

**Matloff:** This is part II of an oral history interview with Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr., held on October 22, 1991, at 9:00 a.m. in Arlington, Virginia. The interview is being recorded on tape, and a copy of the transcript will be sent to Admiral Zumwalt for his review. Again representing the OSD Historical Office are Drs. Alfred Goldberg and Maurice Matloff.

Admiral Zumwalt, at our last session we discussed some of your background experiences from 1962 to 1970 before becoming Chief of Naval Operations and member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. We talked also about your appointment to the position and your conception of the role, the Defense budget, and started a discussion of your working relationships in and out of DoD. At the end we had asked you about whether President Nixon ever considered the dismissal of Secretary of Defense Laird. Now we would like to ask : did President Nixon ever, to your knowledge, order that you be fired?

**Zumwalt:** I was informed at one point that Mr. Nixon had told Henry Kissinger to get me fired. The reason for it was that the president had looked at the TV coverage of the black sailors in 1972 raising their fists in the black salute --the first difficulties were on the *Kitty Hawk*, but the one back in the States, I think, was aboard the *Constellation*, and it was that particular episode, I was told, that led Mr. Nixon to tell Mr. Kissinger to get me fired. Henry Kissinger called Mel Laird and said, "Fire Zumwalt," and Laird said, "You fire him." Kissinger instead called me and relayed the demand that all the men be given bad conduct discharges. I took the position that that was an illegal order, that they would have to be court-martialed, and that justice would be carried out.

**Matloff:** Can you shed any light on the Nixon-Kissinger-Laird relationships? How did Laird deal with the combination? How successful was he at holding his own with Kissinger?

**Zumwalt:** Mel Laird marched to his own drummer. He had the self-confidence borne of having one leg in each of the branches of government, with the strong support from

years of comradeship with his friends on Capitol Hill, and therefore did not kowtow to Kissinger, who increasingly seemed to be of the view that he was, in fact, the chief of staff to the president. Although Kissinger was successful, in many cases, in getting direct edicts from the president relayed to Tom Moorer as Chairman and to the Joint Chiefs and to do things that Laird did not agree with on the issues, when Mel Laird felt very deeply, he took stands and prevailed.

Matloff: How did he deal with Kissinger, who was chairman of the Defense Program Review Committee, in connection with the budgets and programs of Defense?

Zumwalt: Laird did not go to those meetings; he had subordinates who were over there. My understanding, from reading and observing in that era, is that what he did was pay attention to the decisions and then take actions to reverse the ones that he didn't agree with--or that he didn't agree with so strongly and were such a matter of principle that he felt that he must. There were decisions that he complained about and did nothing about, but on the ones where he felt a significant principle was involved, he would work to reverse them.

Matloff: What was the role of the JCS on that committee? I believe they were members of it.

Zumwalt: Yes, the normal thing was for Tom Moorer or one of his staff representatives to be there. I was in a few when I was the acting Chairman.

Matloff: Did Nixon and Kissinger, to your knowledge, ever try, or have a backchannel to the JCS to try to get around Laird?

Zumwalt: Kissinger had that one method of backchannel in which Adm. Robinson came over to Navy communications and personally sent out messages that bypassed the entire system; however, Adm. Robinson, being a loyal Navy man, normally kept both Adm. Moorer and myself informed.

Matloff: How did Laird react to White House efforts to deal directly with the JCS, rather than through him as a conduit?

Zumwalt: With great vigor. On the occasion of my meeting with Mobutu, of Zaire, a meeting that was requested by Henry Kissinger calling me direct, Mel Laird made it clear afterward when I reported it to him, that in the future orders to do anything like that must come through him.

Matloff: Did you become aware of growing strains in the relationship between Kissinger and Schlesinger?

Zumwalt: Yes, Schlesinger was quite frank about the fact that there were problems between him and Kissinger, and was restive under the Kissinger domain. And as I reported in that turbulent last month that I was in office, when I went to see Schlesinger to protest that the JCSMs concerning SALT were not being sent forward to the President, he made it clear that he felt that his hands were tied because he had a direct order from Kissinger not to provide the advice that he was legally required to provide.

Matloff: How did you handle the problem of appearing before congressional committees, when and if your original view differed, let's say, from that of the Secretary of Defense, or, possibly even of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff?

Zumwalt: It was never a difficulty, because I could always count on the Congress to ask the questions that would give me a chance to state my opinion.

Goldberg: That's been normal, all through the years.

Matloff: On what issues did you find Congress particularly sensitive?

Zumwalt: It was the usual split. The more conservative people on defense on the Hill would ask questions that were very supportive and that gave us a chance to make our best case for how serious the situation was; whereas the liberal members would bring out the other side and try to prove that we were over-budgeted and had too much.

Matloff: Which congressmen did you find especially knowledgeable and helpful in national security matters?

Zumwalt: On the Senate Armed Services Committee, by all odds and order of magnitude, the most informed was Senator Scoop Jackson. Senator Stennis tended to take Scoop Jackson's advice. He was much less well informed, but very strong and supportive. On the Senate Appropriations Committee, Senator Young, the senior Republican, was very strong, and a man who took a surprising interest in me and in the Navy case was Senator McClellan from Arkansas. He was senior to Fulbright. On the House side, I had very strong support on the Navy budget requirements from, first, Mendel Rivers, and then Eddie Hébert. Hébert, of course, gave me a hard time about the integration of the Navy, but with regard to the rest of it he was very supportive. On the House Appropriations side, we didn't have the same degree of support. George Mahon was much more inclined to listen to the advice he was getting from the liberal side, but he was very judicious and he tried to be balanced.

Matloff: How supportive did you find the Secretaries of Defense in this connection? And how supportive was OSD?

Zumwalt: There was very good support from the Secretaries of Defense. They took a certain amount of flak from the fact that I was insisting on stating what the probabilities were. After my testimony on Capitol Hill, giving less than a 50 percent probability of victory in a conventional war against Soviet forces, Mel Laird received a lot of criticism from the liberal members of the Congress. He called me in and said, "In the future, when you say that the odds are less than 50 percent that we will win, add 'unless we escalate to nuclear weapons'." I did that in the future, because that was obviously the thing you would have to do rather than lose the war.

Matloff: This is in reference to a naval war involving the Soviet Union?

Zumwalt: Yes. Elliot Richardson was very supportive, although his tenure was very brief. Schlesinger never tried in any way to curtail my right to speak frankly to the Congress.

Matloff: Were you aware of the growing strains in Schlesinger's relationships with Congress, and did those strains in any way affect your relations with Congress?

Zumwalt: He was having difficulties, in large part aided and abetted by the fact that Bill Clements was undercutting him on Capitol Hill, but that did not seem to rub off on the Navy or on me.

Goldberg: Clements was undercutting him in what way? Simply talking him down before Congress?

Zumwalt: Yes, both in the White House and on Capitol Hill.

Matloff: What was the dominant attitude toward the Soviet threat that you found in DoD upon assuming office as CNO? And did you agree or differ from it?

Zumwalt: The dominant attitude on the part of the civilian authorities was that the war in Vietnam was so clearly the major preoccupation of the country and the Congress, and the need to keep getting adequate budgets to fight that war was so critical, that measuring ourselves against the Soviet Union was just something we couldn't have the luxury of doing. The military, on the other hand, felt that you had to keep reminding civilian authorities of the fact that if we had to fight a war with the Soviet Union and that we were having confrontations that could, in theory, lead to that, frequently, that they better beware of the fact that we were in deep trouble.

Matloff: Were there any differences of views within the JCS, or between the JCS and OSD, on the Soviet threat?

Zumwalt: First, the JCS are a fascinating organization. There is a dichotomy. During the budget strife each year, or when the JSOP is being put together, you can find quotes from each of the service chiefs suggesting that the other service can do its job adequately with what it had and doesn't need more. On the other hand, in each of the crises, the chiefs put off their parochial cloak and come together. In the discussions that we had both in the Jordan crisis and the Yom Kippur war, you can see from the consensus there that we all thought that we were in deep trouble.

Goldberg: During budget crises and other times, were the services spying on each other? Did you have people giving documents from other services, and vice versa?

Zumwalt: I do not recall ever receiving a "covert" document. The Ops Deps, it seemed to me, each had an adequate understanding of what the other service was preaching based on their own workup meetings. I always felt that we knew exactly, based on the briefings that I was getting, what the arguments were going to be when I went down into the tank. There may have been some documents that were purloined at a lower level and used for those briefings, but I am not conscious of any.

