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Interview of

WILLIAM P. BUNDY

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Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense
(International Security Affairs), 1961-63;
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INTERVIEWERS: MAURICE MATLOFF AND ALFRED GOLDBERG

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Matloff: This is an oral history interview with Mr. William P. Bundy held in Washington, D.C., on November 9, 1989, at 2:10 P.M. Accompanying Mr. Bundy is Ms. Blanche Moore, his former special assistant. The interview is being recorded on tape and a copy of the transcript will be sent to Mr. Bundy for his review. Representing the OSD Historical Office are Drs. Alfred Goldberg and Maurice Matloff.

Mr. Bundy, we shall focus in this interview particularly on your service as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs from January 1961 to October 1963, and as Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA) from November 1963 to March 1964. First, by way of background, what contacts had you had in your previous official and unofficial capacities with Secretaries of Defense and OSD before your appointment as DASD(ISA)?

Bundy: A minor correction, I was actually DASD until November 22, 1963, and confirmed that day by the Senate as Assistant Secretary.

Goldberg: That was a fateful day.

Bundy: It was, and Paul Nitze and I were confirmed on that very day. I had served in the Army during the war in what later became quite famous as the "Ultra" Operation. I was in Bletchley Park on that. I had had no contact with anyone in the Pentagon, particularly, although my father was special assistant to Mr. Stimson throughout that period and was actually involved in the Ultra business. I came back into the government in June or July 1951, in the CIA, and was immediately involved in the work of the Office of National Estimates, which took me into contact with a lot of Pentagon people. I don't remember any particularly striking encounters at that time. In 1952 I became involved in the then very federally structured National Security Council supporting operation, worked in that in the summer of 1952, and was involved in preparing certain briefing books for the incoming President, summarizing all the intelligence estimates. In the

Eisenhower administration the NSC Planning Board became a big deal and I was involved as the assistant to Robert Amory, the Deputy Director of Intelligence, who represented the agency in the Planning Board setup. In that situation I saw a great deal of Frank Nash, Gen. Tick Bonesteel, Col. (later Gen.) Wally Greene, and Col. (also later Gen.) John Vogt. I met quite a few fellows along the way in that '50s experience, which went on until roughly 1956, and that was a fairly constant interchange. Otherwise my main encounters with representatives of this building were with the DIA people, and also with the CIA, and the coordinating structure of the National Intelligence Estimates. I regularly went to meetings of the U.S. Intelligence Board in one connection or another. Then I was on the delegation to the Geneva talks on Berlin in 1959 and met Secretary McElroy when he came and went. But he was barely there. There wasn't a very strong Pentagon element in that delegation. So it went until I took 1960 off as Staff Director of the President's Commission on National Goals, which was set up under Eisenhower's urging but was privately funded. Blanche Moore and I got together first in Geneva. She was in the CIA delegation to the initial nuclear test talks in Geneva in 1958 and was staying there during the recess in those talks. Then she joined me on the Goals Commission job and was my assistant in DoD and then in State. As for my credentials to come into the Pentagon, I was a Democrat and always had been. I was known by Allen Dulles and anybody concerned to be a Democrat, but equally to have a professional viewpoint. Certainly they never distrusted my total loyalty and discretion in the positions I held. It is rather remarkable to note that somebody known to be a Democrat and with prominent Democratic relatives, notably my father-in-law, Dean Acheson, that one could serve in the Eisenhower NSC structure.

Goldberg: You'd never get there now.

Bundy: You'd never get within several blocks of it. In those days we had a great degree of internal frankness in government. After the NSC meetings, habitually on Tuesday, as I recall, we would get debriefed on what had taken place, including very frank statements of the positions taken by the likes of the Secretary of the Treasury or the Vice President. One would make such notes as one had to have for peel-off, so to speak, for what one was going to do thereafter. But nobody ever leaked any part of those notes, as far as I am aware. I think it's worth noting for historical purposes how different the modus operandi was at that stage. Then in December 1960 I had no particular ambition to go into the Pentagon, but Paul Nitze was an old friend and I wasn't offered anything else. I had hoped to get into economic aid, but was delighted to accept his suggestion that I come with him as his Deputy.

Goldberg: There was no DIA during the 1950s. There would have been representatives of the military services and the Joint Chiefs of Staff intelligence organizations.

Bundy: You are right.

Matloff: What did the impact of your service in the Army or other experiences you had in World War II and the legacy of that war have on your thinking about national security policy?

Bundy: I would say nothing very extraordinary or special. I was not privy to any Ultra having to do with the Soviet Union, so I didn't form any views concerning that problem as a result of my military service. Certainly I had a great deal of respect for keeping things secret.

Matloff: You didn't mention your service with the law firm of Covington and Burling, 1947-51. Did you in any way deal with defense or foreign affairs matters in that capacity?

Bundy: In a few cases. The firm was counsel for the governments of Iran and Greece, and along the way, for Pakistan, in connection with the Indus waters business. I was not involved in the Indus matter, but I was involved on Greece, in the 1947-48 winter, where things suddenly turned for the better. On Iran, one of our earliest tasks, in one of the first papers I wrote for the firm, was a draft reply that the government of Iran might make to a Soviet protest that the Iranians had violated the 1921 treaty by bringing in that police advisory mission, the gendarmerie mission headed by Officer Schwarzkopf of New Jersey . I drafted the note and looked up the 1921 treaty, so I had more than a passing familiarity with Iranian matters and with the status of Iran. The Iranian Ambassador, Hussein Ala, had tremendous guts, and there was a legend in the firm about the work that Messrs. John Lord O'Brian, John Laylin, and Donald Hiss had done in working with the Ambassador, standing firm in the United Nations, and for a while without instructions. In other words, I got well and truly bloodied on some of the key points and episodes on Iran, through my associations in the firm and through that representation.

