#29

Interview of

WILLIAM P. BUNDY

Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs), 1961-63; Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs), 1963-64; Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, 1964-69

WASHINGTON, D.C.

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INTERVIEWERS: MAURICE MATLOFF, ALFRED GOLDBERG, AND LAWRENCE KAPLAN

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Matloff: This is part III of an oral history interview with Mr. William P. Bundy held in Washington D.C., on March 12, 1990, at 2:30 p.m. Accompanying Mr. Bundy is Ms. Blanche Moore, his former special assistant. Representing the OSD Historical Office are Drs. Alfred Goldberg, Lawrence Kaplan, and Maurice Matloff.

Mr. Bundy, at the last session Dr. Goldberg and Mr. Kaplan discussed with you various aspects of your role and service as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs. We would like to move on to your subsequent role as Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs and then as Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs. Before we do that, Dr. Kaplan has a few questions hanging over from last time.

Kaplan: I would like to clarify your role with respect to Cuba in the periods between the Bay of Pigs and the Cuban missile crisis and in 1963. I noted in the ISA records that there were some correspondence and memoranda between you and people in the State Department, particularly over interagency issues connected with Cuba. I wondered if you had any recollection of this.

Bundy: That comes as news to me. I can't think what issues there would have been that I would have been involved in.

Kaplan: To refresh your memory, one was a series of memoranda between you and Alexis Johnson over the guidelines for Cuban policy after the Bay of Pigs.

Bundy: You're talking about from mid-1961 on to the Cuban missile crisis.

Kaplan: That's right. And then when Sterling Cottrell had that interdepartmental coordinating committee on Cuban affairs, there was some evidence, not a great deal, of your activity at that time.

Bundy: I don't remember anything about it. That's one of those that didn't stick. I won't contradict the written record, but I have no useful recollection of it.

Kaplan: I will say that your commentaries at the time were very useful to me and my work, anyway.

Bundy: Good, I'm glad.

Goldberg: You may be cited, anyhow, whether you remember it or not.

Bundy: Of course, that's your privilege. You can't contradict the contemporary documentary. I know those biographees that have tried it and lost their biographers in the process.

Matloff: To go back to November of 1963, when you were appointed the ASD(ISA)--what were the circumstances of the appointment? Who recommended you and what directives or instructions were given to you, if at all, and by whom?

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Bundy: It rolled off very smoothly, once Secretary Korth of the Navy got into trouble, using his stationery for his banking business. I wasn't in on the process that led to the selection of Mr. Nitze as Secretary of the Navy, but I think that was in the pattern of the way that McNamara saw the thing--a little bit like the Ford Motor Company, if you ran a division you had that under your belt. We covered briefly the confirmation business, which in my case was zilch and in his case turned out to be rather complicated. As far as my taking his place was concerned, there was not more than a twitch of the head by McNamara and my saying I would be delighted to do it. There wasn't any directive. By then topic A was Vietnam and I was up to my eyebrows in it.

Matloff: Did Mr. Nitze offer any specific advice or suggestions?

Bundy: No. That's an interesting point. He had not been involved in the 1963 Diem crisis, at all, as far as I can recall. He didn't, as it were, reimmerse himself in the period after he knew he was going to be Secretary of the Navy. As Secretary of the Navy, he did not come to me and talk about it. He was occupied in learning a new job in the first months, which were my only remaining months in the Pentagon. Then he didn't, and he didn't thereafter. I was fascinated to read in his memoirs the account of his views as he framed them by mid-1965 in a climactic conversation with Mr. McNamara. Nitze and I stuck to our assigned jobs, and didn't communicate out of channels, which in a way I regret. I wouldn't have felt it was any kind of breach of anything. He wasn't immersed in the problem, as I was, but I wish I had asked his advice.

Matloff: Did you conceive of the role any differently from the way that he had, the role as ISA head?

Bundy: No, although I think it is fair to say that I was inclined to leave the arms control aspects very much to John McNaughton and others and not get into it personally. I didn't really have the opportunity to do it in my brief stint. There was a framing of an arms control proposal, and, as I recall, we framed a freeze proposal, which we talked about last time. Art Barber had a hand in that.

Goldberg: McNaughton was General Counsel at the time.

Bundy: Yes, he was. In the nature of things, there wasn't any special NATO business. I did enjoy enormously dealing with the Norwegians on the sale of F-5s, going to Norway, and flying up to Kirkenes and the like, but that was hardly high policy business. And a good deal it was, I think. Really, no change in scope.

Matloff: The problems facing ISA had not changed significantly since you had entered the Deputy position?

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Bundy: I would say that the effective wind-up of the Berlin crisis, which followed on in late 1962, removed an enormous agenda item in which ISA members were involved, but above all, Paul himself was engrossed. Vietnam was much more acute by late 1963. We also had the whole question of reshaping relations with Indonesia--we dropped Indonesia as a client for military aid. Those were some of the obvious geographically salient changes, but there was no real change in terms of the ongoing programs, MAP, etc., with which we were concerned. They pretty much stayed as they were, although we had a much larger specifically Vietnam-related program.

Matloff: Did you set any priorities for yourself?

Bundy: I don't think I really had time to, in those four months. I just fielded them as they came.

Matloff: Did you make any changes in the personnel, organization, or procedures in the short period that you were head of ISA? Did you bring in any new people, for example?

Bundy: Frank Sloan was already aboard as a Deputy Assistant Secretary; it may have been about that time that Peter Solbert came aboard. I never thought of it as my making any sweeping changes or putting my people in. They were people that Nitze had known, Solbert particularly.

Matloff: Did you have complete leeway, had you wanted to bring in more people?

Bundy: I certainly would not have felt any constraint in proposing anybody, but I don't think I did in that initial phase.

Matloff: Did you make much use of consultants during that period?

Bundy: I think we certainly continued to have people on the arms control side, but I don't recall anything other than that one proposal. I don't recall, for example, the prominent consultants, Wohlstetter,Ellsberg, etc. Ellsberg came in soon, I guess, as a line member of the ISA staff, but I didn't have any particular dealings with him.

Goldberg: I remember there were lots of consultants during those days.

Bundy: There was the weekly shuttle to Rand, which was pretty full.

Matloff: How about in terms of your working relationships--the division of labor between Mr. Nitze and yourself--did those relationships continue between you and your deputy?

Bundy: I think Solbert was the general deputy. He handled third world, and MAP; I went to the NATO meeting in 1963 and had our little interesting takeoff experience. I was doing that on Vietnam so much of this period that it was a slightly different division of labor, because I carried Vietnam with me.

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Matloff: How about your working relationships with Secretary of Defense McNamara, and Deputies Gilpatric and his successor, Vance?
Bundy: They were all very easy. Vance was an old classmate of mine. We played hockey together, and you know a man pretty well when you play hockey with him. Gilpatric had left by 1964, and Cy took over. My relationship with McNamara remains close to this day.
Matloff: Did you enjoy working for Mr. McNamara?
Bundy: Very much.
Matloff: Any serious differences with him on matters of policy or administration?
Bundy: I don't recall any.
Matloff: What about the other assistant secretaries, did you see some of them more than others?
Bundy: We dealt so much with the State Department, McNamara or the Deputy Secretary; I hardly dealt at all with Hitch, or Systems Analysis, or with the Logistics people. I remember a couple of memorable encounters with Harold Brown. Once we asked him to come and tell us what he thought was going to revolutionize weaponry in the next decade, and he said, "Lasers." That wasn't a bad shot. But we didn't deal with him on a daily basis. I dealt a lot with Gene Fubini, and enjoyed him very much. He was a crackling live wire.
Matloff: Do you recall on what kinds of matters you dealt with Mr. Fubini?
Bundy: Surely you have a cross reference on that. I don't recall now.
Matloff: How about the Chairman, JCS, General Taylor, and its members? Did you see them often?
Bundy: I went down to the tank fairly frequently on Vietnam-related matters--once every two weeks, or something of that sort. I had to be in on those sessions. I came to know Gen. Taylor very well when he was involved in Vietnam and I was Assistant Secretary. But I already knew him quite well from the preceding period. Wally Greene was an old pal from the back bench of the NSC in the Eisenhower group, but we didn't deal in any close way. There were Decker and Wheeler for the Army --later there was quite an intimate relationship with Wheeler. I certainly knew and respected Harold Johnson but the relationship was not really close.
Matloff: Johnson came later. Navy would have been Burke, Anderson, and Air would have been Le May.
Bundy: I didn't really have close relationships with Anderson and Le May.
Matloff: Also McDonald, for the Navy.

