

#52

[REDACTED]

Final Transcript
8/28/84

Matloff: This is part two of an oral history interview held with General Matthew B. Ridgway at his home in Fox Chapel, Pittsburgh, on April 19, 1984. Representing the OSD historical program, as in the first part, is Dr. Maurice Matloff.

General, I'd like to continue our discussion of your role as Army Chief of Staff, in which you served during the period 1953 to 1955, and begin by talking about relationships with various sectors of the OSD. What were your relationships with Secretary of Defense Wilson? Then we will go on to the two Deputy Secretaries during your tenure, Roger Kyes and Robert Anderson.

Ridgway: My relations with Secretary Wilson were anything but pleasant. Mr. Wilson came in with an extensive ignorance of the military establishment and a well-established dislike for the Army. He openly criticized the Army for poor performance in World War II. But, most of all, he was one of these gentlemen who have made up their minds and do not want to listen to facts. On frequent occasions I would go to him on a problem of major importance, that I had coordinated with Secretary of the Army Stevens, and find him looking out the window, drumming his fingers on the table, and paying no attention whatever. On one occasion Mr. Stevens went with me, and, as we were leaving, he addressed us as "you men," as he might well have some employees in a factory. Neither of us made any comment but his whole attitude was not lost on us at all. My dealings with Roger Kyes were not very frequent, but he was the bullying type, a man of impressive physique and, I guess, equally impressive

DECLASSIFIED IN FULL
Authority: EO 13526
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: FEB 19 2014

Office of the Secretary of Defense ^{50 USC 552}
Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS
Date: 19 FEB 2014 Authority: EO 13526
Declassify: _____ Deny in Full: _____
Declassify in Part: X
Reason: 3.3(6X)(6) + (6.2)(a)
MDR: 13-M-1103

13-M-1103

business record. His whole attitude was to overawe a military man who came to him with problems. My relations with Bob Anderson were most pleasant. Here was a gentleman of the first order, who would listen patiently and attentively to anything you had to say, and give it full consideration and a reasonable response.

Matloff: Did you have many dealings with other top OSD officials, for example, Comptroller Wilfred McNeill?

Ridgway: No, very little. Our Comptroller, General Decker, rendered such an outstanding performance that the congressional committees before whom he frequently appeared gave him a very high tribute orally when he was leaving the service to retire.

Matloff: How close was the top OSD leadership, Wilson, for example, with the JCS? Were there frequent meetings? Did he sit down with them?

Ridgway: I don't recall that Mr. Wilson ever attended a session of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, nor do I believe that Roger Kyes did. I'm not quite sure about Mr. Anderson. It would have been his nature to do so, but I don't recall sessions where he was present. That was quite different from the days of Secretary of State Acheson, who frequently sat in with us, and to the best of my recollection, so too did Secretary Lovett.

Matloff: How about your relations with other members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and its Chairman, Admiral Radford? Were there any differences between you and the other Chiefs?

Ridgway: Very much so, between me and Admiral Radford. He had a very one-track mind. When he came to some conclusion, he would pursue that to

the ultimate conclusion, "in unmitigated act," as Kipling said. I think that he felt strongly that the defense of the United States in the years ahead devolved primarily on air and sea power, and therefore the Army could be drastically reduced. He so recommended at one time. That should be in a document in the files of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. As a result, Mr. Wilson apparently had great confidence in him and I think that he accepted Radford's views most of the time. As I recall it, Radford came back with Eisenhower and Dulles, when Eisenhower went to Korea after his election but before he became president. Apparently Radford very much impressed Eisenhower, to the point where he chose him to be the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. My relations with the other members of the camp were most cordial. We never had any troubles. We had strong disagreements, which we aired orally in the meetings of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. But my views and Radford's were generally quite different. Later on, when the Vietnam war came on, he was strongly in favor of using the A-bomb there and I was strongly opposed to it. My other colleagues on the Joint Chiefs, Carney of the Navy, Twining of the Air Force and, I think, Shepherd of the Marine Corps, were all pretty much of my point of view.

Matloff: How much time did you find you had to spend on the JCS business?

Ridgway: A great deal. We had the Indochina problem coming up, and the French were pressing the United States government to intervene there in various ways. They had been pressing for money for a long time and they got a rather large amount. Then they wanted us to take over the training,

and we did that. Finally, when the siege of Dien Bien Phu was on, they supported Radford's point of view of using the A-bomb.

Matloff: Whom did the Secretary of Defense back when there were split issues in the Joint Chiefs of Staff? Did he usually go with the Chairman?

Ridgway: Yes, generally speaking.

Matloff: Was there a deep schism in the Joint Chiefs over massive retaliation, by the time you got to 1955? Was the feeling rather strong about the pros and the cons?

Ridgway: Yes, I would say so. I think Carney and I thought pretty much alike. He could correct me on this, but I think he and I were pretty much in accord, and, to a considerable degree, Nate Twining, too. My only strong differences of view--and they were honest views, I'm sure, on both sides--were with Radford. We were not hesitant in expressing our opinions. So there was a very strong divergence of view there throughout most of my two years between Radford and me.

Matloff: About relations with Congress--how did you handle the problem when you had to appear before congressional committees, when your original view differed from that of the position taken by the Secretary of Defense or the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff?

Ridgway: I can only recall clearly now--and all these things should be checked by documents, which I think still exist--when I was a witness before a joint session of two committees of the Senate--Foreign Relations and Armed Forces. It was chaired by Walter George of Georgia. It was a most impressive occasion, and I can't now give you the substance exact in

detail, but Senator George said to me, "General, we want your frank opinions." I replied, "Senator, you shall have them. To whatever degree the other members of the Joint Chiefs agree (all of whom were present there at this meeting), they're here in presence and you can ask them, but my views follow." I told him exactly what my views were and I think the reception that joint committee gave me was very satisfying.

Matloff: Let's touch on the McCarthy hearings just a bit. You mentioned that Army Secretary Stevens became involved with the McCarthy hearings. Did that involvement in any way complicate your dealings with Congress?

Ridgway: No, I don't think so.

Matloff: You weren't drawn in in any way?

Ridgway: No, I wasn't.

Matloff: How about the impact of those hearings on Army morale during that period?

Ridgway: I couldn't answer that question. I know that the impact personally on Secretary Stevens must have been very deep, because he was a man of the highest principles and integrity dealing with a character of quite opposite personal traits.

Matloff: Let's talk somewhat about the relations with President Eisenhower. How did President Eisenhower conceive of your role as a member of the Joint Chiefs versus that of the Army Chief of Staff in importance? Did you sense any feeling on his part as to what the relative importance of those roles were?

Ridgway: No, I don't believe so. The President was very generous in listening to my views at any time. As a matter of fact, he asked me to present the results of that mission I sent over to Indochina, to examine the state on the ground and come back and report. I made a personal report to him, first alone, and then before the National Security Council.

