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Administrative Information

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Biographical Note
Paul H. Nitze (1907-2004) served as President of the Foreign Service Education Foundation from 1953 to 1961, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs from 1961 to 1963, and Secretary of the Navy from 1963 to 1967. This interview focuses on the Defense Department examining strategies for nuclear engagement and the United States negotiating with France about their nuclear program, among other topics.

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By Paul Henry Nitze

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Date November 9, 1972

Paul H. Nitze– JFK #3
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Miss Fosdick: Mr. Secretary, I notice in the report of the Kennedy Committee on National Security Policy which you headed it is stated that a general approach to the mix of general war capabilities should be determined by the President-elect as early as a full briefing by those who know about the subject could be arranged. I have the impression that the decisions by the President and the Administration on the mix of general war capabilities came out rather closely in line with the recommendations of your report. Would you comment on how this happened or what the significance of this might be?

Mr. Nitze: I think it did end up very close to the recommendations of our initial report to the President. The way in which this developed, however, was not quite as orderly and as rational an approach to it, as I assumed in the report that we might take.

The first question that faced the new Administration was the amount of additional dollars which Mr. Kennedy would ask for to add on to the Eisenhower budget; so that the first question would be addressed to the more essential points of how one could assure the United States of having a secure second strike retaliatory capability. This was the first thing that the Administration addressed itself to. We were all concerned about the vulnerability of the SAC bombers to the possibility of a surprise attack and we thought that it would be some time before we would have enough POLARIS missiles and really secure MINUTEMAN in order to give us an assured second strike capability - one which could not be eliminated by an initial surprise attack by the Soviet Union. So that the first decisions of the Administration were the acceleration of the POLARIS shipbuilding program from 29 boats each with sixteen missiles to a program of 41 boats each with sixteen. Mr. Kennedy asked for the money for the long lead items for the full 41-boat program, and the schedule then called for one POLARIS submarine a month being produced at the peak of the program which, as I remember it, was the year 1964 - this was the year in which we would reach our peak rate of production. He did everything he could in order to get this POLARIS system to the optimum size as fast as possible. This decision was made at the very outset of the Administration. Concurrently there was a discussion as to how much to accelerate the MINUTEMAN program, and this also was accelerated. My recollection is that a second production line was added to the first production line, and the money for that acceleration of the MINUTEMAN program was also in the first add-on to the Eisenhower budget.

Later in the Kennedy Administration the issue that I had referred to in our paper came up time and time again, as to the mix of systems in package one, the strategic package. How many additional MINUTEMEN

should we buy, should we buy the mobile MINUTEMAN on railroad cars, should we go forward with the SKYBOLT system, should we go for the RS-70 follow-on bombers, and furthermore should we buy the mobile medium range missile which General Norstad was saying he needed for European defense? Every year these issues were debated again and again and again in order to make the decisions as to what we would recommend to Mr. Kennedy.

Then discussions were carried on with Mr. Kennedy as to what he finally recommended to Congress in a way of a program in package one and what its composition should be. Over the years he stuck to the original decision on 41 POLARIS boats each with sixteen missiles. Eventually it was decided that the mobile railroad car based MINUTEMAN was less effective for the dollars which it would cost than additional hardened MINUTEMEN in solos spaced some distance apart. The Air Force felt that we should have a larger number of MINUTEMEN which Mr. Kennedy finally approved, and also felt we should have this follow-on bomber or that we should buy more B-52s. They also felt that we should go forward with the mobile medium range ballistic missile for the European theater.

Mr. Kennedy was very much concerned about the mobile medium range missile in Europe. He felt an issue would arise as to where one would locate these mobile missiles. The only European country which looked with favor upon having mobile medium range ballistic missiles on its territory was Germany. The French were prepared to see these mobile medium range ballistic missiles bought but they would not have any of them on French territory unless full control, not only over the launching system but also over the warheads, was given to the French. But this implied a multiplication of national nuclear deterrents and this then got into the realm of command and control, and how did one maintain centralized single command and control over the entire strategic system. If one had bits and pieces of it controlled absolutely by a number of NATO nations, then there was the great dnager that one part would be used alone which would commit us really to go in with them, then the President would have lost control over the operations. We would be in the position that Germany was in in 1914, when their allies, the Austrians, really got them into war without their full consent. The President was not so concerned about the British having an independent nuclear deterrent because he felt that our relations with the British were strong enough so that it was highly unlikely that the British would be prepared to use their nuclear weapons apart from us - independently from us. He felt, however, that the Germans, because of their very great and deep interest in reunification, might use this threat, if they had control over their own nuclear weapons, to cause a crisis in the hope that we would back them up, and that we might be sucked into a general nuclear war not of our desire. He thought

that if the French had this they might eventually make some agreement with the Germans, or that the Germans might end up in control of the Franco-German bloc and therefore he was not desirous of the French having this. Thus, he was very leary of the mobile medium range ballistic missile. In fact, Mr. McNamara did not, until later in the game, recommend that we go forward with even the research and development work necessary to effect such a missile.

