This is part II of an oral history interview with Dr. James R. Schlesinger, held in Washington, D.C., on February 7, 1991, at 1:00 p.m. The interview is being recorded on tape and a copy of the transcript will be sent to Dr. Schlesinger for his review. Again representing the OSD Historical Office are Drs. Alfred Goldberg and Maurice Matloff.

Dr. Schlesinger, at our last meeting we discussed some of your experiences before becoming Secretary of Defense, and had begun to talk about your conception of your role as Secretary of Defense.

Schlesinger: How much had I said?

Matloff: You talked about the problems you faced when you took the position, the initial objectives that you had, and the atmosphere in the Department when you took over. Did the weakened Nixon administration, under the impact of Watergate, add to your problems? Did it hamper your efforts or otherwise affect your role as Secretary of Defense?

Schlesinger: You ask the question as if there might be a simple answer to it. There isn't; it's a very complicated answer. In the first place, in some ways it made my role very easy. In some ways it added somewhat to the difficulty. But overall, it eased the role

substantially because, given the preoccupation which began to expand over the summer of 1973, followed by the war in the Middle East, generally speaking I was left to run the Department as I pleased, with remarkably little, by historical standards, interference from the White House. That was enormously helpful. When Nixon was gone, and Gerald Ford had come in, he began to assert more of the traditional White House overview, which came as something of a disappointment or surprise to me. During the Nixon period there was a preoccupation which grew steadily after Labor Day, 1973, and by the summer of 1974 was such that I was more or less free to do what I wanted. Because of Vietnam, in some ways reinforced by Watergate, the military were not in high repute on Capitol Hill, whereas, for a variety of reasons, by and large I had a good following on Capitol Hill. As a consequence, the military were not in a position to do what the military services had frequently done in the past, which was to run around the Secretary of Defense. Anything they wanted to get, they had to come through my office and get my backing. So the net effect was substantially to strengthen my own position relative to other Secretaries of Defense. However, as your question implied, the administration itself was somewhat weaker,

and that weakened us in particular areas, and, most notably, in our ability to continue to support the government of South Vietnam.

Matloff: Did your perception of your role, functions, or priorities change in office--that is, in the transition from Nixon to Ford?

Schlesinger: My conception of the role didn't change, but I suspect that the White House's conception may have altered.

Matloff: About the role itself, did you view the position primarily as administrator, politician, strategist, lawyer for the client, manager of resources, or all of these?

Schlesinger: You are going to have to put up a checklist. Most of the above. Did you have a chance to read a paper that I gave in Kentucky, called "The Roles of the Secretary of Defense," or something like that, in which I wrote some notes and expostulated and, I think, captured much of the flavor? My first notion is that the role of the Secretary of Defense is not to be a politician in the conventional sense. There are those who think differently. Mel Laird was a politician all of the time, and was quite good at it. That was the trade he had practiced. That was not my trade. At the close

of the Watergate period, I gave a speech to the Armed Forces Council, in which I noted [?] that, despite the difficulties of the administration at that time, the Congress wanted the Department of Defense to be an island of stability on which they could count. You will remember that the summer of 1974 was not a happy summer. People have forgotten the atmosphere of this town at that time. Keeping the Department as this island of stability was enormously important in that period, so that everybody on Capitol. Hill could feel that we weren't playing games of one sort or another. My stock in trade, from the day I arrived as a naive boy scout from the Rand Corporation with the notion that here in Washington there were people who were really interested in seeing the cost benefit of analysis applied to government policy and I soon discovered that there were not scads of political figures who were fundamentally interested, was that I played it straight. I lost some of the boy scoutism, but my stock in trade was that I called it as I saw it. Therefore, I could not play the game of politician. Mel was very good at it. His great strength as Secretary of Defense was that he had alliances on Capitol Hill and knew every trick in the book. He would use that book of tricks mercilessly, but my game was "here's the

substance, and I am going to play it as straight as I can." It is that that won, in my judgment, things like the fight on the Mansfield amendment. When I got there, I was told it was lost in the Senate. When it was all over, Mansfield was beaten 57 to 43, or roughly those numbers. Mike Mansfield couldn't get a majority in the Senate, where he was out-strategized. So the answer to your question is: no, I did not regard myself as a politician, but as the principal strategist, particularly with regard to nuclear matters, and that was a particularly important function as we came out of Vietnam. We were obliged, in my judgment, to revise nuclear strategy and to cast around once again for our NATO strategy, and no one could provide that kind of guidance other than the Secretary of Defense. In fairness to my colleague Henry Kissinger, the Secretary of State had that capacity and sometimes was quite willing to provide guidance. But nobody within the system could provide it other than myself. That was the principal role. The role is not only as strategist but as one who provides political guidance to the military. You hear a lot of rubbish about how the military should be left to do their own thing. They must have political guidance. In fact, I expect that we are going to see the

emergence of that reality in the current circumstances in the Middle East, but that is another story.

Goldberg: They generally wanted political guidance; they've asked for it; and when they haven't had it, they have had to improvise.

Schlesinger: The next role is resource manager. That goes along with the role of strategist.

Goldberg: Do you think you were the exception in the role that you played as strategist, an exception among Secretaries of Defense?

Schlesinger: Yes. I was not quite unique. McNamara tried, but he tended to switch around a good deal and take emotional stands on one thing or another. Even though he is a compellingly logical man, he is also an enormously emotional man. You'll remember how he switched in 1962-63 from the strategy of damage limitation. All of a sudden it was wiped out. From the Athens speech to a year later, his views were totally altered. That was in part because he was new to the business and he picked up things from people like Bill Kaufmann and other Rand men. But he didn't have it in his guts; they were intellectual fancies that passed through his head. Harold Brown, I think, had some of these inclinations, but he was an excellent manager of

technology. He was a good budget man, an allocator of resources. In some ways he didn't have the instinct for strategy; it was an intellectual formulation with him. When he first came into the job, he was imbued with some of the liberal predilections of the era: on arms control, for example. The initial proclivity of the Carter administration, particularly of the President, was to reject all of that stuff about the threat to use nuclear weapons selectively. Carter had renounced it, and by the end of the administration they understood it. Indeed, Carter actually said he had been wrong.

Matloff: With your long experience at Rand, your service with the Atomic Energy Commission, and your brief stay at the CIA, you brought more capital in this field to the position than any previous Secretary of Defense, or any since.

Schlesinger: That's right. The interplay between foreign policy and military forces and between foreign policy and military strategy, was my area of interest. Harold's interest had not been that. He had been head of the Livermore Lab, developing technologies; he had been DDR&E, developing weapons systems; and Secretary of the Air Force, whose primary responsibility was not to run

the war in Vietnam but to find the material resources for the air war.

Goldberg: He involved himself very much in the running of that air war in Vietnam.

Schlesinger: That's right. But for the Secretary of the Air Force that was a logistical problem, rather than making judgments about the utility of air power.

Goldberg: He was doing that, too, I think.

Schlesinger: In any event, he came at things from a different standpoint. I was drawn into this originally by my concern about foreign policy and gradually developed increasing interest.

Goldberg: Where would you put Carlucci in this picture?

Schlesinger: That's an interesting question; I hadn't thought much about Frank. Carlucci, in my judgment--one hesitates to say this--was an enormously healthy change from his predecessors, in that he thought about things. But Frank was so busy clearing up some of the excesses of the previous period that whether or not he had the instinct to deal with these larger strategic issues in a comprehensive way was untested, because he spent much of his time clearing away the debris of the Weinberger period and he was only in office for about a year. But Frank would come at things from a foreign policy

standpoint. I can remember when he was Ambassador to Portugal in 1975 arguing with Kissinger about the future, and Kissinger taking the view that Portugal was irretrievably down the drain of Communism, and Frank standing up in that. Frank was a very effective civil servant type of Secretary of Defense. He was neat; he understood a broad range of issues; he treated everything in an evenhanded way, so far as I could see, as a good civil servant would. He did not have the boldness that more likely comes from not having had that history of continuously being in government.

Goldberg: I think he had it by the time he became Secretary. He had had that experience in the White House by that time and had the White House connections. He was Deputy Secretary for a couple of years, and had served with CIA for years. He was one of the better experienced people before he came into the office.

Schlesinger: I never knew how much he did while Cap was there. Cap's personality was so dominating that it wasn't clear what Frank's role was as Deputy Secretary. I think he was quite effective at the Agency, which I know more about.

Matloff: More the inside man.

Schlesinger: Yes, and he was a good White House man, too. I don't know about that period under Weinberger. That tended to be an era dominated by ideology, spending, and getting the top dollar, rather than thinking things through. And Frank had to defend every major initiative that Cap had under way.