Goldberg: Are you conscious of any Navy documents having being secured by, say, the Army or the Air Force? I have a recollection of the early 1970s that the Air Force somehow had secured some Navy documents, that you became aware of it, and that you wrote a note to Gen. Ryan, who was then the Chief of Staff, saying, "If you want some information, please ask us and we will give it to you." So it did happen, on occasion?

Zumwalt: Yes, I have a recollection of that, too. You have a pretty good spy system, too.

Goldberg: No, the Air Force showed it to me.

Matloff: Did you and your colleagues in the JCS regard Communism as a monolithic bloc or threat in this period?

Zumwalt: We didn't consider that China was part of a Soviet monolithic bloc, but we did consider that the rest of the Soviet empire and its satellites were relatively monolithic. Obviously, Yugoslavia was not part of the equation; it marched to its own drummer. Clearly, the 15 Soviet Socialist Republics had zero voice; the eastern European satellites had a very teeny voice, and when you got as far away as Cuba, you had a bigger voice.

Matloff: On what were you basing your view of the threat?

Zumwalt: First, the ideology of Leninism and Stalinism, which was that they were going to control the world; second, the updating of that theology as given in the speeches of Khrushchev at the time and Brezhnev. Also, there were the actions around the world in which they sought to make mischief and to take areas of interest away from the free world to behind the iron curtain.

Matloff: You obviously had access to intelligence reports. Were these influencing you in any way?

Zumwalt: The intelligence reports helped to validate the details that confirmed that the policy statements that the Communist leaders were making were being carried out. I always put much more credence in the DIA than I did in the CIA. For example, the CIA cost estimates of what the Soviets were spending were catastrophically wrong, and yet they deeply believed them. When Bruce Clark, the son of Gen. Mark Clark, who had been in the cost analysis business in the CIA, got ready to leave the CIA to go to Europe he came to see me and asked me why I was continually inflating the size of Soviet expenditures. I told him that in my judgment he was flat wrong, and years later I think I was proven to be correct when Team B got in and analyzed Team A's work. I think now that it is generally conceded that the CIA was wrong on Soviet defense expenditures.

Goldberg: Were you influenced in any way by the work of analyst Bill Lee, an independent?

Zumwalt: I'm not sure he was an independent at that time.

Goldberg: He had contracts part-time, but he was in and out.

Zumwalt: I knew of Bill Lee's work; that was one of the factors. Another strong factor was that I had created the CNO executive panel, CEP, and had on it a group of brilliant analysts--people like Albert Wohlstetter, Henry Rowen, Charles Herzfeld (?)--and they were reinforcing my view that the situation was much more desperate than portrayed by the CIA.

Matloff: How did you see the balance of power between the United States and the Soviet Union then? Did you and Kissinger disagree about the trend in the balance of power?

Zumwalt: In the private talks that I had with Kissinger he was in total agreement with me about Soviet intentions and Soviet power. However, when he was talking to liberals, he had the opposite view. Who is the real Kissinger? I'm not quite sure. I do know that his view was also that the trend was irreversible, that the Soviet Union was inevitably destined to be the imperial empire of the next century and that his job was to preside over the smooth transition into inferiority.

Matloff: Apparently this affected somewhat his approach to arms control and disarmament.

Zumwalt: No doubt about it. He felt that the American people were over the hill, that he had to negotiate the least worst outcomes and make them look fair.

Matloff: How did you differ?

Zumwalt: I thought that he was absolutely wrong on the American people, and I urged him on more than one occasion to be up front and to speak out on his views. His answer to that was, "If I do that, I won't be here to carry out my job."

Goldberg: Did you get any reaction from President Nixon to Kissinger's views?

Zumwalt: They were never expressed in Mr. Nixon's presence, and therefore I never had an opportunity in the very set-piece meetings that we had with Mr. Nixon to plumb that one. I know that Mr. Nixon seemed to be impressed by and responsive to the probabilities that I gave him that we would lose the war.

Matloff: When we interviewed Secretary Schlesinger, his expression about Kissinger was "Spenglerian doom."

Zumwalt: I've used that phrase, too.

Matloff: Did your view of the threat undergo any changes as a result of your experiences as CNO?



Zumwalt: It became a matter of greater concern, as I got more fully on top of all the intelligence.

Matloff: Who in DoD was primarily influential in strategy-making during your tenure-- the JCS, the services, the Secs/Def?

Zumwalt: In my judgment, under Mel Laird, the only person that really paid attention to long-term strategy was I--that is, in the policy level. Mel Laird was a tactician; he dealt with the problems of the moment. Dave Packard was a businessman, dealing with getting things shaped up. If there was any thinking at all going on, it was in the JCS. I thought we were doing much more on the Navy side, with Project 60 and with the speeches that I was giving, to try to shape strategy. That's, for example, why I fought so hard to get Mr. Nixon briefed on the SIOP/RISOP outcomes. When Elliot Richardson became Secretary of Defense, he began to give it thoughtful consideration, and I think would have gotten into the strategic side because he had a strategic planning perspective. He had several discussions with me about it. When Jim Schlesinger took over, he was a planner and a thinker, and I felt comfortable in his milieu that the Secretary of Defense was doing what he should be doing about that sort of thing.

Matloff: Did you go along with Schlesinger's influence on the need to reorient national strategic weapons doctrine, the so-called "new flexible response strategy"?

Zumwalt: Yes. As a matter of fact, I considered it the natural fruition of what we had tried to kick off with the SIOP/RISOP briefing and the follow-on memos that I had written. I talked to Schlesinger about the need when he took over and I thought that he got right on it.

Matloff: Did you find strong differences in views among the services on strategic planning?

Zumwalt: Yes, because you were always fighting for your own service's strategic weapons. The Air Force and Navy were always natural adversaries with regard to the

land-based missiles and bombers in the case of the Air Force and the Polaris-Poseidon-Trident systems in the case of the Navy. The Army tended to be less interested and more willing to take risks on the strategic side in order to have more conventional forces.

Matloff: How about Project 2000, was that also part of the long-range view of naval policy?

Zumwalt: Yes, it was an effort to look ahead.

Matloff: Why did you sponsor that?

Zumwalt: It became more and more clear to me that Project 60 was the kind of an instrument that could shape our thinking for four to six years, but that we needed to get way out beyond that, in order to look at what the world would be like at the end of the century.

Matloff: Why did you create the Navy Net Assessment Group?

Zumwalt: It was my effort to bolster in depth the views that I was giving as to the probabilities. I found that stating those probabilities was the single most effective way to force civilian authority and members of Congress to get serious. As their questions began to probe into what that was based upon, it was based upon the judgments of me and my senior commanders, but I concluded that we needed to have much more detailed calculations to reinforce those judgments.

Goldberg: Did you have relations with the net assessment office that Schlesinger reactivated or renewed when he came in, Andy Marshall's office?

Zumwalt: Yes, I did, and my staff did even more than I, my OP-96 Group.

Matloff: You took other measures to broaden strategic thinking within the Navy, particularly in connection with the Naval War College. Can you indicate what measures you did take?

Zumwalt: The problem I had with the Naval War College was that it seemed to me that it was a super-technical school rather than the kind that forced people to broaden their

thinking and challenged them in a meaningful way. As a student at the Naval War College, I didn't feel it was a challenge; it was a chance to spend a year getting caught up with family life. Even at the National War College, later on, I thought it was a breeze. We weren't forced to do a lot of constructive thinking. Some of us did, but just in the course of bull sessions and debates. I thought it was very important to have a more challenging system, and I felt that Stan Turner was the one who had the right combination of military experience and academic credentials to do the job.

Matloff: How did you see the role of nuclear-powered submarines and aircraft carriers in national strategy?

Zumwalt: I felt that they were absolutely critical. Indeed, one of the things I am proud of is that we got a nuclear carrier authorized during my term when Mel Laird told me it would be impossible, that the Congress would never go along, and only reluctantly let me play with it and was astonished that we did get it through. My argument was that we needed two in each ocean for rapid deployment. I also felt that the ballistic missile submarine was the single most important member of the strategic troika by far, because it was so survivable.

Matloff: How about the role of low-cost non-nuclear powered surface ships?

Zumwalt: I felt that they had traditionally been underfunded, and that we needed to do better by having more low-cost platforms to replace the very expensive surface combatants that we had been building in the past. It was for that reason that I put forth the hydrofoil ships (the PCHs), the surface effect ship, and the patrol frigates--the Oliver Hazard Perry class, of which we ended up having 50.

