

Adm. Hanser
This is similar to my latest effort to explain the organization which you so ably brought into being.

National Security Council's Role in the U.S. Security and Peace Program

James S. Lay, Jr.

Never before in history has the security of our nation and the peace of the world depended so much upon the policy decisions made by the President of the United States. This country now finds itself in the leading role in the defense of freedom throughout the world and the establishment of a just and lasting peace. On the President rests the responsibility of exercising this leadership through policies which will both protect our security and lead to world peace.

At the same time that these Presidential policy decisions have acquired such vital importance, their development has become much broader and more complex. Policies developed for the security of the United States have far-reaching impact throughout the world. Likewise, events throughout the world affect our national security. Policies, therefore, can no longer be decided solely within geographical limitations, nor solely on political or economic or military terms. Domestic, foreign, and military policies must be integrated if we are to be secure and live in peace.

"To advise the President of the United States with respect to the integration of domestic, foreign, and military policies relating to the national security" is the function of the National Security Council, assigned to it by law in the National Security Act of 1947. Its membership presently consists of the President, the Vice President, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the Director for Mutual Security, and the Chairman of the National Security Board. The Secretary of the Treasury and the Director of Defense Mobilization now participate in all Council activities, at the direction of the President, while other executive department and agency heads participate on specific occasions when policies of direct concern to them are considered. The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Central Intelligence Agency are by law military and intelligence advisers, respectively, to the Council; the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Director of Central Intelligence attend all Council meetings.

At one extreme the National Security Council has been compared with the Russian "Politburo" and at the other dismissed as simply another of Washington's many interdepartmental committees. Neither characterization is correct. Obviously it is not a Polit-

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buro, since it is only advisory to the President, who, as the popularly elected Chief Executive under our democratic form of government, makes the policy decisions. Nor can it be classified as an interdepartmental committee when its membership is headed by the President and the Vice President of the United States.

Actually, the National Security Council provides the President a readily available means of ensuring that a policy decision he has to make for the security of the nation has been carefully considered from all points of view and by all of the responsible officials in the Executive Branch who are directly concerned with the question at issue. The existence of the Council gives the President a permanent staff agency in his Executive Office which can, as quickly or as deliberately as the occasion warrants, bring to bear on each grave issue of national security all the talents, resources, and considerations which will help him find the best possible solution. Through this means, foreign policies which are required for our security are weighed in the light of any military and economic implications and their effect upon domestic policies. Military policies are tested for their impact both at home and abroad. Domestic policies affecting our national security, particularly those related to the current defense mobilization program and to internal security, are judged on the basis of their domestic, foreign, and military aspects. Certainly such rounded and integrated policy consideration is required in these days of national emergency when our existence as a free nation and the peace of the world are so gravely threatened both at home and abroad. In fact, such careful consideration of policies for our national security would be prudent at any foreseeable future point in our history.

Operating solely in the field of national security and developing forward-looking policies upon which both current and future plans and actions may be based, it is understandable that most of the Council's reports and recommendations cannot be disclosed publicly without detriment to the national security. Whenever policies recommended by the Council have been approved by the President and can be made