Matloff: In trying to place your role in the longer range of development in the Department, I am aware that you were the first Secretary of Defense in over a decade to direct this huge apparatus without a war to fight. That had been winding down by the time you came in. Did that affect your conception of your role, dealing essentially with a period not of active war?

Schlesinger: I did have a war to fight for about a month. I came in about May, as I have mentioned, and was sworn in in July. In July the Congress adopted the amendment to the Appropriations tag to cut off all spending in Southeast Asia after October 1. I had the period from May until that time of fighting that issue. Then I had the period until October 1 in which we were still bombing in Cambodia and I was under great pressure from the White House to raise the number of B-52 sorties, a pressure that I resisted. Finally, from that time until April of 1975 I had the Vietnamese War, continuing

throughout most of my tenure at the Department. Every once in a while that war, even though we were not a participant, would surge to the front. During the fall and winter of 1974 I had to spend a great deal of time trying to scratch funds out of the Congress, and then throughout that period in early '75 my attention was devoted to a large extent to the withdrawal from Phnom Penh, the prelude to the withdrawal in Vietnam, and finally that withdrawal. Then we had the Mayaguez incident, and in October of 1973 we had the Middle Eastern War. So I had an experience rich in wartime activities. However, an underlying theme in your question goes to the issue of whether the end of the Vietnam War as the principal focus of American attention affected my role as secretary, and the answer is yes, indeed. In 1965, when I was back at Rand, I had been reluctant to see us go into Vietnam because I thought it was going to divert our attention from more important issues such as the Soviet Union and NATO. When I came in [as Secretary], I had the opportunity to refocus attention on those important issues, both NATO strategy and nuclear strategy, which was tied up with the future of NATO. After the 1973 war I was able to focus a great deal of attention on the Gulf, which, it was plain by

that time, was going to be a centerpiece of subsequent U.S. strategic interest.

Matloff: Also, the rebuilding of the armed forces, which preoccupied you and held a good deal of your attention.

Schlesinger: Yes, most notably in Europe, which had been stripped bare by the Vietnam War.

Matloff: Did you feel that the previous Defense Reorganization Acts gave the Secretary of Defense sufficient authority to run and control the department? Did you ever feel hampered in this regard?

Schlesinger: I think the answer to that is yes. There is such a thing as "two cheers for Democracy," instead of three cheers. This is sort of a 90 percent "yes." There was a lot of nuisance around to hang over from the old days. The Department is not so much an organization as an accretion. The answer is yes, due, in particular, to the circumstances in which the military understood that they had to come through me, that there were no serious problems with the military services making end runs and the like.

Goldberg: You cultivated a good relationship with them, didn't you? And they were aware of that.

Schlesinger: Yes, indeed. I liked them. It's important that you like them and that you trust them as human

beings. I had a very good relationship with them, and, after a while, I had put most of them in office.

Goldberg: Laird had helped foster better feeling on their part toward OSD, hadn't he? or toward the Secretary?

Schlesinger: Yes. McNamara's relations had deteriorated badly, even within the first year he was in office, partly justifiably, partly unjustifiably. Then, of course, when the Vietnam War started in 1965, there was great tension among the military, who felt they were being suppressed by the civilians. I imagine, though I don't know much about this period, since Clark Clifford spent all of his time on Vietnam, that, although he is a man of much greater natural humor and grace than Bob, his relations with the military would have been much affected by the sourness of that period. Mel Laird managed to pull them out of Vietnam, for which there was ambivalence but gratitude, and to treat them, once again as a politician would, as respected members of the team. That was enormously helpful. Where Mel did not engage with them is that in some respects his mind worked in entirely different ways from theirs. He thought as a politician; they didn't think politically. So they appreciated Mel; they appreciated his talents and skills, but they

regarded him as incomprehensible in some ways. If you talk to Tom Moorer, for example, you will find that. Even though there was an improved relationship, there was always one of distrust--what is this politician trying to pull on us? I was in the old BoB and watched the under the table dealings between the White House and the Chairman--the run around Mel. I think Mel knew all about it and had taken counter measures, because you had to wake up early in the morning to fool Mel, but the fact was that there was the view in the military that Mel was trying to do them in, even though his personal relations were fine. In my case, they had a greater sympathy for me because I tried to think largely in terms of military issues, the well being of the Department of Defense, and how most efficiently to allocate resources and not waste a lot of money on the things that the politicians wanted. And they appreciated that.

Matloff: May I ask about your philosophy of management in the Department and how it compared with that of some of your predecessors, like McNamara or Laird? Laird made much of "participatory management."

Schlesinger: He made a great deal of it. I remember his sidekick from Wisconsin, Bob Froehlke. He introduced Bob and said something to the effect that "we believe here in

participatory management, which means that you can participate but I'll manage." It was good. He understood how to bring out the best in people, but never lost the reigns himself.

Goldberg: He didn't interfere with the services in operational matters, which is what they appreciated most, I think--certainly not to the same extent. And he resisted White House interference, too.

Schlesinger: Yes. You asked for my views on that. My views were shaped by my experience. Growing up at Rand, when McNamara first came in, I thought that he was doing a marvelous job in introducing program budgeting and these other techniques which, despite the criticism by the military, have now been totally absorbed by them, and to a large extent the systems analytic way of thinking as well as program budgeting. Then I became somewhat critical of his methods (this is criticism within a larger framework of respect), in particular his way of deciding how all spending would take place. He would decide on the force structure and how much money would be put to it. When I was at the old Bureau of the Budget, I gave a speech, in 1969, at West Point. The basic point of the speech was that the services were large institutions that we were dealing with, that can't be

controlled in detail from the office of the Secretary of Defense. Because they are large institutions, you have to get these people working with you; you have to incentivize them to move in the direction that you want them to; you can't just order them.

Goldberg: Especially the Navy.

Schlesinger: I'm not sure you can get the Navy to do it, even if you incentivize it. I used as an illustration McNamara's decision that the Navy will have 15 carriers and the Army 16 divisions. The effect of that is to incentivize the services, since they couldn't affect the force structure to put more and more resources into the divisions or build bigger carriers, because he wasn't controlling carrier size, he was simply prescribing a force structure. I said, "We have an overall budget limitation and I want to get the services to have the incentive to use those resources as effectively as possible." It was then, as I mentioned last time, that I struck my deal with General Abrams and subsequently to a lesser extent with the Air Force, but was never quite as successful with the Navy. The point was that if you fight with them and order them to do something and, above all, if you treat them with some degree of disrespect, they will be fighting you all the time. You have to get

them working with you and get the incentives working in the right direction. That was the principal model from which I deviated to some extent. I liked Gates's performance, in that he was moving in that direction at the end of the '60s. I had been at the Naval War College in the '50s, and I had very limited respect for the performance of Eisenhower's other two Secretaries of Defense. To some extent, probably to an excessive extent, I had been guided by Forrestal's diaries, Forrestal's gloominess, and Forrestal's apprehension that the Department of Defense was being weakened excessively by budgetary considerations. And he had a gloomy view about the growth of Soviet capabilities. I was certainly influenced by that and also by Forrestal's proclivity to stand up to the White House in defense of the Department of Defense, which may not have helped me after the Watergate period was over. With regard to the FY 1976 budget I just told the White House that if the President had to cut that much out, they would have to get another man to do it. A more prudent fellow would not have taken so firm a stand on budgetary issues.

Goldberg: But Forrestal wasn't effective, either, against the White House.

Schlesinger: No, I understand that. He ultimately was fired by Truman. But that's a measure of effectiveness and the fact of the matter is that I won on the budget issues, because after my departure Ford was obliged to backtrack simply because of the uproar that occurred. I don't remember what happened after Forrestal's departure, but when I departed, I quite consciously used it as a way of forcing them.

Goldberg: After Forrestal Johnson came in and cut even more because he thought that's what Truman wanted, and that's what fixed Johnson and finished him once the Korean War got underway.

Schlesinger: Rummy [Rumsfeld] got very clear advice at the outset that if he were going to live within the building he had to get some of those prospective cuts restored. That's an interesting point. I don't regard these jobs in government at this level as something that is so significant from the standpoint of one's happiness and life style that one takes a great deal of guff in office. It's more important to do the job while you are there than to stick around longer and not do the job.

Matloff: We touched last time on your attitude toward systems analysis, while you were at Rand, that you gave it two and one half cheers, and regarded it as a useful

if oversold tool. Did that attitude change when you became Secretary of Defense? Did you ever get to the point where you gave it three cheers? Laird had downgraded it, along with ISA.