Matloff: How did you envisage the state of the fleet when you took over, and the need for a program of naval expansion?

Zumwalt: We were, on the average, technologically obsolescent. Our fleet was over 20 years of age, on the average. One of the things that impressed both Secretary Chafee and Secretary Laird in my preliminary meetings with them when, as it turns out,

they were looking for who should be the next CNO, was that I said that given the budget limitations, we simply had to reduce the numbers of ships in order to begin the process of building new ships. We needed to reduce the expenditures for men and ships and start building ships.

Goldberg: Did you see a serious naval threat from the Soviets at that time?

Zumwalt: Yes, and I knew that Project 60 would increase the probabilities of defeat in the near years, because we were going to reduce a very large number of ships in order to free the money to do the research and development, weapons building, and construction of new ships. I felt that it was a risk that would be better taken at that time than at some future time, and that we would build up to what I was then calling for, a 600-ship navy.

Goldberg: This is defeat at sea you are talking about, and presumably by submarines?

Zumwalt: That's right. Submarines and the Soviet land-based naval aviation and the ships that were trailing us. They were practicing coordinated attacks with surface ships trailing us, missiles trained on our ships ready to fire, coordinated with submarine and air attacks, and they would have struck the first blow and we would have been defeated.

Matloff: In that volume on The Chiefs of Naval Operations, edited by Robert Love, in talking about your predecessor, J. Kenneth McDonald, now the CIA historian, says, . . . "because of the cost of the Vietnam War and the primacy of the Army in that conflict, [Admiral] Moorer had great difficulty modernizing the fleet. He became embittered over the treatment of the navy by Secretary of Defense McNamara. He contended that McNamara, against his advice, organized the military budget so as to replace only material and weapons whose loss or deterioration resulted from the conduct of the war. Since American warships suffered little in this war, the navy was starved of funds to replace its aging ships." Did you encounter a similar problem during your tenure?

Zumwalt: I think that I would have, had I not come up with Project 60, which appealed to Mel Laird, because it was reducing the number of ships. What he didn't realize was that we were, as I mentioned in the earlier interview, getting our camel's nose under the tent, by virtue of the fact that the appropriations only required 5 percent of the authorization the first year for ships, and 15 percent the second year, and so on; so we built up a bubble.

Matloff: In your memoirs you discussed your concept of the high-low mix of the Navy, and you will forever be identified with that. What would you say were the origins of that concept?

Zumwalt: It stemmed from the fact that it was clear that we were never going to get enough money to have the highly sophisticated expensive ships that any admiral would prefer to have, and when you had to make choices, you were better off to have enough platforms to be in enough places around the globe simultaneously. This meant that you had to have mix of high and low sophistication in order to have those numbers.

Matloff: Which aspects of the buildup did you consider the most important?

Zumwalt: It's hard to say, because they are all part of a single body. The one that I had to work the hardest on was the low end, because there was total support within the Navy for the high end.

Matloff: Did the Navy, in your view, fare any better under SecsDef Laird, Richardson, and Schlesinger than under McNamara?

Zumwalt: I think it did, for the reason that all three of them knew far better than Mr. McNamara that you had to have a Navy. Mr. McNamara and his principal assistant in the analytical field, Alain Enthoven, really didn't understand that you have to control the seas in order to get anywhere.

Matloff: Any better under Schlesinger than under Laird?

Zumwalt: My hunch is that we did slightly better under Laird. Schlesinger came at things much more conceptually than did Laird, but Laird knew in his gut the need for the Navy.

Goldberg: With reference to McNamara and Enthoven was it that they didn't understand the need to control the seas, or that they differed on what was required to control the seas? Did they really not understand?

Zumwalt: I think they really didn't understand the need. They thought in terms of flying things in, landing somewhere, and carrying out your mission. It was extremely difficult to turn McNamara around. Paul Nitze, I think, finally got him to understand, toward the end of his term, because Paul was in there every week preaching Navy.

Matloff: What opposition did you run into within the Navy, and supporters in Congress of other traditional interests?

Zumwalt: An awful lot of resistance. Rickover fought every element of the low end of the mix, because he wanted nothing but nuclear propelled ships. The aviation end of the Navy supported me in the early part of the term, while we were getting the CVAN-70 through, but did not support the sea-control ship, and worked on the Hill to get it killed by George Mahon's committee.

Goldberg: This was typical of the Navy all through its post-war history, wasn't it?-- these divisions between the different elements over what was most important and what they would most like to have. You had it during the so-called revolt of the admirals, you remember, when the naval aviation people really got out in front and trampled over everybody else who stood in their way, and they prevailed.

Zumwalt: They killed the Regulus cruise missile because they saw it as a threat to carrier aviation. When George Anderson took over, his first statement was, "Now we are going to proceed to de-Burkize the Navy." That is standard.

Matloff: How about the Secretaries of Defense? Did you feel they were backing you adequately, both in the conflict within the Navy, and with the opponents' supporters in Congress?

Zumwalt: Yes, I do. I have to say that I think all three Secretaries of Defense really did trust me and back me with regard to the Navy programs.

Matloff: In connection with the struggle with the Russians, did you advocate nuclear superiority, parity, or sufficiency vis-a-vis the Russians?

Zumwalt: I thought that we should strive for superiority, but that we were in such an inferior position that the best we could hope for was parity.

Goldberg: Was this a specific reference to the naval situation?

Zumwalt: No, to the overall strategic problem.

Matloff: You mentioned the strategic troika before, I take it that you supported the triad?

Zumwalt: I did.

Matloff: How about your attitude toward the development of the B-1 bomber, were you drawn in on that at all?

Zumwalt: I don't recall that that was much of an issue on my watch; I think it became much more luminous later on.

Matloff: How about the cruise missile?

Zumwalt: I think I am close to being the author of the cruise missile--first, the harpoon missile--by getting Secretary of the Navy Paul Nitze to direct Tom Moorer to do the concept formulation, which came to my shop to do and which led to the creation of the Harpoon. I think I mentioned in the last interview that the message that came down from Tom Moorer when I did that concept formulation was that I had better not come back with a range greater than 50 miles because they were still worried about the competition with the aircraft carrier. Then, when I became CNO, I initiated the the R&D program for the Tomahawk cruise missile.

Matloff: How successful do you feel you were in achieving your concept of the high-low mix by the time you left office?

Zumwalt: I would give myself on results about a B-minus. We did get the very strong endorsement of Congress on the Oliver Hazard Perry Class. At that time we only asked for thirty ships, but hoped we would get more, and we ended up getting fifty. The hydrofoil ships we got through, and my successor dropped the concept, but they've proved themselves, the five that we did get, to be very useful ships and were a good contribution. The hydrofoil, therefore, I say, was a success. The sea-control ship we lost, because of opposition by Rickover as not being nuclear propelled and the aviators as not being big enough to carry the front-line aircraft. In essence, we got the concept, however, through the LPD program, which has the same kind of flat-tops, but a little more expensive. We got the carrier, which was one of my project 60 concepts, and we got the Trident program started. I say B-minus because we lost the sea-control ship and only got five of the hydrofoil.

Matloff: How about destroyers, you had some with gas turbines?

Zumwalt: The gas turbine destroyers have proven to be very successful. They were authorized, however, before I took over. But I pushed hard to get them built.

Matloff: What personnel problems did you encounter when you became CNO, and what reforms did you feel you had to take?

Zumwalt: We had the worst reenlistment rate record in the Navy's history. Our first term reenlistment rates were 9 1/2 percent. It was a combination of the unpopularity of the war, the tremendous long deployments, and the fact that, although the Navy didn't have draftees, most of the people were there to escape being drafted into the Army. We didn't have, therefore, the esprit of an all-volunteer force. And we had, in my judgment, overemphasized the martinet kind of leadership and underemphasized the charismatic leadership that I thought was important.



Goldberg: There was disagreement within the Navy on that, wasn't there? You encountered opposition?

Zumwalt: Yes, very strong opposition. The anonymous polls that we took at the end of my first year showed that about fifteen percent of the senior petty officers and officers resented the changes and the further down the totem pole in both cases the higher the support and the lesser the turnoff.

Goldberg: Only fifteen percent opposed?

Zumwalt: That may have been because some didn't declare their honest view, but nevertheless that's what the polls showed.