As to the B-52s, it was not felt by Mr. McNamara that they really contributed to our second strike capability. I think everybody was very hesitant about looking into the possibility of a win capability which involved the United States in striking first - kind of out of the blue. It was recognized that our policy and our strategy did contemplate the contingency under which we would initiate general nuclear war - that was an all-out conventional attack by the Soviet Union into Europe which could not be contained by the forces that we and the Europeans had in Europe. In that event, we would have to start the general nuclear phase, but it was felt that this was not the same thing as a surprise first strike with the objective of disarming the Soviet Union and putting them in a position where they couldn't respond in any way.

General Powers and General Page of the Air Force both felt it was important for us to have some kind of a first strike capability which would effectively disarm the U.S.S.R. It was Mr. McNamara's view, and my view, that if one could really do this it would be worth adding to the list of options which the President might have. But all the computations that we could make indicated that under the most favorable circumstances, one could not completely disarm the U.S.S.R., one could go perhaps 90% of the way, but the remaining capabilities left to the Soviet were estimated to cause casualties in the United States of somewhere in the order of 9 to 10 million. No one could really contemplate a war which resulted in 10 million casualties from nuclear weapons in the United States as a war which turned out politically to our interests. Therefore the decision was, as had been predicted in the paper we wrote after the election, it did not seem to be within the technological capability to really aspire to a win capability which would be a win in both the military and the political sense.

On the other hand, as had been suggested in the paper, I think everybody, including Mr. Kennedy, agreed that if we had only a minimum retaliatory capability - a capability which could only be used against Soviet centers of population - this would put us in a very dangerous position indeed; it would not be as credible a deterrent as the type of general war nuclear posture that we sought.

I in particular felt that the Russians in their own councils would consider a number of factors before they went down a course which they thought had a prospect of leading to general nuclear war. One of the factors was the factor of the damage which they might suffer to their civilian centers of population; another factor was their estimate of what might be the probable outcome of the initial phase of a nuclear exchange. If their generals told the high councils of the Kremlin that the initial phase of the nuclear war would end up with the United States having a residual capability considerably in excess of the remaining Soviet nuclear capability, that the Russians would come out by far second best and that the future of the world would then be, at least insofar as it was controlled by military considerations, dominated by the surviving people in the United States rather than by surviving people in the Kremlin; this consideration, I felt, would be a more absolute deterrent to the Soviets from going down this course than the risk that they might lose a certain number of citizens. This seemed to me to be particularly true if one considered the fact that the Russians might evacuate their cities. There were a number of things they could do to reduce the personnel casualties that they possibly might suffer, and they had really been rather brutal in World War II about suffering casualties and still going on to win. Therefore, it seemed to me that the strongest deterrent was the prospect of the Russians seeing, if this war came about even if they struck first, that after our retaliation they would be in very much a second best position.

I think this was persuasive to the President; it seemed to me to be a perfectly clear argument; I think that Mr. McNamara felt it was a perfectly clear argument, and this was the basis for our policy to try to develop forces which would be so strong and so survivable that even if the Russians struck first, we would be able to make the second strike stronger than they had, and still have in reserve sufficient weapons so that we would still be in the stronger position with those weapons we hadn't used than the Russians would be, and so that we would be left dominating this miserable battlefield. From the standpoint of deterrence, this would be much stronger than the minimum of retaliation capability.

Miss Fosdick: You say that the President came to this conclusion. How were the arguments presented to him, by memorandum or were there continual discussions with him over a period of time?

Mr. Nitze: Over a period this was very much on his mind and very much on Mr. McNamara's mind and I believe that Mr. McNamara discussed these issues with Mr. Kennedy as often as two or three times a week. Of course, during the Berlin crisis this was no longer a theoretical kind of discussion.