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Bundy: Again, I didn't have particular dealings with him. I was much closer, in a way, with the successive CINCPACS, because we had those Honolulu conferences and we were their personal guests and got to know them pretty well.
Matloff: How about the service secretaries, any activities with them?
Bundy: Vance left the Army . I didn't deal very closely with Steve Ailes. I have always known and liked him. We didn't get in with the service secretaries, even though Stan Resor was my old college roommate. It was crossing wires. There was no particular feeling against it; it was just that each had his own job to do.
Matloff: With whom did you deal in the State Department, and on what kinds of issues?
Bundy: We dealt a lot with Alexis Johnson, because he was a focal point for general ISA matters, which might then devolve into a relationship with someone else on the Assistant Secretary level. I never dealt closely with Hilsman on East Asia, because we had a strange division wherein State handled the political side and we handled the operating side and never the twain met, until the crash over the Diem thing. Not that we differed too much at that point; I just didn't work closely with him. I had a good relationship with Phillips Talbot, the Assistant Secretary for the Middle East, and that area, particularly formed in the fires of the original 1961 Iran controversy, but going on in various things. We worked very closely on India. Politico-Military did not bulk as large; and I didn't work particularly with the Soviet or European people, because I had only just cut my teeth on that area.
Matloff: How about President Johnson, did you have any direct dealings with him?
Bundy: I didn't see him head to head to have my appointment confirmed. Nitze and I are practically the only people in recent history who have commissions in which the words "nominate and" are stricken out, because we were nominated by Kennedy and appointed by Johnson. We were both confirmed at 1:00 on the day of the assassination. It was the last business the Senate did. It then fell to Johnson to decide whether to confirm those appointments. I never heard from him about it; it was just "Yes." I had known him in the '50s reasonably well, at the distance of our positions, because he was very close friends with William S. White, the New York Times Capitol Hill correspondent, and a Texan, and we were very close friends of the Whites, as were our children. I met him several times at dinners there. At the beginning of the Kennedy administration he had been somewhat my sponsor in the possibility of my being an Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs at State, which then went to Congressman Brooks Hays. We stayed in touch, and when I saw him at meetings, I made a point of treating him as the vice president, which one suspected

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just wasn't true of all the Kennedy gang. There were holdovers of what is now known as frictions over his selection at the 1960 Democratic convention. We did see them on some social occasions when he was Vice President, and there wasn't any doubt that he thought I was a reasonably able and loyal person.

Matloff: How about the dealings with your brother, as the Assistant Secretary for International Security Affairs, did you have official dealings with him?

Bundy: We were careful not to get into the position where anyone could think there was a brotherly cabal in dealing with the Secretaries, particularly the Secretary of Defense, or later the Secretary of State. I don't think either one of them had the feeling that that was the case. We didn't see each other a great deal outside the office. We were in different social orbits; we got together when mother was in town, that sort of thing. I did deal with him on two or three occasions, when I sent over something that needed his look, but the paper would speak for itself.

Matloff: In that case, did you have to clear with the Secretary of Defense?

Bundy: He would know what I was doing. There was certainly never a case when he didn't.

Matloff: How about your dealings with Congress?

Bundy: A great deal. I always regarded that as a rather pleasant side of the job, both as Deputy and as Assistant Secretary. On military aid, I dealt with the authorizing committees and the appropriations committee, which was no fun at all with Otto Passman. I formed a lot of relationships with members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee was another story entirely. Senator Lausche, from Ohio, hardly ever convened his subcommittee, and the relationship just hardly existed. He was supportive of the war and not inquisitive, but the ball was more frequently in the hands of Fulbright. That was an edgy relationship from a fairly early point. On the Hill side, in my Pentagon days, my ties were almost wholly on the MAP side. One story has an interesting jurisdictional angle. At one point we thought it would be much better if military aid were considered by the same committees as the main Pentagon budget, that it really should be measured against that. We formed a project for doing this. One of the people I dealt with a lot at State was Hollis Chenery, who was the coordinator of foreign aid, and another was William Gaud, who was also involved in that. We had come to feel that military aid should be considered by the Armed Services Committee, and in some fashion I was the one chosen to wait upon Carl Vinson and persuade him to take jurisdiction in the Armed Services Committee. He gave me the back of his hand in record time, in a very courtly fashion, of course. He leaned back

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in his chair, the floor covered with cigar ashes, and said, "I think it is a very interesting idea. If you send it over I'll be sure that it goes directly to Dr. Morgan's committee." That was Foreign Affairs, of course. In other words, he wasn't having any part of it. This was the only baby the House Foreign Affairs Committee had, of course, of which one was well aware, and logic be hanged. The Foreign Affairs Committee was much more detailed and searching. They knew the MAP program very well, better than any other committee in either chamber. So there were a lot of dealings with them and vivid experiences testifying there. I remember testifying when Wayne Hays took after me and I bit back--one of the few times one dares to do that in a congressional hearing. I could see by watching the faces around the table that I wasn't losing ground with the others.

Matloff: Do you recall the issues or differences on which the Congress was most sensitive? Did they deal mostly with policy, budget, or what?

Bundy: I would be the witness on the policy side. When people were asking why we were having such and such weapon, that would be General Palmer, and the service people would be saying why we were doing it in that way. I would testify on the policy side, which would include a thing like that five-year deal with the Shah that I described last time. The committees in those days were just remarkably sympathetic. You weren't conscious of a great liberal subcaucus in the foreign affairs committee. There were some who were plainly more trouble than others. That was a very centrist committee, as I saw it at the time. There are a lot of people who are still around on it, Bill Broomfield, and various others. They were a very responsible, thoughtful committee and treated it as very serious main business. Boyd Crawford, their staff director, was very easy to deal with. So, In those days, was the Senate crowd, which later went off the reservation on Vietnam.

Matloff: What was your view of the threat in this period? Had it changed in any way from the period when you were Deputy? Did you detect any differences in the opinions of other people in OSD?

Bundy: I think there was a general feeling after the limited test ban treaty that we were in an easier relationship with the Soviet Union, but we certainly hadn't revised the threat estimates or decided that peace had suddenly broken out in Western Europe. The ending of the Berlin crisis was certainly a factor. I just wasn't there long enough to weigh what was happening to the major theater in threat estimates. And then, of course, we were all sensing a greater threat from China during this period, from roughly the Sino-Indian war onward.