Matloff: How about the problem of race relations, how did you find it?

Zumwalt: I had had a lifelong ambition to do something about the Navy's racist attitude. This was doubly whetted when I was a commander in the Navy, brought in to detail surface worker lieutenants in the Bureau of Naval Personnel, and was given the verbal briefing on how to get rid of 'niggers'. The briefing was that if you got a black officer, you sent him to recruiting duty, the worst form of duty, right out of officer candidate school; extend him for a year beyond his normal tour there; if he got promoted and wanted to stay in, send him to the worst ship you had--an auxiliary, a tanker--and that would almost certainly get him passed over. I didn't carry out those verbal instructions; they were in total violation of President Truman's executive order. But the Navy continued to practice tokenism right up until I took over. One of my absolute convictions was that we were going to set out immediately to change it.

Goldberg: You encountered continued opposition on that?

Zumwalt: That was probably the greatest source of opposition. It was the strong resistance that Admiral Moorer had to it as Chairman, and Eddie Hébert and Mendel Rivers had to it--and even John Stennis, who was much more gracious about it, bitched about it, but didn't do anything about it--that was used by opponents of the low end

of the high-low mix. They said, "You have to stop this guy. He's doing everything including blackening the Navy."

Goldberg: This happened because you were more visible in doing it than the top people in the Army and the Air Force, which had already gone pretty far in that direction.

Zumwalt: They had done it two decades earlier.

Matloff: What was the attitude of the Secretaries of Defense toward your efforts to achieve personnel reforms in the Navy?

Zumwalt: I have to believe that it was Mel Laird's knowledge and John Chafee's knowledge that that was the single greatest difference between me and the others who were nominated to be CNO that led them to pick me. I think both Chafee and Laird recognized that the Navy's personnel policies were in the dark ages.

Matloff: Did you find Schlesinger supportive?

Zumwalt: Schlesinger was less so than either Laird or Richardson. Personnel did not concern Schlesinger so much. He was much more cerebral.

Matloff: On the score of personnel reforms, how successful, looking back, do you feel you were?

Zumwalt: I think, over the long haul, immensely successful. The Navy is integrated. It has now adequate numbers of minority personnel throughout. Adm. Holloway, who followed me, I think adopted the attitude of just consolidating, which was what I had tried to do in my last year. I think Adm. Hayward tried to turn the clock back a bit, but not very much. Although the fifteen percent that I referred to as Admirals and Captains lasted a few years, they gradually washed out, and I now find that the flag officers in the Navy are the people who were the lieutenants then and they are very strongly in support of those concepts.

Matloff: How about the retention rates, was there any improvement there?

Zumwalt: Yes, we tripled them.

Matloff: If you had your preference on the question of draft versus volunteer, which would you have preferred for the Navy?

Zumwalt: I supported the all-volunteer force, and I think it has been well proven.

Matloff: On the question of race riots in 1972, what did you conclude from the controversy that was generated by those and the reactions of President Nixon and the Congress?

Zumwalt: I concluded that I was in for a hell of a fight. It was clear that Mr. Nixon was very uncomfortable, as I reported in my book, about the uproar that I created by commending the Naval Academy for having ever increasing black faces as you went down the more junior classes. He was there, and came back and raised hell with Haig, who raised hell with Schlesinger, who raised hell with me. Even such an innocent thing as that speech, which, if Mr. Nixon had not been so preoccupied with Watergate, he could have recognized as something for which he could take credit. Nevertheless, it very much upset him.

Matloff: This had been Schlesinger, or Laird?

Zumwalt: This had been in 1974; Schlesinger was the SecDef.

Matloff: During the controversy in 1972, how supportive was Laird of your efforts?

Zumwalt: Mel Laird, to the best of my knowledge, never gave me any guidance. He said, "It's your fight; you go win it." But he told Paul Nitze, my esteemed friend who was then the SALT rep for DoD, that this was the kind of an issue that would make or break anyone and that it had to be fought by me at my level. That, I think, was the right way. If he had tried in any way to put his own imprimatur around it, it would have complicated the issue.

Matloff: To turn to area problems and crises that confronted you during your tenure-- first, what was your attitude toward NATO, and what did you see as its major problems?

Zumwalt: I was a strong supporter of NATO. I thought it was the single most important reason that western Europe had remained free and did everything I could to strengthen it. The problems we dealt with were the traditional problems of getting the other allies to do as much as we were doing on a GNP pro rata basis. I never felt that it was more than a challenge. I never felt bitter about it or felt that there were insoluble problems.

Matloff: Did you feel the allies were pulling their weight?

Zumwalt: I thought they were doing less than we, except for the Turks.

Matloff: How about its strategy, did you feel it was realistic?

Zumwalt: I felt that the strategy was a bluff, but it was the best we could do. We always knew that the Soviet Union would overrun us--and we told the President that every year--unless we used nuclear weapons. Therefore, the only thing that was saving Europe was the threatened use of nuclear weapons.

Matloff: How optimistic were you that the allies could counter a Soviet conventional attack?

Zumwalt: The reports in my book of what the Chiefs of Staff of the Army said to the President are accurate; they always said it would be just a matter of weeks.

Matloff: Did you feel that U.S. troops in Europe could be reduced?

Zumwalt: At that time I thought they had to be increased.

Matloff: How about the Navy's relations with the French and British? Did you get involved with that in connection with NATO?

Zumwalt: I was aware of that, but I didn't myself get involved in it. We tended to be more supportive of the British, for two reasons. One, they were the big navy contribution, and we felt much more comfortable with them than we did with the French. And I was very negative on the French attitude toward disaffiliating in NATO.

Matloff: Did you favor helping the British to maintain an independent deterrent?

Zumwalt: Yes, I supported that, for the reason that it seemed to me that it was important for the Russians not to feel that they could ever bluff any one leader or frighten any one leader. Having three different nations to reckon with, the French, the British, and the U.S., complicated their problem.

Goldberg: So you weren't uncomfortable with the French having their own deterrent?

Zumwalt: No, as a matter of fact I welcomed it, because I felt that the French were likelier, actually, to use it in an invasion than we were; and I felt the Russians thought that.

Matloff: Were you and the other members of the JCS disturbed by Willie Brandt's move toward Ospolitik?

Zumwalt: Yes. I considered him a very weak reed and a dangerous man at the time.

Matloff: How about the crisis in autumn 1970 over the reported construction of a Soviet naval base on Alcatraz Island off the southern coast of Cuba. How did you learn about the problem? Kissinger was very much involved in this and was contacting the Pentagon.

Zumwalt: Robinson came to see me to show me the proposed settlement with the Soviet Union, which I was strongly in favor of but which Kissinger changed, watered down, and left a loophole so that the Soviet Union was able to, in essence, violate the Kennedy-Khrushchev agreements over time.

Matloff: Were you disturbed by the management of this crisis?

Zumwalt: Yes, it was a dreadful way to run it. At that time Kissinger was bypassing the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense.

Matloff: He probably was trying to reach the JCS through the Rembrandt Robinson office.

Zumwalt: He just wanted to be sure that the JCS didn't torpedo him.

Matloff: He wasn't seeking advice.

Zumwalt: And he actually overruled our advice by watering down that agreement that was promulgated by the Tass release.

Matloff: It was a disturbing element for you.

To turn to Indochina, what was your attitude toward the U.S. involvement in Indochina?

Zumwalt: When I was working for Paul Nitze, then Secretary of the Navy, as his executive assistant, the papers that I prepared for him and his weekly Friday meetings with McNamara preached that we should not get involved in South Vietnam. It was not a viable national entity. I thought we had to stop the expansion of the Chinese and Russians, but that we should do it in Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Hong Kong, not in South Vietnam.

Matloff: Which period was this?

Zumwalt: 1964-65. Beginning in 1962 in ISA, when I was with Nitze, till 1965. Then, when that was overruled and the decision was made to get involved, I advocated in the papers that I prepared for Paul Nitze that we should go in with Navy and Air Force heavy against the North and Army light in the South, an advisory effort. When that was overruled and we did exactly the reverse, restraining the Navy and the Air Force in the North and putting in huge numbers in the South, I then advocated that we should Vietnamize the war as rapidly as possible. In essence, I got told to put my money where my mouth was and was sent out to take command of the naval forces.

Matloff: Did you believe in the domino theory?

Zumwalt: I did, but I didn't believe that we would prevent it in Vietnam, but accelerate it at that time, if we took a stand there.

