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# McNAMARA AT THE PENTAGON

by

DOUGLAS KINNARD

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January 20th, 1961, was a cold and sunny day in Washington. As Dwight Eisenhower watched, his successor as President, John F. Kennedy, set forth his vision of the Sixties in his inaugural address. It was vigorous, activist, and optimistic. Kennedy had campaigned long and hard on the inadequacies of Eisenhower's defense and foreign policies. It was, therefore, to be expected that a more aggressive foreign policy and a larger allocation of resources to defense would be forthcoming. The rhetoric of the inaugural address gave support to these expectations.

Kennedy had offered Robert Lovett the post of either Secretary of State or Secretary of Defense, but he declined them both. Lovett did, however, recommend Robert McNamara, then president of the Ford Motor Company, for the Defense post and supported Dean Rusk as Secretary of State. Kennedy subsequently offered the two these top cabinet posts. In the course of accepting the job at Defense, McNamara had insisted on selecting his own assistants. In fact, he presented a letter to Kennedy for his signature that would put this arrangement in writing. Kennedy laughed and put the letter in his pocket, but he agreed to the arrangement.<sup>1</sup>

McNamara was born in San Francisco in 1916 and graduated from Berkeley in 1937. He received a Master of Business Administration degree at Harvard in 1939 and the following year joined the faculty there, specializing in the application of statistical analysis to management problems. During World War II he served as a commissioned officer in the Army Air Corps, working as a staff officer in statistical control. After the war, he and nine other Air Force statistical control experts hired themselves out to the Ford Motor Company. He rose rapidly in the firm, and when elected its president in 1960 he was the first to hold that office who was not a member of the Ford family.

Although he obviously had enormous ability and drive in order to succeed as he did at Ford, in certain respects he was not typical of automobile industry executives. Eschewing the usual habitats of that group, such as

Grosse Point Shores, he preferred to live in the collegial community of Ann Arbor near the University of Michigan. Here his relaxation was more that of a college professor—discussion, books, symphonies—than of the relentlessly driving automobile executive that he was. These avocations were to stand him in good stead in the social life of Kennedy's Washington—in Camelot, if you wish—into which he fitted nicely.

There seems to be a general consensus on many of McNamara's personal characteristics: intelligent, able, decisive, self-confident, hard-driving, puritanical, and free of cynicism are terms used most frequently by his associates in describing him. He was most comfortable in dealing with a problem when he could view it in terms of figures, and he required, when possible, that papers submitted to him employ such a format. The rimless glasses and slicked-down hair helped give him a stern and formidable look, but he could be as engaging a person as anyone in Washington.

Another of his characteristics noticed by those who knew him best is less desirable in a Secretary of Defense. Apparently it was difficult for him to compromise on issues—in this sense he was an unpolitical animal, a disadvantage in the Washington jungle.

McNamara approached his new duties at Defense in the same activist spirit he had displayed at the Ford Motor Company. To describe it in his own words, "The direction of the Department of Defense demands not only a strong, responsible civilian control, but a Secretary's role that consists of active, imaginative, and decisive leadership of the establishment at large, and not the passive practice of simply refereeing the disputes of traditional and partisan factions."<sup>2</sup> An example of this philosophy in action comes through clearly in his approach to management, to be discussed shortly.

After Kennedy appointed Rusk as Secretary of State, the two cabinet members got together and agreed on what they felt was the proper relationship between the Defense and State Departments. Thereafter, there was a close rapport between them. McNamara supported the conventional understanding

that defense policy is derived from foreign policy. Still, if one goes back over McNamara's pronouncements in the 1960's, such as those concerning NATO or nuclear strategy, there is a curious blend of original foreign-policy import. Take for example McNamara's annual posture statements, first published in February 1963 (in support of the Fiscal Year 1964 Defense Budget). The introductory statements are 25-50 percent foreign policy—basically written in the Pentagon. State had the opportunity to comment, but it is generally agreed that the agency that writes the first draft is in charge of the situation.