Matloff: You mentioned your service in the CIA, where you served about a decade (1951-61). In what ways did that service shape your views of the threat?

Bundy: It's hard to separate out. Certainly the material on the Soviet military posture seemed very strong. In retrospect, I would say it was overstated. It seemed very convincing at the time and the people who had done it seemed very conscientious. The agency wasn't as strongly equipped in the early 1950s as it became later to do the job of going through all the evidence and coming up with its own judgments. As the decade went on, we were much more reliable than we had been in the beginning of the period, and had a much better idea of what the status of the Soviet divisions was.

Goldberg: You mean whether they were hollow divisions, or real divisions; the total threat on the ground was far less than the Army, for instance, had been saying for a number of years?

Bundy: Yes, but that's hindsight--certainly the picture of Soviet intentions. When I came in July 1951, we did two or three estimates on whether the Soviets were going to attack Yugoslavia in my first five months there. Also, I had a lot of contact with the OSI and the scientific intelligence people. We were scared of how rapidly they were progressing on the nuclear front.

Matloff: Did you perceive any notable differences in the assessment of the threat in that decade between the CIA and the Defense Department?

Bundy: We certainly detected a significant degree of service parochialism. The Air Force would always give you the maximum possible Air Force strength, and the Army would stress something else that it was engaged in, and the Navy its business. There was only fragmentary coordination of the Pentagon side, which may not have been all to the bad, because you saw it in its raw state; but CIA and Defense didn't seem to me to be sharply apart, except possibly over the extent of the bomber gap in the latter 1950s. The missile gap was just emerging. Then I was privy to the overflight material from the time of the first flight that went up on the Moscow route in 1956. I didn't follow that systematically, the U-2s and all of that photographic center, which was set up as a part of the Deputy Director's office. Amory was very close to it. I got the feeling by the time I left the agency, really, in effect, at the end of 1959, that things weren't emerging in accordance with the maximum estimates, but that was as far as it went.

Matloff: Did your work at CIA bring you into contact with Defense intellectuals at RAND and other think tanks, and were you impressed with the writings of any theorists in particular?

Bundy: No, but I certainly knew Wohlstetter's work, published in Foreign Affairs in 1959. I didn't know any of those people at that stage.

Matloff: How familiar were you with trends in post-World War II strategic theories before coming into the Defense Department?

Bundy: In general, but that wasn't a specialized field of mine at all.

Matloff: How about trends in the evolution of the national security system and defense organization since the passage of the National Security Act in 1947?

Bundy: No, not really, I knew the theory of the act and I knew the paragraphs dealing with the mission of the CIA pretty cold, but that was it.

Matloff: Did the service while on leave from CIA in 1960 that you alluded to earlier--as staff director of President Eisenhower's Commission on National Goals--influence or change your thinking on long-range national security problems in any way?

Bundy: No, I don't think it did. The two chapters on national security and basic problems were by William L. Langer and the economic one was by John J. McCloy, both of them outstanding men, but very general in their treatments. The foreign affairs side of that report was not its foremost aspect or its foremost contribution. I think it's fair to say it reflected the state of thinking of that time, but it didn't influence mine in any material way.

Matloff: Did you play any role in the election campaign of 1960, or in the transition from the Eisenhower to Kennedy administration, particularly in connection with intelligence or national security areas?

Bundy: No. I wasn't on active duty in the agency at the time; I was on leave. I don't think they had a repeat of what we had done in 1952, which, I gather, was regarded with interest but not read with care by the incoming Eisenhower administration. I was not involved in any way, shape, or form in the 1960 campaign.

Matloff: To go to your Deputy Assistant of Defense role, what were the circumstances of that appointment, and who recommended you for it?

Bundy: As nearly as I can recall, I certainly was in some touch with my brother, McGeorge, and knew that he was being considered initially for a high position in the Department of State. Then, I gathered he had been moved over to be NSC advisor. I think Paul Nitze tells this story accurately in his recent memoirs. Paul, himself, was asked to take the Assistant Secretaryship. I knew of Secretary McNamara by reputation, but I did not know him personally. I knew Gilpatric very slightly. It was, essentially, that Nitze looked around and finally decided on me.

Matloff: How well did you know him?

Bundy: As a family friend and in social ways. Also, as a very close colleague of Mr. Acheson during the entire critical period of the second Truman administration. We were not close friends, partly because he would have agreed with me that it would not be appropriate when I was in that position in the Eisenhower administration. I had seen him briefly when he was tapped for Assistant Secretary ISA and was turned down by the objections of right-wing Republican Senators in the early 1950s. In any case, I saw him intermittently and in a friendly way, and I followed, also, the Jackson committee hearings in 1959-60. Dorothy Fosdick was an old friend of ours. That whole group that worked together produced an excellent report on the public positions of the two departments. I was following all that, but was not terribly close to it.

