.

32"Paper Prepared in the Department of State," FRUS 1952-1954 2:1 (GPO, 1984), 774.

33National Intelligence Estimates were developed by the Intelligence Advisory Committee (IAC). The IAC was composed of representatives of the CIA, the Departments of State, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and the Joint Staff. "Soviet Capabilities and Probable Courses of Action Through Mid-1959," FRUS 1952-1954 8 (GPO, 1988), 1252.

34"Paper Prepared by the Director of Central Intelligence," FRUS 1952-1954 2:1 (GPO, 1984), 780.

35Charles E. Wilson, "Wilson Explains Program to Gain Maximum Defense Without Waste," New York Herald Tribune October 12, 1954, 1.

36The Diary of James C. Hagerty: Eisenhower in Mid-Course, 1954-1955, ed. Robert H. Ferrell (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), 133-34.

37"Basic National Security Policy, NSC 5501," Record Group 273, File NSC 5501, National Archives, Washington, D.C., 2.

38Ibid.

39Ibid., 11.

40Ibid., 4.

41Ibid., 16.

42"Status of United States Programs for National Security as of December 31, 1954," Record Group 273, File NSC 5509, National Archives, Washington, D.C., 37.

43"Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense," Record Group 218, Box 32, File CCS 381 (1-31-50) Section 41, National Archives, Washington, D.C., 12. See also page 12 of the same report and "Report by the Joint Strategic Plans Committee," Record Group 218, Box 32, File CCS 381 (1-31-50) Section 33, National Archives, Washington, D.C., 9

44"Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense," Record Group 218, Box 32, File CCS 381 (1-31-50) Section 41, National Archives, Washington, D.C., 20.

45Ridgeway, Soldier, 289.

46Watson, JCS, 86.

47"204th Meeting," FRUS 1952-1954, 690

48Watson, JCS, 87. See also Ridgeway, Soldier, 331.

49Watson, JCS, 83-84.

50Ibid., 84.

CONCLUSION

On the wisdom of the council's [NSC] leaders hangs the safety and welfare of the world and the nation.¹

An editorial in Newsweek offered this assessment of the National Security Council in February 1954. By this time, the NSC had indeed made its mark on the foreign policies emanating from the White House. From its inception in 1947, the NSC gradually evolved into a fundamental advisor of President Truman, and later President Eisenhower. Although the purpose of the NSC under each president remained essentially the same, its importance as an advisory body changed drastically. President Truman viewed the NSC from a distance--always considering its advice but only rarely placing great emphasis on its role. President Eisenhower saw it in a different light. It was under his leadership that the NSC obtained the importance that the Newsweek editorial addressed.

During and after the Eisenhower administration, the performance of the NSC received mixed reviews. In 1959 and 1960 Senator Henry Jackson chaired a Senate committee on United States national security organizations and programs. Although the committee's conclusions concerning the NSC were generally negative, the testimony of those who actually served on Eisenhower's NSC presented a different picture.²

Robert Bowie, Director of the Policy Planning Staff, argued that the NSC "has been extremely valuable in posing many of the issues and in assuring that in deciding them the President had the benefit of informed advice."³ Admiral Radford, the chairman of the JCS, added that "I sat in the NSC for 4 years and nobody ever instructed me. I could be just as free as I wanted to be when any new question came up."⁴

Despite these assertions, many scholars have adopted the view of the Senate committee. Political Scientist I.M. Destler argues that the decisions of the NSC "tended to accentuate, rather than challenge, the conventional wisdom of the time."⁵ Another Political Scientist, J.C. Heinlein adds that "In spite of its generally higher status in the Eisenhower administration the National Security Council did not loom any larger in the sequence of events preceding action than it had under Truman."⁶ Although their conclusions represent the common view of scholars of the Eisenhower NSC, this thesis has offered a different assessment.

