SECRET/

John McCone

As Director of Central Intelligence 1961–1965

David Robarge
CIA History Staff

Center for the Study of Intelligence

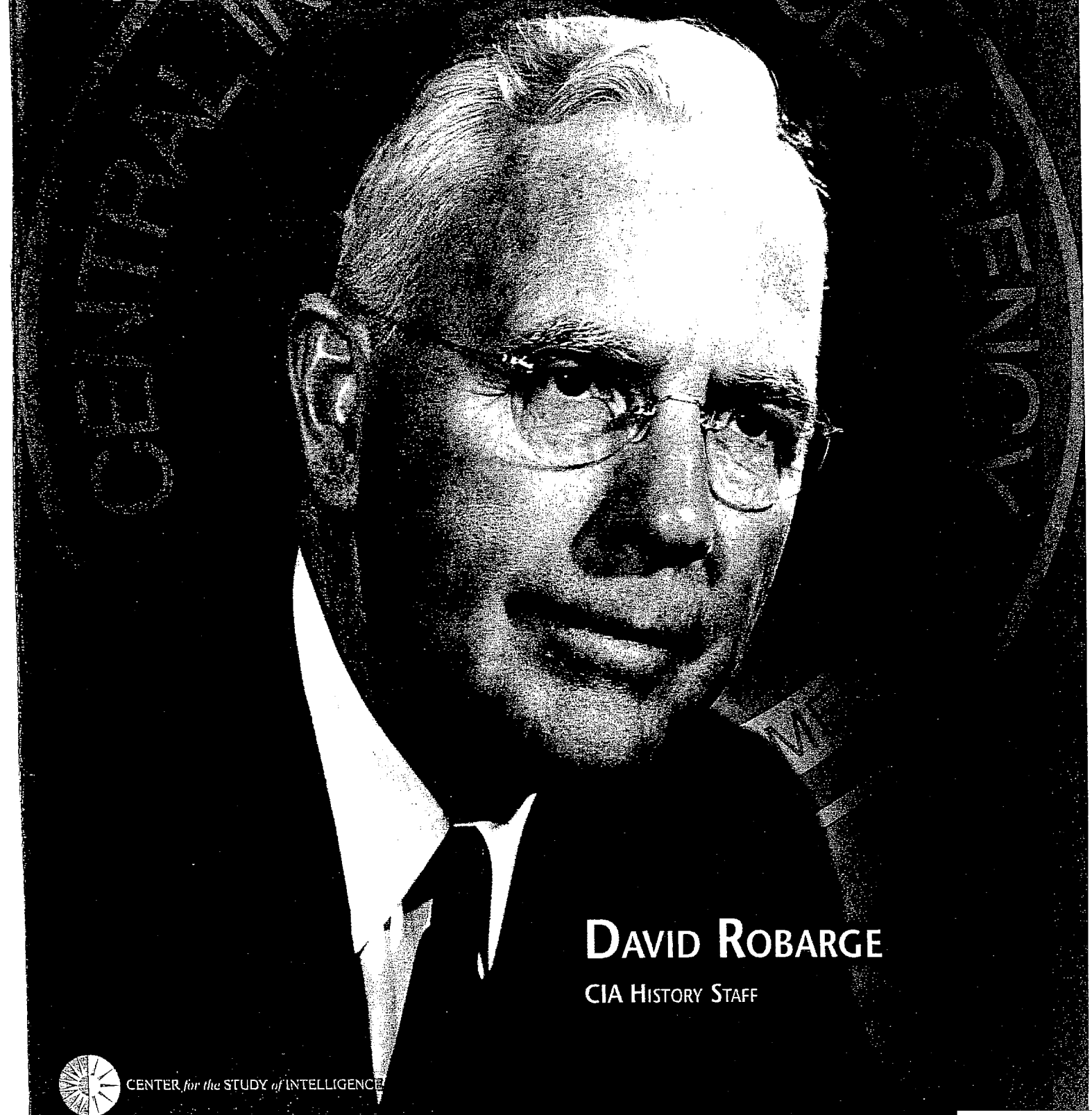
SECRET/

PART 1 OF 2

Approved for Release: 2015/04/10 C01262720

John McCone

As Director of Central Intelligence 1961–1965



David Robarge

CIA History Staff

CENTER *for the* STUDY *of* INTELLIGENCE

Warning Notice Intelligence Sources or Methods Involved

National Security Information Unauthorized Disclosure Subject to Criminal Sanctions

Dissemination Controls	
	Materials in this study are reserved to US personnel holding appropriate clearances. Contents include copyrighted material and should not be reproduced without permission.

All statements of fact, opinion, or analysis expressed in this book are those of the author. They do not necessarily reflect official positions or views of the Central Intelligence Agency or any other US Government entity, past or present. Nothing in the contents should be construed as asserting or implying US Government endorsement of the study's factual statements and interpretations.

John McCone

Other classified biographies of DCIs included in histories published by the Center for the Study of Intelligence are:

William E. Colby As Director of Central Intelligence, 1973–1976, by Harold P. Ford, 1993.

Richard Helms As Director of Central Intelligence, 1966–1973, by Robert M. Hathaway and Russell Jack Smith, 1993.

The Center for the Study of Intelligence (CSI) was founded in 1974 in response to Director of Central Intelligence James Schlesinger's desire to create within CIA an organization that could "think through the functions of intelligence and bring the best intellects available to bear on intelligence problems." The Center, comprising both professional historians and experienced practitioners, attempts to document lessons learned from past operations, explore the needs and expectations of intelligence consumers, and stimulate serious debate on current and future intelligence challenges.

To support these activities, CSI publishes *Studies in Intelligence* and books and monographs addressing historical, operational, doctrinal, and theoretical aspects of the intelligence profession. It also administers the CIA Museum and maintains the Agency's Historical Intelligence Collection.

Readers wishing to have copies of this book or other CSI publications may call [redacted] Requests may also be sent via Lotus Notes to [redacted]

The material on this page is unclassified.

John McCone As Director of Central Intelligence 1961–1965

David Robarge

Center *for the* Study *of* Intelligence

Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D.C.
2005

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

Contents

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

Foreword (U)

John A. McCone was the sixth Director of Central Intelligence, serving from 1961 to 1965 during some of the most tumultuous events in American history. The United States narrowly averted nuclear war with the Soviet Union when the Soviets tried to put offensive ballistic missiles into Cuba. An incumbent president fell to an assassin's bullet. The United States committed itself to defending the Republic of Vietnam against communist aggression and escalated its military support to that beleaguered country. (U)

The Intelligence Community, of which McCone was titular head, saw some of its bitterest bureaucratic battles over control of the National Reconnaissance Office. Within CIA, he faced strong resistance to bureaucratic changes. Those included imposing greater accountability over covert actions, refocusing on analysis, and—perhaps his most far-reaching and enduring achievement—creating an independent directorate responsible for science and technology, which he thought were underutilized as intelligence sources and tools. (U)

On a superficial level McCone was an unlikely DCI. He had built his career in the private sector and had limited experience with intelligence. He was a conservative Republican in a liberal Democratic administration. He appreciated and promoted science and technology in an intelligence organization dominated by the culture of clandestine operations. (U)

Yet this unlikely DCI was one of the best leaders and managers CIA—and the Intelligence Community—ever had. One can make a persuasive argument that he *was* the best. The problems with which he dealt as DCI often appeared insoluble, but he was an extraordinarily successful engineer and businessman with a reputation as a no-nonsense executive unafraid to make tough decisions, and his list of accomplishments as DCI is long. (U)

Writing historical biography well is an art form, and McCone has found a worthy biographer in Dr. David Robarge. Using classified and unclassified sources, Dr. Robarge has written an authoritative and exhaustive study that portrays and assesses McCone's leadership qualities, his managerial philosophy and technique, and his response to the challenges of running a mammoth intelligence bureaucracy. In so doing, Dr. Robarge draws insights as valid for the problems facing CIA's current leaders as they were when Director McCone left the DCI's seventh floor office nearly 40 years ago. (U)

Dr. Robarge's study of McCone will be the standard work for many years to come and establishes the criteria for scholarship on one of the key figures in American intelligence, the historiography of which will be immeasurably enriched when the Agency eventually declassifies and releases *John McCone As Director of Central Intelligence, 1961–1965* to the public. (U)

Scott A. Koch
Chief Historian (2002–2004)

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

Acknowledgements (U)

I am very grateful to many colleagues inside and outside CIA for thoroughly reviewing several drafts of this book. Their substantive knowledge and literary abilities kept many factual errors, unclear interpretations, and awkward phrases from slipping through. I especially would like to acknowledge the following individuals for their invaluable comments and suggestions: Special thanks to the late Richard Helms, who spent many hours offering his unique insights on John McCone's directorship. I also would like to thank of the Directorate of Operations for their assistance in retrieving records on many obscure activities; and of the CIA Library for research help; and the production staffs at the Center for the Study of Intelligence— —and the staff of Imaging and Publishing Support—especially — for their painstaking work in transforming a large manuscript into this book. The cover design is the fine work of of Imaging and Publishing Support. (U)

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

Abbreviations and Acronyms (U)