Schlesinger: I think I stayed with two and one half cheers. I upgraded the Systems Analysis Director. You asked me about Mel before. Mel tended to be very political. For example, he had something called "realistic deterrence." When I was in the White House, we spent a great deal of time arguing about that. I regarded it as just words. It was put together by his chief aide, Bill Baroody. I said, "You can't go around saying that we are in favor of deterrence but not war fighting. Underlying deterrence is a war fighting capability." That made a great thing of it. I was much more interested in defending the substantive defense notions even on Capitol Hill than I was in putting together a PR document. But Mel was different from that.

Matloff: Was there any reason for upgrading the Systems Analysis Director to an assistant secretary?

Schlesinger: It had been, before Mel downgraded it, I think basically at the behest of the House Armed Services and particularly at the behest of Mendel Rivers. As I recall, I had some problem with Eddie Hébert about

pushing it back up. He was fearful that Alain Enthoven had risen from his grave and so on. I wanted to have an office which was headed by somebody who did not carry with him the appearance of having had his office downgraded. I had instructed all of those people in systems analysis that their purpose was not to spend all of their time fighting with the services and telling them that they didn't know their business and all those things that bright defense intellectuals tended to say.

Goldberg: Laird's reaction in downgrading it was a political one .

Matloff: Where and how did you obtain advice and analysis when you wanted it within the Department? What use did you make of people like Kaufmann and Marshall, and did you have a "kitchen cabinet" of sorts of people like Martin Hoffmann, Tom Latimer, and eventually Joseph Laitin?

Schlesinger: No, I didn't have a "kitchen cabinet." It always tended to be discussions one on one. My morning sessions tended to get rather philosophical, to the distress of less philosophical minded people around there. Marty Hoffmann was kind of a troubleshooter, and had been when he worked for me at the old AEC. He would

go away and find some trouble and come back and say how we should work on it.

Matloff: Did you bring him in? And Latimer and Laitin as well?

Schlesinger: Latimer came in as my special assistant; so did Joe Laitin; I brought Marshall over from the NSC. I felt it was important for the Department to be in charge of net assessment rather than having that floating around under Henry Kissinger or the White House.

Goldberg: Kissinger had brought Andy in, hadn't he? Did he have any objection to Andy's leaving?

Schlesinger: I don't think he treated it as a matter of great importance. He was always inclined to preserve prerogatives, but he didn't care that much about people. No, I did not have a "kitchen cabinet." Marshall and Kaufmann tended to influence my substantive judgments about military matters. Hoffmann tended to deal with matters that were legal or practical resource matters that involved public relations.

Matloff: He had been General Counsel and you moved him over as Secretary of the Army.

Schlesinger: I proposed him as Secretary of the Army. He actually took office after my departure.

Matloff: We mentioned that the question of a second Deputy Secretary of Defense had come up during the confirmation hearings and you had said that you would study the issue. You studied it, I take it, and came to some conclusions. You never did appoint anyone, did you?

Schlesinger: No. I had a squabble with the White House over my recommendation that Ellsworth be elevated to it and take the responsibility.

Matloff: He took over in December of 1975, after you left. You had laid the groundwork for that before you left?

Schlesinger: Yes. That had been an issue. I had been rebuffed by the White House in the fall of 1975. Kissinger's view was, "What the hell does he need this for?" But after I departed and Rumsfeld came in, the tendency of the White House was to give to Rumsfeld all the issues that I had raised previously, and so Ellsworth was elevated as a second deputy.

Matloff: You had concluded that there was a need, I take it, for this position?

Schlesinger. Yes, because in the circumstances of the time he needed additional clout in dealing with the Department of State. As an Assistant Secretary he tended to get brushed off, or could be too readily brushed off

by Department of State personnel; whereas if he was elevated to the Under Secretary level he would have additional clout. This was not significant within the Pentagon but it was significant within the interagency process.

Goldberg: It was a limited role, and he was not sharing power with Clements.

Schlesinger: Right. He was very much of a number two man. I had a post that I hadn't filled, you see.

Matloff: In a speech of the fall of 1983, you stated, "Any examination of the DoD's organizational chart reveals numerous anomalies that militate against official decision-making. . . . The incongruities that exist in the organizational structure are, however, considerably eased by the sub-formal and informal systems that actually permit the Pentagon to work." Would you explain what you meant by that statement, and how much you relied on these informal and subformal systems?

Schlesinger: That may have been too pretentious a statement, in the sense that I was expressing something that is true of most organizations. You may remember Bill Jones, an Air Force colonel. Bill had written eloquently about all the subformal structures that actually made the Air Force work. One does not forget

that kind of thing, and I had the opportunity to observe quite frequently. This consists of all of those personal relationships and institutional relationships that are not put down in an organization chart which will make any organization work, but particularly one as vast as the Department of Defense. I think I used this as an illustration at one point or another. On paper, the service Secretary and Chief of Staff do not have anything to do with warfighting. They are there to provide for the weapons systems and the training and logistical base for their service. But as a practical matter, a historic matter, the Chief of Staff has a stature in the eyes of all of the people in that service that isn't captured by the legal wording of the position in the National Security Act. In 1973 when we decided to start the airlift to Israel, on a Saturday, the 13th [of October], actually having decided on it late Friday night, we passed the word to Tom Moorer, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and he passed the word down to the man who headed up the transportation command in East Saint Louis at that time, the Military Airlift Commander. In principle, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force didn't have a thing to do with that. In practice, the first thing that that Air Force general does is to call up George Brown and say,

"I've just heard this." And George Brown says, "Get to work." That's a subformal matter, that isn't in the charter. But if the Chief of Staff of a service says, "That's what those people want to do. You shouldn't be seen to be dragging your feet." You are not going to get any enthusiastic response from the personnel out there. You have to keep all of these people working for you and the organization chart just doesn't capture it. I don't know why, but it seems that people that come from corporate life pay much more attention to that organization chart when they come into the government, even though I suspect that when they were at Ford or GM they knew that it didn't work that way. It's sort of a novelty coming into the government and they think it works in accordance with the organization chart. David Packard, for example, never quite got the hang of things because he thought that the DoD should work like Hewlett-Packard.

Matloff: In February 1974 you were quoted as saying, "You cannot control a department of this size; you have to guide it. I'm really a revivalist." That was kind of tucked in at the end, I don't know in what context. Would you comment on that statement?

Schlesinger: I don't remember that statement, but it doesn't sound unfamiliar. That's a train of thought that started at least by 1969.

Goldberg: That's also in keeping with what you just said.

Schlesinger: It was that McNamara tried to control that department from the office. It resulted from watching him from Rand in the 1960s, then commenting from the BoB that there's no way you can do that, that you have to incentivize the services. That statement clearly reflects that. When I say that I am a "revivalist," indeed I am. That was part of my task, as far as I could see--revival of the morale of the department after being battered in the Vietnam War, and in the sense of getting them all moving toward some set of goals.

Matloff: The statement about controlling the department is similar to one that Brown made and apparently came to the same conclusion. To move on to working relationships, first with Deputy Secretary of Defense and other top officials in OSD--what was the division of labor between you and the Deputy Secretary of Defense William Clements. How did you see the role of Deputy, and did the fact that he had arrived in the Pentagon

prior to your becoming Secretary of Defense complicate the relationship in any way?

Schlesinger: Sure. The first point to be made is that Clements had a strong personality that was somewhat unguided. He had made a major contribution to the Nixon campaign in 1968 and had wanted to come to the Department of Defense but Mel Laird kept him out. In 1972 he had been named after the reelection of Nixon and probably had been slated for it well before the reelection and he was handed to Elliot Richardson. Clements quite obviously had wanted to be the Secretary of Defense when Richardson departed and when I departed, he was cast down once again that he had not received the nod. I thought of Clements, basically, as forceful but lacking in judgment, and therefore I had to keep an eye on him. To him was delegated most of the weapon systems and budgetary decisions in terms of working out the details with the services. That was about it. He was constrained by a commitment that he had given to Senator Stennis and the Armed Services Committee when he came into office that he would stay strictly away from matters involved with petroleum, because he retained his stock in Citgo. He did not always observe that commitment. He had to be very carefully watched, because he kept being drawn back

into these areas. He was also supposed to stay away from the Shah of Iran and from Iranian matters. Either he did not take the pledge to the Congress as binding, or he did not have a clear understanding of the underlying concept of conflict of interest.

Matloff: Did you try to get him removed? According to Ford's memoirs, A Time to Heal, he makes a point of saying that you were trying to get Clements out but that he wouldn't give his approval. Is there any truth to this report, from your standpoint?

