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Jan 28, 2011

Interviewers: Alfred Goldberg  
Roger R. Trask

Interview with Dr. Harold Brown  
Secretary of Defense, 1977-1981  
Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International  
Studies  
December 4, 1981, 10:15 a.m.

Goldberg: This is an interview with former Secretary of Defense  
Harold Brown at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced  
International Studies on December 4, 1981 at 10:15 a.m.  
We have submitted in advance a list of questions for  
Dr. Brown to speak to.

Brown: The first question deals with the relative importance of  
various roles of the Secretary of Defense. Actually all  
of them--manager, policy-maker, advisor, and representa-  
tive--consumed a lot of time. Compared to my previous  
positions in the Defense Department--Under Secretary for  
Research and Engineering and Secretary of the Air Force--  
there just was not as much time available for the manage-  
rial role, although it was still very important, because  
the roles of policy-maker, advisor, and communicator, what  
you call "representative" in your questions, took more time.  
Policy-making involved interactions with other agencies of  
the government and also, very notably, relations with other  
governments. These foreign components of Defense activities  
I had much less responsibility for during the 1960s in my

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earlier positions. The responsibility as advisor to the President took up a lot of time, and both the congressional and the public representation took up an enormous amount of time. Which were the most important to emphasize? I guess there the answer is a little different. I think I would say that the policy-maker and advisor roles were the most important to emphasize. The representation one is largely determined by external events. For the first two years or so, I was able to limit that, and my own judgment is that it was not all that necessary; it is largely, of course, a matter of personality. Some people like to be celebrities and to take a very visible public role, and everybody, I suppose, gets a taste for it as time goes by. But there are also some people who really don't pay any attention to anything else and that then becomes their role. It wasn't to my taste, so I didn't do it for the first two years. During the last two years I had no choice and it got to be a larger and larger fraction of my activities. The experience of my predecessors obviously influenced my outlook and behavior in these regards. I was very aware when I went into the job that it was known to students of the subject that the Secretary of Defense's position was the graveyard of national reputations, and that almost no one who had stayed in the job more than two years had left without effectively being fired or with a very substantially diminished reputation, with one exception. Actually Mel Laird stayed four

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years and managed to come through pretty well. I was aware of it, but I can't say that it influenced me except that it reinforced for a substantial time my inclination to pay attention to the store and not to try to play a very high visibility public role. As I've said, during the last two years I really felt I had no choice because no one else was speaking effectively to the Administration's national security role, in my judgment, although a number of us had tried. I also concluded by examining the years I knew best, namely Bob McNamara's, that it was rather important to pay a certain amount of attention to the protocol and social roles that the Secretary of Defense is expected to play. I gave a commencement address at each of the Service academies. I talked at at least some of the Service schools, because I concluded that if you are seen as too remote and too lacking in personal empathy, that damages your ability to work effectively with the Service people who in the end have to carry out policies. Since I have always regarded my own personality as being introverted and likely to come across as cold, I made some extra efforts. They probably mitigated but certainly did not eliminate that problem.

Brown: Do you want to ask more questions about these issues or shall we go on to the next question?

Goldberg: No, that's fine. In the last remark, the question I would have asked, you've answered.

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Brown: In the question on areas of influence, you ask in which areas did I find it easiest and in which most difficult to exercise significant influence? I found it easiest to exercise influence and to deal with military hardware decisions. It's a subject that I know very well and I didn't have to spend a lot of time learning. That's not to say that it's easy, I'm just saying it's easiest if it's something in which you are interested because the factors are well defined. You have all sorts of conflicting pressures, of course, from contractors, from the Services, from the Congress, and political influences within the Administration as well. Still, ease of definition made it relatively easy to influence. I had much more trouble with personnel and manpower policies. In part, I think that's because it's something with which I had less experience on the military side, although as Secretary of the Air Force I had gotten to see a good many of these policies. But I find the quantification and analysis that goes on in those issues of a very much lower order of certainty. Opinions, experience, and attitudes enter in very much more strongly. The Congress, although it has in recent years taken a very much more detailed and hundreds interest in weapons systems, covering hundreds/of line items, nevertheless does not regard itself in quite as preeminent a role on those matters as it does on personnel matters. For all the reasons that I've said about personnel questions being