The NSC was an effective instrument for analyzing and developing national security policy late in the Truman administration and during the Eisenhower administration. The critique that the NSC only accentuated the conventional wisdom of the times fails to account for the different arguments brought forth in the NSC meetings. The NSC was comprised of individuals who had well-defined opinions, and who were willing to express their views. The NSC played a fun-

damental role in formulating the New Look because it offered Eisenhower the counsel of his most respected advisors in an environment conducive to decision-making.

Project Solarium epitomized the role that the NSC would play in the Eisenhower administration. The project represented the NSC's attempt to study and analyze three distinctive courses of national security policy. The value of the study lay in its attempt to develop the best possible policy from different alternatives. General Andrew Goodpaster, Eisenhower's staff secretary, described Project Solarium in a manner which also explains the role Eisenhower gave to the NSC. He recalled that Eisenhower

wanted to get ... all of the responsible people in the room, take up the issue, and hear their views. He had what amounted to a tacit rule that there could be no non-concurrence through silence. If somebody didn't agree, he was obliged to speak his mind and get it all out on the table ... and then in light of all of that, the President would come to a line of action, he wanted everybody to hear it, everybody to participate in it, and then he wanted everybody to be guided by it.⁷

The formulation of the New Look revealed the fundamental role of the NSC in the Eisenhower administration. It provided Eisenhower with a forum to hear different opinions and to receive different advice. From this counsel, Eisenhower made his decisions concerning national security. The NSC played an instrumental role in establishing the New Look and was, therefore, firmly entrenched as an essential organization for developing national security policy.

Footnotes: Conclusion

1 "No Debating Society," Newsweek 43:6, 29.

2 U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Government Operations, Organizing for National Security, Hearings Before the Subcommittee on National Security Machinery of the Committee on Government Operations, 86th Congress, 2nd sess., I-IX.

3 Ibid., VI, 906.

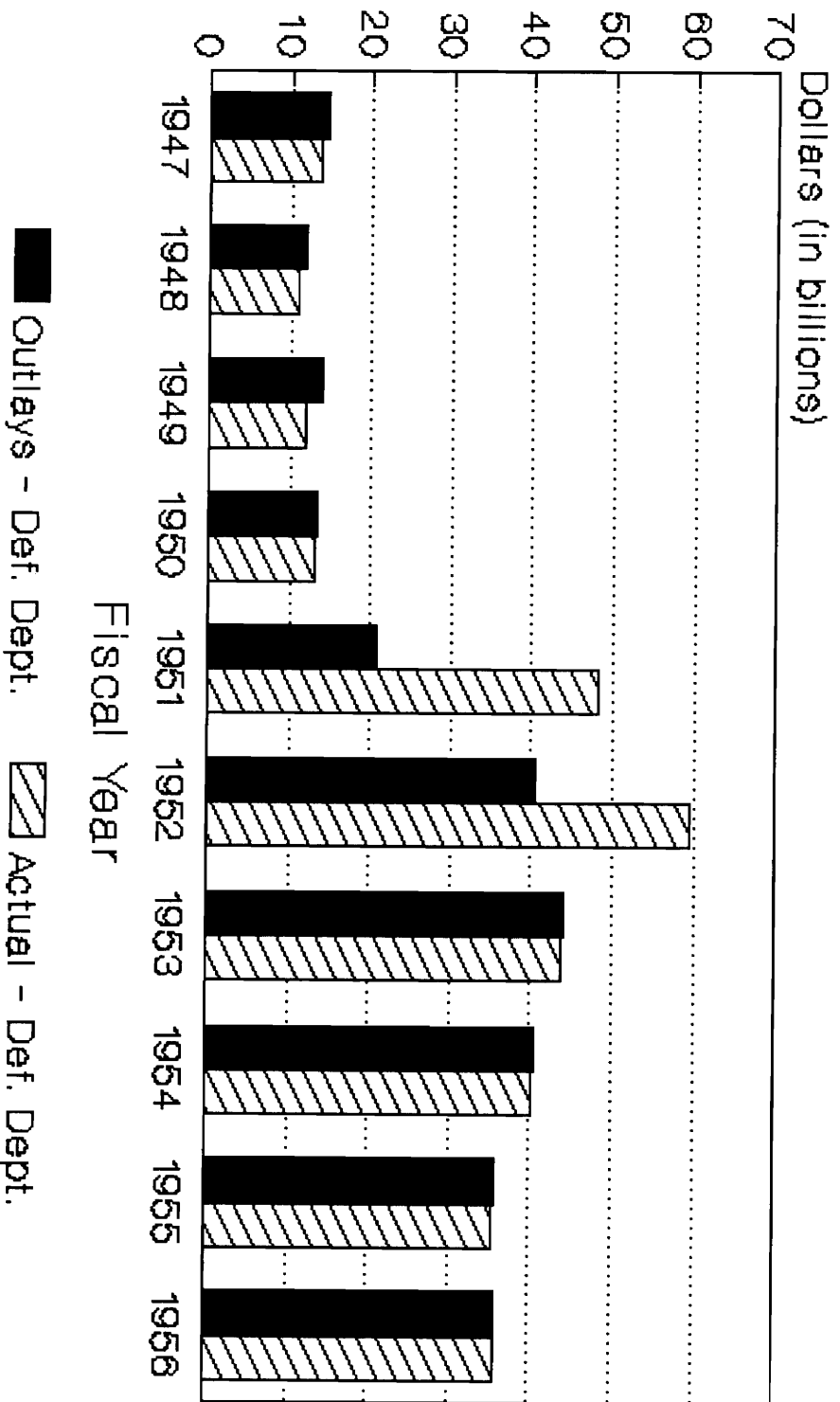
4 Ibid., V, 683. See also Stanley L. Falk, "The National Security Council Under Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy," Political Science Quarterly 74 (1964), 418; R. Gordon Hoxie, "The National Security Council," Presidential Studies Quarterly 12 (Winter 1982, 109; and George A. Wyeth, Jr., "The National Security Council," Journal of International Affairs 8:2 (1954), 195.