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Matloff: Was this fairly common, not only in Defense, but in Defense,State, and CIA, all the agencies?
Bundy: I don't recall any significant differences.
Matloff: The threat of China to Southeast Asia as a whole, not just South Vietnam?
Bundy: Yes, very distinctly so. We were very sensitive to the Chinese tie with the PKI in Indonesia. We had the feeling that China was in a very assertive phase in 1964-65, and to some extent in 1963. Then the Indonesian confrontation with Malaysia began in the fall of 1963--along in there.
Matloff: Let me ask you about strategic planning. Were you or ISA at all involved in the formulation or implementation of strategic planning or policy in the Pentagon?
Bundy: I'm not a good witness on that, because it didn't become a major part of my thinking in the three and a half months that I was in the Assistant Secretary job, and up to then it would have been very much Paul Nitze's business.
Matloff: Could you sense what influence McNamara was having with President Johnson in the matter of strategic planning in the war in Vietnam?
Bundy: Speaking strictly to my Pentagon period, we didn't have our own major forces and didn't feel we were calling the shots. The issues involved things like the strategic hamlet program but it was a fairly limited range, and I don't recall any particular thing, nor certainly any great fuss on this kind of subject with Hilsman, such as he portrays in his memoir.
Matloff: The book To Move a Nation?
Bundy: Yes.
Matloff: Did you have any contacts--yourself or any of your people--with the civilian strategists, people like staff members of Rand or alumni who were in the Pentagon?
Bundy: I didn't really get into the whole Hitch-Enthoven-Rowen association. They were good friends and colleagues, but I don't think I was regarded as quite in the brown-belt category.
Goldberg: It took Harry 25 years to succeed you in that job.
Bundy: I haven't talked to him about how he's enjoying it.
Matloff: How about interservice rivalry, was it a problem at all for you, as head of ISA?
Bundy: It certainly was in the air one breathed, but I don't recall any particularly salient episodes of it. It didn't come into the MAP planning all that much.
Matloff: Did you get involved in the formulation of the Defense budget?
Bundy: No, that I did not do at any time. It might have happened if I had stayed longer as Assistant Secretary.

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Matloff: How about the impact of McNamara's reforms in this field on programs or operations of ISA?

Bundy: I don't recall any. He certainly was much tougher and much more thoroughgoing in his review of the MAP budget, which was the main thing for which ISA was responsible. He also knew what was going on in the military sales program but those were chicken feed in the overall budgetary picture.

Matloff: You indicated in an earlier session that he had given this area stronger support than other Secretaries.

Bundy: Emphatically. It was leadership from in front. He was going to testify and know what he was testifying about. His skull sessions were hard sessions indeed.

Matloff: How about questions about weaponry and manpower--you mentioned that one of the military might get in on some of those problems. Were you drawn in on any issues of manpower or weaponry?

Bundy: I can name one--the case of the F-5 in its early versions, which had been set in motion by Quarles in the Eisenhower -McElroy era. That plane very much was ticketed for use in the MAP program. We inherited it, and I very quickly became convinced that it was a very good idea. The Air Force was not keen on it for its own uses and therefore inclined to keep us in our corner about it. It became known, I believe, for a while in the Air Force corridors as "Bundy's folly." That was the only weapons system I can recall where we were on a different tack from anybody, not taking standard stuff.

Matloff: To turn to area problems, first NATO and then Vietnam; what involvement did you have with NATO, its policies, strategy, or buildup? You mentioned some contacts with the Norwegians.

Bundy: That wasn't in a NATO policy basis, really.

Matloff: Wasn't there an aircraft deal with them of some kind?

Bundy: Yes, there was a substantial sale of F-5 aircraft. The Norwegian Defense Minister, Gudmund Harlem, father of the later Prime Minister, Gro Harlem Brundtland, made the deal. I went over to Oslo to close it and he flew me up to Kirkenes. It was a very memorable personal episode, but not laden with policy implications.

Matloff: In any other ways, were you involved in NATO policy, strategy, or buildup?

Bundy: I don't recall any critical issue at the NATO 1963 meeting, which I did attend as Assistant Secretary, performing the usual role as senior staff adviser to McNamara. I think for once the French were relatively docile in the communiqué, and so on.

Matloff: How much of your time as head of ISA was taken up with Vietnam?

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Bundy: That would have been roughly from the first of December until early March. There was a trip out after the NATO meeting.
Matloff: There was one in December 1963.
Bundy: Yes.
Matloff: And one in March 1964.
Bundy: Yes, which I didn't go on. McNaughton by then was fixed to take my place.
Matloff: He didn't come until July.
Bundy: I'd bet he was acting, because he had the car. There was a memorable meeting in April 1964 where we assessed the threat from China. It was out at Langley at CIA headquarters. I came out of the meeting and started to get into the car that had been mine, and John gently said, "It's my car, now, Bill."
Matloff: An informal appointment had been made, then.
Goldberg: I think I'll check that out, because this (DoD Fact Book) is capable of being wrong.
Bundy: I remember he went with McNamara on that trip to Vietnam in March 1964, and I did not go.
Goldberg: McNamara obviously had him in mind for the job, early on.
Bundy: Not only that, but he was already doing the job. He wrote the report. He had a rough draft of it before he left, and filled it in. This was the one where McNamara raised Khanh's arm. I was involved in that, after all. I must have gone in 1964, but McNaughton was already taking over the job of writing the report.
Matloff: Were your views being consulted by the administration on Vietnam in this capacity? And who was consulting with you?
Bundy: We had periodic meetings, usually on an ad hoc basis, to compare notes on the latest developments. I don't recall any particularly dramatic one in which the President was in the chair. On the coup that Khanh carried out in late January 1964, George McT. Kahin in his book, Intervention, described this as "the Pentagon's coup." Let me just say for the record and with the greatest emphasis, that I would flatly deny that, and did so to Kahin in the form of giving him my manuscript. There was nobody in the Pentagon--although some may have started to have misgivings about the Diem decision--as opposed to General Harkins in the field, who had flatly opposed it. Max Taylor reports himself as having grave reservations, but I think they were somewhat acquired after the event. Let me describe what I think did happen. Col. Wilson was the adviser assigned to Gen. Khanh, who was first corps commander up in the north, and undoubtedly in hindsight and as we later got reports, Khanh had talked to Wilson and asked a leading question in effect but had not received

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negative noises or instructions from Wilson. That's the only connection I can think of. I think Lodge was, by then, a little fed up with the ruling group, but I don't think he was lending himself to coups. If anybody was involved, it would have been Lodge, but not the Pentagon, nor any civilian or senior military person therein.

Matloff: What were your and McNamara's reactions to the coup?

Bundy: We'd been impressed by Khanh; we had met him in some fashion and found him energetic and attractive--sort of more "with it" than many among the top generals. We could see that things were not going very well, The group that had been there under the "leadership" of "Big Minh" wasn't very well pulled together. That we could see in the late December post-NATO meeting trip. We couldn't unwind it once he had done it. So our reaction was that maybe Khanh was the right man. Certainly committee government had shown itself woefully inadequate. So we were with Khanh from the beginning. The super emphasis that the President gave to it came a little later. He wanted to stop the wheel and get on with it and back the man. That's how those rather grandstand and not exactly culturally understandable gestures by McNamara during the March trip took place.

Matloff: Were you and ISA drawn in on any other foreign problems or area crises during this period, aside from the dealings over NATO and Vietnam?

Bundy: We were certainly still involved in Indian aid programs, and in the question of whether they were going to buy aircraft from the Russians. We tried to forestall that, but that may have been after I was Assistant Secretary. I think that was the time I went to Spain to negotiate briefly with them about the base renewal. Those are the only ones I quickly recall.

Matloff: Some general questions about Cold War policies--did you believe that containment was a realistic policy and that its assumptions were valid?

Bundy: Yes, I did.

Matloff: How about detente?

Bundy: I certainly felt that the limited detente of the period was altogether to the good in a lot of ways, and I hoped it would continue.

Matloff: You saw no conflict between the two?

Bundy: No; of course, we were trying to deal and ease, while at the same time keep our guard up. That's hardly an unfamiliar pose in conflicts of any sort over any period of time.

Matloff: On the question of military aid, how effective was it, on the basis of your experience in ISA, as a tool for political leverage in the Cold War?