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subject to these matters of judgment and experience, the Congress, perhaps with some reason, regards itself as much more expert on these matters than the Executive branch, partly because they feel that those in the Executive branch who know the most about it, namely the uniformed military people who've been working with it for thirty years, also are the most self-interested and biased. There is something to be said for that view. It was difficult but feasible to exercise some influence in operational practices and procedures. The military, of course, are most jealous of their prerogatives in this area, and if they do not believe that the Secretary of Defense has some professional expertise at some level in these matters, it will be an enormous struggle for him even to try to participate, let alone decide. They also have an even stronger feeling, and in my view a substantially justified feeling, that even if the Secretary of Defense, who by law is in these matters and in the chain of command, has to be let in, they will resist his use of a staff to this end. They think the staff has no legal basis for being in these things, but that the staff will interpose themselves, and they will be second guessed by a whole bunch of amateurs who have no right to do it instead of by one amateur who may have a legal right to do it. That caused us to go to enormous lengths in organizing the Office of the Secretary of Defense to try to minimize this problem. The Under Secretary of Defense for Policy really is supposed to be an under secretary for plans and operations.

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But you don't dare put the word operations in that title because the military would be very upset and the Congress would get involved, etc. Yet, in fact in the end over a period of years, we were able to work it so that Komer and some of his people were really allowed into the planning business as equals, and I think my colleagues and I were able significantly to influence some of these matters.

Goldberg: Were you regarded as competent in this field? Did they accept you as having the operational knowledge?

Brown: In my judgment they didn't regard me as a military professional of their own sort. I think that they understood that I was very experienced in quasi-military matters, in thinking about many of these things. Over a period of several years during which I spent several hours a week with the Joint Chiefs of Staff on these matters, they came to regard me as somebody with whom they would at least level, and even if they didn't agree with me, they would accept certain decisions.

Goldberg: Do you think they kept you informed on all of their business?

Brown: No, they didn't. I'm not sure they were very well informed themselves on all of their business. The chiefs have so much stuff thrown at them that is of a non-operational nature and is really not pertinent for them that they don't spend enough time on operational matters.

Goldberg: Do you think that they withheld information?

Brown: Rarely, but I think probably on occasion.

Goldberg: I think the record shows that happened in the past, also, during the McNamara years.

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Particularly bad news sometimes gets withheld until it's too late for them to be able to contain it. Now, you also asked whether there are areas in which the Secretary should not seek to exercise influence. I find it hard to specify a particular area in which that's true. The Secretary is charged with the responsibility for the Defense Department; he is supposed to direct its activities. At the very least that means that he has to approve, and if he doesn't act he approves by silence what's going on. I think that the consequence is that he can say there are levels of unimportance in every area that he won't deal with, but I don't think that there is any area from which he can absolutely exclude himself, even though the military people or the Services or his own civilian staff will in various cases argue that he should do so. The Military always felt very strongly that the Secretary of Defense should stay out of the issue of promotions, even criteria for promotions, to and within the general officer level. They admitted the necessity of the Secretary of Defense playing a major role in selecting the chiefs of staff, but when you got even one level below that--the Vice Chief of Staff level--the Chief would say, "I'm the man who's going to have to work with this guy, I should pick him." That's an argument all right, and I think one of some weight. On the other hand, he is not the only person who is going to have to work with the Vice Chief. And the same goes for the unified and specified commands, only more so because those in fact don't by law report to the

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Joint Chiefs of Staff at all, they report to the Secretary of Defense, with the Joint Chiefs of Staff acting as his agents. I could probably think of some important areas where not much control or influence should be exercised, but I didn't give it much more thought.