Schlesinger: Yes. As a matter of fact, what I just referred to was something that the White House Council had taken up, and the Council recommended to Ford that Clements be removed for having violated the set of constraints that had been imposed on him by the Senate. Ford chose to disregard the advice of Phil Buchen and his deputy, Rod Hills, as well as mine, on that. I think it had something to do with Clements and his prior contributions to the Republican Party, and maybe as a source of information to the White House.

Matloff: Did this have any effect, this kind of relationship with the Deputy, on the making of decisions and seeing to it that they were implemented? How did you work around this problem?

Schlesinger: For the most part, with regard to issues within the building, it did not come up because they were sufficiently mechanical issues that they didn't get play. If there were a case on something of significance and my wishes were not being carried out, somebody on my staff would bring that to my attention. But, by and large, the services were quite eager, on those things on which I had expressed myself, to be responsive to the desires of the Secretary of Defense.

Matloff: In your relations with other top officials in OSD did you meet with some more than others?

Schlesinger: I think the answer to that is yes. I tended to spend a fair amount of time with Sullivan, a lesser amount of time with Bill Brehm, relatively little time with Mendolia, the I&L man. ISA was an area of special interest to me, but it's not clear in that case whether my spending time with the Assistant Secretary was that in which he influenced me as much as the other way around. As you know, my principal concern at the outset was the restoration of our relations with Western Europe and the NATO connection, and I spent a great deal of time with ISA people--Reggie Bartholomew, who is now at State, and Harry Bergold. The first head of ISA subsequently went off to Argentina as Ambassador and Ellsworth came

in. They tended to pick up those areas of the world that I wasn't interested in.

Matloff: In your relationships with the JCS, you apparently played an active role in the appointment of some of these Joint Chiefs--not only Brown as Chairman, but also Jones, the Chief of the Air Force, and Weyand, Army Chief of Staff. Did you meet regularly with the JCS?

Schlesinger: Yes, every week.

Matloff: Did you prefer to deal with the Chairman more than with the body of the JCS as a whole?

Schlesinger: Inevitably, but I would meet with the Chiefs individually as well as a corporate body.

Matloff: Did you have any problem getting information either from the Joint Chiefs of from the services?

Schlesinger: I don't think I had any unusual problems. I'm not sure I even had the usual problems.

Goldberg: Do you think they ever withheld information from you?

Schlesinger: I don't think that the services wanted to. They tended, like all institutions, indeed, all subordinates, to put the best foot forward. I don't think that there was any careful withholding of information, except that they tended somewhat to

overstate their achievements and understate their costs, but one applies some discount to that.

Matloff: How did you view the Joint Chiefs of Staff role in such things as strategy, budgeting, and force structure planning?

Schlesinger: All of this was covered subsequently in the Senate hearings on what became the Goldwater/Nichols bill. The Chiefs tended to be much more responsible in a budgetary sense in their service capacities than in their corporate capacities as Chiefs, because the Chiefs tended to generate all of this paper that went more or less under the heading of "wish lists." That was their aspiration, their planning document, planning meaning collection of hopes. One did not spend a great deal of attention on that kind of formal product of the JCS.

Matloff: Did you try to give the Joint Chiefs of Staff more of a role in any of these areas than they had had?

Schlesinger: No.

Matloff: There were at least two incidents, one a problem involving Gen. Brown and an alleged antisemitic remark in late 1974. How did you handle that incident?

Schlesinger: Do you want the undiluted version? I first heard about it the night before the story was published, when I was called up by the managing editor of The

Washington Post informing me that they had this story and they were going to run with it. George Brown had been down at Duke or North Carolina and obviously had thought that he was amongst his pals at the officer's club and was rather unrestrained in his comments. The reporter from the Post, Mr.Keyser [?], had a tape recorder with him. He read it through the quotes and said he would run it the next day and I said, "Please don't make a sensational thing of it, keep it as balanced as you can." I went home and told my wife that George had put his foot in it, which he not infrequently did. I got up the next morning, read the papers, and we had a political problem on our hands. I paced around the office for a while and finally said to Evelyn, "Call me Booky" (Hyman Bookbinder), and we spent some time on the phone. He said that General Brown would have to issue some kind of retraction or apology and statement to the effect that he recognizes that this is a pluralistic society. Pretty soon--maybe a day or two later--we gathered together a meeting of heads of various Jewish organizations in my office. Gen. Brown came in, cheery as usual, and I told him he would have to make an apology. He said, "Of course, a gentleman must always apologize when he has given offense without intending to do so." I went to

work and wrote out a brief statement for him, which was issued later in the day. Of course, we had a torrent of calls which came into the JCS and my office, protesting. I met with the representatives of all the Jewish organizations and talked about it for a long time. Some of them wanted him fired, and I asked them if they really wanted to make him a martyr. After a while that subsided except for one of the individuals there. It rattled around for an extended period.

Matloff: Did you make use of the Public Affairs officer during this incident at all? Did you turn to him for advice, or for damage control?

Schlesinger: I must have done so, but I think that I guided myself. He was certainly involved in putting constraints on it.

Matloff: Another incident came up with Adm. Zumwalt, the CNO, in June 1974. Were you ordered to fire or discipline him by the President?

Schlesinger: No, I was ordered to fire him by General Haig.

Matloff: What action did you take and how did you get around the ire that apparently had been aroused?

Schlesinger: I said simply that it was insane.

Goldberg: He was on his way out anyhow.

Schlesinger: It was one week from his retirement, and I was supposed to fire him to discipline him for having been on a TV show in which he made relatively bland remarks. One might criticize, to some extent, some of the comments to some slight degree for not being correctly nuanced, but basically he behaved, as I recall it, as kind of a reflective soul. But I had been ordered not to let him go on TV, and he went on TV. So I was ordered to fire him.

Matloff: Was that a reflection of Nixon's ire, or just General Haig's?

Schlesinger: I don't know the answer to that. I strongly suspect that it also reflected the President's, but it was certainly a reflection of General Haig's. At that particular juncture of history, the White House was not a model of cool and rational calculation. Even if they had taken offense at what Zumwalt was saying, the fact was that it was one week before his retirement, and he could have gone on TV one week later, and in the midst of Nixon's other troubles to add to them by firing the CNO one week before his retirement made no sense whatever.

Matloff: We've discussed your relationships with the services. One question about the service secretaries--

did you see any of them more than others, or make use of them outside the traditional interests of their departments?

Schlesinger: No. I'm trying to think of exceptions, but by and large I tended to work more with the chiefs than with the service secretaries. I frequently would see the service secretaries with the chiefs.

Goldberg: Your interests ran more in that direction anyhow.

Schlesinger: That's right, In addition, you asked me about the workability of the Department, and I said that there were hangovers from the past. I regarded the role of service secretary as, at best, a PR device, and at worst a hangover from the past. The service secretaries tended to be put in their jobs for political reasons.

Matloff: On the subject of working relationships with the State Department, there was a tail end of the Rogers period, but basically it was Kissinger and you who were contemporaries while you were in the Secretary of Defense post. How often did you meet with him and with what kinds of issues were you dealing with State during that period?

Schlesinger: I met with him formally at the outset, I think, once a month or thereabouts. Our relations

deteriorated at the close of the period and we didn't meet that much any longer. I had a long relationship with Henry Kissinger. I had met him during my years at Harvard; he was a member of my class. He had offered me a job on the NSC staff and was rather put out when I went off to become Chairman of the AEC. We had a relationship, particularly in the White House years, of some degree of mutual support and intellectual respect, as much as one could have with Dr. Kissinger. His relations with my predecessors had been either contentious, as with Laird, or condescending, as with Richardson.

Goldberg: As well as Laird.

Schlesinger: No, it was contentious with Laird; they were always dueling. With Richardson he tended to be very friendly on the surface but tended to disregard his advice and to run around him. When I was DCI, I had been used in that capacity, so I was aware of that and did not want that to happen while I was Secretary. After he became Secretary of State, I was seen by him as his rival, or some such thing. When he had been in the White House, he had two rivals, one was Laird and the other was Rogers. He squabbled with both. By the time I was there and he had moved to the Department of State I was all

alone, as it were; there was only one left as opposed to two. So he tended to view me with some degree of distrust for that reason. But we got along quite well for an extended period.

Goldberg: A rival in terms of influencing policy?

Schlesinger: Substantive, yes. Kissinger was a serious man. He wanted to keep relatively good control on policy, and therefore he worried about that more than personal matters.

Goldberg: Was there a personal element also, do you think?

Schlesinger: By personal matters I mean that he tended to be reasonably affable and about personal matters he got very serious when it seemed to pose some of kind of threat to his position within the administration on matters of substance.