Matloff: What instructions or directions were given to you either in written or oral form, and by whom, when you took over the position?

Bundy: I don't recall having any direct meeting with the Secretary or Deputy Secretary. At an early point Paul and I talked roughly about what we would be dealing with. I had talked by then with Robert Knight, my predecessor, who still remains a friend. I knew Jack Irwin, the outgoing Assistant Secretary, and have

seen both of them occasionally over the years since. It was a very frictionless turnover, and one in which Knight obviously assumed that we would go straight down the furrow that they had plowed in the military assistance program, and that I would more or less take over the things that he had been doing. That had no binding effect at all. I came over to the Pentagon in the first week of January and had a cubby hole of some sort. I remember talking there to a young lawyer from the Chicago Law School named Nicholas Katzenbach, who was looking for a job in the Pentagon but did much better for himself in the Justice Department, State, and in the lives of his countrymen, generally. We didn't have any meetings of the newly installed civilian leadership to say, "How are we going to do this job?" We just kind of tumbled and found out there was plenty on the plate. You probably would have no difficulty reconstructing the kind of circumstances, the tropical crises into which we plunged after trudging through snow to get to the building. It was in very comic contrast, because we had Laos, Cuba, the Congo, Vietnam lurking in the wings, and Berlin, of course, hovering over everything. I had been on the Berlin delegation at Geneva, so I knew that problem pretty well. Altogether, it was damage limitation and crisis management from the word go. We were never very systematic in saying, "You're this and you're that." Except that, as Nitze says in his memoirs, he took on the big things--the Europe-related, strategic doctrine-related, and defense budget-related matters. I thought of Cuba as his--I did fill in for him occasionally--but the rest of the ball of wax gradually turned up in my lap.

Goldberg: Harry Rowen and Enthoven had been in the Pentagon for a while before the changeover. They came in 1960.

Bundy: They were certainly professional close followers of the business. I didn't deal with either one to any great extent. I wasn't involved in the Athens speech. That whole ball of wax was the business of Nitze, Rowen, and Bill Kaufmann.

Kaufmann I had known before; we were classmates in college. The first draft posture statement you saw you knew you were dealing with a real pro.

Goldberg: Actually, Henry Glass wrote the posture statements; Bill wrote speeches.

Bundy: He did them later on, didn't he?

Goldberg: Not until the '70s. Not before Laird and Schlesinger.

Bundy: Bill came and went.

Goldberg: He was a consultant and on the faculty at MIT from 1961 on.

Matloff: I take it that there was a division of labor between Mr. Nitze and yourself--you were taking over the military assistance program function, military sales, and third world problems generally.

Bundy: Yes. The crisis list rather early and clearly marked me as having a big action responsibility in Laos and Vietnam.

Goldberg: You had all the arms merchants working for you.

Bundy: We also had the Zaharoff operation in the form of Henry Kuss.

Matloff: You were being put in charge of particular areas and programs. Did you also serve as Mr. Nitze's alter ego, or inside man?

Bundy: Yes, I did, when he was away, but that was not in those early periods very often. When he was away later on, there was no notice to everyone to say that I was in charge and to tell me about things. That wasn't the way we ran. The people who were running with the ball on a particular item went on doing their business and there was very little change in one's way of living.

Matloff: What changes, if any, did Mr. Nitze and you introduce in the personnel, organization and internal procedures in ISA?

Bundy: I think that's always going to be a personal kind of thing, but we certainly made much more of the Plans office generally than had been its situation before--Rowen and Ellsberg coming in and out.

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Goldberg: Tim Stanley, in Plans and Policy.

Bundy: There was certainly more of a brain trust. The organization on the side I was concerned with wasn't particularly changed, except in terms of the degree of high civilian involvement in the military assistance program right from the beginning. At the very first briefing of McNamara on military assistance he, in effect, said, "I am going to understand this program." Previous secretaries had given a pro forma statement and if any question was asked that required the slightest knowledge, they had waived in favor of some colonel behind them and retired from the lists. McNamara was having none of that.

Goldberg: He was determined to get into all the programs.

Bundy: This was after the questions and all the rest, in that very first session.

Matloff: Did he give you any guidelines in this area?

Bundy: Not in explicit form. First of all, he wanted to know where all of the money was going, why it was going there, what it was based on, what was the rationale for it. He went through it. The preparations for his first appearance before the authorizing committees, which would have been the foreign relations and foreign affairs committees, were exhausting. I had not worked as hard as that since some cases in my lawyer's experience. There was some friction. Gen. Williston Palmer, head of the operation, was wondering why we had to have these answers, and quickly discovered that that was the way the new Secretary of Defense perceived his responsibility. There was a general feeling in the administration that this program had not been thought through recently, but was running on momentum. I very quickly came to share that feeling. The authorization figure we were asking for in the holdover budget was \$2.8 billion, and when you broke it down and looked at it, you were struck by the amount of that that was sheer inertia, particularly that was carrying on from force goals set by the Joint Chiefs early in the '50s for the recipient countries in MAP. Going back