Matloff: Was this in 1954, at the time of Dien Bien Phu?

Ridgway: I'm not sure of the timing.

Matloff: Still on relations with the President, did you find Eisenhower as commander in chief impartial? Did he favor his old service, or did he lean over backwards in other directions?

Ridgway: My recollection would be that in order to appear completely impartial, he rather leaned over backwards not in favor of the Army. He didn't want to be accused of partiality toward his former service. I think that the opinions of others would bear that out.

Matloff: Did he ever seek your advice on other than purely Army issues?

Ridgway: Military issues broader than the Army, yes.

Matloff: You mentioned that mission. Do you recall any other examples where he might have done that?

Ridgway: No, I don't.

Matloff: What were Eisenhower's views in connection with split JCS papers? Do you recall his ventilating any feelings about not wanting split papers, that he wanted a unanimous or some kind of agreed upon position?

Ridgway: I referred yesterday to that meeting when the President came down to speak to the Joint Chiefs, then newly installed in office, at Quantico, and General Bradley, the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, was also present. Eisenhower in his informal off-the-cuff manner said, in substance, "You new Chiefs get together and thrash these things out and come to agreement, and present me with agreed papers." This was when I went to Bradley, whom I knew so intimately, and said, "Brad, I'm disturbed about this because, rightly or wrongly, I get the impression that the President is saying that he wants 'yes' men around him. When strong men get together, as these all are on the Joint Chiefs, there are bound to be fundamental disagreements sometimes, and they cannot be reconciled. They should go forward in that manner. This is the province of the civilian superiors. They have got to make the decision." I don't recall what Bradley's answer was, but I cite that as an example of my first real encounter with the President. Just after I came back from the European command, the President invited me over to the White House for breakfast, just the two of us. I don't recall the topics of our conversation, but I assume that we went over my service with NATO, because he had left that post himself shortly before. It was a very pleasant breakfast, and I'm sure that we ranged over the whole world situation.

Matloff: Did you have direct access to him once you were in the position?

Ridgway: I never sought it, no.

Matloff: Did you go through his national security advisor, or staff secretary, as he was called in those days?

Ridgway: I never had occasion to ask for a meeting with him. He asked me to come over and present the report in person, after that mission came back from Indochina.

Matloff: Were there ever any repercussions on his part when you had to appear on the Hill and your feelings about the Army's slice of the budget were quite strong? any attempt to lean your public position before the committees?

Ridgway: No, I was called before the Congress very infrequently. The only thing that I clearly remember now was before that joint session of the two Senate committees.

Matloff: Concerning the State Department, particularly Secretary of State Dulles, what were your relations with him?

Ridgway: Very pleasant. I had contact with him when I had first joined the Military Staff Committee in London when the United Nations were formally organized. That was the first time I had ever met him. Later on, I got to see a good deal of him, because at least for the first year of my tour as a member of the Joint Chiefs all of the Chiefs attended the sessions of the National Security Council. In the latter part of my tour that was changed and the rest of us were not invited; only the Chairman attended. I recall one incident when the President was ill--it may not have been a meeting of the whole Council--but I do recall that Vice President Nixon was in the chair. Some major issue arose and Admiral Radford elected to state the views of the Joint Chiefs, including those of the Army. I interrupted, apologized to the Chairman, and said, "I

must object to this. I'm Army Chief of Staff, and I will present the views of the Army on this question." That cut that off right away, and Mr. Nixon heard my views.

Matloff: Did you have the impression that Secretary of State Dulles understood the role and uses of military power?

Ridgway: He was obsessed with the idea that we would use the bomb at times and places of our own choosing. I think that he had a fundamental misconception of the possible use of the A-bomb. It was something that you just could not use indiscriminately. But I think that, initially at least, Mr. Dulles would have settled any problem that arose by the threat of the use of the A-bomb, as was done in Korea before Eisenhower became President. The whole history of the world since that time has shown that it really doesn't have any use. It's all or nothing with that thing. Herbert York, a prestigious scientist, wrote a book called The Road to Oblivion, that covered that point very well.

Matloff: We'll be talking with him, too, in this program. I take it then that Dulles probably didn't understand the possible uses of the Army as an instrument of national power, either.

Ridgway: I would think so. I would think that that would follow.

Matloff: Let me touch for a moment on the DoD reorganization of 1953--did you favor it or not? That came along during the period that you had taken over. That reorganization, based on the recommendations of the Rockefeller Committee, was called Reorganization Plan No. 6. It in effect removed the JCS from the chain of command. The service secretaries, rather than the

service chiefs, became the executive agents for the unified military commands. What impact, if any, might it have had on the Army? Did it make any big differences, for example, in the Chief of Staff's handling of the ground forces in crisis actions?

Ridgway: My memory is not clear on that. I recollect the Rockefeller plan but I couldn't answer your question. Let me go back to my dealings with Dulles. Mr. Dulles was a top-flight lawyer with a trained mind, and his oral briefings of the National Security Council at the times when I was present were done in a masterly fashion. Fact after fact was clearly stated in beautiful sequence. In fact, so much so that one time, after the National Security Council broke up, I went up to express my admiration for the clarity and completeness of his presentation of a complicated situation. On the question of downgrading or changing, which did or did not occur under the Rockefeller plan, I don't remember that. I do remember very strongly that I felt that the service secretaries were being degraded in influence, and I put this in a talk I gave to the whole Army staff at one time, before I knew how it was going to be handled. The Secretary of Defense had stated publicly that he would honor the authority and position of the service secretaries, and orders to them would only come from him. That was discarded very early. As a matter of fact, I think that you would find that the service secretaries were very frequently getting orders from various assistant secretaries of Defense, and not with the knowledge and approval of the Secretary of Defense himself. In other words, the service secretaries were really being denigrated. I protested against that. I have a paper--when

McElroy was Secretary of Defense, he asked for my opinions--I'll get you a copy. I felt that there was a double barreled thing there. In the first place, the service secretaries should have the full authority of the great responsibility they carry and deal with nobody less than the Deputy Secretary or Under Secretary of Defense, and not have this proliferation. There were numerous assistant secretaries who would come down and give orders to the service secretaries. I thought that was wrong, and I stated that in the letter to Secretary McElroy.

Matloff: On the positions of the Joint Chiefs versus the service secretaries, do you recall any change in relationships between those two in the chain of command?

Ridgway: No, I don't. You see, during the Korean War the Army Chief of Staff was the agent for the Joint Chiefs, so he issued orders direct to the Far East Command. This was changed after the Korean War, and thereafter any such instructions came not from any member of the Joint Chiefs but from the service secretary concerned or from the Secretary of Defense.

Matloff: In connection with the perceptions of the threat with which the United States was faced, do you recall the dominant attitude toward the Soviet threat that you found in DoD when you assumed office? Was it any different from the perception of the threat in your other capacities? Were there any differences of views about the threat within DoD? within the JCS? or between the JCS and the Secretary of Defense?