### McNAMARA'S MANAGEMENT APPROACH

Of all the writings on McNamara's tenure in the Department of Defense, the majority stress his management approach.<sup>3</sup> It was thus that he made his major impact on defense decisionmaking. Moreover, certain aspects of this management approach were his major legacy to the Defense Department. McNamara was interested in more than simply efficient management. He wanted to achieve more effective top-management control of total defense resource allocation by cutting across the services horizontally on such issues as force structure and competing

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weapon systems. That is, rather than initially settling upon individual service budgets, McNamara wished to settle first upon resources to be allocated to the various functional missions—strategic retaliatory, continental defense, general purpose forces, and so forth—and then parcel these to the individual services on the basis of the most cost-effective alternatives. We cannot here go into the full details of McNamara's management apparatus, but certain aspects should be highlighted to place his tour in the Pentagon in proper perspective.

Prior to McNamara's appointment, a Pentagon-sponsored study examined what the 1958 Defense Reorganization Act authorized the Secretary of Defense to do that he was not already doing.<sup>4</sup> Thomas Gates, McNamara's immediate predecessor, was impressed by the study and recommended it to McNamara. In essence, the study pointed up the fact that the Secretary's authority under the act was considerable and had not yet been exploited. McNamara therefore decided that no further legislation was needed to enhance his authority, but that management changes were. As he put it,

From the beginning in January 1961, it seemed to me that the principal problem in efficient management of the Department's resources was not the lack of management authority. The National Security Act provides the Secretary of Defense a full measure of power. The problem was rather the absence of the essential management tools needed to make sound decisions on the really crucial issues of national security.<sup>5</sup>

The primary management tools that McNamara initiated were the Planning-Programming-Budgeting System (PPBS) and systems analysis. PPBS was installed by Charles J. Hitch, an economist who had been with RAND and had, in 1961, coauthored with Roland N. McKean *The Economics of Defense in the Nuclear Age*. Systems analysis was developed as an analytical technique within the department under the supervision of Alain G. Enthoven, who had joined the

Defense Department in 1960 as an operations research analyst. When Hitch was made Assistant Secretary (Comptroller) at the beginning of the new Administration, Enthoven became his deputy, focusing specifically on systems analysis. In 1965 he became an Assistant Secretary himself when the Systems Analysis Office was raised to that level.

PPBS provided both an information base and a control device linking together long-range planning and shorter-range budgeting through programs costed over a five-year period.<sup>6</sup> Although Hitch wanted to take 18 months to install the new system, McNamara decided to do it in six, so that it could be used in developing the Fiscal Year 1963 Budget—the first budget for which the new Administration was fully responsible.

The planning phase was one that had previously existed, but with a somewhat different thrust. The basic military input was the Joint Strategic Objectives Plan—known as the JSOP—developed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Volume I was a joint document that assessed the strategic threat to the United States in the context of its worldwide commitments. Volume II, which contained recommended force levels to deal with the security demands developed in the preceding document, tended to be less of a joint document. Since force levels eventually determined each service's future, there was a strong tendency for this document to reflect service inputs and hence in aggregate to set forth unrealistic requirements.

The new thrust introduced into the planning phase by McNamara was to require military-economic studies, comparing alternative ways of accomplishing national security objectives based upon cost effectiveness. These studies (which were prepared in Enthoven's office, rather than as part of the JSOP) were in reality the basis for the remainder of the PPBS cycle. The instruments for implementing the studies were called Draft Presidential Memoranda, issued for each of the nine Defense Department-wide mission and functional areas into which the defense budget was divided.<sup>7</sup> The Memoranda were based on

analysis that cut across service boundaries, affecting the way they carried out their roles and missions.