Matloff: Would you say these were differences in substance, rather than in nuance, in terms of your views on national security policy, yours and his? Were there serious substantive differences on such things as Soviet intentions, detente, arms control, or the use of military force?

Schlesinger: We had come out of similar kinds of training in many respects, so structurally we tended to

approach problems in quite a similar way. Therefore, on many, or most, issues we tended to be in agreement. On some issues, we tended to part, and some of them reflected clear differences between the attitude of the Department of State and the attitude of the Department of Defense, to which I will return. In others, they represented personal assessments. On the matters of our relations with the Soviet Union he was much more upbeat. This goes back to my days as DCI when I had pointed to the growth of Soviet strategic forces when they began to introduce the 17, 18, and 19 into their force structure and what it might imply for the vulnerability of our own land-based forces. Those issues continued throughout the discussions of SALT II and on those issues there were some heated moments.

With regard to what I mentioned earlier, differences between Defense and State, we had some significant differences on Southeast Asia. In particular, at the close of the war out there, after the collapse in the central highlands and the collapse in I-Corps, I told Ford that it was all over, which, to put it mildly, irritated Ford. The main point that I was making was that if our best divisions had collapsed in the north, in I-Corps, and all that we had left were five divisions,

the hopes that were expressed that somehow or other we were going to be able to put together a southern bastion, as it was called, were just illusory. The North Vietnamese troops were still pouring in. They had sixteen or eighteen divisions that were coming in. When I got through with my speech at the NSC, Kissinger came over and said that he agreed with me, but didn't think it was time to say so. He and I strongly disagreed, as may be understood because of the differences in the perspectives of the Department, with regard to the removal of our people from Saigon. I said that we had to move the dependents out to Tan Son Nhut and fly them out. The Department of State kept fighting that and ultimately we were forced to remove our people from the roof of the Embassy. The reason for that was that Tan Son Nhut came under enemy fire and we couldn't get most of our aircraft off, and then it fell. So our means of evacuation had been cut off. All of this, in my judgment, was in a general way predictable. The embarrassment that we stood subsequently was a reflection of the desire, that Kissinger expressed, and, I think understandable, in light of the Department of State, that we do nothing to disturb the morale of the South Vietnamese government. My responsibility as Secretary of Defense was to get our

people out of there before they fell captive to the North Vietnamese. So we had an extended discussion going on for some weeks of whether we should get our people out. I consider myself to have been correct in my assessment but unsuccessful in my bureaucratic battle. As a consequence, when Tan Son Nhut fell, which I felt was predictable, and was not, in my judgment, adequately absorbed into the calculations of the Department of State, we were in the position of having roughly 1100 Americans to get out of there. We had to start flying chopper loads backwards and forwards from the roof of the Embassy, which was a poor picture. I was told that I had to get roughly 1,100 out, and before the chopper runs ended, we had pulled 2,000 people out, because the Ambassador kept loading on more and more Vietnamese and holding the Americans back until I gave an ultimatum that the chopper runs would end and if he weren't aboard, he would stay behind. This is a traditional problem between State and Defense, that you don't want to say or do anything or take any action that suggests that you may not have total confidence in the ability of the client state to survive. My responsibilities were clear-cut and I thought that it was not a responsible course of action for the United States to leave our people there as long

as we did. We should have gone down very quickly to a core representation that could have been removed much more expeditiously from the Embassy roof. We should not have gotten into the game which the White House and the Department of State tolerated in the Ambassador of using our people as hostages, as it were, to keep the helicopter lift going.

Goldberg: Differences of this kind have existed between State and Defense from the time that Defense was established. State looked on Defense, initially, with suspicion. To begin with, Defense was looked on as a potential rival in influencing foreign policy and over the more than 40 years since then the relationship has varied depending on who were the incumbents as Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense. Sometimes the relationship has been good, sometimes rather difficult, depending on who held the jobs.

Schlesinger: Depending on the circumstances. It is a lot easier to have good relations when NATO is flourishing than it is when you are withdrawing from Southeast Asia.

Goldberg: Rusk and McNamara got along very well, apparently, according to both of them. They had a fine relationship. Forrestal didn't, particularly, but it

wasn't his fault. It wasn't a matter of personality there, with Marshall, obviously; it was a matter of the institutions. So it's not always a matter of who holds the top job. It's a matter of what's happening, as between the two institutions and their attitudes toward each other and their perceptions of how they are affecting what's happening on the international scene.

Schlesinger: On another issue, we had a bunch of nuclear weapons in Europe--***[words redacted]*** plus--which were costly to guard. My view was to take them out and get something for it, if possible, in the MBFR negotiations. They were militarily useless. I got a great deal of preachments from Henry and even more emotional preachments from Al Haig, who was then SACEUR, that any withdrawal of any nuclear weapons from Europe was going to unravel the alliance, a proposition that I did not find convincing. Ultimately we did draw down those nuclear weapons which were part of a stockpile and not very useful. I was prepared to throw them into the MBFR discussions as a way of getting them to reduce their one or two tankons [?]. They were just useless to us; in fact, they were a burden to us; and they were causing increasing problems on Capitol Hill. His perception, while not as strong as Haig's, but almost as strong, was that this would cause

great morale difficulties with the governments in Europe. My view was that I had no difficulty explaining it, at least to the Ministers of Defense. I think that subsequent events have confirmed that view, but the general proposition of the Department of State has always been not to change anything if you can possibly avoid it, because somebody out there might be disturbed. That is sort of a governing rule. The position of the Secretary of Defense and the Department of Defense has got to be that even we do not have endless resources to devote to sacred cows and white elephants, and that we have to get rid of some of these if we are going to use our resources most effectively for the purposes of deterrence and defense.

Goldberg: Could there have been the same kind of division on this issue between the foreign ministries and the defense ministries of the leading NATO powers? The same kind that existed here?

Schlesinger: I think that the tendency would be that there was likely to be a division, but it was not as clear-cut, because it was the U.S. Department of Defense that was paying the bill. Therefore, the other ministers of defense didn't have that kind of worry about resources and certainly not about congressional reactions and

pressures that we had. Some ministries of defense might have agreed with the position that was taken by Haig. Others would regard it as secondary. I had a splendid relationship with the German Minister of Defense, who was the central feature, and I had no doubt that he would be happy to go along with a reduction of those weapons that were difficult, particularly since he was a Social Democrat. I think that there would have been more problems with the Christian Democrats had they been in power at the time. In some cases the ministries of foreign affairs were eager for this kind of gesture to show that they were not hostile to the Soviet Union, whereas more conservative ministries might say that this was a weakening of our resolve. I think that there were always those differences there, but they did not necessarily fall in the pattern of the United States.

Matloff: Did the fact that Kissinger served in the dual capacities as NSC Advisor and Secretary of State complicate your relationships with the two presidents you served?

Schlesinger: Somewhat; it varied. In Nixon's case, he tended to be his own maker of foreign policy until he really got into difficulties in Watergate. He had great confidence in his own abilities and his underlying

capacity in these areas. He worked through Henry because Henry was the National Security Advisor, but it was not that much of a problem. It became more of a problem, more for reasons of the perceived political weaknesses of President Ford. Ford was instructed that he didn't know that much about foreign policy and it was critical for him to keep Henry Kissinger there, a point of view which I think was correct. But since Henry was both National Security Advisor and Secretary of State and was regarded, in addition, as critical by President Ford, that did complicate my problem much more than it had in the Nixon years. Nixon tended to be somewhat skeptical about all parties and tended to use General Haig equally with Kissinger--not equally in the quantitative sense--but to use Haig for these questions, whereas in the Ford years there was no parallel within the White House staff to Kissinger's role.

Matloff: Did you deal directly with President Nixon, or did you have to go through Kissinger in his NSC Advisor hat to get to him?

Schlesinger: For the most part I dealt with Nixon only intermittently, and quite frequently I went through either Kissinger or from time to time on matters of critical importance to him through Haig.

Matloff: How often did you see Nixon and Ford, would you estimate?

Schlesinger: I saw Nixon more in the period before he became bogged down by Watergate. I don't recall exactly, but it would be every month or six weeks. I tended to talk to him more on the telephone, and he would call me from time to time. With Ford I had regular meetings, and they were one on one meetings, usually without staff present.

Goldberg: Did you keep any kind of records of the meetings?

Schlesinger: No, I did not.

Matloff: How did you deal with the Nixon-Kissinger combination when you found yourself differing with them on issues? How did you work around that problem, or could you?