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Bundy: That is a big question. It was absolutely a military necessity case in most of the big accounts like Korea, Turkey, Pakistan, and the others that had by then mostly been phased out. (Japan, Taiwan, Western Europe.) It certainly gave us standing in Pakistan, whether that was a good thing or not. I always thought our embrace of Pakistan was excessive, even at the time. Certainly military aid contributed to the posture desired by the government, which was national policy. It was useful in a number of base situations--for example, in Ethiopia, where we still had bases. In Iran, the military aid undoubtedly played a part in the bases and the listening posts we had there. There was a lot of generalized gain, hard to pin down, but it did knit our ties all the way around the circuit. It was a major feature which slowly dwindled away, as Frank Nash had predicted as early as 1954. It was a political asset. There was almost no case where it was in any sense negative, at that time.

Matloff: How about in coordinating these programs, did you encounter any major problems, particularly in the period when you were head of ISA?

Bundy: No, I thought we had a very good relationship with the aid coordinator, whose charter was well understood but may not have been categorically committed to paper. Hollis Chenery, in the State Department, was the man who coordinated economic and military aid. They very seldom, in practice, questioned our military aid proposals unless they thought they were much too great a burden on the country, but there was a general thrust for recommendations from the field to become more favorable on the economic side. You wouldn't do nation building if you were asking the country to spend more than made any sense on the military side. There was quite a distinct shift of policy under Kennedy and, to the degree that I was associated with it, it continued under Johnson. This was widely agreed; both Nitze and I agreed with it in substance. We thought there was too much mirror imaging in the JCS force goals for individual countries, which were the guidelines. We certainly thought, again, about the five-year deal with the Shah that if he went kiting off with every fancy weapon he coveted, he would pay much less attention to his main problem, which was getting decent living conditions for his people.

Matloff: How much of a role did ISA play in the policy side of military aid programs?

Bundy: Quite a lot. It was very hard to sort out. There was never a confrontational feeling about the discussions of this subject and they were carried on at all levels. We would send somebody over with the program and he would talk to the desk officer in State. It would come up the line. Sometimes the Assistant Secretary would get involved, but more often than not it was just negotiated and then checked on the basis of what seemed a reasonable allocation of money. A basic fact of the time

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was that Passman was much tougher about economic aid than he was about military aid, so we tended to merge, and in a sense that was allowed for.

Here I want to digress to discuss an important point about the training of foreign military officers in the US (and to a lesser extent the programs for training them in place).

In my time the basic guideline was that we would not explicitly seek to indoctrinate such officers in a "pro-American" direction. Rather, the idea was to let them see our system and learn for themselves, not to urge them to change theirs at least in basic ways, or to take the American view of civilian supremacy. On this point, at least, I strongly suspect we were right: they almost always did get the point, although if you combed the list of graduates of US military training programs you would probably find the odd case where an officer did get into politics in an un-American way, or even perhaps engage in a coup or a military government. Such governments and coups were of course endemic in Latin America especially, and I suspect that there were cases where American officers (and Ambassadors and Washington too at times) accepted them as inevitable and perhaps best in a particular situation. But the guideline always was to describe our doctrine of civilian supremacy as sound and the best possible, without trying to cram it down their throats, which I doubt would have worked in the badly inclined cases anyway.

This problem, of course, went on both before and after my time with MAP, right down to the Noriegas and others very recent. I am only describing what the guideline was in my time. And with it, as I recall, went a ban on CIA recruitment of officers, at least during their training periods. The purpose was to focus the training exclusively on professional military matters.

A tough and complicated subject. I doubt we had the final answers even in principle. Later, after I left office, I had occasion to review a draft study of MAP training programs, done for Brookings by Ernest Lefever, a strong hard liner. He either reported or urged that MAP have an explicit ideological purpose and I doubted his attempt to prove that this had been the case in the past. I don't know how this effort ended up.

Matloff: Another general question on the Cold War--did you believe that alliances were the most effective way of linking American and foreign military power?

Bundy: Yes. I believed it, at least generically. I thought some of the alliances--e.g., with Pakistan, which you call an alliance, although it was only formalized in the SEATO treaty and only on the express understanding that that only applied to threats from the north, etc.

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Goldberg: CENTO?

Bundy: No, we weren't members of CENTO. The presidential executive commitment to Pakistan of about 1959 was never cleared with Congress. Pakistan was an alliance in the broad sense, and that was on the more dubious side, I would have felt, even then. I supported the SEATO alliance at the time. I can see the reservations to be had about it now, but I felt it was right at the time. We also had the Korean, Taiwan, and Japan alliances; OAS did not have the same degree of binding. I did believe very strongly in these alliances.

Matloff: From your perspective as both Deputy and head of ISA, did, or do, you have any thoughts about the working relations and structure at top levels in DoD? Was there a need for changes, or were they effective as they were--particularly relations of ISA with other top levels in Defense, State, the national security machinery?

Bundy: From my experience and seeing it through other eyes in the '50s, as far as the organization within the Pentagon is concerned, I doubt if there has been a more effective time than the three-plus years I was involved in. The machinery worked very smoothly. I imagine there was some unhappiness in some military quarters, but I wasn't involved in that. Of the parts I saw, ISA seemed to have a recognized role to be heard when it needed to be heard; not to be crowding on anyone else's turf; and had good service cooperation, certainly on the Indian matter. It would work very smoothly, I thought. I would not be as complimentary about the way we meshed into national policy making, because I thought the national policymaking structure was too informal, too ad hoc, too task force oriented, and too averse to trying to set down in somewhat systematic fashion what it was you were trying to do in a given situation. I was more an Eisenhower-type procedure man with the proviso that I am talking about the procedures of the earlier Eisenhower years. In the later years it got very bureaucratically highbrow and checklist-oriented in the OCB, with less original thinking and less real debating of the issues. The NSC Planning Board, as I knew it as a CIA assistant to Robert Amory, who in turn was representing Allen Dulles, constituted a nice relationship and was a very profitable and useful thing. At that stage, ISA represented the Pentagon. The ISA representation, under Frank Nash and his successors, and the relationships between ISA and Robert Bowie and State, were very good. I think that more systematic structure had a great deal to commend it. I wish we'd had more of it in the Kennedy years, particularly, but also, to a considerable extent, in the Johnson years.

Matloff: Later on there was an effort to downgrade ISA and give it a lower profile, by the time Laird got into control.

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Bundy: I have only heard about it.
Matloff: Would you have liked to see some changes in the military assistance field?
Bundy: There, again, the sword was in the scabbard. I think Gen. Palmer was surprised we grabbed it, but he didn't demur once we did.

At the time we took over, I think there was far too little genuine policy direction of the MAP program in relation to other programs and to our basic policy toward a given country. Basically such direction had to come from State and ultimately from the President or the NSC, and in working it out and applying it ISA had a key role. We also had our own ideas, of course, and were often troubled by tendencies, for example, to get into "mirror-imaging" of US forces and following the JCS force goals slavishly without regard to what experience had revealed about the severity and nature of the threat and especially the capacities of the local forces and society.

To put it another way, MAP when we took over seemed to be running on automatic pilot and to need a good bit of navigational checking and the constant re-checking. In this process we worked with State a lot, but also tried to keep the military viewpoint in mind, with what success I will let others judge.
Matloff: How about the styles, personalities, and effectiveness of some of the personalities that you worked with and served, starting with McNamara? How would you characterize Mr. McNamara as an administrator of the Defense Department?
Bundy: Certainly forceful and dynamic, and right on top of the most extraordinary range and amount of things. We were much more of a staff section than a line organization, and I thought he handled us very well. He knew what we were talking about and became progressively more sophisticated on the issues. You didn't have to tell him something twice. He was very responsive to the assertion of a political consideration, whether it was by ISA or anybody in State. He was constitutionally bound to say that State had the final say. Since he was such an articulate and forceful person, there must have been those in State who thought that he was running the show more than he should, or having a disproportionate input. I don't think he intended it that way, but that was the way it worked, simply because he was what he was. When he took over the operating business in Vietnam after the decision of November 1961 and running right on through until we were more directly involved, he was undoubtedly taking on things that State might have had a larger role in, and perhaps the Chiefs as well. He took all the turf that was his and then a bit more, sure.