to Lisbon, of course, in the case of the European countries in MAP, but they were by then almost totally out of the picture. There was a residual program in Japan which didn't cause any significant problem but was clearly phasing out. There was a residual program in Taiwan--it may have been more than that. In a lot of cases, such as the Indochina countries, they were running on old assumptions about the nature of the threat. That was one problem. The second problem that we at once thought we perceived was that there was very little consideration at any place in government of the economic impact on the country of carrying this kind of a military establishment. If the name of the game was to get the country very strong--"nation-building" was the common phrase Walt Rostow and others used--then a military establishment that cost too much money and diverted money that could otherwise go to building economic development was at least a debatable proposition for the medium and long-term, unless the threat was truly imminent. There was a rethinking of virtually all of the economic and military aid programs that went on and the State Department was assigned overall coordination of this. The man in charge of it, under Harry LaBouisse and David Bell, was Hollis Chenery, who later was at the World Bank. In effect, we were clearing everything we did in some fashion. It originally was very loose, and never became really tight, but was being gone over from the standpoint of whether it made balanced sense, as feeding a balanced diet to the customer.

Goldberg: Did you see the story in the morning paper about the World Bank on this very point? They are seriously now examining countries to which they are making loans to see whether they have gone too far overboard on military expenditures. As far as they are concerned, it is counterproductive to give them money if it is going to go for military. Some of them are spending 50 percent and more of their GNPs for military purposes.

Bundy: I am astounded that that can still go on. It was a problem, and I don't say that our predecessors ignored it totally, because the elaborate review procedures of the Eisenhower administration may have implicitly taken it into account. In effect, the military assistance program was separated from an overall look at the country, in which people really got together and anybody had the power to say, "Change it." The fact was that the military assistance program on the Hill was much more popular than the economic aid program, which remained the case, and so it probably was too big for balance. At any rate, that was what we thought. Also, a lot of the hardware seemed unsuited to the missions. We started changing the program right from February 1961 onward.

Matloff: Would you regard this as one of the McNamara's administration's important contributions?

Bundy: I certainly would, and I don't look back on it as having been in any significant way erroneous. It would certainly have been much better in Vietnam, if we had had this kind of review from the beginning and really looked at what kind of forces we were going to have. As it was, we reacted too slowly to that one.

Matloff: To get back to working relationships, how much leeway did Mr. Nitze and you have in choosing the assistants?

Bundy: I had no participation in the choice of any individuals you have named. Tim Stanley was a personal assistant.

Matloff: He is listed as a Special Assistant; Lawrence McQuade is another one.

Bundy: Larry McQuade came to me through some Democratic party-Adam Yarmolinsky personnel operation. I liked the cut of his jib from the beginning and was delighted to get him.

Matloff: You had Colonel Folda, USA, listed as executive assistant in 1961-62.

Bundy: He was assigned. I had a personal assistant in addition to Blanche Moore. I fairly early was persuaded to take on Jonathan Moore, who has been at the Kennedy School more recently.

Goldberg: He was quite close to Elliot Richardson for many years.

Bundy: He was with me for five years before that.

Matloff: I take it that you and Mr. Nitze worked rather closely, then?

Bundy: Yes. We were on easy terms, particularly when we were in the back of the building with just a back door between our offices. It wasn't as close physically when we moved to the front of the building. It was his style to be pursuing with the greatest possible energy and concentration that which he regarded as the central problem on which he could contribute at a given time. He was not an across-the-board kind of person. This was simply a difference in styles from some other persons. He would rarely say, "Come in and have a 5:30 drink and let's talk about what's on your mind." One would have to make an effort to communicate what was needed, but it was quickly apparent that he trusted all of us to do the job. He did come to some of the early briefings of McNamara on the military assistance program, but he very quickly decided one was either in all the way or not at all.

Matloff: How about your working relationships with the Secretary and the Deputy? How often did you see them?

Bundy: As I was saying, rather jokingly, to Dr. Goldberg earlier, we had the all-time track record from the back of the building to the front for quite a while. I saw a good deal of the Secretary because of this MAP involvement, but then because of Vietnam, Laos, etc. Eventually, I think I was the only Deputy Assistant Secretary on his button call-box. We saw him usually separately on separate problems, but at a fairly early point we came to have frank exchanges, certainly in

the wake of the Bay of Pigs, but up to then it was chiefly the MAP thing in which we were involved.

Matloff: How about with the other Assistant Secretaries? Charles Hitch, the Comptroller? or Carlisle Runge, Norman Paul?

Bundy: Norman Paul was an old friend; I didn't have many dealings with him. I thought he was an excellent choice for the job, because he knew his way around the Hill. We had worked in the CIA together. I didn't know Charlie Hitch, but very quickly took a shine to him. We didn't have a great deal to do with each other. I didn't really deal with Runge.

Matloff: Thomas Morris, Logistics and Installations?

Bundy: I don't really remember Tom Morris.

Matloff: How about the service secretaries--Elvis Stahr and Vance for the Army; Connally and Korth for the Navy; Zuckert for Air Force--any dealings with them?