Schlesinger: I would present my views. I did not have much difficulty in that period because my views, except on issues of SALT II, tended to be broadly similar to those of Kissinger. On SALT II my recollection is that I would present them to Henry, who, at least on the surface, received them fairly. Then I would subsequently argue them in the run-up to SALT II with Haig, or Kissinger, or the President. These were intermittent

discussions, and ultimately in that meeting in that town near Yalta, in which the Nixonian framework for SALT II was decided, they put forward the views that I had presented. Nixon had accepted them; I'm not sure whether or not Henry had embraced them. I was told that they had been brushed off by the Soviets. This basically was the emphasis upon throw-weight and limitations on MIRV throw-weight. I think we went through that last time--the throw-weight of the SS-9 and the MIRVing of the AT and so on. That was a fundamental concern of mine and I argued that we should be prepared to wait for a long time. In point of fact, in the spring and summer of 1974 President Nixon wanted to have a political achievement and was eager to do that, but he was not prepared to wait a long time to educate the Soviets with regard to the underlying notions of a missile exchange.

Matloff: We have mentioned some of the differences that were being raised between yourself and President Ford. Were you aware of growing strains in the relationship, as time went on?

Schlesinger: Somewhat. We had some serious strains about Southeast Asia. Some of them were PR and some were real policy issues. Some of them were fundamental, as I mentioned earlier. I think I shocked the President when

I indicated that it was all over in Southeast Asia and that the pursuit of additional aid for the South Vietnamese government was not going to go through the Congress, and that, in any event, if we did get some aid out, we were going to lose. I got the old Michigan fight speech from the President. We had some problems about the Mayaguez and some other issues in Southeast Asia. I had a direct order from the White House repeatedly during the Mayaguez incident to sink the boat that was carrying all of our hostages from Koh Tang to the mainland. I had had an order to sink all ships coming from Koh Tang. I took the occasion to add to those instructions orders to the Air Force and Navy to take under scrutiny any ship leaving Koh Tang for the mainland to see what was aboard. I got the advice with regard to this particular ship from the people controlling the air traffic that the pilot reported that he could see Caucasians aboard. I was still getting these orders from the White House. I reported that there were Caucasians aboard. It turned out that that ship had the 27 hostages that were taken from the Mayaguez, and I decided that I wasn't going to sink it. I ignored the order and filibustered for three hours while the ship plowed from Koh Tang to the mainland. At the end of the day the Cambodians coughed

up those 27 hostages. I cannot begin to imagine the scandal that would have occurred if the Department of Defense had killed the people that we were trying to save at the order of the White House. I just simply ignored that. I had General Scowcroft on the phone repeatedly asking whether I had yet sunk the ship and I kept pushing it off.

Goldberg: Who was responsible in the White House for pushing this?

Schlesinger: I never established that. I think that that was probably the President's idea. When the original notion came forward that we were going to sink all the ships coming from Koh Tang, I had no objection to it in principle. What I did, as my orders indicated, was to suggest that we observe this, in case they were bringing our hostages out. But there got to be a degree of obstinacy about whether I was following White House orders, which I regarded as overtaken by events. There was a good deal of ill will that was generated by that particular episode. Subsequently, in connection with what I thought was our strategy, which was that we were going to to bash the Cambodians and their major assets from the carrier, we had four waves set up and in the time that I moved from the Pentagon to the White House in

my car the first wave was canceled. I got over there and discovered Kissinger, and asked him what was happening. He said he'd canceled and that there had been a broadcast from the Cambodians on Phnom Penh radio that they were prepared to negotiate. I said, "We can't stop now." Kissinger was persuaded and got Ford and he instituted the second, third, and fourth strikes from the carrier. In that particular case I was able to persuade Kissinger, and once he was persuaded, the President came around. That may or may not have caused a problem. I don't think so, because it was the basis of the success of the Mayaguez. If we hadn't bashed them up, they would never have coughed up those 27 people.

Matloff: Did you sense, in any way, that your strenuous defense of the Defense budgets before Congress, as well as the policy differences that were developing with Kissinger, were complicating your relationship with President Ford?

Schlesinger: Yes. From late September or October I had been ordered to cut the Defense budget radically and I told Scowcroft immediately that I couldn't do that. I had spent some years arguing up on Capitol Hill what I called adverse trends, meaning that if we continued to go downhill and the Soviets tended to increase, sooner or

later we would be in the position of not being able to meet our commitments vis-a-vis the Soviet Union, and that having myself made these arguments, I was not constitutionally prepared to reverse myself and argue that smaller budgets were a good thing. Incidentally, that is no criticism of the White House, that must look at broader issues than simply the Defense issue. It was a statement that I was too persnickety to do what any good politician might do, and that is to go up and say, "Wipe the slate clean, all those arguments were irrelevant." I didn't think they were irrelevant. I thought that the question of adverse trends was, indeed, a serious problem. From that time we had some bitter exchanges.

Matloff: Did you ever have any conversations with President Ford over any order or instruction you allegedly gave the Chairman of the JCS in the summer of 1974 at the time of President Nixon's resignation that no member of the JCS was to respond to any emergency order from the White House without first informing the other Chiefs and the SecDef?

Schlesinger: No, I never had a discussion with the President about that, but I am sure that the President

had that brought to his attention, and it was reported to me that Ford was quite irritated by it.

Matloff: Had you given such an order or instruction?

Schlesinger: Indeed I had. I had given instructions that any order from the White House that came in other than through me was to be sent to me directly and not to be acted upon.

Matloff: There's also the rumor that you had put the troops on alert. Did you discuss this with the President, and was there any truth to the rumor?

Schlesinger: No, I didn't put the troops on alert. That's just rubbish. I told Gen. Brown that I was to be informed. Not surprisingly, he immediately went down to talk to the Chiefs.

Matloff: Had you taken that step on the advice of anyone, or what led you to take that action?

Schlesinger: I had discussed the general situation with Hoffmann, and had been pressed by Joe Laitin on the general subject of how I was to deal with the unique circumstances surrounding the impeachment of the President. I took those steps I thought were necessary to insure the integrity of the chain of command.

Matloff: To expand on your relations with Congress, you apparently did cultivate successful relationships with

many congressmen. But there were some problems, I gather, with some of the more senior members, at least with one or two of the chairmen of the committees. How do you account for the fact that you had success with some, and not so great success with others? The name of George Mahon comes to mind.

Schlesinger: I had, at least in my view, a very good relationship with George Mahon. He was a Shakespeare scholar, and we would quote Shakespeare to each other. In the 1975 budget the Appropriations Committee proceeded to take about $15 billion out of the request, which was well beyond the usual thing. Jerry Ford had told me, "You have to go out and fight this." So I went out and fought it; I referred to the cuts as "deep, savage, and arbitrary."

Matloff: That was in mid-October 1975, on the FY '76 budget.

Schlesinger: When I referred earlier to the disputes with the White House about the budget, I was referring to the '77 budget. Either Mahon complained to Jerry Ford, or Ford asked Mahon how he felt, and Mahon complained about my statement, probably quite strongly. Up until that time, until the time of the cuts, I had had a pretty good relationship with him, because I had cultivated all

the members of Congress who were not in the extreme antidefense mode with considerable care. Jerry Ford had forgotten that he told me to go out and fight, and apparently he didn't regard criticizing the cuts that way as the appropriate way to fight. So he made some comment about senior members of Congress. I think that was the only episode in that George Mahon got generalized into the senior members of Congress. I had a splendid relationship with Eddy Hébert; in fact, I was still visiting him until the time of his death in New Orleans. I had a great relationship with John Stennis going back to my days in the CIA. I had a great relationship with Jackson, who was quite influential. And I had a superlatively good relationship with Senator John McClellan, who was the head of the Appropriations Committee. If I had any problems, it was not on the Senate side.

Matloff: You might have had a problem with McClellan over his position on troops for NATO. He didn't want the American funding for the troops.

Schlesinger: I did, indeed, and that was one of my most signal services in the NATO alliance, persuading him to back off. I gave a speech once in which I described all of that. At the end of it I said, 'Mr. Chairman, we just

can't do this." He said, "Look at this fellow, de Gaulle." As I recall, I said that de Gaulle was already dead, that the French had behaved very badly, but that we could not abandon the defense of the Dutch, Germans, and British, none of whom could be held responsible for the actions of General de Gaulle of France. I had gone over to him just before leaving for NATO in November and he huffed and puffed in his usual way, and when it was all over he looked at me and said, "All right, you will have your money, but when you go over to NATO tonight, tell them for me that they are a bunch of damned ingrates." I've told that story several times, because it captures the essence of American foreign policy. All these people keep talking about Réalpolitik, and so on, and the Americans expect people to be grateful in foreign policy.