ACDA	Arms Control and Disarmament Agency
AEC	Atomic Energy Commission
AF	Africa Division, Directorate of Plans
AID	Agency for International Development
ARVN	Army of the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam)
BNE	Board of National Estimates
CA	Covert action
CAS	Controlled American Source (cover name for CIA)
CCF	Congress for Cultural Freedom
CGS	Collection Guidance Staff
CI	Counterintelligence
CINCPAC	Commander in Chief, Pacific
COIN	Counterinsurgency
COMINT	Communications intelligence
COS	Chief of station
DCI	Director of Central Intelligence
DCID	Director of Central Intelligence Directive
DDCI	Deputy Director of Central Intelligence
DDI	Deputy Director for Intelligence
DDP	Deputy Director for Plans or Directorate of Plans
DDR	Deputy Director for Research
DDS	Deputy Director for Support
DDS&T	Deputy Director for Science and Technology
DI	Directorate of Intelligence
DIA	Defense Intelligence Agency
DNRO	Director, National Reconnaissance Office
DO	Directorate of Operations
DR	Directorate of Research
DS	Directorate of Support
DS&T	Directorate of Science and Technology
EE	Eastern Europe Division, DDP
ELINT	Electronic intelligence
ExComm	Executive Committee, National Security Council
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FBIS	Foreign Broadcast Information Service
FE	Far East Division, DDP
FI	Foreign intelligence
FMSAC	Foreign Missile and Space Analysis Center
FY	Fiscal Year
GRU	Soviet military intelligence service
HUMINT	Human source intelligence
ICBM	Intercontinental ballistic missile
IG	Inspector General
INR	Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State
IRBM	Intermediate-range ballistic missile
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
KGB	Soviet foreign intelligence service
MAAG	Military Assistance Advisory Group
MACV	Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
MI-5	British counterintelligence and security service
MI-6	British foreign intelligence service
MRBM	Medium-range ballistic missile
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NIE	National Intelligence Estimate
NIPE	National Intelligence Programs Evaluation Staff
NPIC	National Photographic Interpretation Center
NRO	National Reconnaissance Office
NRP	National Reconnaissance Program
NSA	National Security Agency
NSAM	National Security Action Memorandum
NSC	National Security Council
NSCID	National Security Council Intelligence Directive
OAS	Organization of American States
OC	Office of Communications
OCA	Office of Congressional Affairs

OCI	Office of Current Intelligence
ODCI	Office of the DCI
ODDI	Office of the DDI
OGC	Office of the General Counsel
OIG	Office of the Inspector General
ONE	Office of National Estimates
ORR	Office of Research and Reports
OSI	Office of Scientific Intelligence
PDB	*President's Daily Brief*
PFIAB	President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board
PICL	*President's Intelligence Checklist*
PRC	People's Republic of China
RFE	Radio Free Europe
ROC	Republic of China
RL	Radio Liberty
SAC	Strategic Air Command
SAM	Surface-to-air missile
SGA	Special Group Augmented
SGC	Special Group Counterinsurgency
SIGINT	Signals intelligence
SNIE	Special National Intelligence Estimate
SR	Soviet Russia Division, DDP
TSD	Technical Services Division
USIA	United States Information Agency
USIB	United States Intelligence Board
WE	Western Europe Division, DDP
WH	Western Hemisphere Division, DDP

Abbreviations used in bibliographic references in footnotes:

CMS Files	Community Management Staff Files
CSHP	Clandestine Services Historical Paper
DH	*Diplomatic History*
EA Files	East Asia Division (DDP) Files
ER Files	Executive Registry Files
ERWI	Chief Information Officer/Electronic Records WEB Interface
FRUS	*Foreign Relations of the United States*
HIC	Historical Intelligence Collection, CIA Library
HS Files	History Staff Files
I&NS	*Intelligence and National Security*
IJIC	*International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*
ICS Files	Intelligence Community Staff Files
JAH	*Journal of American History*
MORI	Chief Information Officer/Information Management Staff, Management of Released Information
NFAC Files	National Foreign Assessment Center Files
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration
OIM Files	Office of Information Management Files
PSQ	Presidential Studies Quarterly
Studies	*Studies in Intelligence*

Prominent Persons Mentioned in Text (U)

Persons listed are identified by the positions they held when DCI McCone dealt with them.

Allende de Gossens, Salvadore, leader of socialist party in Chile

Amory, Robert, Deputy Director for Intelligence until March 1962

Angleton, James J., Chief, Counterintelligence Staff, DDP

Artime, Manuel, head of anti-Castro expatriate group Movement to Recover the Revolution (MRR)

Ball, George, Undersecretary of State

Bannerman, Robert L., Director, Office of Security, June 1963–July 1964

Bissell, Richard M., Deputy Director for Plans until February 1962

Blake, Gordon (Lt. Gen.), Director, National Security Agency beginning July 1962

Bross, John A., Comptroller, April 1962-September 1963, then Deputy to DCI for National Intelligence Programs Evaluation

Bundy, McGeorge, Presidential National Security Adviser, member of Special Group and 303 Committee

Bundy, William P., Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs beginning March 1964

Cabell, Charles P. (Gen.), Deputy Director of Central Intelligence until January 1962

Carroll, Joseph F. (Gen.), Director, Defense Intelligence Agency

Carter, Marshall S. (Lt. Gen.), Deputy Director of Central Intelligence beginning April 1962

Charyk, Joseph V., Director, National Reconnaissance Office, May 1962–March 1963

Chiang Ching-kuo, Minister of Defense, Republic of China, and son of Chiang Kai-shek

Chiang Kai-shek, President of the Republic of China

Chretien, Paul M., Director of Public Affairs beginning November 1963

Clifford, Clark, Chairman, President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board after April 1963

Cline, Ray S., Deputy Director for Intelligence beginning April 1962

Colby, William E., Chief, Far East Division, DDP, beginning January 1963

Cottrell, Sterling J., Department of State official, Coordinator of Cuban Affairs and head of Interdepartmental Coordinating Committee on Cuban Affairs

Coyne, J. Patrick, Executive Secretary, President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board

Donovan, James B., lawyer involved in negotiations for release of Bay of Pigs prisoners

Dulles, Allen W., McCone's predecessor as DCI

Duong Van Minh ("Big Minh") (Lt. Gen.), leader of November 1963 coup against President Diem of South Vietnam

Earman, John S., DCI Executive Assistant until May 1962, then Inspector General

Edwards, Sheffield, Director, Office of Security until June 1963

Elder, Walter W., McCone's Executive Assistant after May 1962

Felt, Harry D. (Adm.), Commander in Chief, Pacific until June 1964

FitzGerald, Desmond, Chief, Far East Division, DDP, until December 1962, then Chief, Special Affairs Staff, DDP

Forrestal, Michael, member of National Security Council staff

Foster, William C., Director, Arms Control and Disarmament Agency

Fubini, Eugene, Deputy Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering

Galbraith, John Kenneth, Ambassador to India until July 1963

Gilpatric, Roswell, Deputy Secretary of Defense until January 1964; member of Special Group and 303 Committee

Goleniewski, Michal, Polish intelligence officer and CIA source during 1958–61

Golitsyn, Anatoliy, KGB officer who defected to US in December 1961; Angleton's main source about Soviet espionage and deception operations

Grogan, Stanley J., Director of Public Affairs until November 1963

Harkins, Paul D. (Gen.), Commander, Military Assistance Command, Vietnam until June 1964

Harriman, W. Averell, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs until April 1963, then Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs and Chairman of Special Group Counterinsurgency

Harvey, William, Chief, Task Force W (Operation MONGOOSE), 1962

Helms, Richard M., Chief of Operations, DDP, until February 1962, then Deputy Director for Plans

Hilsman, Roger, Director, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, until April 1963, then Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs until March 1964

Hoover, J. Edgar, Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation

Houston, Lawrence R., General Counsel, CIA

Johnson, Lyndon B., President of the United States beginning 22 November 1963

Johnson, U. Alexis, Deputy Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs and member of Special Group and 303 Committee until July 1964

Karamessines, Thomas, Assistant Deputy Director for Plans beginning May 1962

Katzenbach, Nicholas DeB., Deputy Attorney General and Acting Attorney General beginning in September 1964

Keating, Kenneth J., Republican Senator from New York until 1965

Kennedy, John F., President of the United States until 22 November 1963

Kennedy, Robert F., Attorney General until September 1964

Kent, Sherman, Chairman, Board of National Estimates and head of the Office of National Estimates

Killian, James M., President of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Chairman of PFIAB until April 1963

King, J.C., Chief, Western Hemisphere Division, DDP

Kirkpatrick, Lyman B., Jr., CIA Inspector General until April 1962, then Executive Director and Executive Director-Comptroller

Knoche, E. Henry ("Hank"), DDCI Carter's Executive Assistant beginning November 1963

Krulak, Victor H. (Maj. Gen.), Special Assistant for Counterinsurgency and Special Activities, Joint Chiefs of Staff

Land, Edwin H., President of Polaroid Corporation; member of PFIAB

Lansdale, Edward G. (Brig. Gen.), Special Assistant to Secretary of Defense for Special Operations, 1962–63

Lay, James B., Executive Secretary of US Intelligence Board beginning June 1962

LeMay, Curtis (Gen.), Air Force Chief of Staff

Lemnitzer, Lyman (Gen.), Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff and member of Special Group until September 1962

Lodge, Henry Cabot, Ambassador to South Vietnam, August 1963–June 1964

Lundahl, Arthur, Director, National Photographic Interpretation Center

McCloy, John J., Chairman of Ford Foundation, lead US negotiator for Cuban missile crisis settlement, and member of Warren Commission

McMillan, Brockway, Undersecretary of Air Force and Director, National Reconnaissance Office, beginning March 1963

McNamara, Robert S., Secretary of Defense

Meyer, Cord, Chief, Covert Action Staff, DDP

Murphy, David, Chief, Soviet Russia Division, DDP

Murrow, Edward R., Director, US Information Agency, and member of Special Group Augmented and Special Group Counterinsurgency until January 1964

Ngo Dinh Diem, President of Republic of South Vietnam until November 1963

Ngo Dinh Nhu, brother of President Diem and head of security service until November 1963

Nguyen Khanh (Maj. Gen.), leader of January 1964 coup against "Big Minh"; Prime Minister of Republic of South Vietnam until November 1964

Nolting, Frederick E., Jr., Ambassador to South Vietnam until August 1963

Nosenko, Yuri, KGB officer who defected to the United States in February 1964

Osborn, Howard J., head of Office of Security beginning July 1964

Papich, Samuel, FBI liaison officer to CIA

Patman, Wright C., Democratic congressman from Texas who investigated CIA's methods for funding political covert action programs