5 I.M. Destler, "The Presidency and National Security Organization," in The National Security, ed. Norman A. Graebner (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 230.

6 J.C. Heinlein, Presidential Staff and National Security Policy, (Cincinnati: Center for the Study of United States Foreign Policy, 1963), 48. See also H.W. Brands, "The Age of Vulnerability," American Historical Review 94 (1989), 986; Richard A. Melanson and David Mayers eds., Reevaluating Eisenhower: American Foreign Policy in the 1950s (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 2; Samuel P. Huntington, The Common Defense (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), 154; and Henry M. Jackson, "Organizing for Survival," Foreign Affairs 38 (1960), 449.

7 "Project Solarium," Dulles Centennial, 20.

APPENDIX A: Outlays and Costs for the Defense Dept.



APPENDIX B

STATE-DEFENSE POLICY REVIEW GROUP (PRE-NSC 68)

Department of State

Paul H. Nitze
R. Gordon Arnsen
George Butler
Carlton Savage
Harry H. Schwartz
Robert Tufts
Adrian S. Fisher

Department of Defense

Maj. Gen. James H. Burns
Maj. Gen. T.H. Landon
Najeeb E. Halaby
Robert LeBaron
Lt. Col. William Burke
Sec. of Def. Louis Johnson
Gen. Omar Bradley

Guest Consultants

Dr. Robert J. Oppenheimer
Dr. James B. Conant
Chester I. Barnard
Dr. Henry D. Smyth
Dr. Robert A. Lovett
Ernest O. Lawrence