This was a very real discussion, a discussion devoted to real contingencies which you could see coming before you - not just possibilities but probabilities that you would be faced with this decision and that decision and the other decision each of which did involve the chain of general war. It was the only way in which we could possibly defend Berlin - to make it clear that in Russia they were going down a course which we would respond to in a way which they would then have to respond to in a series of escalations which would bring us very close to a general nuclear war. We couldn't save Berlin except through such a chain. The President was determined to save Berlin so he knew that it was probable he would have to make decisions which were getting much closer to the ultimate decision of having to finally press that button.

Miss Fosdick: Did you talk to him personally about these problems now and then, or was it a matter mainly of your persuading, arguing or discussing with Secretary McNamara and then having him, in whatever contact he had with the President, convey these thoughts? To what extent did the President get into the detail of this the way he did in so many foreign policy questions - and enter into argument and back and forth exchange.

Mr. Nitze: He got into this very much in detail, but he got in it largely with Mr. McNamara and in part with the Joint Chiefs, in part with the National Security Council briefings of the Net Evaluation Group. At many of these I was present. But I never discussed these matters with Mr. Kennedy apart from Mr. McNamara.

Miss Fosdick: This was part of your general principle of operation?

Mr. Nitze: I felt that I would destroy my usefulness to the President if I were to short circuit Mr. McNamara and go directly to the President.

I have a further comment that I would like to make about this question of how much do you need for retaliation, how much do you need in order to be certain that the Russians know that even if they were to strike first, we could still end up the initial phases of a nuclear war in the dominating nuclear position. There was a further element that came into this discussion in the latter days of Mr. Kennedy's Administration and this was the question of damage limitation.

The purpose of a second strike would be to reduce the remaining Soviet strategic nuclear capability to a very small amount, not just in order to be able thereafter to dominate the nuclear equations between the Soviet Union and ourselves but also to limit damage to the United States from those remaining weapons. Now this concept of limiting damage to the United States was a very difficult concept for all of us to work through to its ultimate logic. In the event the United States were to

strike first on the contingency, say, that Europe were invaded first and we initiated general war, then one would find the situation where none of the Soviet forces had been as yet shot off and our strike would find all those missiles still on the ground - many of the planes still on the ground - and let's say we destroyed 90% of it, then only the remaining 10% could damage the United States. But after all, what we were talking about was not an initial first strike against the Soviet Union except in this one contingency. Our main strategy was that even if the Russians struck first, then our second strike would be so heavy that we could take out their remaining facilities and still have a greater reserve than they; but, if the Russians had struck first, then all those missiles would have hit their targets, a lot of the facilities they would be destroying would be empty holes - the missiles would have gone, the planes would have gone. We would just be seeing to it that they had no remaining capability; we would have already absorbed much of the damage. Under those circumstances, was it really worthwhile to hit all these empty holes: We would have suffered such damage from the initial strike that it would be hard to conceive of the United States going on as a political entity.

Were there any other things that one could do in order to limit damage? This got us into considerations of the anti-ICBM, the Civil Defense Program, and the anti-Soviet submarine launched ballistic missile system. It was only if we could intercept these missiles, or if we could devise a program so that we would have a combination Civil Defense, plus AICBMs, plus weapons which would control their submarines. As it turned out the requirements for damage limitations, in other words the forces that we needed in the United States in order to give us some shot at reducing the damage from an initial Soviet strike to manageable proportions, these requirements for U.S. forces were greater than those you would need in order to assure yourself of a military win capability.

So the arguments switched over a period of time from the one which I had presented to Mr. Kennedy in this initial task force paper as to the relationship between a win capability and a retaliatory capability. The arguments switched to one between damage limitations, which is a more difficult target, and an assured retaliatory capability - and that's where it is today. This is the only additional comment I have. I think it is an important point.

Miss Fosdick: You referred to President Kennedy's concern about the proliferation of national nuclear capabilities, particularly the French situation, perhaps you'd like to say something more about that.