Powers, Francis Gary, U-2 pilot shot down over Soviet Union in 1960 and released in 1962

Profumo, John, British Secretary of State for War implicated in "sexpionage" scandal during 1962–63

Raborn, William F., Jr. (Adm. [ret.]), McCone's successor as DCI

Ray Rivero, Manolo, head of anti-Castro expatriate group Cuban Revolutionary Junta (JURE)

Reuther, Walter, President of United Automobile Workers

Rowan, Carl T., Director, US Information Agency and member of Special Group Counterinsurgency beginning January 1964

Rusk, Dean, Secretary of State

Russell, Richard, Democratic Senator from Georgia; Chairman of Senate Armed Services Committee and its CIA oversight subcommittee

Scoville, Herbert ("Pete"), head of Office of Scientific Intelligence until June 1962; Deputy Director for Research, February 1962–June 1963

Smith, R. Jack, head of Office of Current Intelligence beginning April 1962

Souvanna Phouma, leader of neutralist political forces in Laos, Prime Minister during 1963–64, Minister of Defense beginning May 1964

Sullivan, William H., Ambassador to Laos beginning December 1964

Taylor, Maxwell D. (Gen. [ret.]), President's Military Representative until October 1962, Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff until July 1964, then Ambassador to South Vietnam; member of Special Group until June 1964

Unger, Frederick, Ambassador to Laos until December 1964

Vance, Cyrus, Deputy Secretary of Defense after January 1964

Warner, John S., Legislative Counsel, CIA

Warren, Earl, Chief Justice and chairman of presidential commission investigating John F. Kennedy's assassination

Weisner, Jerome, President Kennedy's science adviser

Wheeler, Earle G. (Gen.), Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff beginning July 1964

Wheelon, Albert D. ("Bud"), head of Office of Scientific Intelligence, June 1962-August 1963, then Deputy Director for Science and Technology

White, Lawrence K. ("Red"), Deputy Director for Support

Wise, David, journalist and coauthor of *The Invisible Government*

The above list is Unclassified.

John McCone

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

Secret Lives: Intelligence Literature, Intelligence Biography, and DCIs As Leaders (U)

"Everyone likes a good spy story," runs a maxim of the publishing world. The public's fascination with cloak-and-dagger intrigue has only intensified in recent years as the number of nonfiction books and articles about espionage, counterintelligence, and covert action has increased sharply. In part because of officially mandated declassification programs, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests, deeper mining of national security files in presidential libraries, and legal moves by authors and "openness" organizations, many more documents, photographs, and other once-secret records are available for use in writing on all aspects of the craft of intelligence. In 1995, *Books in Print* listed 215 titles about intelligence; in the current online edition, there are well over 1,000. In addition, several specialized journals carry dozens of articles and reviews on intelligence topics every year; some major American newspapers have reporters who cover the Intelligence Community as part of their national security beat; true spy tales often appear in newsweeklies, opinion journals, and even slick society and culture magazines; and the World Wide Web contains hundreds of sites on intelligence issues, both serious and sensational. "Spying," one historian of this literary genre has observed, "rival[s] money, sex, and war as a topic in the popular market for history."[1] (U)

Intelligence Studies: A Problem of Identity (U)

Naturally, this forest of printed matter varies markedly in quality and usefulness for the intelligence historian.[2] It encompasses pulpish exposés, buffish minutia, apologetics and polemics, political and bureaucratic models, theoretical ruminations, journalistic biographies, and scholarly exegeses, as well as occasional ambitious efforts at sweeping syntheses and textbook-like overviews. Despite all the attention—and in part because of it—the study of intelligence history has yet to develop into an independent discipline within the historical profession. It may have the requisite paraphernalia—journals and newsletters, organizations and study groups, symposia, university courses, and an electronic discussion forum—but outside its small community of practitioners, historians do not regard it as a subfield akin to specialties such as constitutional, military, women's, or even sports history. Intelligence history may no longer be the "missing dimension" of historical studies, but the profession still sees it as a stepchild within the extended family known as diplomatic history (or alternatively, "international relations").[3] (U)

Consequently, intelligence topics often are not integrated into historical discussions of foreign affairs. When dealt with at all, they usually appear as cut-and-paste additions to bigger stories, and disproportionate attention is paid to covert actions over espionage, counterintelligence, and analysis. Diplomatic historians who do not specialize in intelligence justify this "sidebar" treatment on several grounds. One is the lack of documentation. Sound scholarship on intelligence is difficult to do, the argument goes, because so much essential information remains secret, controlled by the US government, ostensibly in the name of national security. Even when formerly classified material is released, historians often react suspiciously: "Why are they telling us *this*, and why *now*? What else *aren't* they telling us, and why not?" Intellectual honesty and rigor demand that all sources be available to everyone and that they be reputable and, wherever possible, open to corroboration. Diplomatic historian John Lewis Gaddis has noted:

> [t]he historian of postwar intelligence activities is forced to rely upon a thin thread of evidence spun out in a bewildering array of mostly unverifiable writings and recollections by former officials (both disgruntled and not), defectors, journalists, parahistorians, and

[1] John Ferris, "Coming In From the Cold War: The Historiography of American Intelligence, 1945–1990," *Diplomatic History* (*DH*) 19, no. 1 (Winter 1995): 88. (U)

[2] The historical literature of intelligence is discussed in the Appendix on Sources. (U)

[3] Christopher Andrew and David Dilks, eds., *The Missing Dimension*, 1. Scholars who think intelligence activity made a difference in the outcome of the Cold War are themselves divided over the relative usefulness of various intelligence activities and methods. Some believe that human espionage operations and covert actions were vital to the West's purported victory, whereas others argue that the Intelligence Community's greatest contribution was in advancements in technical reconnaissance (the U-2 and imagery and SIGINT satellites). Illustrative of the "stepchild" perception is the section of "Recent Scholarship" in the *Journal of American History* (*JAH*). The compilation includes nearly four dozen categories covering a wide span of geographical, chronological, sociological, and conceptual topics—a number of which are subdisciplines broken out from broader specialties. The *JAH* does not, however, divide the large category of "International Relations" into any subsidiary topics. An early examination of US intelligence as a scholarly discipline is Kenneth G. Robertson, "The Study of Intelligence in the United States," in Roy Godson, ed., *Comparing Foreign Intelligence: The U.S., the U.S.S.R., the U.K. and the Third World*, 7–42. (U)

novelists. As the sheer volume—and marketability—of this material suggests, the subject does not lack fascination. What it is missing, however, is the basis for solid history.[4]

That may be a general standard of evidence many historical subfields do not, and, because of the passage of time, cannot achieve, but it is not necessarily the case with modern intelligence history. Unless documents have been lost or destroyed, they lay somewhere in official archives, out of reach except to privileged researchers—a type of scholar not unusual in Europe, but whose endeavors violate the egalitarian sensibilities of the American academy.[5] (U)

Another tack scholars of American foreign relations take toward the study of intelligence is to contend that writers on the subject often are amateurs and aficionados preoccupied with novelistic detail and obscure operations, often at the expense of the "big picture." Certainly intelligence history must be more than a compendium of thrilling spy yarns to be considered legitimate, and too frequently the chroniclers of the secret world have expended too much effort dredging up entertaining but largely inconsequential vignettes. "Intelligence developments," observes historian Bradley F. Smith, "have tended to be seen as in-house history, with little attention being paid to anything but the great game with the USSR and bureaucratic transformations in Washington." Moreover, some of that history lapses into oral legend, with the only "evidence" being the now-it-can-be-told reminiscence of a dark-alley spyhandler. In another respect, however, this criticism is disingenuous. If scholars had not surrendered so much of the intelligence field to nonacademics and dilettantes—who comprise what historian Christopher Andrew dismisses as the "airport bookstall" school of historiography—"serious" research would not have been crowded out.[6] (U)

The ready answer to that riposte is that intelligence was not very important anyway in the larger scheme of things. The perennial complaint of the battlefield commander is that secrets about the enemy are always "too little, too late," and policymakers either often misuse, misunderstand, or ignore intelligence. In other cases, the influence of intelligence on policy is assumed, not proved; because secret information was available to leaders, it must have affected their decisions. With historians now having selective access to foreign archives, however, the role of intelligence in changing the world actually has been depreciated. Historians were once admonished that they needed to rewrite recent diplomatic and military history to include the impact of intelligence, as with ULTRA and World War II. In the post-Cold War age of enlightenment, however, "we now know"—or, perhaps more accurately, "we are now told"—that intelligence did not matter that much except in remarkable, and remarkably few, circumstances such as the Cuban missile crisis. (U)

Who's In Charge? (U)

Similar questions can be asked about the subgenre of intelligence biography. Do historians and writers have access to enough reliable information about American intelligence officials, and particularly the Directors of Central Intelligence (DCIs), to fairly assess their careers and contributions? Are these officials important enough figures in the foreign policy establishment to merit the attention of scholars? Have popular biographies preempted more rigorous and better researched life-and-times studies of them? In short, did DCIs make a difference, can we learn enough to tell if they did, and is there anything left to say about them? As heads of the largest agglomeration of secret services in what used to be called the Free World, the DCIs might reasonably be thought to have had a substantial influence on the

[4] John Lewis Gaddis, "Intelligence, Espionage, and Cold War Origins," *DH* 13, no. 2 (Spring 1989): 192. On the same point, from the perspective of the discipline of international relations, see Michael G. Fry and Miles Hochstein, "Epistemic Communities: Intelligence Studies and International Relations," *Intelligence and National Security* (*I&NS*) 8, no. 3 (July 1993): 14–28. (U)