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Matloff: How would you view his accomplishments, and on the other hand, how about any weaknesses, failures, or disappointments?

Bundy: He, and I, think it is fair to say, almost everybody else concerned with Vietnam, never had a real feel for the situation. I don't believe that he was nearly as allergic to non-concrete evidences or testimony as some have said--that he was addicted to and believed the figures in anything like a categorical fashion, although I have known him to do so in other connections. When he became head of the World Bank, he told me that the literacy rate of Burma was somewhere around 80 percent. I said, "Come on, Bob, you don't really mean that." He tended to give what I believe the logicians call a misplaced concreteness to figures in some instances. I didn't feel that was really the case with his views of Vietnam. Also, he would run hard, if the matter was logical from the standpoint of weapons analysis--the Skybolt business was certainly not handled with adroitness. It was unfair to him that he had to do it, but he rammed it down the throats of the British and he was under a budgetary deadline. He moved very fast, on occasion, and sometimes too fast for his own good, I think.

Goldberg: With reference to his dominance of Vietnam policy--

Bundy: Of operational matters. Which gets over to policy, you're right.

Goldberg: Yes, which meant that State looked somewhat askance at his role, and felt that perhaps it was greater than it should have been. When you changed jobs and went over to State, did your position on this change any?

Bundy: Then we were all looking at the thing together. So much devolved on to the ambassador at that point, with the selection of Max Taylor. We were all seeing it together. State was much more involved on the operational side, you might say, than it had been at the earlier stage. We came out of November 1961 and Defense did all of the papers, all of this, all of that, and State just sat there and didn't lift a finger. Because I knew McNamara, and knew the situation, I guess I was a somewhat more active representative of the State Department. I never felt that McNamara was crowding me out, which I think others had felt, in other contexts. I am thinking of a lot of other situations than East Asia. I think the Europeanists felt that his speeches weren't always thought through as thoroughly as they might have been from every angle, but if he was set to make the speech, you'd better speak very quickly and have a very good alternate text handy if you wanted to change it. That was the way he did work.

Matloff: How would you compare him with other Secretaries of Defense with whom you may have had any dealings?

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Bundy: I wouldn't want to compare him to the ones I knew only from a distance--for example, McElroy at a Geneva conference in 1959. I never dealt with Gates on any significant matter; I certainly didn't deal with Engine Charley. If you go back to Lovett and Marshall, you're dealing in my Pantheon, so I won't compare them.
Goldberg: Clifford?
Bundy: Clifford was so concerned, almost to the exclusion of all else, with getting us down and eventually out of Vietnam. I never had a feeling of what Clark was like running the building, because I didn't think he was running the building.
Matloff: He delegated to Nitze.
Bundy: Right.
Matloff: Any comments about Deputy Secretary Gilpatric or Vance?
Bundy: I liked Gilpatric, and worked very easily with him. I didn't feel enormous force. I thought he was a very good deputy, keeping things straight, and all that. I thought Vance was more of a force on many matters. When I was Assistant Secretary in the State Department, I very well recall working with Vance on the question of what we would tolerate or authorize by way of the cloud-seeding operations in Laos or, conceivably, over the rice-producing areas of North Vietnam. I found we were as one on that. We thought it acceptable only if it was remote from populations, and he killed it dead as far as being applied in the area of the dams and the like in North Vietnam. I was very strongly of the same view. That is practically the only time I can remember dealing directly with him on an operational matter.
Matloff: Do you want to add anything about Nitze?
Bundy: We were on separate channels, but I admired Nitze very much in his capacity to get to the bottom of the tough ones. Since I'm going to mention it in a speech about him tonight, I might say that one of the outstanding jobs I thought he did in ISA was the way he ran the quadripartite contingency planning on Berlin in 1961-62. He has covered this action in some length, I'm glad to see, in his memoirs, which Strobe Talbott hadn't picked up in his book about Nitze. I thought that was an outstanding job. I suspect it had a real bearing on the stability and steadiness of the government and the sense, on the other side, that we were serious about this. I think it was a major contribution and I don't think anybody else could have done it in quite the same way, with the combination of feelings of the British, French, and Germans, all of whom he knew intimately from the past or who knew him by reputation in their governments, and dealing with our own military and marshaling the best brains in ISA. That was an absolutely crackerjack job, I thought.

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Bundy: I hope that one gets adequately covered in your history, because I don't think anything but an A + ISA performance could have held that show together, and that was Paul's doing. Don't you agree?

Kaplan: Very much so.

Bundy: I'm going to say so tonight, so I am glad to have your support.

Matloff: How about the JCS Chairmen, Lemnitzer and Taylor?

Bundy: I thought Lem had slowed down by the time he was Chairman. I had dealt with him before. I shouldn't say he slowed down; he was a very measured sort of fellow in general. But the picture I had had of him was a real firelighter from the Marshall Plan days and that didn't seem to fit the gentleman I saw. He certainly was a gentleman, and an easy and admirable man to deal with, though I didn't feel he was by then working on 16 cylinders.

Kaplan: Do you fault him in any way with respect to the Bay of Pigs management?

Bundy: Yes, I do fault the Chiefs on that, because their written judgments were Delphic; and, I am forced to believe on the basis of oral recollections, simply not candid.

Kaplan: Does that apply to Lemnitzer specifically?

Bundy: I assume that the Chairman is the one who finally signs off. I've expressed this lingering query in my mind whether they thought that somehow or other the affair was bound to get into difficulties and then we'd have to invade properly, which was what they wanted to do. But that's only a supposition.

Matloff: How about Taylor?

Bundy: As Chairman, I would say he was certainly very thoroughly engaged in the issues. You never had the feeling that he was quite as easy with his colleagues as Lemnitzer was. Max was a very able man, and my thinking was generally in the same direction as his.

Goldberg: His colleagues regarded him as being McNamara's and Johnson's man instead of their man.

Bundy: There are certain positions where you have to take it from both sides. Max did. I give him credit for that.

Goldberg: The service secretaries should have sympathized with his having to take it from both sides.

Bundy: Exactly. They very much do. And you have to do that. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs who isn't sensitive to the point of view of his major client in the White House is not going to make the government work properly.

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Matloff: What would you regard as your major achievements during your tenure as ASD(ISA)?

Bundy: None of them fall under the heading of major, but the ones I value most were: number one, getting the military aid program into much more coherent shape, with much more sensitivity to the economic and political aspects, getting it really in a crisp fashion up and down and sideways; and number two, the specific case of aid to India where I was action officer for dramatic months and worked closely on developing the framework of that program. In the end it dwindled away, but it might have led on to a great deal and certainly, I think, contributed to Indian confidence in that period. And I think we kept a pretty good control over the military sales program. These are all modest things, in a way. We ran a thoughtful ship, not one that was authoritarian. I think people thought they could communicate with us. It was a very happy period in my life.

Matloff: Any disappointments, or something that was not accomplished?

Bundy: Of course. Certainly we didn't feel that we had rattled the fences on Vietnam. That is, we hadn't done that well at it, but we had done as well as we knew how to do. Of course, where it came apart was partly political, but also partly things we might have foreseen, if we had been smarter. Nobody gets very many high marks on that; we didn't. It wasn't our business to judge Diem, and I thought that the McNamara trip in September 1963 was a useful contribution to policy. But nothing in connection with Vietnam is the source of great satisfaction to look back on.

Matloff: Why did you leave the Pentagon when you did?

Bundy: When the President says he wants you to do a job, my code is either to say, "I am leaving the government" or do the job.

Matloff: He tapped you for the Assistant Secretary of State job?

Bundy: Yes, he tapped me. I'm sure I have mentioned our previous association. He had no confidence at all in Roger Hilsman, and I think that it was only a question of a short time before he was going to make this change. He wanted somebody who knew the territory well enough to operate. I hadn't served in the area and didn't know the languages, and I pointed that out. Averell Harriman was a middle man on it; so was Dean Rusk.