Bundy: Not really. That, of course, is a striking feature of the whole structure of OSD and the service secretaries. The service secretaries did not get involved in the kind of policy and political-military problems that were the warp and woof of ISA's being. There were certain situations in the military assistance program where we got into all sorts of things. One, for example, where the services were directly involved, was in the choice of a standard aircraft for the military assistance program. Northrop was pushing the virtues of the F-5, the first one. This had been a project authorized through the R&D phase under Secretary of Air Force Quarles, but had never been popular with the fellows in uniform. They thought it was too betwixt and between--too thick to drink, too thin to cut the mustard. They liked their own F-101s, 102s, etc. We had a perfectly pleasant back and forth over whether we were going to insert in the military assistance program a substantial buy of an aircraft the Air Force wasn't about to accept for its own line purposes. I forget the details, and I'm sure it was of low grade importance by

comparison with a great many other fights going on around the building. The upshot was that McNamara made a categorical decision after he had studied some of the maintenance figures in some of the sophisticated items in the military assistance program. The helicopter serviceability rates of Iran cling to my memory at 19 percent. When he asked about that and got those figures back as the best they could do, he said if it was the best they could do to give them something simpler. That was more or less how his mind worked on the problem, and I had a great deal of sympathy for it. It didn't hurt that we had a colonel on our staff who seemed to be the only one who had ever taken an F-5 up for a flight, and he said it was a beautiful plane and maneuvered beautifully. Tom Jones of Northrop used to come around quite a little and made a favorable impression by comparison with his counterparts from Lockheed, who aroused hackles the minute they opened their mouths. The F-104G was even then causing us problems in Europe on the coproduction deal.

Matloff: Did you ever have any problem getting information from the services?

Bundy: I don't recall having that problem, but then I wouldn't have. In that sense, Gen. Palmer as a four-star would regard it as his responsibility to get anything relating to the military assistance program straight. [To Ms. Moore-- wouldn't you agree?]

Moore: And succeeded.

Goldberg: A very forceful man.

Bundy: Then there were certain people we began to turn to in the services. Anybody who says he knows how to handle the services is doomed to a quick dose of humility. There were certain civilians, such as Phil Hilbert, Deputy for Requirements Review in the Under Secretary of the Air Force's office, who handled the problems with the Air Force. In the broad military assistance program, the only equipment problem where we really went head-to-head with

any service, day in and day out, in comparison to others, was over the F-5. In certain Air Force circles it was called "Bundy's folly."

Goldberg: There have been several replays of that since here in Defense--battles over simpler aircraft versus the more sophisticated ones for foreign assistance.

Bundy: This was ground-breaking, in a way, and I think that the ground was broken in the right way, in this case.

Matloff: Did you have any dealings with the JCS and its chairman, either with or without Mr. Nitze? Ever sit in on their meetings?

Bundy: Yes. This was certainly part of my job when he was out of town. It was a weekly meeting, so I certainly went down there; but I didn't play an active role. I do recall one encounter. I knew Gen. Lemnitzer. I forget how we met, but we had known each other and he knew my previous family connections with the building. So he was always very friendly. One did feel a certain coolness with others--I don't think I ever really talked to Gen. LeMay or Adm. Burke--and I guess I am an incurable Army man in my way of thinking in these matters, but with Lem it was easy to relate. One occasion I remember vividly. During the Laos situation, the stage was set for intervention. I didn't know at the time what has been subsequently revealed--that Eisenhower, in his farewell handing-on to Kennedy, said that we would have to stand and fight in Laos--that we would have to intervene with U.S. forces. I didn't know that at the time, but it was clear that Laos was one of the apparently very urgent problems. At a very early point--my date book says on January 31, 1961--Ambassador Winthrop Brown was recalled from Laos for consultation to give his view of the situation. I knew of Amb. Brown, who happened to be a very old friend in some special way of Paul Nitze. In Blanche's inimitable hand it is filled in that Nitze had the appointment with Lemnitzer and Brown and couldn't make it so I filled in as his escort down to the Chairman's office. We were there with Gen. Lemnitzer and with Gen. Bonesteel,

whom I had known quite well in my Planning Board days. They were clearly gung-ho in getting ready to take on this job and do it properly. In came this tall, gray-haired, dignified, but very soft spoken ambassador. We got on to the question of the situation and Brown leaned over and said quietly, "General, the Lao won't fight." He said that it was not in their culture, that it just was not correct to think in terms of anything that involved active cooperation by the Lao of the slightest military consequence. Gen. Lemnitzer wasn't a bit happy with that judgment. In some fashion it did seep strongly into the policymaking process and had a significant effect. I think he was staying with Paul Nitze and so would have said it much more thoroughly in the course of that visit. That was a direct dealing with the Chairman on a very sensitive point, and it was not in the tank. I don't recall any other particular things I was involved in at the time, directly with the Chairman. ✓

Matloff: Did you have any dealings with Maxwell Taylor, the successor?

Bundy: Max Taylor came in as someone everybody had already come to know through his participation in the review of what went wrong with the Bay of Pigs. There was a certain clearcut initial sympathy with his line of thought--building up conventional forces and making that a much more important part was in accord with McNamara's, Kennedy's, and Nitze's view. One was quite easy with Max. I happened to have known his son, Jack, from the CIA, and from an early point I found it easy to talk frankly with Max. I also had a lot of respect for Gen. Lemnitzer, but I thought it was perhaps time for a change, on general principles. He went to NATO as part of that switch, but I cannot testify on that. Nitze certainly thought Norstad had become far too big for his britches.

Goldberg: Lots of people thought that; it was the administration's feeling. The other possibility there was that McNamara wanted him [Taylor] for the job

because they would rather have him in the Pentagon than over in the White House, where he had the President's ear.