[5] Several well-known British writers and scholars of intelligence—for example, Nigel West, Chapman Pincher, Gordon Brooke-Shepherd, and Christopher Andrew—have published what in effect are quasi-official histories based on "inside" information that often cannot be confirmed. American examples of that authorial phenomenon are almost nonexistent. Well-connected intelligence journalists such as Thomas Powers, David Wise, Ronald Kessler, and James Bamford benefit from official and unauthorized leaks, but they have retained their reputations for independence and skepticism. CIA allowed Jerrold Schecter to see operational files on one singular espionage case for his and Peter S. Deriabin's book on Soviet military intelligence officer Oleg Penkovskiy, *The Spy Who Saved the World*. Perhaps the most prominent instance of an American writer being allowed an extensive "peek behind the curtain" is Evan Thomas, who sought and received access to Agency records while writing *The Very Best Men: Four Who Dared: The Early Years of the CIA*. Thomas describes the convolutions of that experience in "Gaining Access to CIA's Records," *Studies in Intelligence* (*Studies*) 39, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 1–6. Judging from the acclaim his book received, he obviously negotiated his way through the exercise without taint. (U)

[6] Bradley F. Smith, "An Idiosyncratic View of Where We Stand on the History of American Intelligence in the Early Post-1945 Era," *I&NS* 3, no. 4 (1988): 113; D. Cameron Watt, "Intelligence and the Historian: A Comment on John Gaddis's 'Intelligence, Espionage, and Cold War Origins,'" *DH* 14, no. 2 (Spring 1990): 199–204. (U)

execution, and at times the formulation, of US national security policy. That may have been especially so during the Cold War, when presidents considered covert action and espionage as essential weapons in fighting the United States' main adversaries, the Soviet Union and Communist China. As far as source material goes, certainly enough documentation is available in the CIA Archives and Records Center to keep a DCI biographer with clearances busy for years, and manuscript collections held in public and university archives and presidential libraries can supplement that rich trove. (U)

Lastly, just in terms of numbers of published titles, the answer to the question "Are DCIs important enough to write about?" so far has been "yes." More biographies have been written about DCIs and senior CIA operations officers than about comparable members of the American foreign policy community—the secretaries of state and defense, the presidents' national security advisers, the chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), and second- and third-tier officials at Foggy Bottom and the Pentagon. Moreover, this body of literature about CIA leaders, although somewhat uneven in coverage, generally is quite high in quality. Its research is sound, its prose is readable, and for the most part its authors have avoided fixation on the sinister side of the "black arts." The main limitation of works on the DCIs is that only a few of them—studies of Walter Bedell Smith, Allen Dulles, Richard Helms, and William Colby, written by CIA historians with full access to classified Agency records—are based on anything approaching a complete look at the record. Otherwise, DCI biographers have had to depend mainly on declassified documents (either released previously or in response to their own, inherently limited, FOIA requests), memoirs, and interviews with intelligence officials to gain an inside look at the careers of the DCIs. (U)

An inconsistency exists between the length of the bibliography on DCIs and the evaluation made of their importance. The 18 men who have directed the US government's intelligence machinery since 1946 (acting DCIs and Porter Goss, confirmed as the 19th DCI just before this book went to press, are not included) generally have not been perceived as being nearly as influential as most of their counterparts. A number of secretaries of state and defense—notably George Marshall, Dean Acheson, John Foster Dulles, Dean Rusk, Robert McNamara, Henry Kissinger, and Donald Rumsfeld—are regarded as major players in the diplomatic and military developments of their times, as is at least one national security adviser, Kissinger. The DCIs are another matter. Only two, Allen Dulles and William Casey, usually are considered to have had an impact rivaling that of the other top foreign policy officials in the administrations in which they served. The rest rarely get mentioned in most foreign affairs surveys (although Helms and Colby may come up when the Agency's "time of troubles" in the 1970s is discussed). Even in overviews of CIA and the Intelligence Community, only a handful—Hoyt Vandenberg, Smith, Dulles, John McCone, Casey, and possibly Helms—are portrayed as noteworthy contributors to the way the US government conducts intelligence activity.[7] (U)

That consensus may derive from the DCIs' perceived lack of independence, which in turn results from conceptions of the proper place of intelligence practitioners in the foreign policy process. Intelligence, the premise goes, should be detached from policy so as to avoid cross-corruption of either. Appointment as DCI, Allen Dulles stated in 1947, "should be somewhat comparable to appointment to high judicial office, and should be equally free from interference due to political changes."[8] If intelligence services have a stake in policy, they may skew their analyses or become aggressive advocates of covert action. The Intelligence Community must remain a source of objective assessment and not become a politicized instrument of the incumbent administration. As heads of the community, DCIs should be "intellocrats" who administer specialized secret functions, not to benefit any departmental interests but to advance policies set elsewhere in the executive branch—specifically, the White House. DCIs report to the National Security Council (NSC) and truly "serve at the pleasure of the president"—indeed, much of every DCI's influence has been directly proportional to his *personal* relationship with the chief executive. (U)

At the same time, and somewhat paradoxically, since incoming presidents began choosing "their" DCIs in 1977, the nonpartisan stature of the DCI has diminished, and along with it, his independence. DCIs may be "hand picked" by new administrations, but that has not always

[7] Historical studies and biographies of the DCIs are discussed in the Appendix on Sources. (U)

[8] Allen Dulles statement to the Senate Armed Services Committee, 25 April 1947, regarding the proposed National Security Act, National Security Act clipping file, folder 29, Historical Intelligence Collection, CIA Library (HIC). (U)

translated into greater influence. The president's national security adviser and the secretaries of state and defense usually have had more access to the Oval Office. The situation is not much different at Langley. Directors may come and go, but bureaucracies stay. When DCIs have tried to "clean house" (James Schlesinger and Stansfield Turner), or to manage through loyalists from a previous job (John Deutch), the result has been administrative disarray and abysmal morale. For these reasons and more, no DCI ever has had a chance to become as autonomous as J. Edgar Hoover at the FBI or to be assessed as having more than an episodic impact on US foreign policy. (U)

Can DCIs, then, be regarded as *leaders*, as opposed to heads of organizations or chief administrators? Was, and is, US intelligence noticeably different because a certain individual served as DCI? Do DCIs—*can* they—have a leadership role commensurate with that of their counterparts at the Departments of State and Defense? One way to begin answering those questions is through serial biography and group analysis. In contrast to Clandestine Services officers, however, DCIs have not been examined in such a fashion. Unlike some Agency careerists, they do not fit into categories like "prudent professionals" and "bold easterners," and they lack the sociological homogeneity needed to be thought of, or to think of themselves as, a network of "old boys" or, in William Colby's words, "the cream of the academic and social aristocracy." Anyway, biographers have attached those labels largely to former operators in the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) who joined the early CIA and then stayed on—a situation that applies only to one DCI, Helms.[9] (U)

The DCIs have had few major characteristics in common that lend them to comparative study.[10] The most pertinent is that two-thirds of them had direct experience with intelligence in military or civilian life before their appointments. Five served in either or both the OSS and CIA, and four had backgrounds in military intelligence. Another four had indirect experience with intelligence. The other quality most of them share is extensive education. Over half completed graduate school; seven received master's or law degrees, and three earned doctorates. Seven of the remaining eight finished college; just one (Smith) only made it through high school. Otherwise, the DCIs' biographic profiles are markedly different. Their median age at the time of their appointment was 53, but that is only the central tendency of the group; most were at least several years above or below that age. They came to the job from varied pursuits: five were in the military, four were government officials or lawyers, three had been businessmen, and two came from politics or academe. The first four DCIs were military officers; the last six have been civilians. The backgrounds of recent DCIs have been less diverse than in times past; all of them appointed since 1993 worked in the US government in the national security area. One characteristic the DCIs probably would prefer not to share is their relatively short tenure. The median time they served is just over three years, and only five DCIs have stayed at least four years. Between late 1991 and late 1996, three directors held the job an average of just 19 months. (U)

A Leadership Typology (U)

This heterogeneity does not mean, however, that the DCIs cannot be analyzed collectively. At least some aspects of the many models applied to political and corporate leaders can be used with the DCIs. Empiricism or utility sometimes suffer, however, when these schemes are employed. Complex personalities and complicated situations are made less square to fit more easily into the models' round holes, or so many different holes are created that comparisons among individuals become too hard to draw. In other instances, an ideal construct is used to judge whether a leader was effective or not, but too often those concepts are vague or simplistic, or they reflect the managerial or political preferences of the scholar and do not necessarily arise from the leadership group being studied.[11] (U)

---

[9] See Stewart Alsop, *The Center: People and Power in Political Washington*; Burton Hersh, *The Old Boys: The American Elite and the Origins of the CIA*; Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones. "The Socio-Educational Composition of the CIA Elite: A Statistical Note," *Journal of American Studies*, 19, no. 3 (December 1985): 421–24; Robert E. Spears Jr., "The Bold Easterners Revisited: The Myth of the CIA Elite," in Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones and Andrew Lownie, eds., *North American Spies: New Revisionist Essays*, 202–17; Thomas, *The Very Best Men*; and Robin W. Winks, *Cloak and Gown: Scholars in the Secret War, 1939–1961*. The Colby quote is from his memoir *Honorable Men: My Life in the CIA*, 180. A preliminary look at the circumstances of various DCIs' appointments is Stafford T. Thomas, "On the Selection of Directors of Central Intelligence," *Southeastern Political Review* 9, no. 1 (Spring 1981): 1–59. In 1993 the CIA History Staff prepared a survey of the transition periods of all DCIs up until then: "Fifteen DCIs' First 100 Days," *Studies* 38, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 49–59. Problems that DCIs have had in running the Intelligence Community are analyzed in Loch K. Johnson, "The DCI vs. the Eight-Hundred Pound Gorilla," *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* (*IJIC*) 13, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 35–48. (U)

[10] Most of the following biographic data comes from CIA History Staff, *Directors and Deputy Directors of Central Intelligence*. (U)

A more straightforward approach to the DCIs may be worth trying—one that takes into account the institutional and political limitations on their authority, the objectives they were appointed to accomplish, their personality traits, and their managerial methods. What were the directors told to do (*mission*) and how did they go about doing it (*style*)? With those questions addressed, an evaluation of their effectiveness can be made. How well did the DCIs do what they were expected to, given their authorities, resources, and access (*record*)? What "types" of DCIs, if any, have been most successful (*patterns*)? (U)