As for tools for control: Two ways; first read the material, talk to the people, ask questions, make it very clear that you know something about the subject, if necessary go to the trouble of insisting on making a few decisions. But don't make them arbitrary and don't make them in a way which you are subsequently unable to justify. That way you will get people's attention, and if you are trying to move into a new area that's an important way to do it. Second, pick staff people who can work in those areas to follow-up or even to assemble information and produce a tentative set of policies and programs with alternatives for you to decide on. That's what we did really in what we call the policy area. It's also what I did in the research and engineering area. I myself am not a great believer in ad hoc committees of outsiders. I used one advisory group substantially, and that was the Defense Science Board. I broadened it to include retired military people who weren't particularly technologically oriented to introduce an operational element into their considerations, and that allowed them to speak with some expertise in the broadened areas on which such groups of scientists will speak anyway, whether they have anybody in their number who has this expertise or not.

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Goldberg: Did that work well?

Brown: Yes. I found it worked quite well. I was able to pick a few things and they were able to pick a few things that either I wanted to do or they thought were important, and get them done.

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Now, which areas were the ones where you were unable to get or exercise the kind of control that you would have liked to exercise? Well, there were a lot. As I said, the personnel area certainly worked out to be one. The question of pay and benefits for example; at the end we came up with a reasonable program, or rather the Congress pushed us into doing things that I thought we should have done anyway but were resisted rather strongly in the Executive Office building because of their cost, and because, I think, of an unrealistic estimate of what the situation was in terms of needs. We never did get adequate control or influence over military plans and operations. Actually, on that you have to depend on the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and I thought I got very good cooperation both from George Brown and Dave Jones on these matters. But they were both prickly about them, partly because even what they might have been willing to do, their colleagues on the Joint Chiefs of Staff were less cooperative about, not uncooperative, but less cooperative. Those are two main areas I would say, about which I would express such doubts.

Goldberg: Which were the areas where you considered control most important?

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Brown:

It depends on the circumstances. When you are planning to prepare a program, obviously budgetary control and program control are the most important areas. As soon as you are in an operational situation, that rises right up to the top and becomes much more important than budgetary questions, much more important than programmatic questions. Of course, the name of the game is to keep good enough control over the operational situation in times when it is not in crisis so that you will reduce the chance that there will be a crisis. Unfortunately, even if you can control U.S. actions, and of course the Secretary of Defense is not by any means the preeminent controller of U.S. actions, U.S. foreign policy is a great deal more than its military actions. The Secretary can make sure that you don't stumble into something as a result of loose rules of engagement or maneuver areas or whatever. But even beyond the U.S. what sort of confrontation you get into is of course governed at least as much by the behavior of other countries, some of them big, some of them small, more or less responsible.

Goldberg:

What was your role in the hostage affair?

Brown:

Well, <sup>I</sup>~~it~~ was ~~as~~ one of the President's principal<sup>al</sup> advisors. Of course we got into it by actions that really weren't military at all. The decision to admit the Shah may have had a substantial effect. The decision or lack of decision to bring the embassy down to a very low level of people had a big effect. Then our actions or lack of actions after the hostages were taken set

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the pattern for what followed. But, you know, I was in all of those whenever I was around; I happened to be away the weekend when it was decided to admit the Shah and then as various military plans were considered, I was the principal channel to the Defense Department for the President on those matters.

Goldberg: How about in the actual operation itself?

Brown: In the rescue attempt?

Goldberg: Yes.

Brown: I reviewed the plans; I obviously didn't suggest all the alterations that should in retrospect have been suggested, but I consider myself to have been fairly deeply involved in those plans and in the actual operation. We had predetermined that we would leave it to the military to carry it out unless they felt they needed additional instructions from the President. The President specifically said that to me and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and to the Commander of the task force. And that's the way it was done.

Goldberg: So in other words, it was a military operation with military decisions?

Brown: The decision to abort had to be approved by the President. That was a change in plans, but that was what was approved and what was recommended.

Trask: Could I ask where the origins of that rescue effort were, were they in the White House, or how was the decision arrived at to attempt that?