Mr. Nitze: I accompanied Mr. Kennedy on his trip to Vienna where he discussed matter with Mr. Khrushchev. On the way back from Vienna, we

stopped in Paris and saw Mr. DeGaulle. The discussions with President DeGaulle were, at least to me, extremely interesting. General DeGaulle said that in his view nuclear strategy, nuclear warfare, was nonsense. The whole thing made no sense whatsoever. It was a question of mutual destruction, and wasn't military strategy. Mr. Kennedy very much wanted to repair United States relations with General DeGaulle and with France. France was, after all, the key to a successful and solvent strategic posture for Europe. We had all felt that to carry out Mr. Kennedy's directive - to have a choice other than ignominous retreat or general nuclear war - the European countries plus ourselves could build an appropriate structure provided that we got full French cooperation. At one time the French had committed themselves to contributing sixteen divisions to NATO - this was at the time the Germans originally committed themselves to twelve. The French wanted to be sure that they had stronger forces in Europe than the Germans did because they were worried about a predominant German military capability on the continent. After that time the French cut this pledge back from sixteen to ten to six, and finally withdrew their commitment almost entirely from NATO. I think they have now restored it to two, with a possibility of three.

But when one looked to the requirement for some thirty to thirty-two good divisions in the central front of Europe plus a mobilization capability of an additional twenty-eight or thirty divisions, where could one see the possibility for this? The main place was France. Therefore, Mr. Kennedy went to the greatest lengths to see whether he couldn't work out some modus vivendi, some way to get over the misunderstandings or the differences of viewpoint between General DeGaulle and himself.

Originally at that session in Paris, Mr. Kennedy thought that what General DeGaulle really wanted was the triumvirate, the NATO directorate, of the U.K., France and the U.S., and he asked me to get up a paper there for him in Paris which would outline what we could in fact do in order to meet General DeGaulle's presumed desires for such a directorate. I did get up for the President in Paris such a paper, which went somewhat further than I think the other participants in NSC discussions had thought was right. Before that time the President made it perfectly clear to me he wanted to see the boldest proposition down this line that I could come up with. I had only an hour to do this. I came up with such a paper and he immediately used this in his discussions with General DeGaulle. The point was that he did agree that we would do this to the extent that he wanted to implement it and we could find ways to implement it. The upshot of this discussion was that Mr. Rusk, on behalf of the United States, and Couve de Murville, on behalf of the French, were to have subsequent discussions to see how we could set up a system of consultations which would involve the British, the French and ourselves, on a worldwide basis, with

periodic meetings at the political level, and periodic and related meetings at the military level to discuss problems of political-military strategy worldwide. This Mr. Kennedy agreed to, or suggested that he thought this is what DeGaulle wanted.

Miss Fosdick: Was this the essence of your paper?

Mr. Nitze: This was the essence of my paper. As it turned out, General DeGaulle would never authorize Couve de Murville to follow up on the discussions. This wasn't really what DeGaulle wanted. It then became clear that what he wanted was collaboration from the United States in assisting the French to develop a nuclear capability of their own. This was really what he wanted. He didn't really want the political directorate that he had discussed earlier. There were very strong reasons for not helping France to do this. On the other hand, there continued to be very strong reasons to try to bring France back in the fold. The upshot of this was that I did do some work on a paper to try to test the French out to see whether there was any negotiating position which we could eventually arrive at with the French which would make it possible for us to give the French assistance in their nuclear program. It seemed to me that if the French really were to commit themselves to NATO in quite a different sense than the sense in which they were then behaving in NATO - if they were really to become part of NATO the way we were and the way the Germans were, if they were to view their defense as being part of the NATO defense - then it would be possible for us to give them assistance in developing their own nuclear capability. But the forces should not only then be earmarked but assigned to NATO, so that the plans would all be NATO plans and the authority to use these forces would all be NATO authority. Granted that if NATO broke up the French would still have a national nuclear capability, still if they would demonstrate to us their seriousness in making NATO really work, maybe the payoff would be enough so that we could take the disadvantages and the risk that the French would end up with a capability of their own; particularly, in light of the fact that it looked to me as though they were going to go down the road to getting their own nuclear capability in any case. I think time has demonstrated that this was correct, and therefore it would seem to have been to our interest to help them get a nuclear capability which they were going to get anyway provided we could get them really to be part of NATO.

Miss Fosdick: What was the fate of this paper, or this proposal?