The programming phase, the bridge between planning and budgeting, began with the receipt by the Secretary of the JSOP and the nine Draft Presidential Memoranda. Actually, the planning and programming phases are somewhat difficult to separate analytically. Programming is more specific than planning and determines the resources needed to reach specific objectives. It was, moreover, the key phase in the entire process. The major programming document, consisting of information packages on individual program elements, was known as the Five-Year Defense Program.<sup>8</sup> After reviewing the JSOP and the individual Memoranda, the Secretary provided guidance to the services for subsequently proposing changes to the Five-Year Program.<sup>9</sup>

Upon receipt of program change requests, the Office of Systems Analysis again played a key role. Having previously prepared the Draft Presidential Memoranda, the office now analyzed the service recommendations for changes to the Five-Year Program.<sup>10</sup> The task at this point was to determine the issues, assumptions, and cost alternatives, and to suggest the questions for the Secretary to ask the service proposing a particular change.

Meanwhile, the Joint Chiefs were also reviewing the Draft Presidential Memoranda and then providing their own recommendations. McNamara, aided by Systems Analysis and other elements of his staff, then reached decisions concerning the JCS and service change requests, and toward the end of August of each year issued final Draft Presidential Memoranda as the basis for the final budgeting stage. This stage, which usually culminated in presidential decisions in late December, was not without controversy. However, in a sense the controversy during the final budget phase had been preempted by the programming stage (which had its own share of controversy).

Systems analysis was in effect the instrument by which data were compared as a

means of determining the cost of various options. It also provided the means for judging the logic of the many proposals (sometimes conflicting) that came from throughout the Department, including the services. These proposals might involve such matters as forces, hardware decisions, or training.

The foregoing, then, in general terms, describes the McNamara management approach. Probably nothing in the McNamara period caused more debate within the Department of Defense and the Congress than his management apparatus. This was especially true of Systems Analysis, manned by the so-called "Whiz Kids" who allegedly paid little attention to the professional military. The system had its supporters as well as detractors,<sup>11</sup> and its successes as well as its failures. The best known of the latter probably was the F111 variable-sweep-wing bomber. Plagued by developmental problems, huge cost overruns, failure to meet performance specifications, and operational difficulties, the F111 proved to be the most controversial weapon system the United States ever procured.

The best case in support of the McNamara management approach is made in the book by Enthoven and Smith previously cited. As they see it, defense policymaking was improved in two broad ways. First, strategy, force requirements, and costs were brought together in a single analysis, rather than as a result of negotiations among the services that led to arbitrary allocation of resources. The second area of improvement, according to Enthoven and Smith, lay in providing the Secretary with an independent, mainly civilian, analytical staff. This capability was necessary inasmuch as McNamara had decided on an active role rather than merely mediating between competing military claimants.

There is little question that McNamara's management system permitted him to take the initiative from the services. For example, the Draft Presidential Memoranda were a way of setting forth the assumptions and thus for all practical purposes defining the solution. There is no question that this system

established an increasingly adversarial relationship between the Office of the Secretary of Defense on one hand, and the Joint Chiefs and the services on the other. Further, it eventually brought friction with elements of Congress.

Critics of McNamara's management and especially of systems analysis were many. One of the more frequent criticisms concerned the downgrading of professional military advice and influence. In effect, it was alleged, decisions were being made by civilians on military questions without proper consultation with the professionals. The following charge was typical: "The military planning end of the bridge spanned by the Five-Year Defense Program has been replaced by a body of ad hoc civilian-sponsored, directed or conducted studies and analyses to which the military contribution is largely facts and manpower operating under terms of reference established by civilian authority."<sup>12</sup>

Another frequently voiced criticism was that much of the analysis was designed to support preconceived solutions or decisions already made. Perhaps this is not too surprising. Defense decisions are often, after all, highly political in their implications. The most rational solution to a problem is frequently foreclosed by a call from the White House<sup>13</sup> or by an influential congressman.