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Brown: That's a long story which isn't going to all come out in this session but there were substantial pressures for military action of some kind. And those arose at least as much in the White House or among the political advisors to the President as anywhere else, I guess I would say more because the attitude of the Military was that we could do these things--mine the ports, blockade, etc. That we could even do them fairly effectively in their own terms but we were not prepared to say what effect that would have on the hostage situation. Plans for a rescue started almost immediately after the hostages were taken. It took many many months before anything was produced that seemed to have any chance. The initial reaction of the military people was that a rescue attempt was not feasible. It wasn't as if they were sitting at an airport waiting to be rescued. I would say until at least the end of 1979, nobody thought anything much could be done; then the Chiefs responded to a White House request about what do we do if they start killing the hostages. Well, at that point you have to have some military plans--rescue, punishment, and all the rest. And so those went forward in parallel--rescue and various pressure attempts, pressure plans. When the spring of 1980 rolled around the political pressures to do something got very great, and those political pressures included doing something in the way of punishment. The President felt very strongly that we should work on other alternatives too, and I agreed. We had established in 1978, a year before all of this, a special Army team, the

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so-called Delta Team, to handle terrorist and hostage activities. They had never thought of anything nearly so difficult as trying to snatch people out of a city 600 miles away from the sea coast in a well-guarded area surrounded by a million hostile people. The decisions were pressed upon us, as I say, as a result of a feeling that this was an impossible situation. The United States was completely paralyzed in all of its other activities as a result of this, and once that became apparent it became a choice between various punitive actions and a rescue attempt. The lowest level of punitive action that we thought about was a mining of the ports, which certainly would have been feasible. My own view was that mining wouldn't solve the situation, but that a rescue would solve the hostage situation in the sense that it would excise the heart of the problem. Clearly not everybody agreed with that, as Secretary Vance's resignation later showed; he concluded (I disagree with him) even if it were successful, excising that problem would just lead to another set of problems. But you asked where it came from and how it started; that's how it started.

Goldberg: Thank you.

Brown: Where were we on the list of questions? Relations with the White House and Congress. Did the White House Staff affect your relationship with the President? Well sure, it always does. I was not a particular confidant of the President's. He had few.

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My relations were very substantially with Brzezinski and some of his senior people, with the Office of Management and Budget, to some degree with President Carter's principal political advisors, with Jordan and with Jody Powell, and hardly at all with the domestic staff. I did not consider that I was inhibited in my contacts with the President by any of these people. I had no problem in getting the President on the telephone or going over to see him whenever I wanted, and if I felt strongly about it I would go over to see him alone. So that so far as the format goes, I did not experience what I think many cabinet members experienced. They find out they don't really work for the President at all, they work for his staff. I don't think the Secretary of Defense can work in that mode, and I don't think the Secretary of State can work in that mode; as a result it's mostly the domestic cabinet secretaries who do end up working in that mode. The relationship with Brzezinski was really rather friendly, although prickly at times, since he deliberately but also by the nature of his personality is a high visibility type for whom it is not possible to play the role of quiet expediter or developer of options. But inevitably the real rivalry in the national security area is between the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs and the Secretary of State, not the Secretary of Defense. Brzezinski had a staff of people, some of whom were military amateurs and some of whom were military professionals, who kept coming up with ideas which they would say the bureaucracy in

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the Defense Department had to be dragged into. I think to some degree that happened occasionally; most of the time the ideas were terrible, occasionally they were not bad. And often Zbig would get me to take the lead in something he felt strongly about and I agreed with, but which he didn't feel he could do, and it also worked the other way around. So that actually it was a reasonably good relationship. Vance's and my personal relationships were very good. Often I agreed with his views, sometimes I disagreed with them. On the political side, I got occasional political pressure on Defense Department decisions as every Secretary of Defense does. I would say it's hard to compare because you can't tell what's happening to the Secretary of Defense because you are not that person. My impression is that I got considerably less of that than has often been the case in the past. On the other hand, I didn't have an independent political base or character the way, say, Mel Laird did or Clark Clifford did, and so I could not argue with political people on political grounds as they were able to do. Given that difference I think I got remarkably little pressure because you would expect under those circumstances that I would get a lot more. I think that actually was a consequence of President Carter's own character; you can consider this an asset or a flaw, but he preferred not to introduce political considerations until the very end. He wanted to know what the right thing to do was before he decided what the right

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combination of expediency and policy justification was for the particular issue.