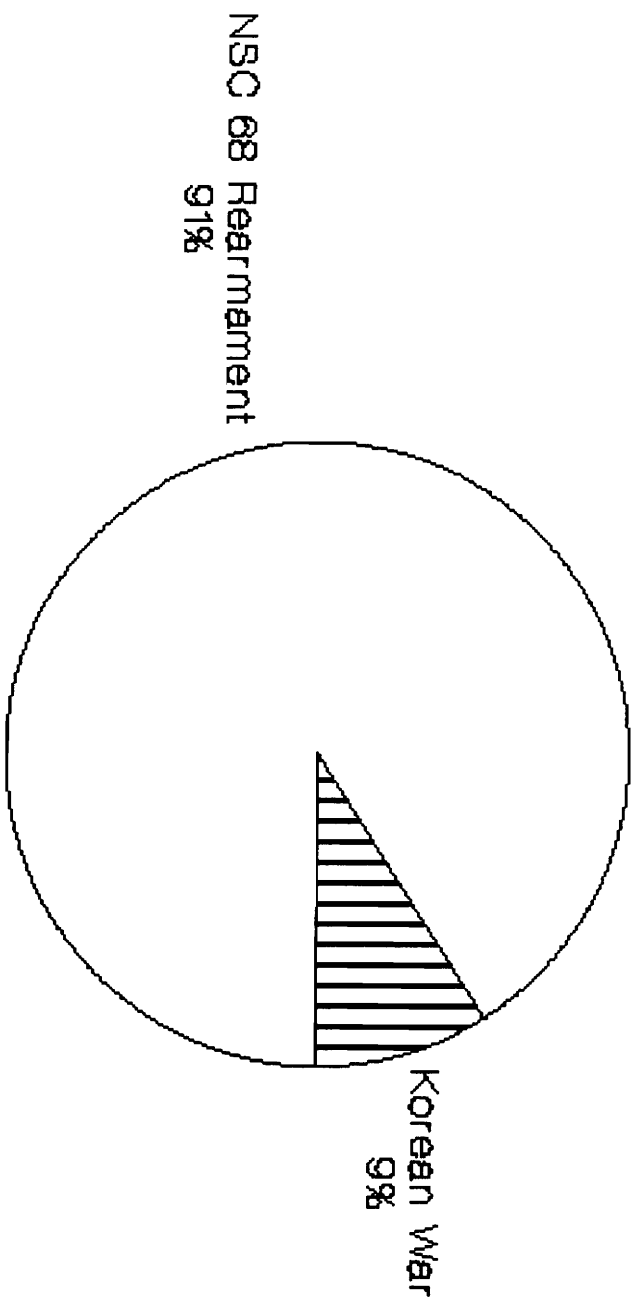
Secretaries of the National Security Council

James Lay
S. Everett Gleason

Executive Office of the President

Adm. S.W. Souers

APPENDIX C: Defense Dept. Costs Attributed to the Korean War



APPENDIX D

MEMBERS OF THE SOLARIUM TASK FORCES

Task Force A

George F. Kennan
Colonel C.H. Bonesteel
Rear Admiral H.P. Smith
Colonel G.A. Lincoln
C.T. Wood
J. Maury
Captain H.S. Sears, USN

Task Force B

Major General J. McCormack
Major General J.R. Deane
J.K. Penfield
P.E. Mosely
Calvin Hoover
J.C. Campbell
Colonel E.S. Ligon

Task Force C

Admiral R.L. Conolly
Lt. General L.L. Lemnitzer
G.F. Reinhardt
Colonel K. Johnston
Colonel A.J. Goodpaster
Leslie Brady
Colonel H.K. Johnston

APPENDIX E

PERSONNEL STRENGTH OF THE UNITED STATES
ARMED FORCES, 1953-1956

Service	June 30, 1953		June 30, 1954	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Army	1,533,152	43.1	1,404,596	42.5
Navy	794,440	22.4	725,720	22.0
Marine Corps	249,219	7.0	223,868	6.8
Air Force	977,593	27.5	947,918	28.7
Total	3,512,453	100.0	3,302,104	100.0