Ridgway: I think that we had a pretty clear perception of the scope and the magnitude of the threat, although the actions which should be

taken to minimize that threat were quite different from those which the JCS would have taken. I think that's been true all the way through, as I was referring to a little while ago. It's impossible for me to imagine why the advice supported by incontrovertible evidence of the senior military leaders over the period of several successive administrations was given only lip service by the civilian authorities.

Matloff: This touches on what we were discussing earlier. Have your views about the threat changed over the years?

Ridgway: Not a bit. Everything has confirmed them. Everything in the document that I gave you this morning, which was written in 1947, stands just as true today, except for one thing. At that time Soviet naval power had not emerged as a threat to our Navy in the oceans of the world as it is today.

Matloff: Let's turn to strategy and strategic planning, and we will touch on the New Look policy of the Eisenhower administration. Who in the Department of Defense was primarily influential in strategy-making during your tenure? Was it the Joint Chiefs? the services?

Ridgway: It should have stemmed from the Joint Chiefs as a body. In other words, the civilian authorities state the political objectives, and the prime responsibility is, of course, the protection of the country. From those, the Joint Chiefs try to evolve a plan to meet any reasonable contingency which they can foresee.

Matloff: Did the Secretary of Defense play any role in this process?

Ridgway: Not during the formulation, but after the views of the Joint

Staff reached him, he was responsible under the President for either approving, disapproving, or changing whatever views were submitted.

Matloff: Some Secretaries of Defense have been very active in this role, for example, Secretary McNamara. But Secretary Wilson, I take it, was of a different stripe.

Ridgway: Yes. Fortunately, I didn't serve under McNamara.

Matloff: How closely did the President or the Secretary of Defense follow the development of military strategy? Was Eisenhower keeping a fairly close watch on it?

Ridgway: Yes, I think so. Of course, you must remember always in evaluating Eisenhower that he had two very serious illnesses that took a lot out of him. He had unique experience in World War II as Supreme Commander in Europe. This reminds me of the time when Acheson was taken apart by the media for having put Korea outside of our line of defense. That was simply carrying out a decision which President Truman had approved. The Joint Chiefs had recommended that to Truman, and he had accepted it. And why wouldn't he? It was a joint recommendation of Leahy, who was senior aide to Franklin Roosevelt and later to Truman, Eisenhower, Nimitz, and Spaatz. Those four all agreed on this question. If we got into a war, Korea was the last place in which we wanted to have to fight. It would be a secondary or tertiary theater. They forwarded that recommendation to the President, who approved it. So Acheson was only enunciating a policy which the commander in chief himself had approved, on the recommendation of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Matloff: On the origins of the New Look Policy, on which so much has been written, discussed, and debated, did you get any impression as to how this came about? Was it possibly British influence; purely economics; Air Force influence; strategic considerations? Did you have any feeling as to why the administration began to talk about the New Look and argue for it?

Ridgway: The New Look, if I understand it, was primarily that they would use the A-bomb to save money. You wouldn't have to have an enormous military, because you would just drop an A-bomb and that would settle it. I have no idea of any influence the British exercised on this, none whatever.

Matloff: In the middle of the 50s the writing of some of the British analysts dealt with the swing over to the idea of independent deterrent as one way that Britain could go, too.

Ridgway: I don't know about that.

Matloff: I was going to ask you whether this policy of the New Look only accentuated or emphasized trends that were already started in previous administrations--whether it was really that new and different? How about the impact on the services, particularly the Army's attitude toward the New Look? Did you support the New Look in principle or did you have strong reservations?

Ridgway: No; I'll give you a concrete example, to which I referred before. Radford was the big proponent of dropping the A-bomb on Dien Bien Phu. He said that this was the first very clear chance to apply the New Look. I was in wholehearted opposition.

Matloff: What in your view should have been the Army's role under the New Look policy? Was there a place for the Army?

Ridgway: Absolutely. The Army is the essential, the final arbiter, because the control of land is the ultimate basis. Neither the Navy nor the Air Force can operate without secure land bases. How would they get the secure land bases?--by the army's protection of the territory involved. Really this is the big theme the Army is trying to put across to the public today--that land power is the final key element in the whole thing.

Matloff: What was your attitude toward nuclear weapons--their buildup and use? Did you and the other chiefs favor the use of nuclear weapons under certain circumstances at least?

Ridgway: I think that you will find almost unanimous disagreement, except on Radford's part, of the use of the A-bomb in Dien Bien Phu. Earlier in Korea, it was certainly considered, to the point where we war-gamed the situation to see if we could make proper use of the A-bomb. Even earlier than that, when the President was over there (before he took office), I read that he threatened that if they didn't produce an armistice, he would use the A-bomb on them. It was perfectly apparent that it could be used. It was a weapon that was available and we gave very careful consideration to it. Bradley came over to see me, when I was Supreme Commander in Tokyo, and asked, in effect, "Would you use it now?" I said, "No, I would not, because I don't know how many bombs the Russians have, but we are very vulnerable to this thing."

Matloff: On questions of conventional versus nuclear defense, I thought you would have leaned toward conventional.

Ridgway: Yes. But I've often said that if I were field commander and I had a nuclear weapon under my control and if it came to the point where it was a

question of the destruction or saving of my forces, I would unhesitatingly use it, with or without permission.

Matloff: Did you ever have any discussions with Dulles or with the President on what they meant by brinkmanship and massive retaliation?

Ridgway: No, not personally. Again, I'll come back to my relations with Dulles. I recall an incident when Adenauer came over to the United States and I was Chief of Staff (I had had very fine relations with him when I had the European command). He wanted, I learned later, to consult with me on how he could best reconstitute the German army without having the flavor of the old Hitler regime. I'd had the same problem with Yoshida: how he could build up the Japanese ground self-defense force without getting this militaristic element into it again. I told this to Mr. Dulles, who said, "I'd like you to arrange a meeting with Mr. Adenauer, and feel free to talk to him about this." So we did. The reason I bring this up is because a short time later LTG Trudeau got in trouble and was relieved because apparently, either with Adenauer or a British high official, he went about something the wrong way. The point I am making is that in my case it was done because the Secretary of State himself asked me to do it. I think that Trudeau might have possibly stepped out of bounds. He's a very able man, splendid in every way, and he finally was vindicated and brought back. Dulles had a vindictive streak in him. The Oppenheimer case proved it very well. He crucified Oppenheimer. Finally, years later, it was retracted but it was too late. He practically ruined that man's career.

Matloff: Did you think that massive retaliation was merely rhetoric with Dulles, or was the administration serious about the possible use of atomic weapons?

Ridgway: I think he believed this. He would say, "I'll tell you what, you do so-and-so and I'll use the A-bomb on you." He'd bring them right up to the brink. I think he was absolutely sincere. I don't think it was just rhetoric at all.

Matloff: Would the President have gone along with him, do you think?