Bundy: The reading of JFK's mind is not my specialty. You know the experience of World War II with Adm. Leahy, and it doesn't seem to me to have been all that happy. I had no part in the shift, but certainly would have been sympathetic to it. I suppose the pieces fell into place as the tensions rose with Norstad.

Goldberg: There was some dissatisfaction with Lemnitzer by that time.

Bundy: Yes, clearly, but not with anything with which I was personally involved.

Matloff: With whom did you normally consult at the State Department, and how much coordination did you have with it?

Bundy: That was a key feature of the Kennedy administration's view of how policy should be run. In effect, it adopted the substance of the [Senator] Jackson committee conclusions that the State Department should have primacy. Very early in the game Chester Bowles rammed through a directive that the ambassador was in charge of the country team and that others were not to do hanky-panky and not tell him about it. The channels of communication were adjusted so that only the most sensitive operational stuff was withheld and he knew broadly what was going on under his aegis in the CIA. He also had a mandate to give his views on things like the military assistance program, which for quite a while they were conditioned not to raise but which they did in some African countries rather quickly and said that it didn't make a bit of sense. State Department primacy was an absolutely fundamental point in the Kennedy administration's view of how things should work, and it was one that Nitze and I completely accepted. He had already explicitly endorsed that view and been a foremost witness before the Jackson committee, and I'd always believed that, right through my years of service in the CIA and my observation of the way in which the departments reacted to each other. So it was there from the very

beginning and to a degree surely that our predecessors had not particularly experienced. Not that other departments or agencies were contemptuous, disdainful, or neglectful, but certainly what went on in Laos in 1960 was not under the ambassador's control. That was very clear, and there were three or four cases where the agency had got itself up to its armpits in ways that the ambassador was or felt himself to be powerless to interfere. That was part of what they were getting at. We were totally sympathetic to that. So from the very beginning there was a checking with State on the force plans, the budget, and especially on assistance programs or base-related matters. This primacy of State was what Rusk and the President had in mind and they were all at one on that.

Matloff: With whom were you dealing?

Bundy: With the regional assistant secretary or deputy assistant secretary--that was the way it worked--and with Chenery's office, because of the coordination function that I described. For example, I dealt very closely with Phillips Talbot, the Assistant Secretary for the Near East, in the spring of 1961, on an intense policy review of Iran prior to Julius Holmes' going out as ambassador. I picked up from my date book about five meetings which I recalled as being very intense, with the ultimate recommendation coming from the State Department. This was the question of whether we went with the Shah, or started to dissociate and give a wink of respectability to the National Front in the way Steve Bosworth did, finally, to the opposition to Marcos in 1985-86. That was a typical example. I dealt with Talbot on that, and in a small way, over the years, in Israeli and Middle Eastern matters. But one habitually turned to them, directly or indirectly, and quite often the liaison was at staff level--the colonels in ISA would be talking to the desk officers. This was one of those somewhat intangible shifts of power. Whereas my feeling was that in the previous administration it had reached a point where the Pentagon was saying, "This is what we are going to do, and you ought to know

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about it," and now it was, "This is what we are going to do, provided you agree." We would constantly be asking whether State had any problem with what we were doing. There was a very discernible shift of power.

Matloff: Did Mr. Nitze and yourself clear your positions before you went over to talk to State, or did you have pretty complete leeway?

Bundy: Pretty complete leeway, would be my recollection. We didn't deal in paper a whole lot. We developed over the years in our various pursuits the feeling that you don't need to get bogged down in paper if you know your stuff and you know the man on the other end of the line. Both Nitze and I were well-known and accepted in the State Department.

Goldberg: If you didn't put it on paper, how did you document it?

Bundy: There was an action paper, of course.

Matloff: Did Mr. Nitze and you have any direct or indirect dealings with President Kennedy?

Bundy: He tells of a number of instances of direct dealings with the President. I don't think I ever dealt in a small group with President Kennedy. I don't recall any particular matter I would have gotten involved in except the meetings on Cuba, which were fairly intense but in a standard pattern.

Matloff: How about with the National Security Assistant and his staff, and with NSC itself?

Bundy: I would underline the point that my brother Mac and I regard ourselves as very good friendly brothers, but we hardly ever went beyond the degree of frankness that one would have in the regular course. We didn't in those days call him the head of the NSC. I didn't have to deal directly with my brother on most matters. He was far and away more active in the sphere of policy that Paul Nitze had already taken on. I did deal with Carl Kaysen, his deputy, on the question of getting cracking on changing the mode of operation in Okinawa and looking to

its eventual reversion, which initially caused quite a fluttering but settled down. Carl didn't have the most ingratiating manner, but he did have a point. We started to work on it at a different level from that point onward.

Matloff: How about dealings with Congress, did you have to appear before committees?

Bundy: That was one of the most educational and very rewarding parts of the job, because, in particular, the House Foreign Affairs Committee's stock in trade at that point was its review of the authorization for military assistance. It didn't have any other sure-fire business--confirmations, treaties, etc.

Goldberg: The whole authorization business was just getting started in those years.