Mr. Nitze: It met violent opposition from the State Department. I guess it was the Standing Group of the NSC which considered this paper. Mr. Kennedy

finally did authorize me to explore these ideas with General Lavaud, who had been sent over by the French to negotiate with us a balance of payments cost equalization proposition which we had made to the French with respect to our dollar gold drain situation in France. We were spending about $300 million a year in France which added to our gold drain and we had asked the French to see whether they couldn't work out a program with us for radically reducing or, in fact, equalizing this $300 million account. General Lavaud was on his way over to talk to me about that, and I knew that Lavaud was going to make one of the preconditions for this balancing out of our gold and dollar drain sale by us to them of some of the things they needed for their nuclear programs. This seemed to be the time to go forward with this exploration. The President did authorize me to make this exploration with Lavaud, and I did do exactly what the President authorized me to do. As it turned out, Lavaud said that the various things that I was raising were beyond his instructions, that he was instructed merely to negotiate this purchase of military supplies from the United States, and he was not authorized to negotiate with me with respect to France's role in NATO. But we finally developed an agreed minute of the negotiations which made it perfectly clear that if the French were prepared to make radical commitments of their support to NATO including the number of divisions they would supply and various other things that would include permitting us to have our planes with nuclear weapons in France, then we would consider assisting them in their nuclear program.

Miss Fosdick: What was the fate of this minute?

Mr. Nitze: The minute had an evil fate. Shortly thereafter Mr. Kennedy was asked in a press conference whether we would assist the French in developing an independent nuclear capability and Mr. Kennedy replied that he thought it would be inimicable to the interests of the allies for us to assist the French to develop an independent nuclear capability. The President's reply was not inconsistent with what in fact he had authorized me to negotiate, but it appeared to be and it got the French so mad that the negotiations ceased right there. Subsequently Ambassador Alphand raised with McGeorge Bundy and me the importance of rebuilding a bridge with General DeGaulle. McGeorge Bundy and I followed this up with a series of discussions, saying that we would be prepared to reopen the negotiations of the type that I had initiated with General Lavaud and that we would do it in any way that they wanted to do it; that it would be our view, however, that it would be unfortunate to have no preliminary negotiations prior to a discussion between General DeGaulle and Mr. Kennedy. One was too apt to have a misunderstanding if there were no preliminary work. Our suggestion would be that if General DeGaulle would appoint somebody, in any capacity, to speak for him and try to work out some of the ground rules which should be explored first, before a high level meeting,

this would be useful. Ambassador Alphand agreed with our position after a prolonged series of discussions and said that he was going back to Paris, he would see General DeGaulle and he would advance these arguments to him and hoped that he would have some success in getting somebody appointed. I think that Ambassador Alphand hoped that he personally would be the man selected by General DeGaulle. But, as it turned out, General DeGaulle was not interested in doing this at all. At least we never got any reply to this initiative. This initiative was some months, even perhaps weeks, prior to the sessions in London with respect to Skybolt which led to Nassau.

Miss Fosdick: After Nassau there was less chance.

Mr. Nitze: Then at Nassau we tried again to open up this possibility with the French and immediately after the Nassau Agreement (Mr. Bohlen was with us at Nassau), Mr. Bohlen was given orders by the President to go immediately back to France and see General DeGaulle and make it clear to General DeGaulle what we were prepared to do with the French not only what we had agreed to do with the British in respect to the Nassau Agreement, but, in view of the different circumstances in France of their not having nuclear weapons of their own, we would be prepared to go forward further in order to make this a meaningful offer. I think that General DeGaulle was faced with a very grave issue as to whether or not to accept this offer which did, however, still involve the French commitment to NATO, or whether to kick this offer in the teeth the way he did in that January press conference, and go down the line of trying to split the NATO as a precondition to negotiations thereafter with respect to NATO.

Miss Fosdick: I am rather struck with the fact that President Kennedy authorized you to negotiate with Lavaud when others, including the State Department, seemed to be reluctant and were advising a rather different line. Do you want to comment further on this departure from the normal channels of officialdom?

Mr. Nitze: President Kennedy was very much interested at this time in the gold and dollar balance problem which we all faced. He felt that this was one of the most important things that had to be controlled; that if we didn't control this gold outflow, there could be a run on the dollar and this could be a disaster, forcing us to currency control and all kinds of things which were unattractive. He was very practically interested in the prospect of being able to improve our gold and dollar balance of payments position by an amount as large as $300 million per year. So despite the objections of the State Department to this, he felt he did not want to forego the chance of getting this $300 million just because of those things and, therefore, authorized me to conduct these negotiations.

Miss Fosdick: I presume your own interest in addition to the gold and balance of payments problem was your own concern to do what you possibly could here to save NATO and to improve the French cooperation with the plans for the development of NATO.