Service	June 30, 1953		June 30, 1954	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Army	1,109,296	37.8	1,025,778	36.5
Navy	660,695	22.5	669,925	23.9
Marine Corps	205,170	7.0	200,780	7.2
Air Force	959,946	32.7	909,958	32.4
Total	2,935,107	100.0	2,806,441	100.0

APPENDIX F

EXPENDITURES FOR THE UNITED STATES
ARMED FORCES, 1953-1956

Service	FY 1953		FY 1954	
	Amount	Percent	Amount	Percent
Army	\$16.605	37.9	\$12.910	32.1
Navy	11.640	26.5	11.293	28.0
Air Force	15.210	34.7	15.668	38.8
Miscellaneous	0.409	0.9	0.464	1.1
Total	\$43.864	100.0	\$40.335	100.0

Service	FY 1955		FY 1956	
	Amount	Percent	Amount	Percent
Army	\$ 8.899	25.0	\$ 8.702	24.3
Navy	9.733	27.4	9.744	27.2
Air Force	16.407	46.2	16.749	46.8
Miscellaneous	0.494	1.4	0.596	1.7
Total	\$35.533	100.0	\$35.791	100.0

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DAVID LINDSEY SNEAD
3501 Corum Dr., #1217
Richmond, Virginia 23294
(804) 747-8328

EDUCATION:

B.A. History, May 1990
Minor: Political Science
Teaching Certification: History and
Political Science (Grades 7-12)
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and
State University
Blacksburg, VA

QCA = 3.82/4.00

M.A. American History, August 1991
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and
State University

QCA = 3.77/4.00

TEACHING
EXPERIENCE:

Graduate Assistant, History Department,
VPI & SU, 1990-1991

- Lectured for Dr. Burton I. Kaufman,
Topics in Modern American History.

Student Teacher, Northside High School,
Roanoke, Virginia 1990

- Responsible for a nine week curriculum
for a twelfth grade American Government
and a tenth grade World History class.

Substitute Teacher, 1990

- Served as a substitute teacher in both
Lynchburg City and Bedford County Schools.

Volunteer Teacher, Camp Rainbow for the
Mentally Handicapped, Bedford, Virginia.
Summers, 1988-1990.

- Served as a volunteer swim instructor.

RESEARCH
EXPERIENCE:

Graduate Assistant for:

- Dr. Burton I. Kaufman, Topics in American
History, 1990-1991.

- Dr. Peter Wallenstein, Topics in Virginia History, 1991.

EDUCATIONAL
AWARDS:

- Graduate Assistantship Funding, 1990-1991.
- J. Ambler Johnston Award, 1990.
- Who's Who Among American University and College Students, 1989-1990.
- George S. Shackelford Prize, 1989.
- Honorable Mention in the Excellence for Liberty Prize, 1989.

ATHLETIC
ACHIEVEMENT:

- Member, Swim Team, VPI & SU, 1987-1990.
- Swim Team Representative, Athletic Advisory Committee, VPI & SU, 1989-1990.
- Metro Conference Medallion Winner, 1990.
- Blacksburg Sports Club Outstanding Hokie Swimmer Award, 1990.

PROFESSIONAL
EXPERIENCE:

Instructor, John Tyler Community College,
Chester, Virginia, 1991-present.

- responsible for semester long survey courses in American History and the History of the Western Civilization.

Graduate Assistant, Swim Team, 1990-1991.

- Supervised and instructed 40 swimmers in the techniques of swimming.

Head Coach, Vista Acres Swim Team,
Lynchburg, Virginia, Summers 1985-1990.

- Instructed 65 swimmers, ages 4 to 18, in the fundamentals of swimming and developed event line-ups for swim meets.

HONOR SOCIETY
MEMBERSHIPS:

- Phi Alpha Theta, Secretary, 1989-1990.
- Phi Beta Kappa
- Phi Kappa Phi
- Phi Eta Sigma

ORGANIZATIONS AND
AFFILIATIONS:

- Presbyterian Church
- Intercollegiate Studies Institute
- Institute for Humane Studies
- Council for Social Studies Education