With the Office of Management and Budget I had very good personal relationships, both with McIntyre and White, and before that reasonably good ones with Bert Lance while he was there. I don't think that there have been budget directors more favorable to Defense programs as against non-Defense programs than Lance and McIntyre. I don't think there's one in there now, for example, but the President himself and his domestic staff really had quite a different attitude. In other words, I would say McIntyre, and before him Lance, were probably pressuring Carter to do better by Defense than Carter ended up doing.

Goldberg: That's a switch on the usual practice.

Brown: Yes. The Vice President took a rather different view, that you ought to spend more money on both Defense and non-Defense matters. He was willing to spend on deficit, whereas neither the President nor the budget people were. But then when confronted with the decision that said you can't have a deficit, the money is going to have to come out of somewhere, the Vice President favored taking it out of Defense. I'm not saying that that had a lot of influence, but that was his view. The domestic staff was always agitating to spend less money on Defense, and I think that's always the case.

Goldberg: Were there initiatives from the President in the Defense field?

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Brown: Sure, they ran a gamut because he had a personal and professional history of this kind of knowledge, all the way from individual efficiencies to particular weapon systems.

Goldberg: Any really big things?

Brown: Well, he was very hot on cruise missiles, for example, and rightly so. To take something at the completely different end of the spectrum, he took the initiative of saying the Defense Department ought to have a program to assure the physical fitness of its officers, to see that they lost weight, got more exercise, etc. And I think he paid too much attention to that kind of thing.

Goldberg: He was a detail man?

Brown: Very much so. You ask, did you have the relationship with the President that you envisaged when you entered on the job? It's hard to tell; let's say I was not disappointed, but neither did it turn out to be any closer than I expected. The President got lots of advice from lots of different people, and he had lots of ideas of his own. He very seldom overruled me on anything except the size of the budget, which obviously has to go beyond what the Defense Secretary says. But he got into much more detail than I would have thought profitable for him. In some ways, of course, that's an expression of style, and it's not different from my own style, so I can't really fault him. In the end I think it probably did not help him in the attitudes toward him by those in the Defense Department.

Goldberg: Did he overrule you on B-1?

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Brown: Not really; I told him that it would be a good idea to do some production tooling without committing to any specific number of aircraft while we saw how the cruise missile came along. When he said to me, "I can't go along with you on your recommendation," I told him he had misunderstood my recommendation.

Goldberg: Was he strong for MX?

Brown: No. I think he was pushed into it by a combination of concerns about Soviet behavior and political pressure. But I think once he made his decision, he was firm for it.

Goldberg: Were your concerns the same?

Brown: My support for it came more from a military point of view than from a political point of view, although I think the political point of view played a part with me too. I simply did not think that it made sense to depend entirely on a sea-based force for a survivable missile capability, and that meant that you had to have a less vulnerable land-based force, and having worked on it for two and one-half years, I came out with the one I thought the best. It was going to cost a lot of money, not more than the other components of the Triad had cost before.

Goldberg: Were you influenced by Service considerations there?

Brown: I don't think so particularly. I think that early on it did seem to me that the political pressures would be such that if you didn't have the B-1 you would have to have an MX. There would be more pressure both internally and in terms of international political considerations for an MX, but that was in 1977, and by the time 1979 had rolled around and the decision had been

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made, the B-1 was dead and I didn't think it mattered.

I think that it would have been possible then to have gone to a diad and gotten away with it politically. I just didn't think it made military sense because it would put too many eggs in one basket.