Ridgway: I don't think Eisenhower would have. Eisenhower said in his memoirs that he might have gone along with intervening in Indochina in 1954, had Britain and France gone along with him, but primarily Britain. The British government said that it would have no part of it.

Matloff: Still on the question of strategy and touching on weaponry, did the President encourage you and the other chiefs to go forward with the development of conventional weapons?

Ridgway: I can't remember any overt encouragement; certainly no contrary opinion brought against it. We in the Army were trying, among other things at that time, to foresee the character of the battlefield in a future war-- not trying to look too far ahead, but to be practical about the thing. We realized that the present organization we had of a very heavy division probably needed some drastic change. So we had a very thorough study done. Like all these things, it only offered a partial solution or correction. Since then, we've had numerous changes in the organization of divisions and, right now, we are trying to organize a light infantry division.

Matloff: You mentioned some difference of views with Admiral Radford. Wherein, if at all, were your views of limited war and brushfire wars, even the use of conventional weapons, different from those of the other chiefs?

Ridgway: The main difference was this question of using the A-bomb.

Matloff: How did you see the Army's role in the atomic age? You've written in your volume, Soldier, that one of your main concerns was what the Army of the future should look like and what its role should be. You had given considerable thought to this question.

Ridgway: I'd rather rest on what I what I wrote. It was fresh in my mind, and I stated it in the precise language I wanted to use.

Matloff: We'll refer the reader to your chapter on the Army's role in the atomic age.

Ridgway: I frequently reread my letter to the Secretary of Defense dated June 27, 1955, three days before I retired. That is the one that I sent to him unclassified. He didn't like some parts of it, so he classified it--marked it "secret." The New York Times got ahold of it within 48 hours, in toto, not through me or any of my subordinates. I don't know how they got it. They published the whole thing. Then they queried him about it, and he said, "It wasn't important anyway."

Matloff: You have a copy of that in your memoirs.

Ridgway: Yes, I read it and reread it. I would hardly change a word in that thing. The only thing was that I couldn't then foresee that the Russian military machine, which had through the ages been essentially a ground force, could possibly become a first-class blue water navy. It was

not in the tradition of the Russian people. The last time they had a sizable fleet, the Japanese destroyed it at Tsushima, in May 1905.

Matloff: Let's turn to NATO for a minute. We talked yesterday at considerable length about your experiences in NATO. Did the problems in NATO change when you became Chief of Staff? Did you get involved again with NATO problems in any way? You touched on the German army buildup.

Ridgway: The German army thing came a little bit later. That came during my Chief of Staff tour. The problems had changed from the time I took over from Eisenhower. Eisenhower had gotten there in a spirit of euphoria among the heads of the government, with his tremendous reputation and the realization of the real threat of the Soviet Union, so that they were willing to promise everything, and they did. They promised all these divisions--that we would have X number of divisions by M+30 and all of that. But that period had very much cooled when the political heads of these governments found what the cost of this thing was, and meanwhile they apparently felt that the threat had somewhat abated. They weren't willing to go along and provide the funds to do it. That was our big problem.

Matloff: When you became Chief of Staff of the Army, were you involved with NATO policies, strategy, and buildup?

Ridgway: Yes, because this was when we were trying to reinforce our forces in NATO, and Senator Taft opposed this strongly. We were trying to provide two more divisions there and beef up the divisions we already had in the area, in spite of Korea. Korea was more or less static. The decision had been made by Mr. Truman before I became Chief of Staff, while I was still

Supreme Commander in the Far East, that there would be no material reinforcement of the forces in Korea. You work with what you've got over there now, the rest of it will be going to Europe. This is what Taft opposed. So we were very much involved in that in doing our planning, but these political directives came down from Eisenhower and, of course, he wanted to build up the strength of our NATO contingent, too.

Matloff: Along with the question of the German rearmament and the admission of Germany to the alliance in 1955, the question of the buildup of the German army became important. You touched on this a little earlier. Did you have any doubts, misgivings, or qualms at first about German rearmament, in view of Germany's past history?

Ridgway: Again, it's a hard thing to look back 30 or 40 years. I think that my thinking goes back so far that the German people are essentially militaristic. The love of soldiering is bred in the bone of the German people. I'm sure that I wasn't trying to look ahead another decade or two as to what might happen if we permitted West Germany to rebuild its army. But neither would I have ignored the fact that that was a very likely contingency, as it was with Japan. The forces operating against it in the case of Japan were: (1) the thinking of the Japanese electorate when the women got the franchise and everything else after the peace treaty, and (2) the academicians and the youth of the country were opposed to militarism. Combined with that was the deep hatred that the Japanese operations had engendered in all the countries of southeast Asia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, etc.

Matloff: You expressed before that you felt that these forces in Japan and Germany were going to be rebuilt; that you wanted to rebuild them, but without the touch of Hitler and of the militaristic element in Japan.

Ridgway: It was very interesting that I had that same very frank talk with Yoshida, the Prime Minister of Japan, and later with Adenauer, the Chancellor of West Germany.

Matloff: That's a rather unique experience, I would think. There aren't very many officials that have had that.

Ridgway: I told them that the differences were very pronounced. One fundamental difference was that in Germany, particularly, the individual officer took a personal oath to Hitler, but our allegiance is to the President of the United States, and those who may succeed him in power.

Matloff: We mentioned yesterday something about the European Defense Community proposal of amalgamating West Germany closer to the Western defense community by having a common European army. Did you as Chief of Staff get drawn in on those discussions?

Ridgway: No, I wasn't drawn into that at all.

Matloff: Lets come now to some of the area problems that arose. You've already touched on Indochina. I'd like to come directly to this because there are some questions that still linger. During your tenure as Chief of Staff there occurred the Dien Bien Phu crisis, and, shortly thereafter, came the communist takeover of northern Indochina as a result of the Geneva conference. What were your impressions at the time of the significance of those developments for American security interests? There was, for example,

a rather widespread feeling on the part of United States officialdom that communism was on the march and putting the free world generally on the defensive. Did you share that feeling at the time?

Ridgway: I personally never subscribed to the domino theory, that if one falls, they all would. I don't today. I think that the rulers of each one of these governments are going to decide in their own interests what they want to do. That's not to preclude the possibility that it would happen. For example, as in Central America today, with people who have been denied the basic elements of life for centuries, who are ill-fed, ill-clothed, ill-housed and have no medical attention of any kind, you're always going to have a group that is seeking power. They go through the same process. Usually they proclaim that they want freedom for their people and because of that they draw the support of such middle class and business people as there may be. But in the back of the minds of these leaders is, "When we get control, we're going to exercise authoritarian rule." And that's what happens.

Matloff: Let's talk about the Dien Bien Phu crisis in the spring of 1954, which has come up here on a number of points. Were you consulted about possible U.S. help during that crisis? What advice do you recall giving? There were discussions in the Joint Chiefs, and apparently meetings with the President, too. You mentioned Admiral Radford's desire for an atomic strike. What position did you take at that time?

