

The President's General Management for U.S.

A small group of men, meeting without fanfare in the Cabinet room of the White House every Thursday, has, in effect, become the general management of the United States Government. As such, this group also has become the democratic world's most powerful concentration of influence.

Yet it is doubtful whether one American in 100 could identify the members of the National Security Council—the proper name of this super-Cabinet—or tell what they do. While it is duly constituted by law, (the National Security Act of 1947), and makes no secret of its existence, neither the council's deliberations nor its decisions are matters of public record.

Until 1953, the National Security Council was more a forum for discussion of broad questions (and an arena in which conflicts of interest between the various Federal establishments could be resolved) than a super-Cabinet which systematically determined policy.

Foreign-Domestic Tangle: But President Eisenhower realized that in the complex mechanism of government the functions of State, Treasury, and Defense overlapped—that the jurisdictions of foreign policy, military policy, and fiscal policy were inextricably tangled. In grave times of domestic and international interdependence, the President believed, the national security demanded coordination through a regularly constituted body rather than through the office of the President.

The council was tailor-made to serve

this purpose. By statute, its members are the President, Vice President Richard M. Nixon, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, Defense Secretary Charles E. Wilson, Defense Mobilization Director Arthur Flemming, and Foreign Operations Administrator Harold E. Stassen.

No Debating Society

"The National Security Council is the *real* government of the United States," a very high government official said last week. "The Cabinet is just a debating society." While this somewhat overstates the case—the Cabinet still handles a large number of important problems—the council holds the reins of power. Its decisions touch on the life of every American and, in fact, of millions everywhere. On the wisdom of the council's leaders hangs the safety and welfare of the world and the nation.

Mr. Eisenhower, with Congressional sanction, designated Treasury Secretary George Humphrey and Budget Director Joseph M. Dodge as members.

The General Staff: Along with such advisers as Admiral Arthur W. Radford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Director Allen Dulles of the Central In-

telligence Agency, and Presidential Assistant on cold-war planning C.D. Jackson, the council constituted a general staff for the President.

This innovation has worked out precisely as Mr. Eisenhower envisioned it. In the first twelve months of the Republican Administration, the council has discussed and won Presidential approval of 305 major policy decisions, ranging from broad directives to detailed orders which previously were left to individual departments or which had dragged along without action. These decisions are based on the careful research of the NSC's Planning Board and staff. On a number of occasions, however, the staff has operated on a "crash" basis, gathering material for NSC study in one day.

The NSC Planning Board and staff move into action when alerted that a policy problem exists. This alert may come from the President, from the board's hard-working chairman, Robert Cutler, or, as it most often does, from a department. One such problem, which because of its unusual nature occupied the NSC for a long time and required intensive study, was the nation's new atomic defense strategy (see page 24).

New Strategy: Before the President had formulated any statement of the new policy line, the Planning Board and the NSC studied every aspect of the problem. The Joint Chiefs, through Admiral Radford, had their say. Atomic Energy Commission Chairman Lewis Strauss was invited to lay before the NSC the best thinking of his group. Top State De-

These Six—With the Chief Executive—Are Called Most Powerful



Associated Press
Dulles

International
Humphrey

Associated Press
Wilson

Nixon

Newsweek—Ed Wergoles
Stassen

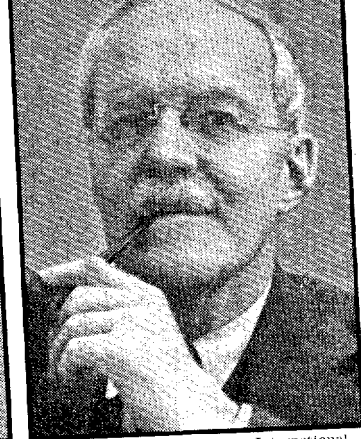
International
Flemming



Associated Press



United Press



International

Planners, Doers, Advisers: The most influential men in the National Security Council's solar system are (left to right) Robert Cutler, W. Bedell Smith, Arthur W. Radford, and Allen Dulles. The vastly complex job of gathering together the data on which the NSC bases its deliberations falls to Cutler, chairman of its Planning Board. Cutler, who puts in a 12-hour day, attends the board's thrice-weekly meetings and supervises its growing staff. Smith heads the Operations Coordinating Board, a watchdog committee which makes sure that NSC policies