Mr. Nitze: This is correct. All of us that worked on these matters in the Pentagon - McNamara, General Taylor and I - were very much interested in licking this strategic problem in NATO. This seemed to be a chance to do it and this was our main interest - we were also interested in the gold and balance of payments problem. Our main interest in trying to work this out was to meet the NATO strategic position - to weld NATO together once more.

I should have pointed out earlier that I did show this paper of mine to Mr. McNamara before I took it up with Mr. Kennedy and the NSC subgroup and he authorize me to do that. He didn't say he approved, but he authorized me to do this.

Miss Fosdick: What was the main line in the State Department in objecting to this?

Mr. Nitze: The main line of the State Department objections to it was (a) that the proliferation of national nuclear capabilities was a bad thing and that one couldn't guarantee that if we helped the French at some time or other, they wouldn't renege on their obligations to NATO and end up with a national capability; and (b) at least a part of the State Department - George Ball, Bob Schaetzel and some of the people in EUR - were dedicated to the proposition of the multilateral force as being the solution to both the strategic problems of Europe and to European unification. They felt that this approach to the French would undermine the prospect of the multilateral force, and, I think, that this was perhaps their strongest objection. The President was always somewhat leary of what he conceived to be almost a fanaticism of the strong proponents of the MLF - not that he wasn't for the MLF, but he felt that it engendered almost fanatical support on the part of some people and he was always skeptical when he saw that.

Miss Fosdick: Is this perhaps an illustration of the fact that the President wouldn't let a program like the Multilateral Force - which was still in the paper stage and, as you say, the concept of a group of very enthusiastic people - stand in the way of certain very practical gains, such as progress in the handling of the balance of payments problem or progress in tying the French more directly into NATO? He wouldn't let that sort of gimmick, if I may use the word, stand in the way of concrete steps forward?

Mr. Nitze: This is quite right, but I think the point is even stronger than that and that is when Mr. Kennedy wanted to get something done, he wanted to get it done and he didn't easily tolerate opposition to what he thought was necessary to get it done, no matter where it came from. When he really had the bit in his teeth to go forward with a program, he would unilaterally, singlehandedly, push on the thing and drive forward on it.

Miss Fosdick: And overrule Department recommendations and other points of view if he felt they stood in the way of something he was pretty sure about.

Mr. Nitze: That's right. He thought this was an inherent responsibility of the President to drive forward on the things which he felt necessary to do. His responsibility was different from that of any one of his cabinet members. He had the final responsibility. When he saw clearly that he wanted to do something, he would drive right ahead and you could see him kind of change countenance and get very stern and tough about it.

73-23 RG's filed. Hitze Committee

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REPORT OF SENATOR KENNEDY'S NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY COMMITTEE

1. Whom has the Committee consulted:

a. We have sought the views of a large number of those senior Americans well informed on national security matters regardless of party affiliation. Without exception we have found them anxious to cooperate. Those consulted include:

Robert Lovett
Arthur Dean
John C. McCloy
Henry Alexander
William C. Foster
Dean Rusk
General William Draper
James Conant
Robert Bowie
Dean Acheson
Moorhead Patterson
Joseph Johnson
Stacy May
Colonel George C. Lincoln

b. We have tapped the views of those within the Administration who have been prepared to give advice, including:

State: Bohlen, Henderson, Gullion, MacArthur, etc.

Defense: Gen. Bonesteel, Gen. Parrish, Adm. Hooper, W.S.E.G., Marvin Stern, etc.

Treasury: Graydon Upton

Budget: Elmer Staats

C.I.A.: Richard Bissell

c. We have sought the views of some of the research institutions, including:

RAND
Stanford Research
Institute of Defense Analyses
Foreign Policy Research Institute, Penn.
Washington Center of Foreign Policy Research

d. We have consulted with certain knowledgeable foreigners, including:

British: Watkinson, British Minister of Defense
Rozier, British, Chiefs of Staff
O'Neil, Parliamentary Secretary of State for Disarmament
Members of the Labor Shadow Cabinet

Representatives of Mr. Adenauer and of the German Social Democratic Party

Canadians, including George Ignatiev, Amb. Heeney, Dana Wielgress

2. What has the Committee attempted to do?

It has attempted to isolate the principal national security issues which the President-elect is likely to face during the transition period and to sort out those on which the Committee feels reasonably firm recommendations can be made and those requiring further guidance from the President-elect.