Using this perspective, six varieties of DCIs are evident. The first two are the *administrator-custodian* and *administrator-technocrat*, charged with implementing, fine-tuning, or reorienting intelligence activities under close direction from the White House. Examples of these types have been Sidney Souers, Roscoe Hillenkoetter, William Raborn, James Woolsey, John Deutch, and George Tenet. Usually appointed at a time of uncertainty about the Intelligence Community's roles and capabilities (the late 1940s and the mid-1990s), these DCIs tried to maintain stability in CIA's relationships with other community agencies, Congress, and the public. Their main goals were to do better with what they already had and to avoid distractions and scandals. Except for Raborn, all of these administrators had experience with intelligence affairs, but they were not intelligence careerists. Some had a very low-key style, almost to the point of acting like placeholders and time-servers (Hillenkoetter, Raborn). Others energetically pursued administrative changes designed to make the community more responsive to policymakers and better adapted to a new political environment (Deutch, Tenet). (U)

Next is the *intelligence operator*, a current or former professional intelligence officer, tasked with devising, undertaking, and overseeing an extensive array of covert action, espionage, and counterintelligence programs in aggressive service of US national security policy. Three DCIs fit this category: Allen Dulles, Richard Helms, and William Casey. The presidents they served had no qualms about using all of the US government's clandestine capabilities to win the Cold War, and they relied on their DCIs' knowledge of and experience with operations. The DCI as intelligence operator emphasized different secret activities, depending on his background and predilections. Dulles and Casey were devotees of covert action, while Helms preferred to work with espionage and counterintelligence. Because of the prominent place clandestine affairs had in American foreign policy when they served, this type of DCI generally had close relationships with the president. Partly for that reason, these DCIs served longer by far—seven years on average—than any other type. (U)

The high level of secret activity during those long tenures recurrently produced operational mishaps, revelations of "flaps," and other intelligence failures that hurt CIA's public reputation and damaged its relations with the White House and Congress. The Bay of Pigs disaster under Dulles, the ineffective covert action in Chile under Helms, and the Iran-Contra scandal under Casey are prominent examples. As journalist James Reston noted during the Agency's dark days in the mid-1970s, DCIs who came up through the ranks might have known more about what CIA should be doing than outsiders, "but they are not likely to be the best men at knowing what it should not be doing."[12] (U)

Failures, indiscretions, and other such controversies in turn have led to the departures of those intelligence-operator DCIs and their replacement by *manager-reformers* charged with "cleaning up the mess" and preventing similar

---

[11] Not surprisingly, American leadership scholars have analyzed US presidents more than any other officeholders. The utility of those efforts remains to be determined. The ranking of presidents that Arthur M. Schlesinger Sr. started decades ago has become a regular exercise for academicians and journalists, although shifts in the ratings of specific presidents suggest more that the *Zeitgeist* has changed rather than the arrival of a new empirical basis for reevaluation. At one end of the scale of complexity is James David Barber's pathbreaking work, *The Presidential Character: Predicting Performance in the White House*, which puts all 37 presidents until then into a four-box matrix designed around their levels of engagement and initiative ("passive" or "active") and their *joi de vivre* in holding office and exercising power ("positive" or "negative"). Barber concluded that the most effective presidents had "active-positive" characters. At the other end of the scale is a recent study by a group of psychologists called "The Personality and the President Project." It examined the first 42 chief executives for five psychological characteristics—agreeableness, neuroticism, extroversion, conscientiousness, and openness—and came up with eight personality types—dominators, introverts, "good guys," innocents, actors, maintainers, philosophers, and extroverts. Despite all the criteria and categories, the psychologists' findings were easy to summarize and not very venturesome: Successful presidents "set ambitious goals for themselves and move heaven and earth to meet them" and "are not necessarily the nicest guys on the block. They are assertive and hardheaded, and tend to be impulsive." Marc Kaufman, "Profiles Offer a Peek Inside the Presidential Psyche," *Washington Post*, 7 August 2000: A7; Danielle Eubanks, "Great Presidents May Be the Crankiest," *Washington Times*, 7 August 2000: A2. (U)

An admirably objective effort to analyze DCIs according to whether their primary loyalty is to the president, the intelligence profession, a political cause, the rule of law, or Congress and the public, is Glenn P. Hastedt, "Controlling Intelligence: The Role of the D.C.I.," *IJIC* 1, no. 4 (Winter 1986–87): 25–40. A short evaluation of the effectiveness of "political" versus "nonpolitical" DCIs—the former being those whose appointments were based largely on partisan concerns—is Ward Warren, "Politics, Presidents, and DCIs," *IJIC* 8, no. 3 (Fall 1995): 337–44. (U)

[12] Renze L. Hoeksema, "The President's Role in Insuring Efficient, Economical, and Responsible Intelligence Services," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* (*PSQ*) 8, no. 2 (Spring 1978): 193. (U)

problems from happening again. There have been two kinds of manager-reformer DCIs. One is the *insider*—a career intelligence officer who used his experience at CIA to reorganize the bureaucracy and redirect Agency activities during or after a time of political controversy and uncertainty about its direction. Two DCIs functioned as manager-reformer insiders: William Colby and Robert Gates. Colby, an operations veteran with experience going back to the OSS, sought to rescue CIA from the political tempests of the mid-1970s and to regain some of the Agency's lost prestige through his policy of controlled cooperation with congressional investigators and targeted termination of questionable activities. Gates, a long-time Soviet analyst who had worked on the NSC in two administrations and served as deputy director for intelligence, moved the Agency into the post-Cold War era after a period of undynamic leadership. (U)

The other type of manager-reformer is the *outsider*, who is chosen to draw on his experience in the military, business, government, or politics to implement a major reorganization of CIA and the community or to regroup and redirect the Agency, especially after major operational setbacks or public conflicts over secret activities. Five DCIs have been manager-reformer outsiders: Hoyt Vandenberg, Walter Bedell Smith, John McCone, James Schlesinger, and Stansfield Turner. Collectively they have been responsible for more major changes at CIA (or its predecessor, the Central Intelligence Group [CIG]) than any other category of director. For example, under Vandenberg the CIG acquired its own budgetary and personnel authority, received responsibility for collecting all foreign intelligence (including atomic secrets) and preparing national intelligence analyses, and coordinated all interdepartmental intelligence activities. Smith—in response to intelligence failures before the Korean War and to confusion and infighting among operations officers—centralized espionage and covert actions, analysis, and administration by rearranging CIA into three directorates and creating the Office of National Estimates (ONE). In effect, he organized the Agency into the shape it has today. Schlesinger and Turner removed or saw to the departure of hundreds of Clandestine Services veterans to streamline the Agency's bureaucracy, lower the profile of covert action, and move CIA more toward analysis and technical collection. Most DCIs in this category have been hard-charging, strong-willed, and ambitious, far more concerned about achieving their objectives than about angering bureaucratic rivals or fostering ill will among subordinates. Largely because they accomplished so much and did not worry about who they antagonized, some of them have been the most disliked or hardest to get along with of any DCIs. (U)

Finally, there are the *restorers*, George Bush and William Webster. Like the manager-reformer outsiders, they became DCIs after the Agency went through difficult times—they succeeded Colby and Casey, respectively—but they were not charged with making significant changes in the way CIA did business. Instead, they used their "people skills" and public reputations to raise morale, repair political damage, and burnish the Agency's reputation. Bush, a prominent figure in Republican Party politics, went to Langley to mend CIA's relations with Congress, and to use his amiability to improve *esprit de corps* and put a more benign face on the Agency. Webster, the director of the FBI and a former federal judge, brought a quality of rectitude to an Agency mired in scandal and helped raise its stature in the community and with the public. (U)

John McCone: The Archetypal Outsider (U)

John McCone was DCI from 29 November 1961 to 28 April 1965, a time when some of the great events of the Cold War occurred—the Cuban missile crisis, the early Vietnam war, the split between the Soviet Union and Communist China, and the assassination of John Kennedy, to name but a few. McCone's background put him in stark contrast with the Kennedy and Johnson administrations in which he served. He was a conservative Republican working for liberal Democratic presidents, a self-made businessman from the West in a government filled with scions of the Eastern Establishment, a bottom-line executive in his early sixties dealing with many much younger policymakers steeped in academic theories. Yet McCone was appointed in the wake of the Bay of Pigs debacle largely for just those reasons. His proven success as a corporate manager and his political connections with the opposition party commended him to the Kennedy administration, which was resolved to use all the assets of the Intelligence Community to prevail in the fight against international communism. The White House wanted a tested and reliable executive in charge of its clandestine campaign against Moscow, Beijing, and their satellites and proxies. (U)

McCone's directorship has not been examined comprehensively. Most writers have focused on his involvement in the Cuban missile crisis and the Vietnam War.[13] The story of McCone's 41 months at Langley goes far beyond those familiar and much-studied events, however. He was an extremely active manager, deeply interested in the full range of the community's and CIA's business, whether administrative, technological, analytical, or operational. He also was politically connected and astute, and showed great sensitivity to the Agency's relations with the White House, other community departments, Congress, and the media and public. (U)

This study will examine McCone's extensive involvement in the whole span of American intelligence activities, and endeavor to show how his background and personal attributes affected his accomplishments and shortcomings in leading CIA and the community during some of the bleakest years of the Cold War. The work will seek to capture, in biographer Edmund Morris's words, "the endlessly interesting spectacle of character meeting circumstance and either changing it or being changed by it."[14] The narrative is generally chronological, and the sudden change in presidents in November 1963 provides a logical break in the treatment of certain subjects, such as Cuba and Southeast Asia, where different policies were adopted. In a few other cases, however—such as science and technology, and some clandestine operations and managerial affairs—no notable differences in McCone's involvement occurred after the switch in administrations. Accordingly, those subjects are covered in one piece. (U)