Ridgway: I opposed entry into Indochina in the first place very strongly. Going way back--I've forgotten just when it happened--but we had an ambassador

who had just been designated to be the ambassador to Indochina, Philip Bonsal, and he came to me when I was the NATO commander, or maybe when I was Deputy Chief of Staff of the Army. In effect, he wanted to know if I had any comments on the job he was about to undertake. I said, "Yes, I certainly do. I think you've got a hell of a tough job to take over there." I can only say that from the very beginning I was strongly opposed to intervention in Indochina. When it was first brought up to me (I think I was taking Collins' place when he was off somewhere) by the State Department, who wanted the view of the Joint Chiefs on X number of hundreds of millions of dollars to the French, I said, "I think that you're throwing good money after bad. As far as I'm concerned that's kind of out of my field but I think that you are just wasting your money." That was the beginning of my opposition, and I opposed it all the way through. When we were overruled (I'd long since retired before we put combat forces in there), my reaction to our sending in a Marine contingent as the first combat element into Vietnam was, "Don't you learn anything from Korea?"

Matloff: It was the Korean experience that made you feel that we should stay out of Indochina? Was that the basis for the feeling?

Ridgway: The main thing, even before I sent that group of senior experts, quartermaster, medical, signal, engineering, and combat arms, over there to survey the theater on the ground, was that there was abysmal ignorance in the whole Defense Department of the nature of the theater there. I put it in writing: "It will take a major national logistic effort to prepare the facilities that an American force requires, if you're going into Indochina."

I told them, as a result of the study we had made in the Plans Division under General Gavin, "If you go in there, you're going to wind up with a force of some half a million troops." Radford's position was that it could be done by air and navy at the beginning. My opposition was dead set against that. If we committed air and navy, we were going to have to follow up with ground troops, and I wanted no part of it.

Matloff: Let me introduce a question here by my colleague Dr. Richard Leighton, who has written in the U.S. Army in World War II series and is working on the OSD history in this period. He asked me to raise this point with you. In studying the period he finds that some of the writers, Bernard Fall, Melvin Gurtov, and others, have recorded your strong opposition, during the siege of Dien Bien Phu in the spring of 1954, to Admiral Radford's recommendation for an air strike to help the French at a critical point in the siege, in response to a French appeal. They've written that that recommendation of yours was decisive in influencing President Eisenhower to turn down the Radford proposal, and that you were convinced that the intervention with air and naval forces would lead inevitably to deploying large ground forces to Indochina. These writers have also written that during the same spring you had sent a team of logistic specialists to the theater to examine its capabilities--ports, roads, railroads, airfields, and the like--for supporting large ground operations, and that that mission had discovered that the capabilities were minimal.

Ridgway: Absolutely non-existent, I would say.

Matloff: Does this tally with your memory?

Ridgway: Absolutely.

Matloff: Here is the historian's problem, quoting Dr. Leighton: "I have been unable to find evidence that such an army mission was in fact sent to Indochina in the spring of 1954, although your opposition to the deployment of large ground forces to the theater is, of course, well documented."

Ridgway: Tell him to look up my memorandum of 17 May 1954, which refers to the report of this mission. I don't have a copy of that here. This is when I briefed first the Secretary of the Army, and then President Eisenhower in person. I think that was decisive, but that's purely opinion on my part. Let me refer to your friend Leighton for a minute. With reference to port facilities, there wasn't any place where you could unload, except a minimum of tons, and if you could get it off the ship, you would have to put it in a rice paddy. The telephone system and the electrical communication system in the country were practically nonexistent. The roads were wholly inadequate to support the population. And as I said again, "If you go in there, it's going to take a major national logistic effort to do it." It did. We poured billions of dollars into developing Cam Ranh Bay, Danang, and those places--not millions, but billions of dollars. The Russians are using them now.

Matloff: On the question of your recommendation to the President at the time of Dien Bien Phu, Dr. Leighton was asking if you personally advised the President not to order a carrier air strike against the Viet Minh at Dien Bien Phu at any time before April 29, when, according to a writer on

Indochina, Bernard Fall, the issue was seriously considered for the last time.

Ridgway: I don't recall that I made a personal recommendation to the President. Whatever recommendation I made would have gone through channels.

Matloff: Can you recall whether it was before April 29?

Ridgway: No, I could not do that.

Matloff: Dien Bien Phu actually fell on May 7. Is there anything more that you would like to say on this crisis in Dien Bien Phu that we have not touched on?

Ridgway: No, I don't think so.

OSD 3.3(b)(5)(6) + OSD
Section 6.2 (a)

Matloff: The recommendation of Radford's for an atomic strike--was it in addition to a carrier air strike, or using the atomic weapon from the carrier?

Ridgway: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] These were the nearest available, and were the ones that Radford wanted to use. Dulles went along with that. Dulles and Radford were trying to persuade the President to do this.

Matloff: One of the by-products of the problems in Indochina was the founding of the SEATO alliance. That was one of the offshoots when Dulles was looking to do a repair job. Did you get drawn in at all on that?

Ridgway: No, not on SEATO. I want to reinforce something I said on Dien Bien Phu. I think Eisenhower might have gone along, this is surmise on my part, but the sine qua non was that Britain go along and probably France. But the British said that they would have no part of it.

Matloff: Are you minimizing your influence on him in this decision?

Ridgway: No, I don't think so.

Matloff: Did you think that it carried weight? It must have had some influence.

Ridgway: I couldn't even say that. Eisenhower was a professional career soldier and the report of this group of experts [the May 17, 1954 memo] would have been conclusive to him, overwhelmingly so. As a President and controller of the immense power of the United States, he might have decided to go in if Britain went along, but Britain wouldn't go along.

Matloff: Is this the mission that was headed by General Gavin, that you mentioned earlier?

Ridgway: No, Gavin was the head of my Plans Division. I mentioned Gavin in the connection that if we did go in, the Plans Division of my staff estimated what forces would be required. It would take around half a million men. That's what we finally sent there and still didn't do the job.

Matloff: It was a very accurate prognostication, as it turned out. Let me turn to the crisis in Quemoy and Matsu, which followed the one in Indochina. Did you feel it important to support the Chinese nationalists in connection with the problems that were rising in the Quemoy-Matsu affair? How far would you have gone to defend those islands?

Ridgway: I wouldn't have gone at all. On the map, if there was a line between the promontories sticking out, a good part of those islands would be almost within the line. They were clearly a part of the mainland there, and I didn't think we had any legitimate reason for trying to permit the Chinese forces on Taiwan to take those islands. Here again, Radford and I

had opposite points of view. He thought so, and I didn't.

Matloff: Did any other trouble spots arise in other parts of the world? This was also the period in which the Guatamalan crisis came up. Did you and the Army get drawn in at all on that one?