Goldberg: And none of them ever were suckers, or played for suckers by these clever insidious foreigners.

Schlesinger: At least, if not suckers, were played badly by them. But John McClellan responded very well. I had a splendid relationship with him and when he died some years later, I went to Little Rock for the funeral and wept. He had saved me when I was back there at the CIA at the time that the issue of the CIA doing profiles on Americans broke and Congress wanted to have a hearing.

Scoop Jackson steered it, because Senator Stennis had been shot, over to the McClellan hearing and McClellan took charge of the issue and managed to pass it by. That's part of the job. I just spent endless hours on the question of the Mansfield amendment, going around and assuring the votes in the House for us to block it and then trying to get the votes in the Senate so that we could win on the issue, which would mean it would go away.

Goldberg: We had a breakdown on Forrestal's time on how he spent it as Secretary. About 14 percent of it went to congressional relations.

Matloff: What recourse does a Secretary of Defense legitimately have when there is, in his view, a drastic cut in the defense budget that he has proposed and wants to have enacted? Can he legitimately go to the press, for example? Can he try to develop his own constituency?

Schlesinger: The answer is that certainly he is engaged continuously in attempting to have his own constituency with regard to defense spending issues. Once, particularly in that post-Watergate period, I spent an endless amount of time trying to generate support for defense spending that was rationale between our move to constant dollar basis as opposed to a nominal dollar

basis. It was the rationale for moving to apply inflation factors to the out-year budgets. It was the rationale for a whole host of activities that took place. So you are continuously engaged in attempting to generate support and particularly in that period of the post-Watergate environment, when everyone on Capitol Hill thought we could throw away the Department of Defense. With regard to an administration, the only recourse that one has is to offer to resign if, indeed, one is hard-pressed, which I was pleased to do on that occasion in 1975. With regard to the Congress itself, you have no recourse, it seems to me, other than to make a public fight over it or accept it. There are a number of techniques. In the first place, we had the appropriations measures over there at the Senate. That was under the ministration of John McClellan. McClellan would fight, get the sense of where his votes lay, and he would call me in and say, "Mr. Secretary, I have done my best. However, I am going to have to take out $5 billion. Now you tell me where it is most convenient for you to take that out." So at the close of the process you would work with him, and in this case the Senate side, because you knew that the House cut was going to be much deeper. George Mahon was running scared, because

Eddy Hébert had just been overthrown as Chairman. This was the post-Watergate period and you had that class of Watergate babies in there and he was not going to alienate them. But the normal procedure is that you fight for what you lost in one house, to get it back in the other, and then fight in the conference committee.

Matloff: Did you have the feeling in the struggles with Congress that there was a difference in views over your strategic proposals, your program proposals, or was it just a question of money?

Schlesinger: It varied from member to member. For example, take Senator Leahy, who came to the Congress about that time; I think he was elected in 1974. He was on the Armed Services Committee. Leahy never failed to vote for me and for the Department on issues involving conventional forces. And he virtually never failed to vote against us on issues of strategic forces, because he had strong views on that matter. So in his case, it was a discriminating judgment, with which, needless to say, I didn't agree. Others were just interested in getting the budget down and would vote for any cut, irrespective of where it came, without thinking much about it. To the question of whether there was agreement with regard to my views on strategic forces, the answer is that there was a

great deal of restlessness about that--restlessness that was reflected more in the Foreign Relations Committee than it was in the Armed Services Committee.

Matloff: When there were differences of views within the JCS, did you step in, in connection with their presentations to Congress, or did you give them free hand in their own individual presentations?

Schlesinger: There was a good deal of chatter about that. I discussed that particular point directly with Marty Hoffmann and he recommended to me the policy that members of the military establishment, which would include the chiefs, would present the administration's position. If they were asked whether they personally agreed with that, they were free to say that they did not personally agree with it and to spell it out. But they could only do so in response to a question about their personal judgments, and until such time they were asked such a question they were obliged to present the budget as put together by the administration. I did not want to put people in a position in which they were obliged to be untrue to their personal convictions but also, since they were in an official capacity, there was no reason that they could not present in their official capacity the official views of the administration.

Goldberg: That was traditional.

Schlesinger: It was in this case, at least as I recall my discussions with Marty, a reversion to a prior practice that had lapsed.

Goldberg: It lapsed under McNamara primarily.

Schlesinger: My impression was that Mel hadn't liked that much, either, that he had liked them to toe the party line. That's an impression that goes back 16-17 years. Marty did say we should go back to the old system, and not expect these people to go out and be untrue to themselves.

Matloff: I think you touched on this before--on balance, how successful did you view your efforts in dealing with Congress?

Schlesinger: Immensely successful.

Matloff: Even though you had these run-ins on the budget?

Schlesinger: I didn't have that much of a run-in, except in that last year, with the House Appropriations Committee, that took a slug that was much beyond the usual thing. That was a unique run-in. Usually the Armed Services Committees worked very effectively with me. Appropriations were a somewhat different case, needless to say. But the basic problem that I faced when

I came into office was the majority expectation on the Hill that now that Vietnam was over we could go back to spending about $75 billion a year, without recognition of our NATO responsibilities and that we rebuilt our NATO forces; without recognition of the complexity of our strategic force requirements; and without understanding the steady buildup of Soviet expenditures as opposed to the decline in U.S. expenditures--the issue of adverse trends. So far as I can see, I was remarkably successful in all that, to the point that in that 1976 budget we actually had real growth. In the 1975 budget I think we had real growth.

Matloff: Let's go to the question of threat perceptions and strategic planning and doctrine. What was your perception of the threat to American national security when you took over the Department?

Schlesinger: My perception was that the United States had a set of obligations, both treaty and moral, to our European partners; that the advance of Soviet strategic forces was such that if we did not have an adjustment of our doctrine, that the threat to use our strategic forces in support of our NATO allies would be neutralized; that we would be self-deterred from reacting to a Soviet conventional force invasion; and that consequently we had

to have a change in doctrine and, preferably, some change in weapons systems, although that did not necessarily flow from the first. The change in doctrine did flow, that we had to get away from "mutually assured destruction."

Goldberg: How are you using the term "doctrine" here? What do you really mean by it? Because what you're talking about is policy.

Schlesinger: In this case, I'm talking about declaratory doctrine and policy. I'm not talking about the actual employment plan. It is what the other side can see as to our expression of intent. That was my concern. I didn't see a way that we would get involved in a missile exchange except arising out of a European war. There was a great deal of worry about the Soviets coming and suddenly striking the United States. I would from time to time make use of that argument in the context of my testimony to foreign relations, in particular when they asked me about the Schlesinger doctrine, and why we were moving away from mutual assured destruction. I would point out that the Soviets might have the capability for a discrete strike at American retaliatory forces that would carry with it the possibility of a very low level of casualties--one or two million--and take out a

substantial portion of our strategic forces. But that didn't mean that I put a very high level of probability on that event. I used that as a theoretical device to help explain why we might want to have a capacity for discrimination in response to an invasion of Western Europe by conventional forces. I did not see the Soviet threat as likely to lead to an attack on the United States, as some did at the time and more did subsequently, during the Carter period. I thought of the problems primarily in terms of the perception of the United States as equal in strategic strength to the Soviet Union as that might affect psychology in Europe, psychology in Moscow, and possibly the willingness of the Europeans to succumb to Soviet pressure or the desire of the Soviets to bring pressure to bear on the European states.

Matloff: Did your view of the threat change as a result of your experiences at Secretary of Defense, or did it remain pretty much the same when you left the post?

Schlesinger: My view of the strategic threat I brought with me to the Department of Defense and tended to impose upon the Department of Defense. It reflected my earlier years at Rand as Director of Strategic Forces and my observations during the period that I was DCI with regard

to the explosion of R&D activity that came after the May 14, 1972, SALT II agreement and the movement of the Soviets towards a heavily MIRVed, more accurate force, and what that would do either to perceptions or to the willingness of the United States to initiate in the event of a land assault in Europe.

Matloff: You were reported to have said that you were neither a "hard-liner" nor a "soft-liner," but a "firm-liner." What did you mean by that phrase?