In retrospect, McNamara's management approach was a major innovation. It was bound to be a source of bureaucratic friction, since it diverted power from the military to the Secretary. But McNamara's major accomplishment was no mean feat: for the first time, the Secretary of Defense gained real control of the Pentagon. Though the early PPBS was primitive, it was gradually refined and has been retained as McNamara's enduring legacy to the Department of Defense. Systems analysis survived in a different way, not as an all-powerful office, but as an analytical mode of thought now prevalent throughout the Pentagon in both the service staffs and the Joint Staff.

#### McNAMARA AND VIETNAM

In the early days of the Kennedy

Administration, McNamara was not deeply involved in the Vietnam question. In the fall of 1961, however, he became so increasingly. In December, while en route home from a NATO Ministerial Meeting in Paris, he attended the first of many meetings on Vietnam in Honolulu. The military had many questions to ask McNamara about what equipment would be provided for the South Vietnamese, about the broad policy on assistance, and so forth. McNamara's responses were positive: "We are," he said, "going to the uttermost limits of policy."<sup>14</sup>

When he returned to Washington, McNamara reported to Kennedy and Rusk. At this point, the Defense Secretary assumed a major supervisory role with respect to US actions in Vietnam. He became in fact the "action officer" on Vietnam for the President. From this point on, no one in the State Department was in a position to vie with him for this role, even had one wished to do so.

By early 1964, just after the Kennedy assassination, it would still have been possible to reassess the American role in Vietnam. Lyndon Johnson was a new President, and the changed political situation in Vietnam in the wake of the Diem assassination would seemingly have made a reevaluation of the US role a live option. However, 1964 was an election year in America and Johnson had assumed the Kennedy mantle. In addition, he believed in the American effort, perhaps more than Kennedy had. In any case, the reassessment did not take place.<sup>15</sup>

Whatever ambiguity there may have been in the degree of commitment of the United States up to this point, none was left after publication of the presidential decision embodied in National Security Action Memorandum 288 in March 1964:

We seek an independent non-Communist South Vietnam. We do not require that it serve as a Western base or as a member of a Western alliance. South Vietnam must be free, however, to accept outside assistance as required to maintain its security. This assistance should be able to take the form not only of economic and social measures

but also police and military help to root out and control insurgent elements.<sup>16</sup>

Beginning in the late fall of 1964, events moved rapidly in Vietnam: two days before the US election the enemy attacked the American base at Bien Hoa; on Christmas the Brinks officers' hotel in downtown Saigon was bombed. By this time, with the election over, the President was considering his options. In late January McGeorge Bundy was dispatched to Saigon to look over the situation. Then came a benchmark event that set in motion a series of actions from which there was no turning back. On the afternoon of 6 February 1965 (Washington time), there occurred the Pleiku incident in which US barracks and helicopters were subjected to surprise fire from the Viet Cong, resulting in a substantial number of casualties. After receiving recommendations by phone from Bundy and Ambassador Taylor in Saigon, Johnson decided to respond by aerial attack on North Vietnam.

In the next month Marine ground units were dispatched to the Da Nang area to provide security for the air base from which by now US aircraft were conducting air missions in South as well as North Vietnam. Apparently, at this point there was no consideration of the widespread introduction of ground troops by Washington. However, it is doubtful that anyone with experience missed the important threshold being crossed. Introduce ground combat organizations and it is a long time indeed before they can be removed from such a situation as existed in Vietnam at that time.

The announced rationale for the initial deployments of US ground units was the security of American bases and installations in South Vietnam. These were bases whose aircraft were primarily involved in Rolling Thunder, the bombing campaign against North Vietnam. By the time most of the deployments were underway, however, the rationale had shifted. In the first place, Rolling Thunder was not meeting the expectations of its proponents about bringing Hanoi to negotiations. Further, there was at

the same time a deteriorating military situation in South Vietnam. Therefore, by late March the possibility of introducing large numbers of US combat troops into South Vietnam was a real one.