Ridgway: No, not at all. The President briefed us one time on that Guatamalan situation, just after Arbenz was overthrown.

Matloff: You weren't drawn in on that?

Ridgway: No, I wasn't involved.

Matloff: Any other crisis areas that occurred during your years as Chief of Staff?

Ridgway: I don't believe so.

Matloff: Let me ask you a little about manpower, weapons and equipment. What was your view of the relationship between nuclear weapons and the need for manpower for the Army? Obviously some people were arguing that with the coming of nuclear weapons you might have a bigger bang for a buck and need fewer men.

Ridgway: This was Dulles's argument always. This was the basis for his brinkmanship and the New Look and massive use of the A-bomb. Our conclusion in the Army was that we would very likely need more people in a nuclear war, because you would have to disperse them not far from these remunerative targets where you could have terrible losses from a single nuclear weapon. Then we hit into that, and I still think so today.

Matloff: Did any questions come up during that period as Chief of Staff or at other times about UMT? Did you have feelings about that one?

Ridgway: Not while I was Chief of Staff, but long before that. After World War II General Marshall led the fight to get universal military training, but Congress would have no part of it at all. It had Truman's support but the Congress was just adamant against it and the whole country was also.

Matloff: Would you have favored it?

Ridgway: Absolutely. We worked hard for it.

Matloff: How about questions of the draft versus the volunteer army?

Ridgway: I opposed the latter, and I still think that it's a great mistake. There was a very fine article in the Wall Street Journal yesterday (the 18th of April) which I would commend to you, "The Folly of Our Manpower Policy." It was written by a major in the Marine Corps Reserve. You haven't got a backup. You're going to have enormous casualties in the very initial stages of a war today, whether A-bombs are used or not, and we don't have the backup, the trained manpower.

Matloff: You would have favored the draft over the volunteer army?

Ridgway: Absolutely. Not only that, but you get a cross section of America, if it's properly and fairly implemented, and there's no question but that it can be. There were so many exceptions made during World War II; that's where most of the criticism came. But if it's fairly implemented, you get a cross section of every stratum of American society. Two years' service is a great benefit to a young man. It gives him a little discipline. Any number of times since I've been here, in the almost 30 years since I retired, as when our Vietnam War was at its height, parents would come in and moan, "My son is ordered to Vietnam, drafted. My wife is going to go crazy." I

thought, "You're lucky. He'll come out a better man than he was before." Then, almost every time it happened, they would come around and say that it did him a world of good.

Matloff: Obviously the Eisenhower defense policy had an impact on the Army buildup program during the period when you were Chief of Staff--the budget and manpower cuts.

Ridgway: I protested that. Right after I retired, I was called before a committee of the House--Mahon was the chairman, it's in the congressional record--and I was asked, "Will you disagree with the President?" I said, "I do, and these are my convictions. He's had a lot more experience in some lines than I, but nevertheless these are my views."

Matloff: Let me raise some questions that Dr. Leighton has given me here in this connection, and see how you react to them. Did your opposition to the manpower cuts imposed on the Army by the President at the end of 1953 cause you to give serious consideration to resigning as Chief of Staff? There were press reports at the time that you were considering this.

Ridgway: No, never. I deplored the fact that any senior officer would resign because of a disagreement with a policy, unless it was a policy so repugnant to him morally, and then he always has the option of saying, "I will not go along with that, and you can have my resignation."

Matloff: Let me raise another one, along the same lines, in connection with your testimony during the hearings in the Senate on the Fiscal Year 1955 Defense Budget--you were testifying early in 1954 about the 1955 budget. This testimony shows that you were very mindful of your professional

duty to support the lawful orders of your civilian superiors--the Commander in Chief; the Secretary of Defense; the Secretary of the Army. Dr. Leighton has asked how you reconciled in your own mind your later opposition in articles and speeches, for example in 1955, a few months before the end of your tour as Chief of Staff, to the manpower and budgetary cuts imposed on the Army?

Ridgway: The distinction was clear in my mind. Up until the time a decision is made by a properly constituted authority, you not only have the right, but you have a duty to express your views. You are legally a military adviser to the Secretary of Defense and the President. If these are your carefully considered views, and you give the supporting reasons, then it is your duty to say so before a member of the Congress. I have said in that connection, and I would repeat it now--I have before recommended though I don't think it has ever been agreed to--that I think that the Chiefs of the services should have the prescriptive right by legislation that any time a matter is of sufficient importance in their considered view they have the right to appear before the proper committees of the Congress (for example, the Armed Forces Committee), not just the Congress as a whole, and state their views. This was following the time that I referred to before, when the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff would elect to speak for all the services. No man in my opinion is likely to have such a complete command of the facts relating to one of the big services more than his own service. He has spent 30 years acquiring that. If you have a man like General Marshall, all bets are off because he was so broadminded that he

could see the whole picture, and, as a matter of fact, he dominated the Navy in this whole thing. But you don't find men like him but once in a generation.

Matloff: Let me ask a few general questions about cold war policies. With reference to containment, which was the buzz word of the day and has been ever since this first came into view in the 1940s--did you believe that containment was a realistic policy?

Ridgway: I don't know what I thought then. I would say today that it probably was the only realistic thing you could do--try and check their expansion. I was probably fully in accord with that. Check their expansion as far as you could, without going to war; prevent their extending their control.

Matloff: How about the problem of military aid as a tool in the cold war? How effective do you view it on the basis of your experience?

Ridgway: Military aid to other countries?

Matloff: Yes.

Ridgway: That's always a two-edged sword, too, because you always have a chance (which has happened before) that conditions will change, and all the military aid you poured into there will be turned against you. We've got this today--we poured billions of dollars into building these tremendous logistic bases in Indochina, which are now occupied by the Russians.

Matloff: It works well in some places, and not in others?

Ridgway: Yes, the same argument has been used through my whole career, not just as Chief of Staff, but as a young officer in the Latin American field.

I had extensive experience with the Latins. Nicaragua is another example. Sure, we give them military equipment, but you never know what is going to happen in the end; it's a gamble.

Matloff: What was your view toward arms control and disarmament? Did you play any role in this area during your tenure as Chief of Staff?

Ridgway: No. It's an illusion; there's no such thing. Man is the most dangerous predator on earth. It is bred in his bones. He has had to fight for a living since time immemorial, and he always will. That's human nature and it's not going to change. So this business of disarmament is just a figment. I think that the word should be abolished. There is never going to be disarmament. If there were, and if you abolished every weapon, you would fight with sticks and stones.

Matloff: How about arms control?

Ridgway: That's a fine thing to do, but how do you treat with leadership, such as the Soviet Union has. They will violate anything. Their secrecy is an openly employed method. It's been a secret society for hundreds of years, and no less so today than it ever was.

Matloff: Let me ask now some general questions about your perspectives on the OSD organization and management. How do you see the roles and relations of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and its chairmen? Do you see any need for changes there?

