

STRATEGY, MONEY, AND THE NEW LOOK

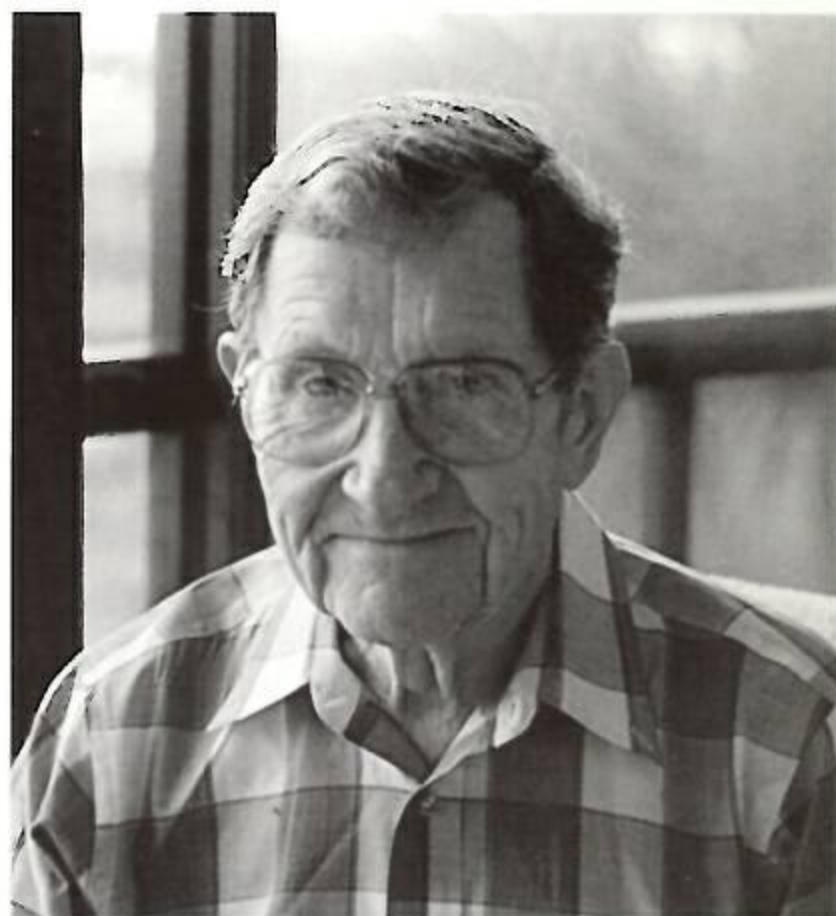
1953-1956

Strategy, Money, and the New Look, Volume III in the award-winning History of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, examines the role of OSD and Secretary of Defense Charles E. Wilson in the transformation of national security policy during the first Eisenhower administration.

In the aftermath of the Korean War, the new administration presided over a reduction of military forces that saw a realignment of service missions and reshaping of strategy in the context of more constrained budgets and more advanced technology. Author Richard M. Leighton explores the connections between money, politics, technology, and strategy and the relationships among the key participants—besides Wilson, a president with commanding military knowledge and experience, an often divided Joint Chiefs of Staff, and a Congress increasingly involved in national security affairs. An accomplished manager and outspoken advocate, Wilson was staunchly loyal to Eisenhower and firmly committed to the president's priorities. Leighton portrays the defense secretary as a man of strengths and foibles who was both a major asset and an occasional embarrassment for the White House.

At the center of the defense debate during this period were economy concerns that ordained a shift from an emphasis on ground forces and tactical airpower to strategic airpower and nuclear weapons. Fully a third of the book traces the evolution of the defense budget, annually and in unprecedented detail, from planning and conception to final negotiation and legislative enactment. Through the prism of the budget exercise and working extensively in the original records, Leighton focuses on both the philosophical differences and institutional conflicts—within the Pentagon, in Congress, within the R&D community, and within NATO—that sometimes blocked the administration from achieving its goals. At all stages, partisan politics, service jockeying for influence and advantage under the new strategic concept, and the cost of military assistance to bolster allies complicated the commitment to balance the budget.

In the end, unrelenting fiscal pressures and cold war uncertainties in both Europe and Asia forced some retreat from the New Look's "more bang for a buck" but not before, as Leighton concludes, Eisenhower and Wilson had fundamentally altered both the tone and direction of national security decisionmaking.



RICHARD M. LEIGHTON received an A.B. degree from the University of Cincinnati and a Ph.D. degree in history from Cornell University. His service in the U.S. Army during World War II, from 1941 to 1946, included an assignment as chief historian of the Army Service Forces. After teaching history at the University of Cincinnati from 1946 to 1947 he joined the War Department Historical Division as chief of its Logistical History Branch. Subsequently he served as professor on the faculty of the Industrial College of the Armed Forces and edited its journal, *Perspectives in Defense Management*. He is the co-author of *Global Logistics and Strategy*, the definitive two-volume history of logistics in World War II. He also published a series of studies on presidential crisis management and decisionmaking, including *Vietnam 1964-65*, *The Decision to Bomb*, *Airlift to Israel, October 1973*; and *Dien Bien Phu*. From 1978 until his death in 2001 he was associated with the Historical Office in the Office of the Secretary of Defense.