Goldberg: What was Rusk's role in making the change?

Bundy: I think he accepted it quite readily.

Goldberg: But he did not initiate it?

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Bundy: I have no knowledge whether he did or didn't. My hunch is that he would have spoken in an entirely friendly and favorable way, had he been asked. We always got along very easily.
Goldberg: He didn't initiate moving Hilsman out?
Bundy: No, but I don't think he fought it, either.
Goldberg: So it was the President's initiative, as far as you know?
Bundy: Yes, but he was pushing on a swinging door. There wasn't anybody who really felt it was going to be a bad move.
Goldberg: Who had influenced Johnson with respect to Hilsman?
Bundy: Johnson had had at least one personal encounter with Hilsman in the summer of 1963 on a social occasion where Hilsman had talked in a most indiscreet fashion in front of him and had rather taken over the floor, which in itself was not calculated to win the enduring good will of the Vice President. (I heard about this from the host, William S. White.) LBJ just thought of Hilsman as a bigmouthed lightweight and he did not approve, as we all know, of the decision to put skids under Diem, which was very much Hilsman's and Harriman's decision. So I never had any difficulty figuring out where his negative feelings about Hilsman came from.
Matloff: Did you brief McNaughton, your successor?
Bundy: We worked side by side, and knew each other the way that people who have once been on the Harvard Law Review do know each other, talking shorthand to each other. We communicated very easily and readily right along. We did know a lot of people in common. But I didn't brief him in any formal sense.
Matloff: To turn to your Assistant Secretary of State role now, 1964-69, how would you compare your responsibilities in that post with that of Assistant Secretary of Defense?
Bundy: The subject matter was entirely different. When you called and talked to an ambassador, you talked about anything that came up. The whole relationship fell within your purview one way and another. You might decide to let the Pentagon talk about a certain aspect of it in the working relationships, but the Assistant Secretary of East Asia was in charge of policy toward his country's course, referring to the Secretary and the President as necessary. It was just a different degree of responsibility.
Goldberg: Given your choice, you would have preferred the State job to the Defense job, wouldn't you?
Bundy: I always said the best job I had in the government was ISA; on an across the board basis, involvement in everything, with final responsibility for very little. It has

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its extremely attractive aspects. At the same time, you do know that the regional assistant secretary in an embattled region does have a greater basic responsibility.

Matloff: Did your service with ISA in any way prepare you for that position in State? Did it influence your approach to it?

Bundy: I suppose it did. Others could speak better. I had been to the countries and had talked to people in senior positions. When you went to Korea and ran the military aid program, you talked to Park Chung Hee. You didn't talk to top people in Japan, but you certainly could talk in an easy way to ambassadors, both the Americans in the area and the Asian ones in Washington. Also, I'd been around the territory once or twice. I had had a couple of orientation trips when I was in CIA and had read the cables since 1951. So that was my experience, and I knew the policy papers from which a great deal stemmed of those successive periods. But I lacked the hands-on fingerspitzengefühl, for which I always turned to my people.

Matloff: What contacts did you have with OSD in connection with the Vietnam War?

Bundy: One or two are recorded in the Pentagon Papers. We were constantly back and forth, all the time. In the key task forces--for example, that of November of 1964--John McNaughton and I were cheek by jowl every step of the way. We dealt at all levels. I'd also like to say that the man in charge of East Asia in the ISA staff, Adm. Luther Heinz, was first-class and I learned a lot at his feet. He helped me a lot. He is a wonderful man. He's probably in Coronado at this point.

Matloff: How effective was the coordination between State and Defense in connection with the Vietnam War?

Bundy: I didn't think it was one of the weak spots. We shared our thoughts a great deal. I didn't think that the President's Tuesday lunch was a very effective coordinating mechanism, at least from mid-65 on. Later it was supplemented, beginning in the spring of 1967, by those "non-meetings," as we used to call them, that Nick Katzenbach used to have, which I now find the President had practically instigated. Wheeler, Nitze, and others came to Katzenbach's office, and we had a very informal chinning. The coordination by then had become less good; no question about it. I would say that the coordination in the government as a whole was very good through the period of major decisions in 1965 and right through to early 1966. It got progressively more centered in the White House, particularly when Walt Rostow took over my brother's job. His emphasis was more on his own role than my brother's was. I thought that it was progressively less effective. We weren't drawn in in State; we weren't drawn in on troop addition issues in the fall of 1966

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and spring of 1967, in anything like the degree that we had been involved in the Pleiku decision, or the July 28, 1965, decision to send forces, etc. It tended to become separate and be treated as more and more an operating military program problem, which in many ways it was, but I missed the closeness of constant discourse that we had had in the earlier period. My successive deputies in the State Department who were charged specifically with Vietnam, Amb. Leonard Unger and Phil Habib, who was a superlative officer (Len was a very good one, too) had good relationships with their Pentagon counterparts--but it was not as close at the top as in 1964-65. Phil could break down almost any barrier. He knew when it came to those briefings of early 1968 that he, Gen. Dupuy and George Carver were in sync, and it was Phil who did it. We could pull it off in a crunch, but we didn't have it day to day quite as closely as I would have liked. That's a relatively minor critique of decision-making, because it's mostly operations-making decisions.

Goldberg: So the centralization role of NSC begins with Rostow.

Bundy: I would put it that Rostow was much more aggressively asserting his own point of view than my brother Mac ever did. Certainly as far as reporting what happened at the Tuesday lunches, my brother Mac would always have a good report available; Rostow, almost never, in my experience.

Goldberg: Kissinger followed in his footsteps, rather than in McGeorge Bundy's footsteps.

Bundy: That's an oversimplification in a way.

Goldberg: He improved greatly on it.

Bundy: It's the truth, put it any way you wish. Rusk was close to LBJ, and influential--as William Rogers was not under Nixon.

Matloff: Did you or any of the other of Mr. Rusk's top assistants feel that the Secretary of Defense through his posture statements, was usurping the power of the State Department to enunciate foreign policy or was intruding on State's foreign policy prerogatives?

Bundy: The best answer to that would have to come from someone like Henry Owen, head of policy planning, and Walt Rostow and Alex Johnson. I didn't get into that enough to have a useful opinion.

Matloff: Can you tell us on whom President Johnson was relying primarily for advice on the Vietnam War during the period when you were in this position?

Bundy: Certainly the most influential figure was McNamara.

Matloff: And after him, Clifford?

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Bundy: Clifford, yes and no. The forces that led Johnson to change his view in March 1968 certainly included Clifford, but much more, the briefings of "the wise men". Then, when the smoke cleared after the March 30 speech, Clifford exerted his influence unrelentingly not to let any further increases take place and to get us on a course from which we would start withdrawing. I think he asserted this position at every point, but I don't think Johnson necessarily bought it at every point. I think Johnson remained to the end somewhat more "hard line" than Clifford.

Goldberg: How did you view George Ball's role, especially in the early stages of the war, in 1964-65?

Bundy: That was no charade, by a jugfull. George's papers were powerful, and they were seen and read by the President. I don't know whether they were read precisely when they were written--for example, the famous October 1964 paper. I know that I saw it at the time, and I presume it went to the President, but that was a busy time in the President's life. He was getting elected. George certainly weighed in strongly at the crucial times of decision and got a full hearing. I think it was one of those situations where, had he picked up a lot of support, Johnson would have really pricked up his ears. He thought of Ball as inherently very skeptical of pulling it off, and perhaps unduly influenced by the French experience. But Ball certainly kept that course of action before the President. He did it as honestly and concretely as he could and contributed enormously to the honesty of the debate. I think Johnson took him seriously, respected him, and never held it against him.

Goldberg: There are differences, of course, on Ball's role.

Bundy: You mean there were those who said it was a charade?