Principal archival sources for this book have been the files of the Office of the DCI and the DCI Executive Registry; the Directorates of Intelligence, Operations, and Science and Technology; and other Agency and community components with which McCone dealt regularly, such as the Offices of Congressional Affairs and Public Affairs, the Office of the Inspector General, and the US Intelligence Board (USIB). A collection of McCone's "papers" as DCI, archived in 11 boxes, has been the principal documentary source for this work. (McCone was a strong believer in leaving a "paper trail.")[15] Many volumes of the Department of State's *Foreign Relations of the United States* (*FRUS*) series, as well as numerous collections published by commercial or academic presses or posted on official and nongovernmental Web sites, contain documents on the national security and intelligence issues in which McCone and the community were engaged in the early 1960s. The CIA History Staff's own files and large archive of oral history interviews and classified internal histories and materials in CIA's Historical Intelligence Collection (HIC) have proven invaluable, as have interviews and documents from the Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson presidential libraries. The extensive memoir literature on the period has added many first-person recollections. The Kennedy and Johnson presidencies have attracted the attention of a small army of scholars whose research and insights have contributed importantly to this work. The principal books and articles used are discussed in the Appendix on Sources or listed in the bibliography. (U)

---

[13] McCone's tenure is discussed in any detail in only two published works: Kenneth J. Campbell, "John A. McCone: An Outsider Becomes DCI," *Studies* 32, no. 2 (Summer 1988): 49–60; and Peter S. Usowski, "John McCone and the Cuban Missile Crisis: A Persistent Approach to the Intelligence–Policy Relationship," *IJIC* 2, no. 4 (Winter 1988): 547–76. Hastedt, "Controlling Intelligence," identifies McCone's loyalty as being primarily to certain policies and secondarily to the president. Other open sources that treat McCone in the context of narrower issues will be mentioned in subsequent chapters. Two unpublished, classified manuscripts on McCone's directorship repose in History Staff (HS) Files, Job 03-01724R, boxes 7 and 8: Mary S. McAuliffe, "John A. McCone As Director of Central Intelligence, 1961–1965," completed in 1994; and Walter Elder (McCone's long-time executive assistant), "John A. McCone: The Sixth Director of Central Intelligence," completed in 1987 (hereafter Elder, "McCone as DCI (1987)." The former concentrates on Cuba and Vietnam. The latter is an abridgment of a much longer unpublished chronicle by Elder, "John A. McCone as Director of Central Intelligence." Assembled in 1973, it is basically a compilation of document summaries. It is archived in HS Files, Job 87-01032R, boxes 1–5. Hereafter, references to this work will be cited as Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)." ~~(S)~~

[14] Bill Goldstein, "No Fiction in Roosevelt's Story," *New York Times*, 1 January 2002: B5. (U)

[15] McCone's official Agency papers are in DCI files, Job 80B01285A, boxes 1–11 (hereafter McCone Papers). His personal papers are at the University of California at Berkeley's Bancroft Library; they have not been archived and are not open to researchers. (U)

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

CHAPTER 1

Captain of Industry and Technology (U)

John Alex McCone's life and career before he joined the Central Intelligence Agency exhibited the drive, diligence, and focus that characterized his tenure as Director of Central Intelligence.[1] He was born on 4 January 1902 in San Francisco into a Scots-Irish family involved in the western machinery and manufacturing industries since 1860. That year, his namesake grandfather opened a small iron foundry in Virginia City, Nevada, during the boom times after the discovery of the silver-rich Comstock Lode in 1859. McCone's father, Alexander, bought or started other foundries in Reno, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, and the younger McCone lived in all three cities.[2] After graduating from Los Angeles High School in 1918, he attended the University of California at Berkeley's College of Engineering, where he acquired a reputation as a hard-working, humorless student—"a man with a slide-rule mind," according to one classmate. McCone's father died in 1920, so to help his family make ends meet and pay his tuition, he worked summers in shipyards and iron mills and had a night job at a foundry during his senior year. McCone graduated with honors in 1922, 10th in his class, earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering. (U)

From Overalls to Riches (U)

"A few years of pretty rough going" then followed, McCone recalled. He got a job as a 40-cents-per-hour boiler riveter for the Llewelyn Iron Works, a Los Angeles-based manufacturer and builder of steel frameworks for office buildings and petroleum storage tanks. McCone had so little money then that he had to borrow some to buy overalls and work shoes. Los Angeles's burgeoning construction industry helped carry him quickly out of the boiler shop and onto a surveying gang, then an erector crew, and, at age 26, into a position as construction manager. He was a hands-on supervisor from the start; he supposedly spent so much time climbing around on skyscraper girders that life insurance companies would not issue him a policy. (U)

In 1929, after the Llewelyn Iron Works merged with two competitors during an economic slump, McCone became general superintendent and sales manager at the Consolidated Steel Corporation. Consolidated Steel boasted that it was the "biggest steel fabricator west of the Mississippi," but it suffered badly during the Depression. In 1931, McCone became general sales manager and was asked to reverse the fortunes of an underused and costly fabrication plant the company had built just before the crash. He later recalled that year as "a memorable [one] for sales managers. I was in search of my first customer when the other sales managers were sure they had seen their last." McCone and Consolidated Steel could count on an old school friend of his: Stephen Bechtel, Engineering Class of '21 and director of purchasing for his father's construction firm, which was ordering immense quantities of steel to build the Hoover Dam on the Colorado River. The former college mates struck a deal, and Consolidated Steel eventually supplied Bechtel with 55 million tons. For saving his firm from bankruptcy, McCone was rewarded with an executive vice presidency and a directorship in 1933. He was not yet 32 years old. (U)

McCone's collaboration with Bechtel on the Hoover Dam positioned him to act on his "sense of imminent change, of great projects about to break at last upon the West," as he later described it. He resigned from Consolidated Steel in 1937 to start his own engineering company, but after about a year he accepted Stephen Bechtel's proposal that they join forces and create a firm to provide the oil industry with a full range of engineering and construction services. They formed the Bechtel-McCone Corporation as a sister firm to the W.A. Bechtel Company (founded by Stephen's father), with McCone as president and Bechtel

[1] Sources on McCone's early life and career are: Robert L. Ingram, *The Bechtel Story,* 10–12; idem, *A Builder and His Family,* 41–48; Laton McCartney, *Friends in High Places: The Bechtel Story,* 52–55; George J. Church, "Stephen Bechtel: Global Builder," *Time* 152, no. 23 (7 December 1998): 114–16; *Current Biography 1959,* s.v. "McCone, John A(lex)": 272–74; "Atomic Energy's McCone: A Private Dynamo in the Public Service," *Time* 71, no. 16 (16 June 1958): 16; "Energy for Atoms: John Alex McCone," *New York Times,* 7 June 1958: 8; Charles J.V. Murphy, "Mr. McCone Arrives in Washington," *Fortune* 58, no. 8 (August 1958): 194, 196; Gene Marine, "McCone of the AEC," *Nation* 189 (11 April 1959): 307–10; Russell Baker, "McCone Is Confirmed for C.I.A...," *New York Times,* 1 February 1962: 9; *A Conversation with John A. McCone,* 3–6; "The World Tonight," *CBS Reports* broadcast, 27 September 1961, transcript in HS Files, Job 84-00473R, box 1, folder 1. (U)

[2] When McCone was appointed DCI, the *Reno Gazette* reminded its readers that he once had been a newsboy for the paper. *Reno Gazette,* 30 September 1961, copy in HS Files, Job 84-00473R, box 1, folder 1. (U)

as chairman. They soon signed a multimillion-dollar contract with Standard Oil of California and filled big foreign orders as well. In two years, Bechtel-McCone had 10,000 employees and was building oil refineries, chemical plants, power facilities, and pipelines from the Rocky Mountains to the Amazon Basin and the Persian Gulf. (U)

Joining the "Arsenal of Democracy" (U)

After World War II started in Europe in 1939, McCone and Bechtel joined several large firms (the "Six Companies" consortium) in forming the Seattle-Tacoma Shipbuilding Corporation, with an order to make five ships for the US Maritime Commission.[3] In 1940, the Commission approached Bechtel-McCone and the other firms about building 60 cargo vessels for the British, and in January 1941, President Franklin Roosevelt announced that 200 similar ships would be constructed for American use. That was the start of the Emergency Shipbuilding Program, under which the United States manufactured many more merchant ships (nearly 5,700) than anyone had thought possible. The pace of production accelerated steadily throughout the war as experience grew, procedures were refined, and efficiencies took hold. Between 1940 and 1945, the United States' share of total Allied merchant ship construction rose from less than 40 percent to almost 90 percent. (U)

Bechtel-McCone was responsible for a large portion of that output. By 1943, McCone was overseeing tens of thousands of workers at three West Coast shipyards. One of them was a decrepit facility that needed major improvements to make it usable, while a second had to be built from scratch out of a swamp. McCone directly managed the California Shipbuilding Corporation ("Calship") facility at Terminal Island in Los Angeles Harbor, where 42,000 employees—less than one percent of whom had shipbuilding experience—worked on as many as three dozen Liberty ships at once. (U)