Matloff: When you took office, American sentiment against the war in Indochina was rising and disillusionment with it was growing. Were you and the JCS consulted on possible initiatives to end the war in Vietnam?

Zumwalt: We were, of course, constantly consulted about the rate at which Vietnamization was going. I mentioned previously Mel Laird's and John Chafee's decision on me was personnel-oriented. Probably the second most important element was the fact that I was known to have been the one to have started the Vietnamization process in Vietnam. But the decision with regard to how many troops we were going to cut in each of the phases was never made in consultation with the Joint Chiefs of Staff. We were informed of what that was going to be by the Secretary of Defense after Nixon and Kissinger had decided what it was going to be. Mel Laird took a more active role in that, and was brought in on that by Kissinger and Nixon more than he was on other issues.

Matloff: Were you aware that there were differences between Laird, the Secretary of Defense, on the one hand, and Kissinger and Nixon on the other, on the pace of Vietnamization?

Zumwalt: Yes, Laird wanted to go faster than the other two did.

Matloff: Were the JCS brought in on that question?

Zumwalt: -They were in the furtive way that Kissinger operated, that is, by getting private consultations with Moorer and with me, at least, and with Haig, I am sure.

Matloff: But there was no pressure brought on the JCS to take a side, one way or another, on the question of the pace of Vietnamization?

Zumwalt: No. My recollection is that we were always informed, never consulted officially.

Matloff: Did you agree entirely with defense policy and strategic planning for the Vietnam conflict during your tenure as CNO?

Zumwalt: I took over as we had started the withdrawals. My position was that we still could make this thing come out all right, we still could have a two-Vietnam solution, if we were measured in the rate of withdrawal. So I tended to resist Mel Laird's desire to move fast and to support Nixon's and Kissinger's desire to move somewhat slower. I

would have moved even slower than they did, but, of course, Mr. Nixon had to worry about reelection.

Matloff: During the negotiations in Paris, were you and the JCS consulted either by President Nixon or Henry Kissinger?

Zumwalt: No. There were occasional mentions; just enough that they could claim there was consultation, but there wasn't.

Matloff: How about on the questions of bombing North Vietnam and mining the harbors, in 1972, were the JCS and Laird in agreement on those two questions?

Zumwalt: With regard to the bombing of Hanoi, I don't recall that Mel Laird was in opposition. With regard to the mining of Haiphong, he wasn't consulted until after the plan was approved by the President. Tom Moorer came to me and said he couldn't count on the Joint Staff not to leak it, and would I do the mining plan. I did it in my office with the mining expert and gave it to Tom Moorer. It was approved by the President and Kissinger. We were instructed not to mention it even to our service secretaries. On the day of the mining, I couldn't tell John Warner until 9:00 p.m., the time at which the President was to speak to the country.

Goldberg: Where did the initiative come from?

Zumwalt: I think the specific decision had to come from Nixon and Kissinger. But the Joint Chiefs, particularly Tom Moorer and I, for a long time had been advocating mining as a very low cost way to really hurt them.

Matloff: Were you enjoined not to discuss it with the Secretary of Defense, also?

Zumwalt: Yes.

Matloff: On the question of the Vietnam settlement that was reached in Paris on 27 January 1973, do you recall whether you were satisfied on the whole with that settlement?

Zumwalt: No, I was not, at all. I felt that the issue was one in which we could only have a prayer of ending up with a two-Vietnam solution if we were going to be very



vigorous in retaliating, and it was clear to me from the briefing that Mr. Nixon gave us that he really didn't have any intention of doing that.

Goldberg: This was the attitude of the Joint Chiefs in general?

Zumwalt: Yes.

Matloff: In retrospect, do you feel that the Secretary of Defense, as well as the JCS, should have been better informed of the progress of negotiations in Paris as well as have had more input into the peace process?

Zumwalt: Yes, I do. I think that Kissinger ended up providing a real disservice to this country, not understanding that the imperfect nature of our process is part of its strength, and that he had to deal with it instead of violating it.

Goldberg: He was driven by political forces, don't you think? His concern was for the President's position, in that particular instance.

Zumwalt: I think that Kissinger put primary emphasis on having personal control and was prepared to violate the democratic norms in order to maintain that control. For example, the things that he said about Haig to Mr. Nixon were not in any way calculated to strengthen the White House, nor, indeed, were the things that Haig said about Kissinger.

Goldberg: I mean in terms of the settlement.

Zumwalt: I will concede that as far as the settlement was concerned, Kissinger knew that he had to help Nixon survive that settlement.

Matloff: In your view, did the United States fail in Vietnam? And, if so, what went wrong?

Zumwalt: What went wrong was Watergate. In my judgment, without Watergate, we could well have ended up with a two-Vietnam solution. The result of Watergate was that the president felt politically incapable of retaliating vigorously, as he had promised President Thieu he would, in the event of truce violations. And Congress refused to authorize the expenditures for the replacement of equipment that they

needed. South Vietnam forces, nevertheless, continued for nearly a year or more, and finally fell.

Matloff: Was it a failure of American national policy, in your view?

Zumwalt: As one who opposed getting involved in the first place, and who opposed the strategy of Army heavy, Navy-Air Force light, and who clearly advocated Vietnamization, I then opposed bugging out at the end. We could have had a successful national policy, minus Watergate.

Matloff: How about the factor of American public opinion? Some of the writers and theorists of limited war, like Robert Osgood, have written that he for one felt that they failed to take into account the impact of a long limited war on American public opinion. Did you feel that policymakers and theorists miscalculated on that score?

Zumwalt: I do. Clearly the McNamara philosophy of hurt them a little bit, sit back and wait, hurt them a little bit harder, and sit back and wait, was designed to deal with a completely different society than the ruthless totalitarian society we were dealing with.

Matloff: General Marshall commented that "A democracy cannot fight a seven-years war."

Goldberg: With reference to your thought that we could have brought about two Vietnams, had we really worked at it, what policy would we have had to follow in 1973, '74, and maybe '75, in order to bring North Vietnam to a real standstill?

Zumwalt: With each truce violation, we should have resumed the B-52 bombings of Hanoi. That brought the truce in ten days' time. And we should have resumed total economic blockade, and re-mined. We clearly had the power, with those saturation bombings, to do what achieved the truce.

Goldberg: You are talking about Vietnam now, not the Persian Gulf, I take it?

Zumwalt: Right.

Matloff: How did you view the domino theory, in retrospect?

Zumwalt: I think it was correct, that the domino theory was something to be seriously concerned about. Let's count the dominoes: Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, East Germany, Romania, South Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, Afghanistan; they collected a big hunk of dominoes.

Matloff: Would you comment on the role of the press, as you saw it, reporting from Vietnam, during your tenure as CNO?

Zumwalt: There were a few who continued to report honestly; the majority tried to turn the war into a greater horror than it was, and it certainly was enough of a horror. I think that people like Kyes Beech, were very good, but the majority were exhibitionists, I thought, whetting the appetite of the American people for getting out at any price.

Matloff: Do you recall your reaction to the leak in publication of the Pentagon Papers in 1971 in several major newspapers?

Zumwalt: I thought it was an act of treason. I wish that action had been taken against Dan Ellsberg.

Matloff: In retrospect, what was the impact of the Vietnam conflict on the U.S. Navy?

Zumwalt: It meant that the money for a generation of ships that should have been built instead went into bombs and bullets, attrition aircraft, and logistics in Southeast Asia. It meant that, when I started the modernization program, we were probably seven or eight years late in getting it started. And that the Navy today is not as powerful as it would have been, had we been able to devote our budgets fully to naval replacement.

Matloff: To turn for a moment to the India-Pakistan war, did you and the other members of the JCS play any role in the conflict?

Zumwalt: No. We were not even given the reason we were there. Tom Moorer couldn't even tell me what the mission was.

Matloff: They weren't asked to comment, for example, on the tilt of Nixon and Kissinger toward Pakistan?

Zumwalt: It was clear that that was what was going on, but when you start playing with sending ships into a potentially hostile area, you had better have the ships knowledgeable about what they are there for, or you can have a terrible problem. I don't know if this is relevant history, but when I went to India in 1989, to be a guest of the Indian Navy and to speak at their war college, I had dinner with all of the living former Indian CNOs, including the one who had been in command at the time of that crisis. He had read my book and he said, "Let me tell you what I told the skippers of my ships: 'If you encounter the American Navy, invite their skippers aboard for a drink'." I said, "If I had known that, I would have worried a lot less."