The watershed meeting regarding the troop buildup took place in Hawaii on 20 April, with McNamara, Bundy from State, JCS Chairman Wheeler, Sharp, Westmoreland, and Ambassador Taylor present. As a result of the conference, Westmoreland gained a commitment for 40,000 more troops, including an Army brigade, the 173d Airborne. The floodgates were about to open. Meanwhile, the situation worsened for the Army of Vietnam—with an ambush here, a defeat there, it seemed that South Vietnamese forces were coming unglued.

By late May, events in Vietnam began to take an ominous turn with reports of ARVN units melting away in battle. By early June, plans were underway to send 75,000 troops to Vietnam. By late June, Westmoreland felt the need for major reinforcements, and McNamara was dispatched to Vietnam to look into the situation. Events moved rapidly following his return. His report endorsed the view of raising the ante to 150,000 troops by the end of 1965 and the possibility of more than 300,000 troops a year hence. At a meeting in the White House all officials involved expressed support of McNamara's recommendations. The climax came on 28 July 1965 when President Johnson at a nationally televised press conference redefined US objectives in South Vietnam:

We insist . . . that the people of South Vietnam shall have the right of choice, the right to shape their own destiny in free elections in the South, or throughout all Vietnam under international supervision, and they shall not have any government imposed upon them by force and terror so long as we can prevent it.

At this point, however, Johnson expanded the objective: "We intend to convince the Communists that we cannot be defeated by force of arms or by superior power."<sup>17</sup> The

President was definitely laying US prestige on the line.

In his initial recommendations to the President following his return, McNamara had recommended a call-up of the Reserves. However, the bad aftertaste left by the activations during the Berlin situation in 1961 and the desire to avoid a debate with Congress persuaded Johnson to fight the war with an essentially conscript force. The President wanted to prosecute the war and build his Great Society at the same time—to have both guns and butter. A congressional debate might well have resulted in derailment of the Great Society. Johnson's decision was to send 175,000 US troops for the time being, although in the press conference he used the number 125,000 and indicated that more would be sent later.<sup>18</sup> Troop increase followed troop increase in following months, with each increase being called a "program." The goal was called by Westmoreland "minimum essential forces," rather than the "optimum forces" of 670,000 that he occasionally requested but that were never seriously considered.

Secretary McNamara told Westmoreland early on not to "worry about the economy of the country, the availability of forces, or public or congressional attitudes." He, Westmoreland, should ask for what he felt was necessary to achieve his objectives, and McNamara would do his best to accommodate. After the decision was made, he would pressure the Army to meet the request immediately. With no Reserves to call up, the successive levies for Vietnam threw the Army into turmoil, in time wrecking the US Army in Europe and the Army strategic reserve in the United States.

McNamara was in Vietnam in October 1966 on one of his many trips to get a fresh feel for the situation. With the mid-year elections a month away, the President wanted the best assessment of the increasingly unpopular war that he could get. This trip was important in persuading McNamara that the war was a losing proposition.<sup>19</sup> Although he did not openly communicate this feeling, probably out of loyalty to the President, in

retrospect it seems clear that apprehensions he had already begun to entertain were strongly reinforced. We see some hint of this in his report upon his return, in which the nagging doubts of this supremely self-confident man began to emerge: "I see no way to bring the war to an end soon." Despite the high enemy casualties, McNamara reported that there "is no sign of an impending break in enemy morale and it appears that he can more than replace his losses by infiltration from North Vietnam and recruitment in South Vietnam." As for the Rolling Thunder bombing campaign in the North, McNamara judged that it had neither slowed infiltration to the South nor cracked the enemy's spirit in the North.<sup>20</sup>

Consequently, the Secretary's proposals to the President were designed to stabilize the US military posture in a way that could be maintained indefinitely, while at the same time stressing pacification and the improvement of the South Vietnamese armed forces. Specifically, he recommended stabilizing US ground forces at 470,000; constructing an infiltration barrier along South Vietnam's northern border; and stabilizing the Rolling Thunder bombing campaign at current levels. Clearly, McNamara had decided to try to contain the continued expansion of the war effort, reversing the approach of the preceding 18 months.