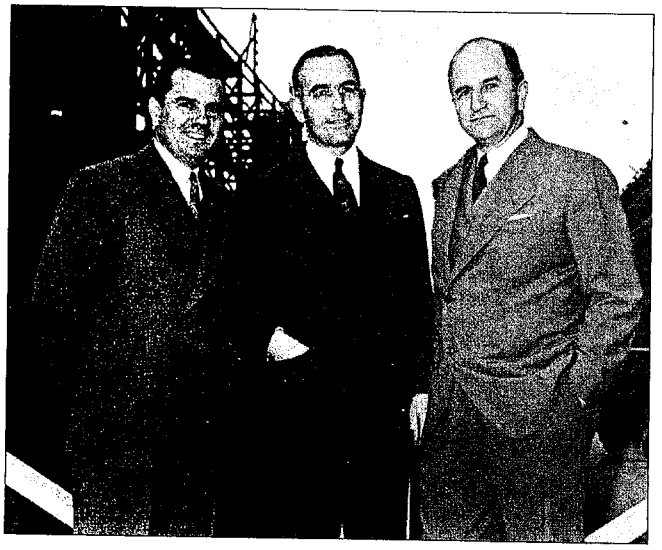
Despite Bechtel-McCone's accomplishments, its main competitor, Henry Kaiser's company, got much more media attention. Lacking Kaiser's skills at self-promotion and unwilling to tussle with him publicly, McCone and Bechtel resolved to beat their rival in the factory. McCone "set production goals higher than anyone thought could be met, and then he made sure they were met," wrote the *New York Herald Tribune*. He did not shrink from putting in 100-hour workweeks himself to meet those targets. By late 1944, Calship was assembling 20 troop transports, tankers, and cargo vessels a month, making it the most productive shipyard in the world at that time. During the war it built 467 ships—nearly 10 percent of the Maritime Commission's output—valued at nearly $1 billion. Meanwhile, in collaboration with Standard Oil, a Bechtel-McCone affiliate operated a fleet of nearly 90 tankers for the US Navy in the Pacific—one of the largest oil transporters anywhere. Stephen Bechtel gave most of the credit for the firm's success to his partner, calling McCone "the greatest organizer in the United States."[4] (U)

Industrialist instinct, and possibly pique at Henry Kaiser, encouraged McCone and Bechtel to move into the aircraft industry, where Kaiser was reaping handsome profits. In the summer of 1942, Bechtel-McCone submitted a proposal to the Army to build an aircraft modification facility for the Air Corps in Birmingham, Alabama.[5] McCone made his firm's proposal stand out from the 14 others—one of them Kaiser's—by attaching a bill for $25,000 to it. The other companies had submitted proposals without charge, but McCone's brash tactic worked. He correctly calculated that the Army would pay the bill and, partly because it had, award the contract to Bechtel-McCone. The terms were exceedingly generous: cost plus five percent of work estimates that the firm developed, with payment rendered

[3] Information about the United States' wartime shipbuilding program comes from: McCartney, 56–59, 61; Ingram, *A Builder and His Family*, chap. 5; *Current Biography 1959*: 273; "Atomic Energy's McCone," 16; William S. White, "Ship Profit Data Called 'Half Truth,'" *New York Times*, 26 September 1946: 20; Murphy, "Mr. McCone Arrives in Washington," 196; *Conversation with McCone*, 6–7; Charles Wollenberg, *Marinship at War*, 9–10, 15; Frederic C. Lane, *Ships for Victory*, 54, 175, 208, 211, 470; and Daniel Levine and Sara Ann Platt, "The Contribution of U.S. Shipbuilding and the Merchant Marine to the Second World War," in Robert A. Kilmarx, ed., *America's Maritime Legacy*, 175–214. (U)

[4] McCone also served on the boards of directors of the Marinship Corporation—another Bechtel enterprise—in Sausalito, California and the Oregon Shipbuilding Corporation. Calship's and Marinship's combined production made them the Maritime Commission's third-largest wartime shipbuilders, behind Kaiser and Bethlehem Steel. (U)

[5] A modification facility reconfigured aircraft after they came off the regular assembly line with standard design and equipment. The system originated in Britain, which needed to adapt American aircraft to accommodate British specifications. It was easier to make the changes as the planes arrived in Britain than to alter American assembly lines to include specialized features. The Army Air Force used the facilities it underwrote to modify basic models it deployed in different combat theaters. Twenty-eight such facilities, employing over 45,000 people, were established in the United States during the war at a cost of around $100 million. John B. Rae, *Climb To Greatness*, 148; Wesley Frank Craven and James Lea Cate, eds., *The Army Air Forces In World War II*, 316, 332, 336. (U)



McCone (center) with Stephen Bechtel Jr. and Stephen Bechtel Sr. at the Calship yard in 1945 (U)
Photo: Bechtel Corporation

whether or not the work was completed, according to an unpublished interview with McCone at the time. Bechtel-McCone built the Willow Run Aircraft Modification Plant on nearly 300 acres outside Birmingham and hired close to 9,000 employees.[6] (U)

McCone soon got caught up in legal difficulties over the sensitive issue of war profiteering. By mid-1943, not one plane had flown off the Willow Run compound—partly because the bombers to be modified did not start arriving until late 1942—and reports of waste, fraud, and abuse proliferated. A local citizen's lawsuit prompted Alabama Sen. John Sparkman to visit Willow Run and meet with McCone and several Bechtel-McCone executives. Sparkman did not talk to any employees allegedly involved in featherbedding, cost overruns, and theft, and McCone and his colleagues apparently persuaded the senator that nothing was wrong. The lawsuit was dismissed because the contract Bechtel-McCone's attorneys submitted in court did not contain the cost-plus provision that McCone claimed the Army had agreed to include. (A historian of the Bechtel enterprises notes that McCone "was famed for the exactitude of his memory" and suggests that the contract might have been altered.) The bottom line was that McCone and his associates avoided any legal or political sanction and earned $3,375,000 for their firm from the Willow Run project. During the war years, this high return was not considered unusual for aircraft modification facilities. According to an official history of aircraft procurement during World War II, "the centers were staggeringly expensive to operate...[and were] a necessary evil...an expedient stopgap." All such facilities worked on loosely-drawn, cost-plus-fixed-fee terms, and their personnel performed many individual, labor-intensive operations, often under tight deadlines. In addition, the Bechtel-McCone plant got more of this remunerative work than most facilities because the Department of War designated it as one of two "overflow" centers for handling rush orders regular plants could not complete on time.[7] (U)

By the time the war ended in mid-August 1945, Bechtel-McCone had brought in over $100 million from marine, aviation, and engineering contracts on an initial investment of $400,000 in the late 1930s. McCone emerged from the war with a personal fortune and a sterling reputation as a tough manager and exemplary patriot. At a ceremony in October 1945, the deputy of the Maritime Commission praised him for "building the ships that carried the guns that won the war."[8] (U)

Maritime Magnate (U)

McCone quickly adjusted to the end of the wartime boom and his declining interest in heavy construction.[9] For tax reasons, he and Stephen Bechtel liquidated their corporation, sold its assets, and created a new entity called Bechtel Brothers-McCone. Other tax considerations deterred

[6] McCartney, 66–67; Ingram, *A Builder and His Family,* 75–76. The facility was so named because it worked mainly on B-24 "Liberator" bombers produced at Ford's mammoth Willow Run plant near Detroit. I.B. Holley Jr., *Buying Aircraft,* 531. (U)

[7] McCartney, 67–70; Rae, 149; Holley, 531–33, 537–38; Roger E. Bilstein, *The American Aerospace Industry,* 76–77; Ingram, *A Builder and His Family,* 76. Production at Ford's Willow Run plant was so slow at first that it was derisively referred to as "Willit Run?" By the end of the war, however, the factory had produced more than 8,500 bombers, over 5,700 of which went to the Bechtel-McCone modification plant in Alabama. The Birmingham facility also remanufactured almost 6,000 of the Army's quarter-ton trucks and hundreds of other military vehicles. (U)

Another example of Bechtel-McCone's hard-nosed business practices is evident in the arrangement it reached with several other firms in jointly building and operating a new shipyard in Evansville, Indiana. Bechtel-McCone, the only member of the consortium with shipbuilding experience, agreed to assume half of the risk of the venture, but in return it would garner half of the profits. James H. and Patricia C. Kellar, *The Evansville Shipyard,* 109. (U)

[8] McCartney, 67–70; Ingram, *A Builder and His Family,* 49, 66, 70, 71. Among Bechtel-McCone's many other war-related contracts were a heating plant at Elmendorf Air Field in Alaska; a powder factory at an ordnance facility in Missouri; a power generating plant in California; and a storage tank farm in Washington (used in the Manhattan Project). (U)

McCone from taking an active role in management, however, and when the firm started to fail, he sold his interest to Bechtel. (U)

Congressional investigations into war profiteering in late 1946 produced some bad headlines and temporary embarrassment for McCone. An auditor for the Maritime Commission reported that Calship had turned a $44 million profit on an investment of only $100,000. "At no time in the history of American business," the auditor testified, "whether in wartime or peacetime, have so few men made so much money with so little risk—and all at the expense of the taxpayers, not only of this generation but of future generations." Appearing before the House Merchant Marine Subcommittee, McCone denounced the Commission report as "full of half-truths" derived from questionable accounting methods that understated what his firm had invested and overstated what it had earned. He noted, for example, that if the auditors had factored in the taxes Calship paid and the non-reimbursable charges it incurred, the company's profits would have dropped to under $9 million. The subcommittee asked McCone why his firm—which earned the third-highest profits on paid-in capital before taxes and the fifth-highest after taxes of any war contractor—should have made so much just for operating the government-owned, government-supplied shipyard at Terminal Island. He responded that some wartime contracts were risky and that companies like his provided the US government with "unique management skill" and organizational and technical experience, without which the wartime shipbuilding effort would have foundered. (U)

Meanwhile, McCone's own business undertakings were performing well. After Bechtel-McCone broke up, McCone used some of his wartime windfall to buy full control of the Joshua Hendy Iron Works, a San Francisco-based firm that built ship engines during the war but had gone into a peacetime decline. McCone, the president and sole owner, added generators and earth-moving machinery to the Hendy product line and, after some initial setbacks, brought the company into the black. He moved Hendy into the maritime transport industry by setting up the Pacific Tankers Division to operate a fleet of oil carriers. In addition, he, Stephen Bechtel, and several West Coast associates from the construction industry formed the Pacific Far East Lines for hauling cargo to and from Japan, China, and the Philippines. McCone became majority stockholder and chairman of this highly profitable enterprise.[10] (U)