Goldberg: What about that naval Task Group 74, did the president order this naval task force to do something without discussing it with the Navy?

Zumwalt: The task force that went into the Indian Ocean? Yes. We were told to send it in, and where to station it, but we were not told anything about what its instructions were. It was a dreadful way to operate.

Goldberg: The order came from whom?

Zumwalt: From Kissinger to Moorer.

Goldberg: Speaking for Nixon?

Zumwalt: Correct.

Matloff: No cluing in as to the purpose of the mission?

Zumwalt: No.

Matloff: In your book you describe the crisis involving Jordan in September 1970. I want here to touch on the October 1973 war, the Yom Kippur war. What role did you and the JCS play? There was some conflict between Schlesinger and Kissinger about the resupply of Israel. Was the Navy brought in, in any way, in that problem?

Zumwalt: I went to see Schlesinger at about the end of the 24-hour period, and said that the Israelis were losing, and that we had to get equipment on the way. We had kept them on thin rations so they couldn't be aggressive. Schlesinger said, "My hands are tied. Kissinger wants them to bleed a little." He was a professor playing at war. I then went to see Senator Jackson and told him what was going on. He called Mr. Nixon, who at this time was totally preoccupied with Watergate, and Mr. Nixon told Kissinger to get the stuff moving.

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Matloff: Subsequently there was a controversy between Kissinger and Schlesinger over the resupply question. Kissinger's memoirs maintain that the Pentagon, particularly Schlesinger, was dragging its heels. Schlesinger denied it, and actually said that his shoes were nailed to the floor by national policy.

Zumwalt: This is one of Henry Kissinger's great lies. Incidentally, in 1978, when Golda Meir came to this country, she asked to see me. She said, "I want to hear it from you. Is it true that my friend, Henry, withheld the supplies?" I had to say, "Yes." She was terribly crestfallen.

Matloff: This was Schlesinger's judgment of that, too, the expression of wanting them to bleed. You won't get this out of Henry's memoirs. There is no indication of it. What about problems with American allies during this operation of resupply--did you get drawn in on any of those problems?

Zumwalt: I knew that we had to lean pretty hard to get permission to land in the Azores and to refuel over Spain. The Greeks were not terribly comfortable about our operating our Sixth Fleet out of their ports. On the other hand, I took some delight at that time that at least 17 or 18 liberal members of Congress called me to urge that we do more to help Israel,. They were the ones that had given us terrible problems about using the bases of totalitarian systems. So I took great pleasure in telling them that we were flying the supplies over, landing in the fascist bases of the Azores, refueling over the fascist skies of Spain, and supporting the flights out of the fascist ports of Greece.

Goldberg: Is there any further information on the *Liberty* incident?

Zumwalt: I am totally ignorant on the *Liberty* incident. I fault myself for never sending for the file when I was CNO, but I was always so busy I never got around to it, so I know nothing about it.

Matloff: Schlesinger made a comment that part of the deal worked out with the Israelis was that the American transport planes bringing supplies would be landing in the middle of the night. The weather wasn't good and they came in in daylight. The Israelis were cheering about Uncle Sam coming to the rescue.

Zumwalt: Yes, we got the spare logistics there just in time.

Matloff: To turn to China and Japan for moment, how did you view the rise of Communist China and its impact on the conflicts in Southeast Asia? Did you and the JCS play any role in connection with Nixon's and Kissinger's opening to China?

Zumwalt: No. I knew about it only through the naval person who was in his office at the time.

Goldberg: Like Adm. Moorer?

Zumwalt: In my case it was Lieutenant Halperin, who was very close and had been on my staff in Vietnam. But we were not consulted nor officially informed.

Matloff: Did you favor a tilt toward China, to play the so-called "China card"?

Zumwalt: Yes, I did. I thought it was very important at a time when the Soviets had such military superiority.

Matloff: Did Laird, Kissinger, or anyone consult you and the JCS in that regard?

Zumwalt: None.

Matloff: How about the role of Japan in relation to U.S. security interests in the Pacific? How did you envisage that role?

Zumwalt: I felt that Japan was critical. It was a single aircraft carrier right where we needed it, and I was constantly advocating through my opposite numbers and through the JCS and discussions with their naval attaches that they needed to do more.

Matloff: Any discussions with Laird, or anyone else, on this question?

Zumwalt: Yes, and with Nixon and Kissinger.

Matloff: Did you play any role in efforts to stimulate Japanese rearmament?

Zumwalt: Yes, and it was our policy at that time to urge them to do more.

Matloff: Were there any other important foreign area problems into which you were drawn during your tenure as CNO—for example, in connection with Latin America or Chile?

Zumwalt: I report in the book my involvement in visiting Allende about the time that Kissinger was involved in getting the coup organized against him and the furor that that caused when Allende invited us to have the nuclear carrier stop in for a visit as it made its end run. But the only input that the Joint Chiefs had was through discussions in the JCS with the Secretaries of Defense and Deputy Secretaries of Defense. In truth, no one in the Pentagon had much impact on foreign policy, nor did the Secretary of State, until Henry took over that job.

Matloff: Certainly in the case of Rogers, that was true.

On the question of arms control and disarmament, what were your views?

Zumwalt: I considered myself an expert because I had been Director of Arms Control under Paul Nitze and, in effect, had "taken a Ph.D. under him" on arms control. I had

never trusted the Soviet Union and therefore strongly advocated verification. I reluctantly supported SALT I, but solely on the basis that it only made sense if the Congress recognized that they had to fund our own strategic weapons programs to give us a chance to catch up, to fund vigorously the R&D programs necessary, and to fund the intelligence programs necessary to detect cheating. But, in essence, not one of those was carried out by the Congress.

Matloff: It is pretty clear that Kissinger and Nixon were using backchannels to talk with the Soviets during the SALT talks. Were the JCS aware of this or clued in on any of those?

Zumwalt: No, we were totally cut out. Indeed, we didn't even know about that secret codicil.

Matloff: How did you react to the agreement on the SLBMs--the numbers that were granted to the Russians?

Zumwalt: I was horrified by it.

Matloff: How about the Secretary of Defense, was he equally horrified?

Zumwalt: I believe him to have been so, yes. As a result, he sort of end-ran both the President and Kissinger and went to Congress with a basketful of programs which they needed to approve to try to catch up.

Matloff: Was he going along with the numbers, in order to make that end run?

Zumwalt: No, I believe that Mel Laird was as ignorant of the deal as was Tom Moorer.

Matloff: Let me indicate what Hersh said about this. He feels that Moorer, having squeaked through the spying scandal, was compliant with White House desires. On the question of Laird, he indicates that Laird won his struggle for Trident and increased spending by going along.

Zumwalt: I think he went along after the fact. In other words, instead of resigning, he said, "I'll support it," and got over on the Hill and dumped these programs on them.



Matloff: There is a comment in your book I would like you to elaborate on a bit. Why, in the spring of 1974, did you feel that Secretary of Defense Schlesinger "did not put forward the Department's ideas, or his own, as aggressively as I thought he should."

Zumwalt: Schlesinger is a brilliant person. He always understood the issues. He could express very vigorous positions but they didn't seem to get advocated all that fiercely to the President and to Kissinger.

Matloff: Do you recall any specific measures that he wanted in connection with SALT?

Zumwalt: It was the beginning of that period, which got to its worst in June of 1974, when Kissinger was telling Schlesinger, in essence, "Shape up or ship out," and finally telling him not to send any more advice over. So Schlesinger presented no ideas during that period.

Matloff: What lessons did you draw from the American experience with SALT I and SALT II?

Zumwalt: First, I concluded with regard to SALT I that you cannot, in America, conduct diplomacy in the deceitful way it was done--deceitful of Congress and the public. In contrast to that, the START talks, every step of which has been made public, have generated a lot more support. Second, I concluded that in both SALT I and SALT II we granted immense strategic nuclear superiority to the Soviet Union, and we are very fortunate that we got through that period without any more difficulty than we had.

Matloff: Have your views on arms control and disarmament changed since your tenure as CNO?

Zumwalt: No. But I think that the country has grown more supportive of my position, which is that you have to have adequate verification. The Soviets, I believe it is correct to say, have violated every agreement we ever signed with them.

Goldberg: Have we violated any agreements?