Goldberg: Or that it wasn't as clear as Ball makes it out to have been, in retrospect.

Bundy: All I can say is I think I read papers that a lot of other people didn't read, and it was very clear to me.

Matloff: Let me try out for your reactions a few quotations from books that have been written about this period. Sorensen, in his book on Kennedy, said this: "Rusk at times seemed almost too eager to disprove charges of State Department softness by accepting Defense Department toughness." Does that seem like a fair appraisal, from your viewpoint in ISA and State?

Bundy: On the issue in which I knew Dean Rusk best, he war pretty consistent and pretty consistent with his record under the Truman administration. I didn't think he needed to toughen it.

Matloff: You have something of the same nature reflected in Schlesinger's book, A Thousand Days." He stated: "The Secretary of State was well satisfied with military

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predominance in the formation of United States policy in Vietnam." He also wrote: "In Saigon, as in Washington, the State Department had acquiesced in the theory that Vietnam was basically a military problem."

Bundy: I never thought the latter part of that was really true. I think that this was kind of the White House staff line of the period. I don't think that Sorensen was really immersed in it; I would differ with the latter [Schlesinger's comments]. I think it's true that from an operating standpoint McNamara was just in there doing his job and that turned out to be a big chunk of what was being done.

Goldberg: He and Rusk had a good relationship, didn't they?

Bundy: That was my experience. I think Rusk could be Delphic to a lot of us. He didn't believe, as a matter of principle, in stating his clearcut position, even when he had one. He said, "That way, people will start 'yes' advising me, in effect. They will say, 'We'll do it the way he wants to do it.'" Frankly, I thought he carried it a lot too far. And he disliked frank disagreement among his colleagues and subordinates. He disliked it almost viscerally. Bob Bowie is very vivid on this, when he and Adrian Fisher differed on some question in the nonproliferation treaty. They were old friends and colleagues in the tougher ranges of the law, and were used to extremely vigorous argument. Rusk just said, "You don't talk that way to each other." They were going to go and have lunch afterwards, in the most friendly way. Bowie was saying, "Think of the German angle" and Fisher was saying, "You have to have your treaty." Rusk was averse to that kind of head-to-head argument--even to sharp differences in general.

Goldberg: He should have dealt with enough lawyers by this time to know what they were like.

Matloff: He ended up in the law school in Georgia.

Bundy: Of course, but not all lawyers are necessarily disputatious.

Goldberg: Only most of them.

Bundy: That's a very important characteristic of Rusk. He did not encourage frank expression of your underlying views. I have been on long plane trips with him and he never let his hair down. That phrase doesn't fit with him, though. (Rusk was, of course, bald.)

Goldberg: If he didn't want to state his own position, he must, in effect, have invited this sort of thing from his subordinates. He'd want to know what they were thinking and the positions they would follow.

Bundy: But you would still have to ask, "What's your gut feeling about where we stand vis-a-vis where we were three to six months ago?" We went for a lot of drinks

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together between six and seven o'clock in the evening. He didn't draw out; he was correct to a fault.

Moreover, I think it is high time to be candid about the exhaustion factor, not only for Rusk but for others of us as the grind went on from 1964 to early 1969. Rusk as I first knew him at close quarters in 1964 was a much more vigorous man than he was by late 1968, and a lot less grooved than he became as the ordeal went on. He himself writes that he went through the last year in office, 1968, with a lot of "help" from heavy smoking. He also drank a lot of whiskey, never so that he was visibly under the influence (slurring words, or incapable of putting his views clearly) but so that, as at least I came to feel, he was not open to new ideas or new approaches as he might have been in top physical form.

Setting this down, I realize that my own staff would very likely say the same things about me (minus the whiskey part). We were all damn tired by 1968 and I am afraid it showed at times.

Matloff: In reference to the "Tuesday Cabinet," there's a quotation in Professor Henry Graff's volume on this subject, dealing with the Johnson administration, in which he notes that Secretary of State Rusk relied heavily on his area chiefs--"that is, on men like Bill Bundy." He writes that they frequently attended conferences with the President to help express State's position on specific questions. "Occasionally one heard it said ," he states, "that this style of presenting State's point of view weakened the position of State as against Defense, in that it tended to pit an Assistant Secretary against a Secretary, because McNamara did not speak through his subordinates." Do you want to comment on that?

Bundy: I recall very few instances where I stated the State Department position rather than George Ball, or more usually, Dean Rusk himself. But no, I think that's somebody's construct. That's probably Graff's book that he published in 1965.

Goldberg: No, later.

Bundy: Rusk just didn't take up the cudgels in meetings. He would say, "The President will find out later what I think and I don't want to get myself in the position of recommending something and being overruled, because that weakens the consistency and integrity of the government." That was a position that he, on one or two occasions, attributed to George Marshall, but I don't think it was Marshall's position. I think it was largely a reflection of a certain correctness in his own view, but also a certain diffidence about saying, "This is what I think," in a way that you could wade in and say, "Dean--or Mr. Secretary (I rarely called him "Dean"

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then)--I disagree with your view on that point." He did not wish discussion to reach that pitch. I think that was part of his makeup.

Goldberg: When he was an Assistant Secretary, he certainly didn't hesitate to state his positions.

Bundy: That's quite right, so that lends credence to the idea that there must never be a visible difference of view between the Secretary of State and the President. Certainly, that is highly desirable, and I suppose Acheson handled it because he saw Truman three times a week and knew very well where Truman was coming out. Every now and then there would be a disagreement with Defense or others, when he would usually win, but not always. Rusk didn't play it the same way and didn't have quite the same degree of intimate exchange with Johnson. Johnson didn't extract it from people, either.

Matloff: Was Johnson reaching down to get your views, by chance?

Bundy: Not in a direct way.

Matloff: Let me ask a few questions about the Vietnam War in this period. When and how did you first learn about the Tonkin Gulf incident, or incidents?

Bundy: The first incident, which nobody's ever questioned, was on Sunday August 2, and I was told by Rusk not to come down. I had gone with my family on Friday for my holiday in the Vineyard. The second incident was on Tuesday, and I was called off the tennis court and told to get my tail back here as fast as I could. I came in Tuesday afternoon, and picked up the evidence of the attacks in secondhand fashion. It was then that I became directly involved.

Matloff: Did you get involved in planning for the Tonkin Gulf congressional resolution?

Bundy: No, I didn't, and it is very interesting and important to note that the drafting of that resolution was done by Abe Chayes, recalled to duty, having left shortly before to return to the Harvard Law School faculty. Abe Chayes and George Ball drafted it, using only bits and pieces of what we drafted on a contingency basis in May and June. To say that we had it in our pockets ready to go is just nonsense.

Matloff: Let me ask you about the decision to bomb north of the 17th parallel, and also the decision to commit American ground combat troops, both in 1965. Did the President consult Rusk or you?

Bundy: The bureaucratic process behind both of those decisions has been spelled out exhaustively, in all kinds of ways. I don't know of anything that doesn't appear in the record. Rusk was actually taking a short sick leave during the decision on Pleiku. George Ball was representing the State Department . What may have gone

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on between him and the President, I do not know, but everything I have ever known about that is in my manuscript.

Matloff: Did the views of yourself and the Secretary of State differ at all from those of McNamara and the JCS on policy and strategy in Vietnam?

Bundy: At a certain point the military strategy seemed so clearly a matter that should be theirs. We didn't have a strong view that they were wrong in any particular way. I think we shared, certainly with McNamara but possibly not with all of the Chiefs, the view that the senior civilians generally felt, that bombing was a limited tool for South Vietnamese morale and had a certain cost on the other side constantly to overcome it, but it could not be in itself decisive unless and until you already had the situation moving in our favor in the South. McNamara must have said that 46 times in boilerplate to me. I think that was the general view of the civilians. There were people in the military who did think it could have a more dramatic impact than that. Certainly Gen. Vogt would have thought it, based on his later experience. It was not a view that Gen. Wheeler pressed, at least in my hearing. I do not know what may have passed directly between the President and any of the Chiefs; that's a rather murky area that some people are writing books on at the moment. A man at Texas A&M is writing a book about Johnson and the generals, intended to be a little similar to the book, Commander in Chief, about Franklin Roosevelt. I don't think it can be nearly as full because I don't think their relationships were anything like as close as FDR's relationships.