Ridgway: Rather than try to answer that, I'm going to give you a copy of this document. It answers this in detail. [Letter, Gen. M.B. Ridgway to Neil S. McElroy, Se/Def, 6 Feb. 1958.]

Matloff: How about relations between the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of Defense? You've probably reflected on this over the years. Do you see any need for changes in this connection?

Ridgway: My views probably aren't up to date, because I lack the facts today. In this paper I wrote to Secretary McElroy, I said, "You have far too many assistant secretaries of defense." But I think they have more today. I don't know what the organization is today. Each one tends to dabble in the affairs that were the prerogative of his seniors in his own office of Secretary of Defense and not for him personally.

Matloff: Have you given any thought to questions about the need for changes in structure or working relations at the top levels in the OSD?

Ridgway: I think that's pretty well covered in this document.

Matloff: I would like to go down this list again and get your impressions of some of the people with whom you came in contact at the top levels in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. The general question is: How would you characterize the styles, personalities, and effectiveness of the Secretaries of Defense and other top officials in OSD and JCS with whom you worked? We've already touched on Secretary of Defense Wilson. I have a series of questions about him, some of which you have already answered. How would you characterize Wilson as administrator of the Department of Defense? Do you consider that on balance his administration was effective?

Ridgway: Very poor. They wound up with a \$12 billion deficit during Eisenhower's first term, as I recall. It got completely out of Wilson's control, and he was Secretary of Defense.

Matloff: So you don't get the feeling of a strong manager, of a strong Secretary keeping an eye on all the pieces?

Ridgway: My opinion of Mr. Wilson--his abilities, his personality--is very low.

Matloff: Did he choose able subordinates and associates?

Ridgway: I don't know how many of them he personally picked, but he picked Roger Kyes, who was one of his chief men when he (Wilson) was head of General Motors. I think Kyes may have been an able administrator--I don't know. But he was not the type of man that draws willing cooperation out of people. It's a bulldozing, bulldog effect. Now, Bob Anderson was the type that would elicit your cooperation and get it.

Matloff: Did you get the impression that Wilson shopped around for advice, or did he rely on just a few trusted advisers?

Ridgway: I would think the latter.

Matloff: Did he develop an understanding of the complexities of national security policy and problems? Was he implementing merely what the President was directing, or did he rise above that to make his own creative contributions?

Ridgway: I couldn't answer that.

Matloff: How would you compare Wilson's influence over the President with that of Admiral Radford? Who was the more influential?

Ridgway: I think the President accorded both of their views very serious consideration on all occasions.

Matloff: Would you add any other impressions of other Secretaries of Defense with whom you came in contact, people like Forrestal, Marshall, Lovett?

Ridgway: To my mind there's nobody that even equals, much less surpasses, Marshall. I will put Lovett at a very high place, because he imbibed the working methods and basic character of his chief.

Matloff: Any other impressions of Forrestal, with whom you had some dealings?

Ridgway: Forrestal I didn't know too well, because our acquaintance was quite brief. But I had the highest regard for him. I think that he was a man of the highest integrity and character and I think that's what killed him.

Matloff: We've already spoken about Roger Kyes and Robert Anderson. We've touched on McNeil. How about Radford, anything more you want to say about him?

Ridgway: I didn't have much contact with McNeil. I've told you all I can about Radford.

Matloff: You had a favorable impression of Robert Carney, as I remember.

Ridgway: Very, and a very warm feeling of friendship toward him which exists today. With Nate Twining, likewise.

Matloff: How about Stevens, you mentioned before that you had a high regard for him?

Ridgway: A man of unimpeachable character and integrity and a gentleman. The door between his office and mine was always open. I could walk in to him unannounced at any time.

Matloff: This was a rather close partnership, then.

Ridgway: Very close.

Matloff: Let me ask a general question now about the Eisenhower presidency. There has been a considerable changing of views by writers on the subject

of the Eisenhower presidency. Some historians, who don't agree with the earlier accounts, have been portraying an activist president, and some scholars, what we in the trade call "revisionist historians," are talking about the "hidden hand leadership"--that he was really more active than people on the outside originally thought. Did you have any impressions of how activist a president Eisenhower was?

Ridgway: No, I don't think I'm competent to answer that question. My feeling would be that Eisenhower's personality was such (he had a winning personality) that he could very readily use his personal influence in the manner in which you describe. But I didn't have any personal examples that came to my notice about that.

Matloff: Do you have any impressions of how he was getting his information and advice? In moments of crisis, let's say, to whom would he turn?

Ridgway: There's no question about this--that he practically gave Foster Dulles carte blanche in running the foreign policy of the United States. I gave you one example of that--Dulles wanted very much to go into Dien Bien Phu at that time, and Eisenhower put a flat "no" on that, for the reasons stated. But he certainly did defer to Dulles and let him run the State Department and the foreign policy of the United States, and that is, of course, what the Secretary of State is for.

Matloff: How about on the Eisenhower-Wilson relationship? Some people have the impression that Eisenhower became impatient with Wilson, that Wilson was always bringing him problems and letting the President decide.

Ridgway: I wouldn't know what problems he brought to the President.

Matloff: Let's talk about your leaving the post of the Chief of Staff. Would you describe the circumstances of your departure from the post, when you made up your mind that you were going to leave and why?

Ridgway: Yes, I think this is in my book, and again I commend that to you, because it was written at the time and it is accurate beyond any question. But now I can only say this: the decision to retire at age 60 was made in Paris, while I was SACEUR, long before I even knew that I was going to be Chief of Staff. My wife and I thoroughly canvassed the situation. You see, I was an Army boy. I entered the Military Academy at the age of eighteen, and had never had a residence or been able to vote in any state of the union. Not until I had been here in Pittsburgh for one year could I cast a vote. I had no roots in any part of the country. I had lived all over the United States. By "lived," I mean in places for more than a year. It's really amazing when I think back on it. The states of Washington, California, Texas, Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia, Massachusetts, New York, Kansas, Illinois--more than a year had I lived in every one of these places. I knew the country but I didn't have any bond with any community. So Penny, my wonderful wife--and she is magnificent--and I decided that at age 60 it was going to be hard enough to get established in some community. If we waited longer, even assuming that I didn't have to retire until 64, it would be that much harder. So while I was in fine health, but not too long before 60, I let it be known that I wanted to retire. I waited until April, and then I asked the Judge Advocate General of the Army, "Do I have a right to retire now?"

and he said, "Yes, you do. All you have to do is ask for it." So I submitted my letter sometime shortly after that. I left without any rancor at all, and I would commend again my letter to Wilson that summed up my outlook on the world, which hasn't changed.

Matloff: Were you consulted about your successor?

Ridgway: No, not at all; not a word, which was typical of Wilson's dealings. He brought Taylor in---Taylor was on duty in the Far East---just a few weeks before my retirement, and he and Taylor had some meetings. Taylor, who had been my subordinate, never breathed a word about it. All I could assume was that he must have been selected, but I was given no intimation whatever.