Schlesinger: I would have hoped that that was self-evident. Soft-liners are those who either trusted Soviet intentions, or if they did not trust Soviet intentions, believed that a small counter-city deterrent, a finite deterrent, was sufficient to fulfill our international responsibilities. The hard-liners were those who had what I regarded as an excessively grim view of Soviet intentions, that if the Soviets had an edge on us they might actually initiate a surprise attack on the United States. I thought that, given the growth of Soviet strategic forces, mine was a realistic appreciation and I described it as a firm view. No doubt, since in the climate of that time hard-liner was the term of opprobrium, I may have tried to separate myself from that term. The notion that I was a hard-liner probably was

not wholly inaccurate, but I did not like the intonations, and I thought that it was really missing a nuance about my position. Of course, that came up because of differences between Kissinger and myself with regard to the SALT II negotiations.

Matloff: I take it there was a difference in view of the threat between you and Kissinger. He was leaning more toward the detente notions of this period.

Schlesinger: Yes, remember his famous comment, "What in God's name is strategic superiority" At the time that he made that comment he was expressing frustration and I sat down and began to collect documents to demonstrate what strategic superiority might be, in God's name or otherwise.

Matloff: Was your view of the threat during the period when you were Secretary of Defense different from that of CIA of that time?

Schlesinger: An interesting question. With regard to the Soviet capabilities there was no difference, because basically those estimates had been started during the period that I was DCI and I followed those estimates meticulously. With regard to the implications of that, I don't think there was any difference between myself and the CIA, if you mean the institution. But the Director

of Central Intelligence, Bill Colby, had something of the view that I earlier described as the soft-line view, that is, that if you had a city-busting capability, that was enough. From time to time he would open up NSC meetings with a description of that view, which I always pointed out was neither my view, nor, for the most part, the view of Dr. Kissinger. I think that Henry's expression was that of the frustrated diplomat, not an expression of him in his more somber moments, because certainly after he left office and no longer had the responsibility for diplomacy, he was one who pointed to the development of Soviet counter-force capabilities. I just happened to be the earliest public official who talked about the development of Soviet counter-force capabilities and earned a certain amount of criticism for that reason.

Matloff: Did you favor the notion of the Nixon administration of cutting back from the 2 1/2 war concept to the 1 1/2 war level?

Schlesinger: Yes. As a matter of fact, I was a major participant in that one at the time. That was the NSSM III. I was provided all of the BoB input into that. That was the correct way to proceed with regard to budget formation. I'm sorry that this administration has not done that in the wake of the collapse of the Warsaw Pact.

It seemed to me to be a rational position. But I wanted to have a 1 1/2 war capability, particularly a NATO capability, and especially after the 1973 war the capacity to intervene in the Middle East. After 1972, I think it was evident that the Chinese threat, which was one of those wars, was pretty much a thing of the past.

Matloff: During your period you advanced the flexible response strategy. The term gets confusing since this was also used back in the McNamara days.

Schlesinger: I never used the term "flexible response." I used the term "selective targeting." That was my preferred term. Because I included among selective response going after military targets, and I developed the MARK 12A warhead in order to go after those hard targets, there was a tendency to confuse this with counter-force targeting. What I wanted was the capacity to initiate, and I called it "selective targeting" or "selective response."

Matloff: This involved avoidance of cities?

Schlesinger: City avoidance was central to it. I wanted to have a plausible way of initiating nuclear attack against the Soviet Union, and destroying their cities would simply evoke a response against our cities and therefore was not plausible. I never used the term

"flexible response" that I can recall. I wanted to distinguish quite sharply between this alteration of our strategic targeting and what had been the prevailing doctrine in NATO since 1967.

Matloff: To what extent was this new, and to what extent was it a ratification of actual war plans? You felt it was a break, I take it?

Schlesinger? In the first place, I distinguished very sharply among hardware, war plans, and declaratory doctrine. This was quite new with regard to declaratory doctrine, and that was the principal importance of it, because our prior doctrine had lost its credibility except in moments of irrationality, which I did not want to have. Whether or not it was related to war plans or hardware, I was moving in that direction. I frequently said that the change in doctrine is not dependent upon the sizing of the forces. The doctrine led in several respects to my reaching for those instruments that could be precise and discriminate and could be used in selective targeting--the MARK 12A warhead was intended to be that kind of instrument of discrimination. That's why we had a great fight on Capitol Hill over it. I was trying to improve the capacity of the hardware to respond to the doctrine. Secondly, we had an attempt to alter

both the SIOP and, more importantly from my standpoint, the sub-SIOP options, to reflect the move toward selective targeting. But no, it was not an outgrowth of either the weapons systems or the war plans.

Matloff: Did you encounter any opposition within the administration, or was it accepted?

Schlesinger: It was accepted.

Matloff: By 1974, it was accepted.

Schlesinger: It was accepted within the administration.

Matloff: Any objections from Kissinger, or anybody else?

Schlesinger: I had some objections from Kissinger, and he was quite right. He thought that I had announced this without proper preparation of the allies, and I think he was right, in retrospect. In fact, I think that within a matter of weeks I concluded that he was right on that, but he had no objections to the substance. Indeed, the substance in some respects was an outgrowth of what had started as the Nixon world views. You remember the Nixon world strategy papers.

Goldberg: The Nixon Doctrine.

Schlesinger: That was part of it, but the world strategy papers did acknowledge that the Soviets were catching up with us in terms of strategic forces and that we had to do something about it. They were dropped about 1971, but

mine was an answer to the questions that had been raised, the issues and dilemmas that had been raised in those studies. So I had no problems within the administration.

Goldberg: If you coordinated it within the administration, why didn't Kissinger early raise the issue of informing the allies, before you actually made it public? That's the sort of thing you would expect from State, and the National Security Adviser.

Schlesinger: There are two answers to that. First, he was quite a busy man. Secondly, having established a commonality of view, I proceeded to announce this at a meeting of foreign journalists and took him by surprise. If I had not done so, he certainly would have wanted to coordinate at least with the principal allies in advance. He tended to want to coordinate, but to wait until the last possible moment to do so.

Matloff: How closely did Presidents Nixon and Ford follow the development of military doctrine and strategy ,from your perspective?

Schlesinger: They didn't follow it in any detail. This was quite consistent, though, with the overall Weltanschauung of President Nixon. I mentioned that when I was DCI that I had briefed the NSC and Nixon on the emerging Soviet strategic forces and what they implied

and had used this as an opportunity to demonstrate reciprocal counter-force capabilities as they might change over the years. While Kissinger thought that I was getting beyond my authority as DCI because I was discussing the blue side, Nixon was quite excited by that and told me to go and brief it to the Hill, because we wanted the Hill to understand that they were developing that kind of capability. It was quite consistent. With regard to the development of selective targeting I had the approbation of the administration and of the President, but he didn't get involved in detail. He was not inclined to do so. As my tenure as Secretary of Defense wore on, he was getting in a position in which he had other preoccupations. The announcement of selective targeting came in January of 1974. The administration was already in some degree of difficulty and he was not going to worry about those details. In the case of President Ford, I think that he accepted the position that we were moving in the right direction and that he was not particularly concerned about the details. He was concerned about them insofar as they reflected on the SALT II negotiations, particularly as we moved toward Vladivostok.

Goldberg: He perceived himself as being knowledgeable on military affairs, didn't he?

Schlesinger: Yes. It was strictly from the congressional and budgetary standpoint.

Goldberg: Yes, I think he would acknowledge that, probably.

Matloff: From your perspective, have there been any major changes in official U.S. strategic doctrine since you advanced these proposals and got them accepted?

Schlesinger: Basically, the answer to that is that there have been no fundamental changes that brought us back into the realm of what had existed prior to January 1974; that we have had some rhetorical discussions of each administration--each administration tries to put its own gloss on what's going on. Carter's discussion of this in 1979 did something that I thought was in error, and that is, that it began to talk about the need to take out command and control on the other side. My notion of selective strikes of minimal response and avoiding collateral damage, city avoidance, and the like, meant that you had to have on the other side a government that knew what you were doing and you communicated to it the notion that you would go after command and control on the other side. In particular, the highest level was, in my

judgment, an add-on that was inconsistent with the basic underlying point. That was something of a change, but it wasn't a reversion to what had existed before. In the Reagan years, particularly after SDI got going in 1983, there were those rhetorical assaults on mutual assured destruction as a way of pushing forward SDI and this was reflected in briefings to the press and editorials in the press, most notably the Wall Street Journal. I thought it was poppycock, because we had not embraced mutual assured destruction and it had been explicitly rejected as our doctrine since the end of 1973. So that was, I felt, a totally misleading rhetorical excess, which confused us about what our real strategic doctrine was, as a way of justifying a particular set of developments and possibly deployments of strategic defense, which may or may not have been justified, but certainly was not justified on the basis that our doctrine had been to that point mutual assured destruction.

Matloff: This is a convenient point, from my standpoint, to stop, if it's agreeable with you to allow us to come back again. Thank you very much.