McNamara's recommendations concerning stabilization of ground force strength in the South and Rolling Thunder operations in the North brought into the open a conflict between the Joint Chiefs and the Defense Secretary over the conduct of the war. Concerning the notion of leveling off ground forces at 470,000, the Chiefs were initially guarded. However, on the bombing they were straightforward in their written reaction to McNamara's recommendation:

The Joint Chiefs of Staff do not concur in your recommendation that there should be no increase in level of bombing effort and no modification in areas and targets subject to air attack. . . . To be effective, the air campaign should be conducted with only



those minimum constraints necessary to avoid indiscriminate killing of population.<sup>21</sup>

The controversy continued into the spring of 1967. McNamara prepared for a trip to Saigon to hear what the military there had to say—or at least discover the tenor of their thoughts, as he already knew pretty much what they would say. He himself was now thinking of a troop ceiling of somewhere between 485,000 and 500,000 in contrast to Westmoreland's "minimum" ceiling—at this point, one of 550,000. The Mideast war that broke out in early June caused a postponement of the trip, but McNamara finally reached Saigon on 7 July. On the final night of his visit, McNamara and Westmoreland worked out a compromise (to which Westmoreland apparently did not fully agree) for a new ceiling of 525,000. This was considered close to the highest level that could be sustained without mobilizing the Reserves, something the President did not wish to do.<sup>22</sup>

The controversy over the bombing was to follow a different and more dramatic course than had the troop-ceiling issue. While the military endorsed a significant expansion of the air campaign in the North, McNamara and many of his key civilian advisors favored a restricted campaign south of the 20th parallel. It was an important and divisive issue not only in the Pentagon, but in Congress and in the public realm. In August 1967, the issue had become public enough and controversial enough, in fact, for Senator John Stennis of the Preparedness Subcommittee of the Armed Services Committee to conduct a probe into the air war in North Vietnam.<sup>23</sup> McNamara had prepared a detailed analysis to show that increased escalation of bombardment would not accomplish US objectives. Indeed, he felt that de-escalation might well further the possibilities for a negotiated settlement of the war.

McNamara presented his testimony on 25 August. This was the only occasion on which McNamara took a position that, if not contrary to the President's position, probably hedged Johnson's future options. The

official relationship between the President and his now "dovish" Secretary of Defense was never quite the same again, nor was McNamara's influence with the President ever as secure.

McNamara's testimony (which took the entire day) was designed to convince both extremes: to those who wanted more bombing, that it would be futile; to those who wanted none, that there was a purpose to bombing in certain areas. The air war was not a substitute for the war in the South, as some believed it could be, he stated. Still, he pointed out, it had its objectives: to reduce infiltration to the South; to raise the morale of the South Vietnamese people; and to exact a sufficient price from the North for them to conclude finally that negotiations were preferable.

Despite the gulf between his and the President's thinking, McNamara's testimony did set the stage for a diplomatic initiative on the part of the President, the so-called San Antonio formula. The key part of the formula, delivered publicly by the President in San Antonio on 29 September 1967, relaxed America's previous position somewhat in that we would no longer require advance concessions by North Vietnam nor the stopping of all military effort by the North: it asked only that their level of military activity not be raised. The initiative led to nothing at the time. However, it did help set the stage for the bombing halt that took place in the fall of 1968.

During the preceding April, McNamara had been tentatively offered the presidency of the World Bank. In a discussion about the job with the President, he received no direct reaction. In mid-October, however, the President finally asked McNamara if he was still interested and, upon receiving an affirmative reply, indicated that he would help him get the position.<sup>24</sup> Johnson was true to his word; the nomination went to the Bank on 22 November. When the announcement was made on the 29th, even Washington, where leaks of imminent cabinet changes are routine, was surprised. McNamara stayed on until the end of February 1968 to help with the fiscal 1969 budget, but he was now a lame

duck and his power was gone. The seizure of the *Pueblo* by the North Koreans on 23 January and a few days thereafter the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong Tet Offensive of 1968 guaranteed that he would be busy and occupied to the end.