3. What major issues emerged from the Committee's consultation?

a. Defense Policy

b. Disarmament Policy in Relation to Defense Policy

c. The Gold Drain and U.S. Balance of Payments

d. The Organization of the State Department

e. U.S. Representation to the United Nations

f. Berlin, NATO, the problem of deGaulle, the 6 and the 7

Brief memoranda on each of these issues are attached.

4. The Committee, or one or more of its members, would welcome an opportunity to discuss these issues with the President-elect as soon after November 9th as may suit his convenience. In any case the Committee would welcome guidance as to any further work Senator Kennedy may want it to undertake.

A. Six Areas for Consideration in The Defense Field

The following six areas are all interconnected. What is decided in one area will radically affect what is possible and can and should be decided in the others. Perhaps the most fundamental interaction is between defense requirements and the politico-economic feasibility of the gross defense budget implied by an acceptance of those requirements. Even though the six areas are necessarily listed seriatim, the actual judgments and decisions must be arrived at more or less concurrently as parts of an integrated program.

1. Basic Strategic Judgments: For the new defense program to get under way with evidence of purpose and direction, the newly elected President should early arrive at a judgment on the two or three basic strategic issues which the Eisenhower Administration has tended to compromise about, sweep under the rug and permit to remain as the subjects of internecine warfare between and within the Services. These are not easy judgments to arrive at. The initial decisions may have to be tentative. They should not, however, be ignored or indefinitely compromised.

a. The most basic issue is between attempting to achieve a politically meaningful "win" capability in general nuclear war versus the creation of a secure retaliatory capability.

Weapons systems and programs necessary for a "win" capability may differ quite radically from those required for a secure retaliatory capability.

A true "win" capability would require accurate and powerful attack systems, first class target acquisition systems, elaborate active and passive defense systems, forces for the prosecution of the second and third phases of a general war and a good recuperation program. It is doubtful whether such a capability is possible within presently foreseeable technology. In any case it would be immensely expensive both economically and politically to make an all out drive toward achieving such a capability. It would also probably require a first or preemptive strike by our side to capitalize on its "win" possibilities. Furthermore, such a capability would probably be destabilizing -- in other words would increase the danger of nuclear war.

On the other hand there are very great political and military dangers in having merely a punitive retaliatory capability with no possibility of a "win". If deterrence were to fail, or threaten to fail, we would be left with no option for military action other than a self-defeating punitive attack.

A pure retaliatory capability therefore undermines the credibility of the deterrent and gives little or no support to the political aspects of our policy.

It would therefore seem that in addition to a secure deterrent posture, some admixture of possible "win" capabilities is called for.

A general approach to the "mix" of general war capabilities to be striven for should be determined by the President-elect, as early as full briefing by those knowledgeable in the subject can be arranged.

b. The last Administration has never clearly faced up to the issue of the degree to which we should rely on nuclear weapons in limited wars. In essence they have said we will do what we can with conventional weapons; what can't be handled by conventional weapons must be handled by nuclear weapons.

Budgetary pressures and the pressures for greater general war capabilities have caused a continuous squeeze on our non-nuclear capabilities.

The President-elect, in the campaign came out clearly for a strengthening and modernization of our limited war capabilities and particularly the non-nuclear component of these capabilities.

To have capabilities which would meet all contingencies will be a tremendous undertaking. An early Presidential decision, after appropriate briefing, of the speed and scope of the approach to this problem, will be needed.

B. Disarmament Policy in Relation to Defense Policy

The Committee is impressed by two circumstances: the first is the very real international psychological pressure for disarmament; the second is the unreality, unworkability, and lack of serious substance to most of the disarmament proposals which have been advanced.

The U.S. has gotten trapped in a position where general and complete disarmament has received the sanction of the United Nations as a goal.

The U.S. has also been forced to agreement with the principle of parity (equality between Westerners and Communists) in the fora of negotiation. The parity principle then gets itself extended to any organization or control mechanism connected with disarmament or control and regulation. This can only result in Communist power to veto or control in view of their superior discipline.

We believe that the most feasible intermediate term objective is not complete and total disarmament but a more stable nuclear relationship between the two blocs.

The most feasible and practicable route to such a relationship lies through reciprocal action and counter-action between the two blocs.

In the meantime, however, the political psychological problem must be dealt with, and successfully dealt with. Even in England there seems to be a gap between the understanding of those professionals seized of the disarmament problem and both public opinion and the British Cabinet.