Goldberg: They haven't gone away, have they?

Brown: No. You asked about the Congressional relationship. Is it more complex and difficult? The answer is certainly yes. The Congress as a result of the Vietnam and Watergate years has increased its relative influence over these matters as compared to the President and the Executive branch. By quadrupling its staff since the early 1960s the Congress had essentially, for good reasons (I mean they had no expertise of their own) been led down the path of ever and ever greater attention to detail and insistence on playing a part in ever and ever greater detail. The new staffs really don't have the continuity or the loyalty or the motivation of the old staffs, who are there to make a career of serving the Congress and the national interest. People now come and go, it's part of a career for them, and one part of that career is to make the biggest possible splash, whether by listening to what contractors say or getting a reputation for being tough, mean and intransigent, and that just makes it much harder to get anything done. I think that in the end that's going to over-reach itself as it has already done in the so-called budget process, where the Congress, in an attempt to gain still more control from the Executive branch

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has added another layer to the authorization and appropriation process. It has come very close in these last few months to making the whole process collapse and revert to something in which the entire authorizing and appropriating hearings process and markups get thrown out of the window. Everything is replaced by an annual continuing resolution which in fact gives the Executive branch all the power in the end. I think something like that may happen in the whole oversight process as well, but just what form it will take, I don't know. You ask about organization, about significant changes between 1969 and 1977. There had been ebb and flow. What had happened was that Mel Laird had decentralized--given everything to the Services, downgraded Systems Analysis, and then before many years had passed found that the Department couldn't operate that way and had begun to recentralize again. Each Secretary, of course, has his own style, and that's part of what causes this ebb and flow. In general, the tendency is for the Democrats to centralize somewhat and for the Republicans to decentralize at the beginning and then come back somewhat.

Are my views about OSD relationships with the military services different from those I held as Secretary of the Air Force? Well, inevitably they were from a different viewpoint, but I had spent as much time in OSD as I had as Air Force Secretary before I became Secretary of Defense. As Secretary of the Air Force I felt that I had the responsibility to carry out policies and should play a part in making those policies. As Secretary of

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Defense I didn't disagree with that view as a Service function, but believed that it could only be served if a Service secretary was able to be something more than a mouthpiece for his service. That wasn't a change of view for me. The result is that those Service secretaries like Graham Claytor, for example, who were able to show that although supporting their Services they were making separate decisions, decisions that were not merely what was sent up to them, got a lot of support from me and played a big role in policy determinations. And those who didn't do that played rather less of a role. Inevitably there was argument between the Services and the OSD staff. Depending upon which OSD staff component it was and what my relations with and opinions of the various people were and how good the arguments were, they would win most or win only a few. By and large I placed very high reliance on Bill Perry, for example, on the research and engineering side, and substantial responsibility for strategy and military planning on Bob Komer and for relations with foreign countries, on both Komer and McGiffert. Unfortunately, the Services managed to play a substantial role through the Joint Chiefs in the questions of military strategy and planning, which is not really their job. They played very little role in foreign relations, but some. On force structure issues, which are the big arguments between the Services and OSD, the focal point of course is the program analysis and evaluation group--the systems

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analysis group. The Services are of the impression that they lose all the arguments, but in fact, as Russ Murray, the PA&E man knows, and in fact he overestimates this, where there was a difference of view between the Service and the OSD staff, I decided for the Service probably 80 or 85 percent of the time, but the Services only remember the other times.

Goldberg: What was the problem with Resor? Komer was relatively successful and Resor not very successful.

Brown: Resor was unable to get McGiffert to be willing to play a subordinate role. You know, Resor had lots of experience. He did not have enormous drive and to get that going, needed more drive, he told me, than he felt he could give it. This is the basis on which he left. I did not push him out. I was satisfied although not overjoyed with the job that he was doing. I thought he was doing a good one, but he found it too uncomfortable to both get a completely new thing going and also to try to get through the bureaucracy of international security affairs. I told him that I would support him if he insisted on doing that but he did not want to do it. Komer did, and so Komer was able to get it done. Are the broad lines of internal OSD organization sound? I think the answer is yes, I think that the Secretary of Defense still needs an operations group, and it is up to the Under Secretary for Policy somehow to work that out with the Joint Staff in a way that the Chairman and the Secretary of Defense can work together.