### SOME OBSERVATIONS

When McNamara became Secretary of Defense in January 1961, the Department was more than 13 years old and had had seven previous secretaries. From a loosely decentralized arrangement in the Forrestal days, the control of the secretary had gradually tightened. Eisenhower's 1958 Reorganization Act provided for even greater central control, but the act had been basically untapped when McNamara was sworn in.

The successful, intelligent, and dynamic new Secretary was determined to be an activist in carrying out his role. Although his intellectual interests had evolved far beyond those of managing the Ford Motor Company, his basically business orientation had not permitted the development of a fully mature geopolitical world view, with the result that initially he accepted that of the new President and his immediate advisers.

With respect to his pioneering introduction of systems analysis into defense decisionmaking, a final word is in order. The early unit within the Comptroller's Office did some ground-breaking work. Later, as an independent agency, the office grew too large and the work was less well done. Furthermore, the adoption of a public adversarial role vis-à-vis the military impaired the office's credibility and perhaps lessened its effectiveness. But systems analysis as a mode of thought has proved both beneficial and lasting.

Much has been made of McNamara's accountant's approach to problems—his ease with charts and his insistence upon quantitative analysis in all areas. A note of caution is in order with respect to pressing this view of McNamara too far. The driving force in all analysis is the assumptions that lie behind it, and in arriving at these McNamara was not simply a computer. He relied on

intuition and hunches as much as any human being, and it is erroneous to assume otherwise. This is not to deprecate the analytical mode, but only to stress that the ideal of totally detached and scientific analysis developed by McNamara and his team was never achieved in practice.

If we leave aside Vietnam, McNamara played a major and successful role in the development of national strategy and defense policy in the first three or four years of his tenure. Although the necessarily brief length of this article has not permitted us to trace the development of his strategic thinking, he deserves fairly high marks in this regard.<sup>25</sup> He attempted with moderate success to make American military power more responsive to US foreign policy and national security objectives. While rejecting a counterforce strategy, he did oversee the development of an American nuclear deterrent that could survive a USSR attack and still inflict unacceptable losses on that country. He also strengthened the command and control facilities of our strategic retaliatory forces, thus increasing the flexibility with which they could be employed.

What McNamara did not do was work out a relationship of trust with the military—the ideal example of which is the Stimson-Marshall partnership during World War II. True, McNamara worked well with JCS Chairmen Taylor and Wheeler, but more than this was needed. The JCS as a group did not receive enough direct contact with the President. One member of the Chiefs during that period told me he felt like a spectator of the war rather than a decisionmaker who was integrally involved. By law, the Joint Chiefs are, after all, the principal military advisors to the President. Of course, they work also for the Secretary of Defense, but on the life-or-death issues of national security no Secretary of Defense should insist on acting as conduit between the President and his uniformed military advisors.

McNamara served Presidents Kennedy and Johnson well. He was respected by them and was included in the small inner circles in which each liked to do his real decisionmaking. McNamara was a strong

cabinet officer and at the same time a key presidential spokesman and representative in the sense that he loyally reflected the President's views to the Defense bureaucracy, to Congress, and to the public. Indeed, perhaps he was too loyal—who knows what would have happened had he vigorously articulated his misgivings about the war earlier than he did?