Matloff: What was your reaction to the Tet offensive?

Bundy: I could see right away that, in all probability, we were going to get back to where we had been in Vietnam itself, but the psychological effect was devastating here. There was very little doubt, and this is downplayed in a lot of books, including Colby's recent one, and no question that the pacification program was, for the time being, set back. It was made impracticable. That was a key feature in the briefings of March by the Habib-Dupuy-Carver team.

Matloff: Did you take any part in that post-Tet policy review that OSD was involved in?

Bundy: I was right in the middle of it. I was the State Department man all the way through, with Habib alongside me.

Matloff: Do you recall what you recommended? Was it any different from the approach of OSD?

Bundy: Only at one particular point. We went with a higher force increase recommendation initially, with the thought that that was good as a stab at the

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question but that it probably would come down in further analysis before the final decision was made. As far as the bombing part of the decision, what bombing would be cut, and so on, I was certainly skeptical that any quick progress could be made in negotiations if they started under the circumstances that then existed. I felt that the other side would not be downcast and not feel it had to make concessions. I did, under orders, send out to Bunker a very Eyes Only message requesting his advice on a limited bombing halt, such as was actually done, versus a relatively complete one for a period of time that would get us directly into substantive negotiations. He came back and said the latter would be very upsetting; the first was something he thought they could live with. It was that one that the President finally went with. For a period in there, I, and, I think, Habib did privately urge the latter course--not stop the bombing immediately, but wait, and if there was not a renewed offensive on the other side, stop it in six weeks completely, and jump over the stage of talking about conditions under which you would stop it, on some variant of the San Antonio formula. That would have gotten us into negotiations sooner and might have defused a lot of trends within the Democratic Party, but I don't think it would have brought Hanoi to peace, or anything of the sort. It wasn't for the political reason that I was urging it, but because I thought it would get us to a serious test of negotiation and create a situation where quite possibly we would, for fear of adverse consequences, be spiking the guns of the possible follow-on offensives by the other side. In other words, I was advocating it for straight reasons. I never allowed a question of what it would do to the domestic political scene or the Democratic Party affect any recommendation of that sort; I just didn't. That's the way I played it, from my position, anyway.

Matloff: Toward the end of McNamara's term, did your views and those of Secretary of State Rusk vis-a-vis McNamara's about the war diverge more and more?

Bundy: I was not conscious of the degree to which he was discouraged. As I track it back, I can see that we were not in close touch from the spring of 1967 onward. And even earlier it was very different than in the older days. He never let his hair down with me. I could detect that John McNaughton was somewhat discouraged; but, of course, he died in July 1967. Paul Warnke was certainly bearish from the beginning, but not markedly so, through the fall of 1967. So the short answer is that I didn't appreciate the degree of it, and the things he was recommending seemed to me things that I could understand his basis for thinking them. I didn't back them, but I didn't openly oppose them, if they'd come to a head.

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Matloff: Were you aware that the Pentagon Papers were being compiled before they were published?

Bundy: Yes, I must have known it. I didn't pay much heed to it. I certainly was never asked about the significance of any of the documents that were used in the compilation. The ground rules were that because the people who could interpret the documents were also the people who were thoroughly engaged, with reasonably full schedules in other respects, they shouldn't come to us, and they didn't. So I didn't see it until it was complete, for practical purposes.

Matloff: In the book How Much Is Enough?, written by Alain Enthoven with K. Wayne Smith, who joined the State Department later on and became a member of Kissinger's staff, they wrote, "In Vietnam, no one insisted on systematic efforts to understand, analyze, or interpret the war" .... "This most complex of wars never got serious and systematic analysis." Elsewhere in the book they suggest that the problem in the conduct of the war from Washington was not "overmanagement," but "undermanagement." Given the McNamara administration's strong interest in management and quantification, how do you account for this?

Bundy: I thought it was over-figured from Systems Analysis. What I saw from Systems Analysis seemed to me less persuasive. It was detailed; it was this and that; it was: "Turn the figures on their heads, spiral them this way and that, and what do we get, etc." I found it singularly unpersuasive during the time, and I suspect I would find it unpersuasive in hindsight, too. I think an ounce of real feel for the situation and a real feel for the biases built into the reporting system--the fact that any officer reporting on the status of things was, in effect, writing a part of his own fitness report--were things on which we never developed a proper refracting angle.

Goldberg: But they were McNamara's creation. Didn't they exercise a strong influence on him?

Bundy: I never was able to tell, because I didn't have that kind of separate meeting with McNamara to see how seriously he took them. It gets back in part to my feeling that we didn't have enough middle level contact about what we really thought was happening. There was no structure for doing that. I think John McNaughton had a good feel for the biases in field reporting; I don't think Paul Warnke had much of any. I think he was very skeptical of it. We needed somebody who was soaked in the reporting process who could say it was infinitely more a question of the inputs than it was the spinning of the dials. We had the inputs. There was a limerick we use to have in the Agency: "There was a young man from Racine who invented a logic machine. The answers he got didn't differ one jot from the premises that he put in."

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Matloff: Do you want to add anything to what you've written on Vietnam?
Bundy: No, I think I sent you my 1983 speech.
Matloff: You'll rest on that. Were you drawn in on the Pueblo incident, in January 1968? Was there coordination with OSD on that incident?
Bundy: Yes, I was in my pajamas on the lower floor phone for an hour and a half in the early morning. I got quite cold, getting the initial coordination. We were very closely coordinating that from the word go. We certainly were wired up from the very beginning right away. What could we do to rescue them right away; what diplomatic lines could we take? I've forgotten the details, but wired up we were.
Matloff: Were you involved with the question of rearming Japan?
Bundy: Not much. They were very low key at that point. The one percent target was very much their guideline.
Matloff: Can you shed any light on Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon as commanders in chief and directors of national security policy?
Bundy: They had totally different styles. I thought the Kennedy style was a little too informal, but it brought people together and you got honest differences of view. Johnson dominated the process too much. He was a hard man to lean back and chew the fat with; he went for the jugular all the time. That's not necessarily the way to get the most reflective views put down before you. Johnson, I'm convinced, was totally honest in his approach to this situation, but he didn't elicit as much, and he detested leaks to the point of excessive obsession. I never really saw Nixon in action.
Matloff: Any more to add on the Rusk-McNamara relationship?
Bundy: I think not.
Matloff: How about the Rusk-Clifford relationship?
Bundy: I didn't really see much of a relationship, frankly.
Matloff: As a result of the experience at State, added to what you already had had in Defense, did you see a need for further changes in the top structure of national security?
Bundy: I think the relationship between the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense is absolutely fundamental. Those relationships were decent and honorable, but not always full, in the time that I knew them. They certainly weren't as bad as I had seen them before and have since.
Goldberg: What do you mean by not always full?
Bundy: In the sense that the relationship between Acheson, Marshall, and Lovett was extraordinarily full. They talked really frankly, and Bradley likewise, if I read the

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record correctly. There just wasn't that degree of real communication such as they had. I don't suppose that could be equaled, because they had been such close colleagues in other contexts and trusted each other so completely; and their subordinates took their cue from them. In the Kennedy and Johnson periods, it was good but it just wasn't quite as good as it might have been .

Matloff: I have other questions, but I would be willing to let it rest here.

Bundy: If you have other serious questions, I am always at the other end of the telephone line.

Matloff: Thank you very much for your cooperation and for sharing your insights with us.