Zumwalt: We have, unintentionally, a couple of times. I think we covered up some construction that we weren't supposed to have covered up, and when we got

challenged on it, we uncovered it. I don't know of any deliberate violations. The New York Times would have them within 24 hours, if we did.

Matloff: On the question of containment and detente, did you believe that containment was a realistic policy?

Zumwalt: Yes; I felt that it was the only policy that we had a prayer of working over time. I felt that it was more observed in the breach in a couple of administrations, particularly in the Carter administration, in which we just let the Soviet Union run riot.

Goldberg: This may have been a good thing, as it turned out.

Zumwalt: Yes, as it turned out.

Matloff: On the basis of your experience and reflection, how effective did, or do, you view military aid as a tool for political leverage, particularly in the Cold War period?

Zumwalt: If used properly, it can, and has been, very helpful. Used improperly, it can be a disaster. A helpful example is the Turks. The Turks have been a sturdy ally with U.S. equipment and aid, and have been a tough proposition for the Soviets to consider taking on. On the other hand, the aid that we have given Mobutu has been a total disaster.

Matloff: How about the question of alliances as a means of linking American and foreign military and naval power?

Zumwalt: I think they have been critical. The series of bilateral alliances in the Pacific--the U.S. with the Antipodes, the U.S. with the Philippines, Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, and so on, in essence created under CINCPAC a NATO-like system.

Matloff: Let me ask you about your perspectives on OSD organization and management, as you look back on it as a result of your experience and reflection. Did, or do, you see need for changes in the structure and working relations at the top levels in Defense and the national security system--such things as the roles of the JCS, the relations of the JCS and its Chairman, or the relations of the JCS and the Sec/Def?

Zumwalt: I think that the Goldwater-Nichols bill has been a step forward. I think that the JCS process worked far better in Desert Storm than it had worked previously, because the Chairman now has some authority and I like the fact that his number two, the one who takes over in his absence, is the Vice Chairman, not the rotating service chief, who is never quite prepared for what has happened in the last month. On the other hand, I feel that the Defense Department overall, as it stands today, is a living example of a monstrosity. It grew like Topsy, through a series of compromises, and that put a layer on top of the services. We will never go back to having individual services, and I don't think we even should. So I say that the time has come to make major changes by eliminating the secretariats of the Army, Navy, and Air Force and having three Deputy Secretaries of Defense for Army, Navy, and Air Force with only four or five staff persons, all the rest of the staff services being provided by the OSD. I think this would strengthen the ability of the service chiefs, to have their own inputs into the service side. That is, the Navy, for example, would be reporting to a Deputy Secretary of the Navy, whose staff would be the same staff that you would have to wrestle with when you come up to the Secretary of Defense through the Joint Chiefs. It would cut literally several thousand personnel, both military and civilian, out of the system, and this could only improve efficiency.

Goldberg: You spoke of doing away with the services, you mean the departments?

Zumwalt: Yes.

Goldberg: Your view on Goldwater-Nichols, however, is not the traditional Navy view, is it?

Zumwalt: No. If you asked Adm. Burke, he'd rail against it.

Goldberg: So would Adm. Moorer, and so he has. The Navy has traditionally, from the beginning, before the National Security Act was passed, been opposed to this whole system, and they have had some good arguments.

Zumwalt: Yes, but we have gone beyond where those kinds of complaints are effective. We clearly are headed for a single military system, and we are far better off now to create the optimal opportunity for the Navy uniformed service to have influence by eliminating one whole layer of civilian hierarchy. I think the same thing holds true for the Army and the Air Force.

Goldberg: But the Navy doesn't see it that way at the present time. They are still fighting the battle of the admirals back in 1949. They have just written a history of that, which is an absolutely clear reflection of Radford and Burke, one hundred percent. They are going to revise it, fortunately. It was written by somebody who accepted everything on the naval aviation side. He damned the Navy people who were not with the main Navy aviators, and all the rest of it. Incredible.

Matloff: Would you say that centralization in OSD should go further?

Zumwalt: Yes, in the sense of eliminating the layers that now delay decision-making.

Matloff: How would you characterize the styles, personalities, and effectiveness of the SecsDef and other top officials with whom you worked as CNO; for example, thumbnail impressions of Laird, Richardson, and Schlesinger?

Zumwalt: Laird was very canny; very well informed on the issues because of his years in Congress; knew how to use the base that he had in Congress to checkmate Kissinger and Nixon as much as they could be checkmated; and was totally living in the present, paying very little attention to the long range. Elliot Richardson--less involved in the present, more involved in thinking through the issues and looking long range--less involved in the details of the administration. Schlesinger--even more in the direction of long-range thinking and less involved in the details of personnel administration.

Matloff: Which of them do you think made a more lasting imprint? You might include any other Secretaries of Defense with whom you served earlier.

Zumwalt: Still today, the most lasting imprint is that of McNamara, in the programming system that he brought in. He proceeded to make a caricature of the system, and I

think it worked better without him than it did with him. A caricature because he insisted on the answers that he intuitively believed, rather than letting the system produce the answers. It's hard to compare them--Richardson particularly, because he was there so briefly. I suspect that he would have made a tremendous contribution. But you have the same problem that you do in evaluating JFK. I think Schlesinger was probably right for his time, and did better for that era than Laird would have done; but I think also the reverse is true, that Schlesinger would not have done as well as Laird in the winding down of the war phase.

Goldberg: It took somebody with real political savvy to bring that about.

Zumwalt: Yes.

Matloff: Any impressions of some of the Deputy Secretaries of Defense--Packard, Rush, and Clements?

Zumwalt: Packard was a giant who was constantly frustrated by the bureaucracy. He found that, unlike business, you couldn't make a decision and expect it to stick. He was a thoughtful person who helped improve the efficiency of the system. I considered Rush a total nullity. Clements was a political infighter who was out to get the top job and didn't care how he got it. He was pompous, and, in my judgment, a racist. He simply couldn't understand why I wouldn't pull the blacks out of Iceland when the Icelanders expressed difficulties with them. He couldn't understand the equities in that sort of thing.

Matloff: Do you want to add anything to your impressions of Adm. Moorer and the other members of the JCS? You had Abrams, Westmoreland, Ryan, and George Brown.

Zumwalt: As I said about Moorer, we almost never had a disagreement on strategy. We were very much alike in our geopolitical views. He was in total opposition, I think, to my integration policies. He is a very effective military person. George Brown was a very fine Air Force person. I didn't get a chance to observe him as Chairman. I knew him as a commander of the Seventh Air Force in Vietnam, where he was extremely

effective, and as an opposite number on the JCS, where he was extremely effective, quiet, cool, and laid back. Gen. Abrams is a hero of mine. I believe that in any other war he would have been forced to run for the presidency, but instead inherited in his half of the Vietnam War all the animosity of the American public. He was a great commander and a very fine opposite number in the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I thought so highly of him that it was very difficult for me to take him on in the JCS debates as I used to take Gen. Westmoreland on. With reference to the two commandants with whom I served, Gen. Chapman was a tremendous commandant; his successor, Gen. Cushman, was much less effective, I thought. He was really there because of his association with President Nixon.

Matloff: Cushman worried Schlesinger. Schlesinger worried about Cushman and the close ties with Nixon.

Zumwalt: The first Air Force Chief of Staff, Gen. Jack Ryan, was much more operational than he was staff oriented, and, I felt, uncomfortable in the JCS arena. A very fine man of total integrity.

Matloff: How about Secretaries of the Navy--you had Nitze, Chafee, Warner, and Ignatius.

Zumwalt: I also had a lot of experience with Gates and Franke, I worked on their staffs. I think Paul Nitze was, by all odds, the greatest Secretary of the Navy we've ever had. Tom Gates was nearly as good, and a great Secretary of Defense, a man of great vigor, courage, and charismatic leadership. Mr. Franke was much quieter, but very knowledgeable, and a good Secretary. Paul Ignatius was much like Mr. Franke, well grounded on the financial and logistics side and a quiet leader. I worked very effectively with John Chafee. He was totally supportive on the changes in the Navy. John Warner--I will just rest on what I said about him in the book.

Matloff: Anything additional about Kissinger, or Al Haig?

Zumwalt: My own judgment is that we were as close to fascism during the last year of the Nixon era as we have ever come in this country. I hope and pray that we will never again have such a combination of factors that we have two power-seeking men and a greatly weakened president.

Matloff: Anything more you want to add about Nixon as commander in chief and director of national security policy?