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I think that's feasible and informally that's the kind of thing that's now going on, or rather was going on when I left.

Goldberg: You were pleased at the results you got from the establishment of the two under secretaries?

Brown: That worked well, I have no question about that working well. I was concerned that it would establish too many levels, but that did not happen because as I set it up, in both cases the assistant secretary was supposed to be the alter ego to the under secretary. It didn't work out perfectly in either case by any means, but it didn't produce another level.

Goldberg: You didn't really cut down very much on the number of people who were reporting to you either, did you?

Brown: Less than I had hoped but somewhat, because in fact I did not have to spend as much time with Dineen as had been the case with the earlier director of telecommunications, for example. I did, I think, have to spend just about as much time on the ISA matters, but that I think was inevitable because that was the part of the job that took most of my time, and it was a new thing to me.

Goldberg: And you still had most of the other assistant secretaries.

Brown: Well, they are going to have them back again.

Goldberg: I know, but I mean you did have them not under the under secretaries. I remember, you still appointed directors.

Brown: That's correct, but the number was reduced from something like 30 people reporting directly to the Secretary of Defense,

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which is the way it was when I came in, to something under 20. Partly this was done by reassigning the defense agencies. Because the fact is that when you have 30 people reporting to the Secretary of Defense, that means a good many of them don't report to anybody. Also I was able to establish a situation in which the Deputy Secretary handled many and I handled some too. It wasn't that they all channeled through the Deputy Secretary.

Goldberg: Was this as true of your first deputy as your second?

Brown: Yes, it was true with both of them because the pattern had been established by the time Claytor came aboard. It might not have worked the same way if Claytor had been first and Duncan second or some other way. But in fact Duncan and I worked it out from the beginning that he would take on some of these things even though he had very little Defense experience. His managerial capability and the force of his personality was such that he was able to do that well.

Goldberg: Claytor had considerable reservations about the degree of centralization.

Brown: When he was a Service secretary.

Goldberg: No, it was subsequent to that.

Brown: He maintained it afterwards, but that's partly because a Service secretary keeps that view for quite a while. When the decisions had to be made, he was prepared to make them. I think he felt that OSD got too much into the Services' business,

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and I think that's right. The trouble is that because the Services try to keep the OSD out of all business OSD has to get into more just to be able to get into the right parts.

Advice from military services. Well, that depends on what you mean. I think the advice from the Military Services really has to do with their programs. You mean the uniformed military.

Goldberg: We're up above that on the list of questions.

Brown: Are we still?

Goldberg: Yes. What are your current views about the need for organizational changes in OSD or any need at all? You know they've done away with the special assistant's office recently.

Brown: Well, that will work if the Secretary does not get very much into the Department's activities. If the Secretary spends his time mostly as an outside man, that's reasonable, but then the Deputy Secretary has to do the same thing that the Secretary would otherwise have been doing. I think that's the way they are doing it now.

Goldberg: Yes.

Brown: That will work so long as the Secretary of Defense knows enough about what's going on in the Department and plays enough of a role in its internal decisions so that in his external representation, he can give an accurate picture. I won't make a judgment on whether it's working now. But I guess what I'm

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saying is that you risk, especially over a long period, the Secretary of Defense becoming the spokesman but not knowing what he's speaking about. It's like any other organization; you know there is a tension between the external demands of the job and the internal demands of the job. It's always more than one person can do, but each person will pick his own balance between the two of them. And the current secretary has picked a balance that is very much weighted toward the outside.

Goldberg: Yes. Do you see any need for organizational changes?

Brown: Yes, there is lots of need.

Goldberg: Do you recommend any in particular?