#### NOTES

1. Interview with Roswell Gilpatric.
2. Robert S. McNamara, *The Essence of Security* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), p. x.
3. A representative sample of this literature includes Alain C. Enthoven and K. Wayne Smith, *How Much is Enough* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971); Clark A. Murdock, *Defense Policy Formation* (Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 1974); James M. Roherty, *Decisions of Robert S. McNamara* (Coral Gables, Fla.: Univ. of Miami Press, 1970); Ralph Sanders, *The Politics of Defense Analysis* (New York: Dunellen, 1973); and Samuel A. Tucker, ed., *A Modern Design for Defense Decision* (Washington: Industrial College of the Armed Forces, 1966).
4. This was the Air University Black Book of Reorganization Papers. The Symington Task Force set up by Kennedy during his 1960 campaign also used this book. Some of the proposals were quite far-reaching, such as employing a single Chief of Staff for the armed forces. This approach was rejected by McNamara.
5. McNamara, p. 88.
6. Military forces, also an element of programming, were projected over an eight-year period.
7. I.e. Strategic Retaliatory Forces, Continental Defense Forces, General Purpose Forces, Airlift and Sealift, Reserve and Guard, Research and Development, General Support, Retired Pay, Military Assistance.
8. The Five-Year Defense Plan was comprised of summaries of each program element (for example, a particular tactical fighter being requested) together with all the supporting information on that element, such as force descriptions, procurement lists, and facilities lists.
9. The services had been provided earlier with Tentative Force Guidance tables that could also form the basis for program change requests.
10. Systems Analysis did not review all service proposals. Some were reviewed by other offices, such as Installations and Logistics, and Research and Engineering.
11. Some well known military figures who subsequent to their retirements made strongly adverse comments were General Thomas White, Air Force Chief until 1961; his successor General Curtis LeMay; and Admiral George Anderson, Chief of Naval Operations until 1963.
12. Stanley M. Barnes, "Defense Planning Processes," *United States Naval Institute Proceedings*, 90 (June 1964), 32-33. For a comparable view from a former Defense Department Comptroller, see the address by W. J. McNeil excerpted in "This Speech Wasn't Cleared," *Army, Navy, Air Force Journal and Register*, 20 June 1964, pp. 1, 8.
13. McNamara's speech concerning the Anti-Ballistic Missile in September 1967 comes to mind. Based on analysis, a speech had been written rejecting the ABM. However, Johnson did not want to get caught during the 1968 election with an ABM "gap" comparable to the missile "gap" (invented) with which he and Kennedy had plagued the Republicans in 1960. Hence, a presidential decision was made to go for some ABM deployments. In this case, the same rejection speech was made usable merely by adding at the end of the text support for a light ABM deployment to counteract the potential Chinese threat.
14. Interview with William P. Bundy.
15. On 27 January 1964, Secretary McNamara testified before the House Armed Services Committee. The following extract from his testimony captures the tenor of feelings of the new Administration: "The survival of an independent government in South Vietnam is so important to the security of all of Southeast Asia and to the Free World that I can conceive of no alternative other than to take all necessary measures within our capability to prevent a Communist victory" ("Text of McNamara's Testimony on Southeast Asia," *The New York Times*, 30 January 1964, p. 2).
16. *The Pentagon Papers: The Defense Department History of United States Decisionmaking on Vietnam*, Senator Gravel edition (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), II, 412.
17. "Transcript of the President's News Conference on Foreign and Domestic Affairs," *The New York Times*, 29 July 1965, p. A-12.
18. For Johnson's perspective on the early buildup decision, see Lyndon Baines Johnson, *The Vantage Point* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1971), chap. 6.
19. Interview with William P. Bundy.
20. *Pentagon Papers*, IV, 348.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 357.
22. During that same summer, Clark Clifford and General Maxwell Taylor were sent by the President to visit the other countries with troops in Vietnam (Korea, Thailand, Australia, New Zealand, and the Philippines) to solicit further contributions. The additional increment was minimal.
23. The best account of the August 1967 hearings is Philip G. Goulding, *Confirm or Deny* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), chap. 6.
24. Henry Trehitt, *McNamara* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), *passim*.
25. For an informed, interesting, but dated and somewhat polemical account of this, see William W. Kaufmann, *The McNamara Strategy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964).