Bundy: The aid bill went back a long way; it had been a fight back in the Truman era. Budget reconciliation, the process of the two stages of the authorization and appropriation, which involved Otto Passman, that was another matter. I got to know many members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee on a friendly basis, because I was a witness. McNamara testified for a full day usually, much more than any other secretary had. Then it would be Gen. Palmer and myself in tandem. The general would answer questions about the specifics of equipment, and I would answer questions about policy. I've forgotten whether I appeared jointly with an assistant secretary from the State Department, but certainly they were close to the process. The result was that at that stage, and progressively in my Pentagon experience, I formed a considerable number of useful friendships in the House Foreign Affairs Committee. Less so in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which was overwhelmed with things. We talked with the staffs there but they didn't take much interest in it, except to snipe at it in a petulant way.

Matloff: Did you touch base with the Secretary or Deputy Secretary of Defense, or did you and Mr. Nitze proceed directly to the congressional committees?

Bundy: Once we were squared away, we just testified. I don't think he testified much on the MAP program, but he did on many other things. I don't have that many congressional engagements showing in my calendars, but we worked very hard on those.

Matloff: Do you recall on what issues you found Congress particularly sensitive?

Bundy: Not on Vietnam during my period as Deputy Assistant Secretary. There really weren't special programs or problems raised. We tried to give them a frank statement of how we felt we were doing and we were sanguine--too sanguine--on the progress in Vietnam. I remember a very tense congressional session in September 1962 on the question of the possibility of missiles in Cuba, just before the Smoking Gun overflight. I think it was the Senate committee. In the military assistance program, I suppose you could search the hearings, but I don't recall any. They would hit us on some of the more personal items for the Emperor of Ethiopia, and things that were out of line having to do with base commitments and some long-buried conflict, but they were not really at the policy level. There was no visible hang-up that I can recall on the military assistance program. There were opponents, and the less willing, and the more hawkish ones, but there was no great row about the program as such.

Matloff: Did you and Mr. Nitze ever make use of outside consultants?

Bundy: I must have done so on one or two occasions, but not nearly as much as he. He habitually brought in the Rand crowd--Wohlstetter, et al.

Matloff: Were they mostly coming from the think tanks, universities, or industrial sectors?

Bundy: We had a lot of friends in the universities, and sometimes they would come down.

Goldberg: You had a lot of consultants. A great many.

Bundy: If you named them for me, I could tell you the ones I was involved with.

Goldberg: At one point I read that there were as many as 400 on the rolls.

Bundy: That's interesting.

Goldberg: Some of them came just for a few days or on one occasion, and you can get large numbers that way.

Bundy: You are talking individuals, not consultant days.

Goldberg: Yes, individuals.

Bundy: It was, of course, a handy way for those people to serve. My part of ISA didn't use them at all frequently.

Matloff: I recall in '61 being called over to the Pentagon from the Army. I had just come back from NATO, and Wohlstetter was there with Rowen.

Goldberg: Kaufmann was here all the time during those years. He kept an apartment here and spent half of his time here; and has ever since.

Matloff: Nitze sent a car over so I could get there in time and meet with Mr. Rowen and Mr. Wohlstetter. They were particularly interested in a briefing they were going to give to the White House the next day.

Goldberg: That was early on when McNamara set up those task forces, and Nitze headed the one on NATO.

Bundy: I wasn't really involved in that task force in any depth.

Matloff: What was the dominant attitude toward the Soviet threat in DoD or OSD when you assumed office in ISA, and did you agree with it?

Bundy: Yes, I did. I believed that there was a serious Soviet effort in the military component. I didn't perhaps believe it in quite as downright a fashion as I had read in the original draft of NSC 68, but I certainly believed in the basic policy and the necessity of a strong defense posture, including a high priority for stronger conventional forces. I believed also in the military assistance program as dollar for dollar at the margin more efficient and more serving the interests of the country than a dollar spent in the main budget.

Matloff: Did you find that your colleagues or yourself viewed Communism as a monolithic bloc or threat?

Bundy: No. I had lived through the Eisenhower years where the habitual nomenclature was "the Sino-Soviet bloc," but I remember in my own personal experience in 1958, when something went to the United Nations and India, supported by the Soviets, was chosen over China to be one of the mediators for the Middle East, thinking that that was one of those signs--that the Chinese were absolutely sore as hell about it. I watched the off-shore islands crisis later in '58 very closely and thought I saw signs of trouble between the two. In the summer of 1958, those two together gave me a distinct feeling that these were not by any means a monolith. Then, of course, the fall of 1960 was when the first harsh words were stated at one of the party congresses. Even before 1961 it was abundantly clear that we weren't dealing with the two totally united.

Goldberg: You already had Zagoria's book by then, too.

Bundy: I had known about Zagoria's work when he was at the agency.

Matloff: Do you recall any strong differences of views between OSD or DoD, and any other agencies in government?

Bundy: I'm stating the views of civilians. I would have to guess, but my guess would be that there were still Joint Chiefs' papers that refer to the Sino-Soviet bloc in that period. They accepted the degree of friction and difference either not as far or in a different sense than the dominant civilians in the Kennedy administration did. We were dealing with China--and this was outside anything in which ISA was directly involved--in a situation where it was visible that the Chinese were in poor shape during that year, needed food, and there was thought about token offers to show good will via Hong Kong, etc. It was quite different from the picture that one had inherited. We caught on to that pretty quickly.

Matloff: You had noted that Mr. Nitze, with his interest in strategic matters, would have been naturally attracted to that field. Were you ever drawn into strategy making, directly or indirectly?