are integrated into the activities of all Federal departments and agencies. And he sits as a member of the NSC in Secretary Dulles' absence. Admiral Radford, who as chairman of the Joints Chiefs of Staff holds the nation's top military post, is officially an adviser to the NSC. But his knowledge and intellectual stature have markedly enhanced his position. Dulles, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, reports at all NSC meetings on the situation in critical areas abroad. His briefings are based on the Intelligence summaries which pour into CIA.

partment planners delved into, and reported on, the diplomatic and cold-war ramifications.

The result was a clear policy directive from the President: strategic air power as the backbone of U.S. defense, a reliance on atomic weapons, the delimitation of ground and sea forces, and the concept of "massive retaliation" against further Soviet aggression.

In general, the council's procedure follows a careful routine set by the Eisenhower Administration. Over a period of weeks, the Planning Board staff gathers views and data from all agencies which have a special competence in the problem being considered. The board itself will discuss these data, sitting over them for as many as 25 sessions.

After sifting, evaluating, and boiling down this material, the staff prepares a detailed summary, a heavily documented report, and a budgetary estimate. Conflicting views of Federal agencies and board members are included. Then the question is put on the NSC agenda.

Briefing: Prior to any council discussion, the members are individually briefed by Planning Board members specifically assigned to the task. The President is briefed by Cutler, who sees Mr. Eisenhower frequently and often breakfasts with him.

The council never votes, but on the basis of its discussions, the President makes a decision. When the meeting is over, Cutler puts the NSC recommendations in final form. It is then circulated to all members, some of whom suggest

changes in language. The statement does not become official policy until the President has given his approval.

It then goes to the Operations Coordinating board, set up last September, which is headed by Under Secretary of State Walter Bedell Smith. It is the mission of the coordinating board to see that the new policy is faithfully executed and supported by all branches of the executive department.

This is the general procedure followed by the NSC. The President usually launches the discussion of topics on the agenda, and members of the council say that his questions cut away nonessentials and get to the crux of problems. Mr. Eisenhower studiously avoids showing any favoritism to any council member or consultant. Mr. Eisenhower tries to avoid letting his own sentiments be known until others have spoken—even when he has already made up his mind.

Discussions, which run for two to three hours, are spirited and extremely frank—but there has seldom, if ever, been any rancorous feeling or any violent outburst. Mr. Eisenhower encourages a full exchange of opinion, breaking in only when a member ranges too far from the subject at hand. In this, the President has shown himself to be an astute chairman, guiding discussion but never shackling it.

Ike Dominant: In the early months of the Eisenhower Administration, the strongest voice among NSC members was Secretary Humphrey's. He was the first of the new team to acclimatize himself to Washington. There was a period in which

Secretary Dulles exerted the most influence on the NSC's thinking. Today, it would be difficult to point to any one man as the dominant personality—the President always excepted. The men who carry the most weight in major fields of policy are Secretaries Wilson, Dulles, and Humphrey with Stassen and Nixon, who presides in the President's absence.

Dulles does not talk very much, but it is the consensus among NSC members that when he does so, he talks extremely well. Wilson tends to be inarticulate, but the record he has been building up in the Defense Department gives what he says status. Nixon speaks up when discussions touch on fields of his special competence, and on the political repercussions of a debated policy. Since his return from the Far East, his impact on the council has increased considerably.

Idea Man Stassen: Stassen's stock has been rising steadily. He is considered a good idea man. On matters relating to fiscal policy, Humphrey commands the council's full attention. Radford, who speaks only when requested, commands great respect. As chairman of the Planning Board, Cutler has emerged as one of the real powers in the council. He has the President's ear at all times and he carries most of the workload.

But the National Security Council has revolved, and must, around the President. Vice President Nixon describes the council as the board of directors of the American Government. Mr. Eisenhower has clearly demonstrated that he is the chairman of the board.

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