Matloff: Was there any discussion or correspondence between you and your successor on the nature of the Army's problems and its role under the New Look philosophy and how you had fared during your tenure?

Ridgway: Yes, I'm sure that Max Taylor and I discussed that at length, and that I offered to do anything I could after I knew he was going to be Chief of Staff. We had long talks. I had known him intimately for many years. We were classmates of the Command and Staff College. He had been, first, Chief of Staff of the 82d for a brief time, then Chief of Artillery, 82d Airborne Division, and then in command of the 101st, when it was in my corps in Europe.

Matloff: In this connection I have a question from Dr. Leighton bearing on this issue about this succession. He says, "General Maxwell Taylor has told how, before his appointment as Chief of Staff in 1955, he was quizzed by Defense Secretary Wilson as to his willingness to carry out orders of

his civilian superiors. Were you aware at the time that this had occurred? that Taylor was being quizzed by Wilson?"

Ridgway: My answer is an unequivocal 'no,' but I learned about it later from Taylor.

Matloff: Did General Taylor tell you about it later?

Ridgway: No, I read about it in his books.

Matloff: Leighton asks, "Did this incident indicate to you that Secretary Wilson may have felt that you had been remiss in fulfilling your professional obligations?"

Ridgway: I don't know what Wilson felt. I've said enough about my opinions of Mr. Wilson. He should never have been Secretary of Defense. But Eisenhower picked him.

Matloff: I think that we've talked about how you see the Chief of Staff's role as a military adviser, unless you want to add to that. In your letter you were writing about that, as I remember.

Ridgway: I made it very clear in this McElroy letter. I think that by statute he is one of the advisers to the Secretary of Defense and to the President. There should be no question of having him cut off by edict from above. He should have the legislated prescription or legal right legislated by the Congress. You're dealing with a man who has had 30 years of service; apparently he must have had a fine record. or he would never have been chosen as the chief of one of our services. You've got to rely on that man's judgment that if a matter is of such great importance to his service and his views are not being consulted, and he is not being given an opportunity to

express them, then he should have the right to go to the committees of the Congress--the Senate and the House Armed Forces Committees--and state his views. It's like the right of the people peacefully to redress their grievances. The civilian authorities make the final decision, but they make it in the light of knowing his views.

Matloff: What do you regard as your major achievements during your tenure as Chief of Staff and member of the Joint Chiefs? Anything in particular that you look back on with special pride?

Ridgway: I think the preservation of the integrity of the office, and its acceptance as such not only by the government but by the American people. Walter Lippmann, in one of his articles about me shortly after my retirement, commented on just that, and I think that that probably would be my best contribution as Chief of Staff: to set an example of fearless, forthright expression of views, before a decision is made, and then to do your utmost to carry out the decision that you opposed, after it has been made. For instance, after the decision was made to adhere to another drastic cut in the Army's strength, which I had opposed, when the decision was announced by the President, I personally went to every one of the four Army commanders to tell them what the situation was and that we would do everything in our power to carry it out.

Matloff: On the other side of the coin, what, if any, do you regard as your disappointments or uncompleted tasks, or failure to do things that you would have liked to have done during this period as Chief of Staff? This was obviously a very trying period for the Army and for its leader.

Ridgway: I expect that was probably to be unable to stop the steady erosion of the Army's strength, just successive cut after cut. Right after my retirement, as I said before, I was called as witness before the Mahon Committee of the House. Mr. Mahon, whom I had known for many years, said, "General, you are free to say anything you want, now." And I replied, "I shall." I reiterated what I've just said to you.

Matloff: I should ask you along that line: did you feel that the Congress had an appreciation for the issues?

Ridgway: Men like Mahon did, yes. I had great admiration for Mahon. We had great statesmen there. I refer again to Senator Walter George, Senator Dick Russell, and in his early days Senator Stennis. Senator Stennis now, I'm afraid, is senile, and they've stripped him of his power. The committee chairmen had great power in the old days; they don't have it any more.

Matloff: You've been very patient, and I want to express our appreciation for your willingness to share your observations and comments with us on a very important period of history in OSD. If there is any question which I should have asked you but have not, or anything that you would like to add, please feel free to do so.

Ridgway: I very much appreciate these sessions with you. It's been a personal pleasure and, of course, a duty which I felt obliged to agree to-- to say what I think. I want to repeat once more that there may be considerable variance between what I say now and what the documents might prove, but you have the right, privilege, and opportunity to check and document the accuracy of what I have said. I hope you will do that, if there is any

doubt in your mind. I say again that it's been my great honor to have served in the Army. It's been a high privilege to have had the high posts I have had.

Matloff: I'm sure that the record will show that yours has been a very long and distinguished career that will certainly have its place in history. Anyone writing about this period will have to take it into account.

Ridgway: That's very kind of you. I feel very deeply about these things. Every one of my assignments was carried out always with the principle of doing one's utmost to understand the problems from all angles, to arrive at logical conclusions, and then fearlessly to say what one thought. I would come back to that again.

Matloff: Thank you very much, General.

Ridgway: Thank you, Doctor, a great pleasure.

Page determined to be Unclassified
Reviewed Chief, RDD, WHS
IAW EO 13526, Section 3.5
Date: FEB 19 2014

GENERAL M. B. RIDGWAY
918 WALDHEIM ROAD W., FOX CHAPEL
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA 15213

10 Aug 84.

Dear Dr. Goldberg,

I return herewith First & Final transcripts of the two interviews of me conducted by Dr. Maurice Matloff on 18 & 19 April 84, received here on 06 August. I have reviewed both with great care.

In the many official and personal interviews I have had over many years, I have never seen a finer transcript than Dr. Matloff has produced.

I have made only a very few corrections as noted and initialed on the margins.

It is deeply gratifying to have such a detailed and precise record of what I said and what I believe to be true, and I place no restrictions whatever on any use you or Dr. Matloff may care to make of the entire text.

Would you kindly let Dr. Matloff see this letter, and tell him of my high regard for him and his talents.

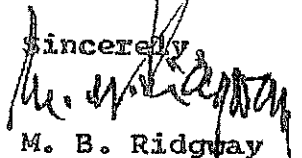
I assume that a like interview of Admiral Carney will take place, if it has not already occurred, and if both he and you approve I would be grateful to have a copy in due time.

May I also express my appreciation of the freedom granted me to edit, delete, add, and correct the transcripts.

With great respect,

Encl - Return receipt
postcard.

Sincerely,



M. B. Ridgway
General, US Army,
Retired.

Dr. Alfred Goldberg, Historian
Office of the Secretary of Defense
Administration, Room 3D 839
Pentagon, Washington, D. C. 20301.

Page determined to be Unclassified
Reviewed Chief, RDD, WNS
IAW EO 13526, Section 3.5
Date: FEB 19 2014