

INTO THE MISSILE AGE

1956-1960

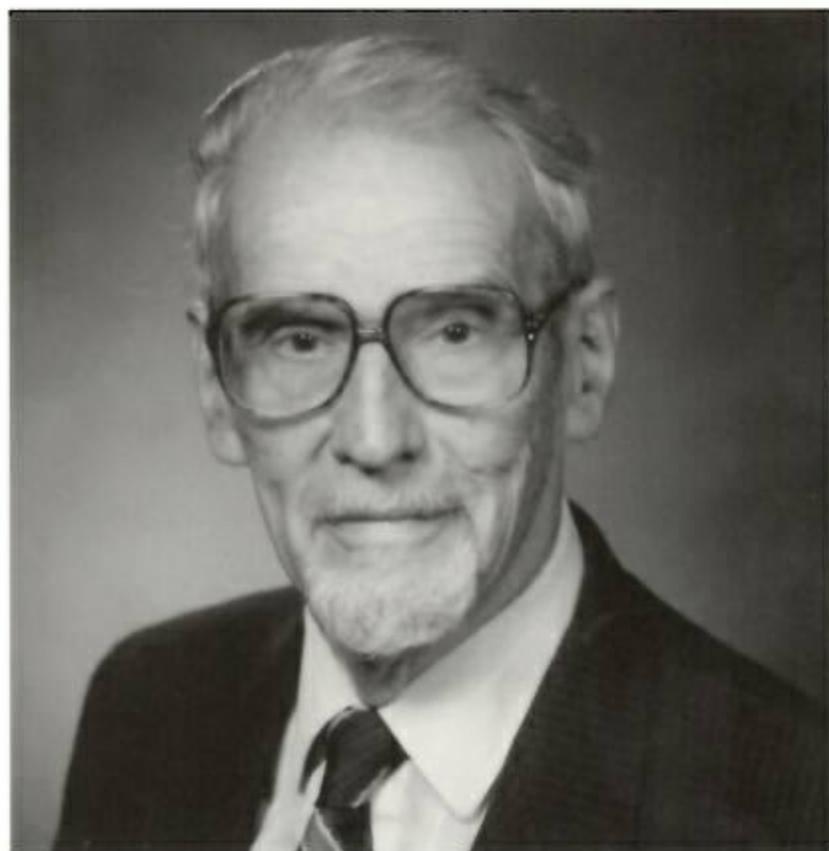
Into the Missile Age, the fourth volume in the History of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, traces the development of OSD from 1956 through 1960 during the eventful tenures of three secretaries: Charles E. Wilson, Neil H. McElroy, and Thomas S. Gates, Jr. It focuses on the secretaries of defense, their staffs, and the administration of the Pentagon within the larger framework of national security policy making and execution.

These were years of peace, but the United States faced an increasing threat from the Soviet Union and mounting challenges elsewhere. The book examines OSD's difficulties in coping with pressures from the White House to minimize military spending and from within the Department of Defense to produce more and better weapons for the military services, notably long-range missiles.

U.S. national security was closely bound up with that of the other member nations of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Efforts to bring NATO strategy into the age of nuclear weapons were complicated by the need to reach agreement among all the nations of the alliance and the reluctance of Europeans to pay the necessary costs.

OSD also had to deal with international crises that raised a possibility of major hostilities. Perhaps most dangerous was a Soviet threat to abrogate the World War II agreements on the status of Berlin. In the Near East, chronic instability threatened to provide the Soviets with a strategically important foothold. In the Far East, Communist China's avowed desire to "liberate" Taiwan caused great apprehension in 1958. Establishment of a Communist regime in Cuba and the rise of an aggressive Communist movement in Southeast Asia laid the groundwork for more serious difficulties in the next decade.

Based on extensive research in archival records, *Into the Missile Age* offers fresh information and insights into a pivotal era in the evolution of both the Office of the Secretary of Defense and U.S. national security policy during the Cold War.



ROBERT J. WATSON graduated from Virginia Polytechnic Institute with a B.S. degree in 1941. Following service in the U.S. Navy during World War II, he obtained M.A. and Ph.D. degrees at the University of Virginia. He worked as a historian with the National Security Agency and with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, serving as chief of the JCS Historical Division from 1977 to 1983. He is the author of *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, 1953-1954*, and coauthor (with James F. Schnabel) of *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Korean War*.

PUBLICATIONS OF THE OSD HISTORICAL OFFICE

*The Department of Defense:
Documents on Establishment
and Organization, 1944-1978*
(1978)

*A Community of Interests:
NATO and the Military Assistance
Program, 1948-1951*
(1980)

The Formative Years, 1947-1950,
vol. I in *History of the
Office of the Secretary of Defense*
(1984)

The Test of War, 1950-1953,
vol. II in *History of the
Office of the Secretary of Defense*
(1988)

The Pentagon: The First Fifty Years
(1992)