Zumwalt: He was a man of immense capabilities who greatly handicapped himself during the last part of his tenure by his conduct in the Watergate episode.

Matloff: Any impressions of other presidents you served?

Zumwalt: My personal experience with presidents is limited to Lyndon Johnson when he was majority leader and I found him the most profane man I have ever known. I was sent to see him when Paul Nitze was an Assistant Secretary of Defense, and Johnson was Vice President. The issue was why we couldn't carry out a request he had made. I went over and told him, and he looked at me and said, "Captain, I'm going to stand still for that, but you go back and you tell that f....g Secretary that this is the most frustrating thing that ever happened to me since pantyhose came along to interfere with finger-f....g."

Goldberg: Was Nitze Secretary of the Navy at the time?

Zumwalt: No, he was Assistant Secretary of Defense. "Go back and tell Paul Nitze" is what he really said.

Matloff: I can imagine how Nitze would have taken that.

Zumwalt: He blanched. He's such a gentleman.

Goldberg: You mean you gave him the whole quote?

Zumwalt: Yes.

Matloff: We've interviewed Nitze and Ignatius.

Zumwalt: The issue had to do with an involvement where the Vice President was interested in the Diego Garcia incident. At that time we were trying to detach Diego Garcia from the British. It wasn't a personnel issue.

Matloff: In your book you have described with some detail the choice of your successor, Adm. Holloway. To what extent did the Secretary of Defense consult with you on that?

Zumwalt: I sent the three names forward--Holloway, Weisner, and Bagley. Schlesinger did discuss it with me, and discussed the personalities of each. My recollection is that Schlesinger said that he was going to send the three over, that they were all satisfactory to him, and that he did not make a recommendation to the president. That ought to be confirmed with him. I do know that when the paper was taken in to the President, Haig was quoted as saying, "The President said, 'ah, yes, Adm. Holloway, I remember his father in the Lebanon campaign.'" That little familiar touch probably tilted it in that direction. They were all three qualified and any one of the three could have done it.

Matloff: What do you regard as your major achievement as CNO, and, conversely, what disappointed you the most, or perhaps was not completed?

Zumwalt: I think my major achievement was the winning of approval and implementation of Project 60, which carried with it the strategic modernization of the Navy, the high-low mix modernization, and the personnel upgrade. I think my major disappointment was that we only got part way there. We lost some of the low end of the mix, and we were late getting the Trident program launched. Although it's very controversial, I'm very proud of the way the personnel thing turned out.

Goldberg: Of course, to see things through you really need about 20 years, don't you?

Zumwalt: That's right. Only now, we are seeing the final fruits of the personnel changes in the lieutenants who are now admirals.



Matloff: In the book edited by Robert Love, titled The Chiefs of Naval Operations, Norman Friedman has written: "Zumwalt entered office determined to save the navy from multiple potential disasters . . . Strategically, he believed that the position of the United States relative to the Soviet Union in military terms had fallen dangerously. He estimated that in a naval war the chance of an American victory was less than 50 per cent, and he urged war planners to prepare for a conflict in which the United States would suffer a disastrous loss of allied forces and territory . . . Unfortunately, as CNO, he was effectively prohibited from voicing such pessimism, and, without voicing it, he could not hope to mobilize public opinion behind a large program of naval expansion. Complicating Zumwalt's predicament was Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, who dominated foreign policy during the Nixon presidency and who believed that, since the United States was declining as a great power, the only realistic policy for Washington was to get the best possible terms from the ascendant power, the Soviet Union. Since Nixon and Kissinger saw the Strategic Arms Limitation accords as the greatest achievement of the administration, Zumwalt's voice arguing for a buildup of the American arsenal was fairly lonely and muffled." Does that seem accurate?

Zumwalt: The only place I would disagree with that quote is a matter of degree. It is true that I couldn't go out and stir up the public, but I think I was effective in the halls of Congress and in the Pentagon in getting Laird, Richardson, and Schlesinger concerned about our naval capabilities.

Matloff: Let me ask you a little bit about the post-CNO contacts with OSD to wind this up. You mentioned the Goldwater-Nichols Act--were you consulted at all by Congress in connection with the hearings on the act?

Zumwalt: No.

Matloff: How about the Packard Commission?

Zumwalt: No. I was asked by the Congress to testify on SALT II, and to testify on Soviet arms control violations.

Goldberg: Were you associated with any of the groups of secretaries and chiefs who worked up a lot of this data information of positions on what eventually became Goldwater-Nichols?

Zumwalt: No. I was one of the founders of the Committee on the Present Danger, which has been quite influential.

Goldberg: I was thinking of the Georgetown Group.

Matloff: Do you see any basic changes in the threat to U.S. national security since you left the office?

Zumwalt: I would have said "no" just a couple of years ago, but now, of course, there are dramatic changes. Interestingly enough, I think I differ from the conventional wisdom in this case, the Soviet capability is every bit as fearsome as it ever was. They still have those 25,000 nuclear warheads. They still have nuclear superiority over the United States. But their intentions have changed dramatically, and their own self-interest requires them now to do things so differently that they are less of a threat. Had the coup been successful, or should another coup come along and be successful, you would find me right out there sounding the alarm again.

Matloff: We do want to thank you, Adm. Zumwalt, for sharing your recollections and insights with us, and for your cooperation.

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Matloff: Is there any question that I should have asked that I didn't ask, concerning your tenure and reflections?

Zumwalt: There's one item that I want to put in a separate category for classification, and that has to do with the meeting of the Joint Chiefs of Staff with Mr. Nixon in December 1973. It is a highly sensitive issue that I would like kept in a separate minute somewhere regarding its release. This was the last of the four budget meetings that I had with the President. The others had all been pro forma: we would go in, meet, and give our reasons why the budget was unsatisfactory. Mr. Nixon would ask a pre-programmed question or two and thank us. We would leave, and the decisions would all be made as originally agreed prior to our arrival.

Goldberg: This is the '75 budget?

Zumwalt: That was the format for the earlier three. But in December 1973 we were talking about the budget that would have been locked up for 1975. Instead of the usual format, he had us in to breakfast. Present were Haig, Kissinger, Schlesinger, and the five members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The meeting went on for a long period of time and was almost totally a monologue by the president. At one point Tom Moorer was able to make a short pitch for the budget, and at another point I was able to make a short pitch about the Navy part of the budget. I don't think any other chief said anything, and the speech was full of such things as "we've got to stick together," "this is the last best hope," "the effete, elite, eastern establishment is out to do us in." In a way it was rambling, and in a way it was hortatory, and in a way he would seem to come back and focus on us from time to time. When we left the office, I turned to my friend, Gen. Abrams, and said, "Did you get the same general impression that I got?" Gen. Abrams said, "I don't want to talk about it, I don't want to make a minute about it, and I don't want to have heard it." I never talked to any of the other chiefs about it. Abe was the only one I felt close enough to talk to. I didn't talk to Schlesinger about it. Some three to six weeks later Schlesinger came out with his famous directive that no troops will be moved on Washington without his personal approval.

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Matloff: Were you still on the scene as CNO at that time?

Zumwalt: No. That was quite a bit later.

Goldberg: Schlesinger did mention that when we spoke with him.

Zumwalt: He mentioned that breakfast? So he read it the same way? That's fascinating.

Goldberg: He was appalled.

Zumwalt: I really believe that the president was trying to find out what support he had. That's why I put my fascist statement in there at the end.

Goldberg: He obviously got the wind up of Schlesinger, too, at that time.

Zumwalt: I think the decision not to act unconstitutionally was made not on morality, not on ethics, but just on the sheer calculation that he couldn't get away with it.

Matloff: There's a different recollection on this whole issue by President Ford in his memoirs. He talks about his being disturbed by the stories of Schlesinger doing things with the Defense Department, putting troops on alert and putting a terrible canard on the American military, to think that the military might possibly take some untoward action, coup, or the like.

Goldberg: He repeated that to us.

Zumwalt: I think Ford is right about that. I think that Schlesinger didn't need to have done what he did, because I don't think you could get any company commander anywhere to march on the White House. It is so ingrained in us. But it does confirm that Schlesinger read it the way I read it.

Goldberg: Yes.

Matloff: I think Schlesinger was a little disturbed by the closeness of the Marine Corps in its barracks in southwest Washington.

Goldberg: This was the Cushman thing. He made that connection in relation to Nixon.

Zumwalt: Frankly, I would be more worried about Haig than Cushman, at that time.

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