Brown: Well, I think the Joint Chiefs of Staff organization has to be rearranged so that the Service chiefs don't bring so much of their Service parochialism into the job as they do now. And that's not a criticism of the people; the organization is set up so as to intensify that by an enormous factor.

Goldberg: Always has been so. Maxwell Taylor tells stories about the time when he was Chief of Staff and majors and lieutenant colonels used to urge parochial policies on him all the time.

Brown: That still goes on.

Goldberg: Yes.

Brown: There are ways to change it, and I think the current Chairman is working on that. Should there be changes in the basic responsibilities and organizations of the three services?

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Yes, I think there is substantial need, and I think there is going to be real difficulty because the Congress is going to fight it very hard. I think the Reagan Administration actually could do something about it, because the President is very popular. He is seen as having a mandate. He has substantial influence in the Congress, and since the opposition will always come from traditionalists and conservatives, it may be that it can only be done by a traditionalist, conservative administration.

Goldberg: What sorts of changes do you have in mind?

Brown: I really think the Services ought to be reorganized as regards to the way they do procurement; they ought to be reorganized as regards to the way they do promotions; they ought to be reorganized in regard to the way they influence operational decisions; and that's an entire book which I may write someday. And the obvious question is, well, if you have all these great ideas why didn't you do them? The answer is we did some of them. It's only infrequently that you can make revolutionary changes, and the years 1977-81 were not the time in which that was feasible. I think reassignment of roles and missions is a very important part of this. Nothing, in effect, has been done about this since 1948.

Goldberg: Do you have anything specific in mind there?

Brown: Well, we still have four Air Forces.

Goldberg: Yes. That will be a tough one.

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Brown: You know we've talked really about most of the items in the next set of questions. If you're talking about military advice, I really felt I got it from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, on occasion from his special assistant, both of whom I happened to know fairly well. I knew Willie Y. Smith very well, he had been my military assistant when I was Secretary of the Air Force, and I had come to know Pustay pretty well. I didn't always take the advice that anybody gave me but that's where I went. I felt able to talk to the individual chiefs of staff and often did. I didn't feel I always got objective military advice from them, but I respected their opinions nonetheless. I always asked my military assistants, who were of course in a very tough spot under such circumstances, but I always felt I got objective advice from them. I had two Navy admirals in succession and then an Air Force General. Or I would turn to the other military assistants in the office-- either my junior military assistant or one of the two assistants of the Deputy Secretary of Defense. I always felt I got along with them; in most cases I felt close enough to them to be able to ask them something.

Goldberg: How did you pick them?

Brown: The Services could always provide a menu. In the case of my first military assistant, I inherited him from Rumsfeld and felt that it was very important to hold somebody over. Subsequently, the Services offered people, and they always

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offered very good people. And then I asked around in the Services about those people. I really have answered I think the last two questions about military advice. As for major changes in U.S. strategic policy during the past four years, I think there has been an evolutionary change. I don't think there has been a revolutionary change. PDM 59 represents a codification rather than a significant change in policy, in my view. The question is how feasible is such a policy and nobody knows.

Goldberg: Still not.

Brown: But I think that the evolution to what we call a countervailing strategy is clearer than what people have said before. There has been a swing back and forth--McNamara in the Athens speech in 1962 was talking about military targets only; within a year he had abandoned that essentially completely. Schlesinger himself probably was too committed and would since say that it is now not feasible to be committed. He might argue that it was feasible to be committed to a limited nuclear war strategy back when he was talking about it. The countervailing strategy is a way of saying we don't really believe that this is feasible, but if the other side tries it, this is the way to show them that it's not.

We should probably break off the interview now and try to do it another time. Now that I've started it, you will have an easier time of getting back to me next year.

Goldberg: Fine. Not a whole year?

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Brown: No. Let me give this list of questions back to you, and you can bring it with you next time. That way I won't have to worry about it.

Goldberg: Could we make an appointment with your secretary?

Brown: It's not going to be until after January because I'm going to be out of town. But for sometime in February, the answer is yes.

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