A substantial strengthening of U.S. talent working on disarmament is called for. This applies not only to technical talent but most importantly to political andpsychological talent.

C. The Gold Drain and U.S. Balance of Payments

All those whom we consulted in the New York business community, and most of the foreigners we have consulted, have put at the top of their list of national security problems the question of the persistent imbalance in our balance of payments and increasing concern for the stability of the dollar.

Two basic lines of approach appear possible. The first is to restore confidence in the dollar (a) by indications of firm policy and (b) by firm and effective policies to increase U.S. productivity and bring our balance of payments into equilibrium. The other would be to take emergency measures.

We hope that the positions taken by the President-elect during the campaign will have relieved the immediate symptoms of uncertainty. Should, however, uncertainty continue we see no short term device which would be as effective as the prompt appointment of a Secretary of the Treasury who enjoys high respect and confidence in the international financial world.

If the President-elect desires them, we have specific names to propose.

D. The Organization of the State Department

Two members of your Committee, and a substantial number of those we were instructed to consult, attended a three day meeting at Arden House on State Department Organization.

We think the report of that meeting can well be used as a basis for the new Administration's approach to the problem. The report is attached.

The Committee has more detailed suggestions both as to organization and as to personnel should the President-elect desire to receive them.

E. U.S. Representation to the United Nations

The experience at this falls meeting at the United Nations has demonstrated the gross inadequacy of our present organization to deal with the problems that now arise there.

The stature of our permanent representative is inadequate.

The U.S. delegation was relatively unknown and ineffective.

The staff was inadequate, overworked, and dispirited.

The non-partisan U.S. policy orientation of the operation which had been developed in Senator Austin's day had disintegrated.

Your Committee believes that the U.N. job is now of such a magnitude that it would warrant the appointment of a three-man team to handle the Permanent Representative work; one would be the Permanent Representative and concentrate on policy, one would concentrate on the debate within the Assembly and its committees, the third would concentrate on liaison with the other delegations.

The U.S. delegation should be of higher level and should restore an effective non-partisan approach.

An enlarged and more competent staff could be attracted if the first two steps were done.

F. Berlin, NATO, deGaulle, the 6 and the 7

1. A renewal of pressure on Berlin to force a summit conference will clearly be one of Khrushchev's gambits which must be promptly dealt with by the new Administration.

Adenauer sent over a personal representative, Mr. Erik Blumenfeld, to urge that the candidate make a pledge during the campaign to go to Berlin, among other places, at some early date after the election. This seemed too much of a copy of Eisenhower's "I will go to Korea" to be much use in the campaign.

Macmillan clearly favors an early summit meeting in order to forestall immediate pressure on Berlin.

deGaulle's position appears to be closer to Adenauer's than Macmillan's.

It is probable that Khrushchev prefers to threaten Berlin to pressure us in directions he wants on other issues rather than actually to pull the string of final action. The possibility of a renewed blockade cannot, however, be ignored.

A common position with the British, French and Germans must promptly be developed. Such a position must include a negotiating position with respect to Berlin itself, a solution we could live with and which would not have a specific time limit, a negotiating position with respect to renewed summit discussions, and agreement on a contingency plan to cover the renewal of a blockade.

If the President-elect does not wish to go to Europe at an early date, he may wish to set an early meeting with Macmillan, Adenauer and deGaulle in the United States.

2. NATO: Immediately after the election, someone should be authorized by the President-elect to request access to the Bowie report on NATO. This is understood to be a carefully thought through report which is receiving careful consideration both in State and the Pentagon. Unless prompt action is taken to gain control of the situation, positions may crystalize, particularly in the Services which may be hard later to overcome.

3. The most crucial political problem facing us in our relations with our European allies is that of how to handle deGaulle. It appears unlikely that he can either be appeased, or beaten down by frontal attack. The best strategy would seem to be to rebuild our relations with the British, Italians and others and bring the Germans around to cooperating with us in restricting deGaulle's freedom to disrupt the Western coalition. Progress should then be possible on individual segments of the European problem. In the long run deGaulle will be succeeded by someone else.

4. The conflict between the Common Market Six and the Outer Seven should be more firmly grasped by the new Administration. Our

weight should be put behind getting England and its associates and to some extent ourselves, into the ambit of the Six. We should work against exclusivity and inward turning on the part of the Six.