Bundy: Only in the sense of the occasional informal meeting or lunch with Nitze, more likely with Rowen, and I would listen to the exposition that the SIOF was simply a massive orgasm and that we needed much more selective targeting, etc. I had sympathy with those views, but I didn't get involved and I am not a proper witness on that.

Matloff: You were undoubtedly keeping up with some of the literature on strategic theorizing--for example, the notions of Bernard Brodie that strategy had hit a dead end in the nuclear age.

Bundy: I have read a lot about it in my brother's book, so any recollection I might have now would probably be colored by that. I don't have strong individual recollections.

Matloff: Did you or ISA get involved with counterinsurgency planning, in Vietnam or elsewhere?

Bundy: Yes we did. "Counterinsurgency" was one of the early intellectual contributions, fads, or what you will, of the incoming administration. I remember--and I picked it up again in my date book when reviewing for this meeting--that the interdepartmental counterinsurgency seminar was set up. I remember addressing it from time to time on how the real name of the game was to strengthen nations in fundamental ways. As my first paragraph I always said, "If George Washington were to return today and find the United States engaged in a massive counterinsurgency effort, he would be appalled. Let us put a positive face on this. What we are really trying to do is strengthen the target country so the viruses won't take hold; and occasionally you have to beat them back when they exist." That was the line I took within that framework. I thought it was too

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schematic, too laden with everyone's favorite project, as any idea in a new administration tends to get. I was a loyal servant of the doctrine of counterinsurgency, but I didn't think it said much that hadn't been clear to fairly wise heads from way back.

Matloff: What were you reading in this area, any particular theorists?

Bundy: I didn't read that kind of theoretical material.

Goldberg: There wasn't much time for it in those days, was there?

Bundy: No. But I wasn't drawn to this in a doctrinal sense. I guess I'm not a very doctrinal person. I can see why it had to be done importantly in country X or Y, Turkey, etc. You could really come to grips with it in terms of what was needed to get a given country in a strong position. But it was so different from case to case.

Matloff: I can't help remembering the Raymond Aron thought that revolutionary war was the poor man's total war against highly developed technological societies. There was a lot of ferment going on among the strategists and theorists at this time.

Bundy: I didn't follow it and was not significantly influenced by it. I have enormous respect for Aron. I also think it is the tendency of academics to develop general theories, and maybe that is their main contribution.

Matloff: From your perspective, what and who were the dominant influences in strategic planning in the Kennedy administration; or in the McNamara administration?

Bundy: I am not the one to ask that.

Matloff: How serious a problem was interservice rivalry for Mr. Nitze and yourself?

Bundy: We didn't get too much into the middle of it from where I sat. There is absolutely no doubt that interservice rivalry was endemic, and I'd experienced it from the intelligence standpoint around the USIB conference tables and seen,

over and over again, how it tended to operate. This was human nature, surely, and, after all, anybody who had lived through the late '40s had seen it at its most virulent. I don't recall anything that hit me personally in my responsibilities very hard. There must have been a lot of infighting on the force goals that we were still broadly guided by, but we started going into them much more carefully.

Matloff: I won't belabor you with the budget. I assume you weren't drawn into the process.

Bundy: I really wasn't drawn into those questions.

Matloff: Was there any impact on the operations and programs of ISA as a result of the internal management reforms in the budget formulation that the McNamara administration introduced, such as program packaging and systems analysis?

Bundy: I don't recall any. We certainly were in practice doing many of the same things, but I don't recall that we used those terms or were much influenced by it.

Matloff: How did you, or do you, account for the rise of the so-called missile gap? Did you believe in it, and how do you account for its demise? Did you play any role in its connection?

Bundy: Not really. I certainly recall, as one who was already privy to whatever we called the overflight business that started in the fall of 1956. Then I must have been involved in the 1958 and 1959 estimates of the overall Soviet capabilities. I was still at CIA, and I was not involved in what I now think must have been the critical year of 1960, because that's when I was on leave. I don't recall how alarmist a picture we painted in 1958-59. I do recall the Trevor Gardner school and Joe Alsop beating the drums frantically, and others saying this. I didn't get much caught up in that, and I certainly was not caught up in the argument that we had to vastly increase our air defense, which I seem to recall William Yandell Elliott advocating rather ardently in some NSC setting, perhaps earlier in the '50s. I

wasn't near the center of that one, although I was obviously privy to the main estimates. I felt out of date in it by the time I came back after a year off in 1960. You [Ms. Moore] may have known something about it from your old colleagues in OSI [OSI/CIA--the scientific intelligence shop], but I didn't.

Moore: That was quite separate. In CIA there had been OSI/CIA, Office of Scientific Intelligence. There was a special section for guided missiles, which was separate from nuclear energy.

Bundy: That's your answer, I'm afraid.

Matloff: I was wondering whether, given your background in intelligence, you might have been pulled into this kind of question.

Bundy: No, I wasn't an expert. My plate wasn't exactly empty, and so I didn't get brought in.

Matloff: How about other controversial issues in weaponry during the McNamara administration--such things as the B-70 bomber, the TFX fighter (the F-111), and the cancellation of Skybolt? Were you drawn into those issues?

Bundy: The short answer would be no, not in any meaningful way. I certainly knew that the blood was flowing out of the Secretary's door, but I was not directly involved.