Into the Wild Blue Yonder (U)

Even while overseeing his far-flung business interests and serving as a director of the Stanford Research Institute and a trustee and chief fund-raiser for the California Institute of Technology (Cal Tech), McCone in his mid-40s found himself "a little restless" and increasingly attracted to government work. He was especially interested in the national security area, and the Department of Defense seemed the most compatible place for him. By this time, the southern California region where he lived had emerged as a bastion of the military-industrial complex, with a network of defense contractors and public officeholders who—like McCone—embodied its social conservatism, strong anticommunism, and entrepreneurial ethos. When left-wing journalist I.F. Stone called McCone "a rightist Catholic...with holy war views," it could be consigned to ideological punditry, but even McCone's associates at Bechtel—scarcely a den of accommodationists—found his anticommunist fervor unsettling. He was active in state and local Republican politics, and, a devout traditionalist Catholic, he became one of the Church's most prominent American laymen. He held many honorary and functional positions in Catholic institutions and in 1955 was made a Knight of St. Gregory, the highest honor for a Catholic layman, by Pope Pius XII. At other times, he received honorary degrees from Notre Dame, Fordham, and the Catholic University of America. In 1956, he represented the United States at a celebration of the pope's 80th birthday, and two years later he and Clare

[9] Sources for this paragraph and the next are: McCartney, 96; Ingram, *A Builder and His Family*, 80–81; White, "Ship Profit Data Called 'Half Truth,'" 20; Murphy, "Mr. McCone Arrives in Washington," 198; "McCone Likely to Be Questioned on His Shipbuilding Profits," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 19 October 1961, copy in HS Files, Job 84-00473R, box 1, folder 1; Marine, 307–8; *Investigation of Shipyard Profits: Hearings Before the Committee on the Merchant Marine and Fisheries, House of Representatives, Seventy-Ninth Congress, Second Session...September 23, 24, 25, and 26, 1946*, 189–225; Wollenberg, 25–27; Lane, 817, and chap. 4 passim on shipbuilding contracts generally; and John Perry Miller, *Pricing of Military Procurements*, 124–33, on the US Government's wartime use of the cost-plus-fixed-fee contract. (U)

[10] McCartney, 96–97; Ingram, *A Builder and His Family*, 58–59; *Current Biography 1959*: 273; "Change in Iron Company," *New York Times*, 22 December 1945: 26; Murphy, "Mr. McCone Arrives in Washington," 198; *Conversation with McCone*, 9; McCone's biographical statement submitted to Senate Armed Services Committee, 18 January 1962, copy in HS Files, Job 84-00473R, box 1, folder 8. McCone had been president of Hendy during the war; its board then also included Stephen Bechtel and his brother Kenneth. Wollenberg,

Boothe Luce, a close friend, stood in for the president at the pope's funeral.[11] (U)

In 1947, McCone got his chance to turn thoughts into deeds when President Harry Truman invited him to become a member of the Air Policy Commission, charged with devising a strategy for American military airpower (and thereby reviving the moribund aircraft industry). The Commission published its report in January 1948 with the attention-grabbing title *Survival in the Air Age*. It concluded that "the country must have a new strategic concept for its defense...the core of this concept is air power." However, "[t]he Air Force as presently composed is inadequate...not only at the present time when we are relatively free of the dangers of sustained attack on our homeland, but [it] is hopelessly wanting in respect of the future...when a serious danger of atomic attack will exist." Accordingly, the Commission recommended that the US government build hundreds more military aircraft and create a massive strategic bomber force. In short, the American aviation industry was to be revitalized to support national security needs. McCone wrote the military recommendations in the report, which became one of the key documents in the campaign to increase defense spending during the early Cold War. The Commission's ideas were well received in southern California, where aviation—the state's largest manufacturing industry—had an economic and social influence second only to the automobile because of the wartime boom in aircraft construction. The fate of the industry and the vitality of that region were intertwined in what one historian has aptly termed the "pax aeronautica."[12] (U)

After the Commission issued its report, Secretary of Defense James Forrestal pressed McCone into several months of service at the Pentagon as a special assistant developing the first budget for the unified military services and for the new Air Force. Besides what he remembered as "long hours, sleepless nights...[and] pounding the table" to get agreement on the budget, McCone also spent a good deal of time helping implement the National Security Act of 1947, including the portions dealing with the new Central Intelligence Agency and Department of Defense. Afterward, he returned to his shipping business.[13] (U)

McCone was soon back in Washington, serving as undersecretary of the Air Force. His brief tenure (May 1950–October 1951) helped him learn to run a public organization, but the bureaucratic controversy and personal tension he engendered demonstrated the limits of his brusque leadership style. He was responsible for procurement and construction of overseas airbases during the first year of the Korean War—when the defense budget increased more in both real dollars and as a percentage of GNP than in any

The Air Policy Commission presents its report to President Truman. McCone is third from the left. (U) Photo: US Air Force

[11] McCartney, 97; *Current Biography 1959*: 273; "AEC Changes Its Top Command," *Business Week*, no. 1502 (14 June 1958): 32; Roger W. Lotchin, *Fortress California*, chaps. 4–7; Ann Markusen et al., *The Rise of the Gunbelt*, 84–100; Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, chap. 1; James Q. Wilson, "A Guide to Reagan Country: The Political Culture of Southern California," *Commentary* 43 (May 1967): 37–45. (U)

[12] McCartney, 97–98; George M. Watson Jr., *The Office of the Secretary of the Air Force, 1947–1965*, 106; President's Air Policy Commission, *Survival in the Air Age: A Report by the President's Air Policy Commission*, 10, 24; Walton S. Moody, *Building a Strategic Air Force*, 161–64; Steven L. Rearden, *History of the Office of the Secretary of Defense*, 313–16; Murphy, "Mr. McCone Arrives in Washington," 198; Rae, 192–94; transcript of McCone interview with Arthur Schlesinger Jr., 26 February 1965, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 3; *Conversation with McCone*, 10–13; Lotchin, *Fortress California*, chaps. 4–7; Martin J. Schiesl, "Airplanes to Aerospace: Defense Spending and Economic Growth in the Los Angeles Region, 1945–1960," in Roger W. Lotchin, ed., *Martial Metropolis*. McCone originally was slated to work on the Air Policy Commission's staff. He declined, but then Henry Ford II decided not to serve as a commission member, and President Truman, familiar with McCone's wartime involvement in aviation, asked him to take Ford's place. *Conversation with McCone*, 10. The chain of aircraft plants that ran from San Diego through Los Angeles employed nearly a quarter million workers during the war. "Their function was not unlike that of the mines in the Gold Rush of 1849," one historian has written. Gerald D. Nash, *The American West Transformed*, 25–26. (U)

[13] *Conversation with McCone*, 13. (U)

single year of the entire post-World War II period and while the Air Force was mounting a major effort to expand its strategic striking power. McCone's dealings as a defense contractor during World War II enabled him to exert some control over the service's Byzantine acquisition system and public works budget. He campaigned tirelessly for higher appropriations and inspired the crash programs that built the large Strategic Air Command (SAC) complexes in Greenland and North Africa. He pushed for intensive research and development in missiles and wanted to reorganize the military's separate missile programs along a Manhattan Project model under the direction of a "missile czar." He overreached with this proposal, however; interservice rivalries precluded it, and Truman rejected it.[14] (U)

McCone's stint at the Pentagon familiarized him with intelligence processes, bureaucracies, and personalities. He served on a Department of Defense committee on intelligence and later said he "leaned very heavily on CIA... because I always wanted to check the intelligence estimates of the Air Force itself. In this way I got a little look through the side door of CIA." He also knew DCI Walter Bedell Smith and the chief of clandestine operations, Allen Dulles, and met with them often.[15] (U)

McCone saw his primary role as the secretary of the Air Force's general manager, and he rankled Air Force officials and commanders when he tried to employ the same strict administrative methods he used to run his own companies. According to one assistant secretary, McCone was guilty of "throwing his weight around," and a senior member of the Air Staff regarded him as a "know-it-all" who treated high-ranking officers with contempt. McCone challenged the Air Staff's conclusions about the power of nuclear weapons and its plans for new bombers. He usually sided with "young R&D colonels" who were trying to be heard at senior echelons, and he clashed with SAC strategists when he advocated deploying small nuclear weapons for use in "little wars." His tireless constitution, constant demands, and refusal to countenance failure intimidated many subordinates. A former colleague recalled that when McCone was displeased with an explanation for some lapse, he would take out a pocket watch and twirl it on its chain, the circles speeding up as his anger rose. When the motion became a blur, "that's when the explosion came. You wanted to run for cover."[16] (U)

One of McCone's decisions while with the Department of the Air Force revived the touchy issues of war profiteering and conflicts of interest that he had dealt with only a few years before. In 1951, he awarded a lucrative aircraft construction contract to a company partly owned by Henry Kaiser, the wartime rival with whom he later had undertaken joint ventures. Not only did Kaiser's airplane, the C-119 "Flying Boxcar," cost three times as much as the Air Force had been paying another contractor, but Stephen Bechtel was also a part owner of Kaiser's financially strapped company. Moreover, McCone decided to award the contract without the usual preliminary procedures. When a Senate committee later questioned this haste, McCone replied that "the action, though fast, was proper under the sense of emergency that we were operating." Asked if the process was "even faster than fast," he responded that "it is pretty fast, you bet." This episode left important members of Congress with the perception that McCone, as one Republican representative put it, was "merely on leave of absence from his position as president of the Bechtel-McCone Corporation."[17] (U)

Private Sector Interlude (U)

McCone returned to his business affairs after less than a year and a half at the Pentagon, ostensibly for personal reasons. Along with an Exceptional Civilian Service Award—for his part in doubling US aircraft production during the early months of the Korean War—he also presumably took with him some lessons about how, and how not, to shake up a federal bureaucracy. Once back in his executive offices, McCone embarked on a new phase of entrepreneurship that

[14] Watson, 110–11, 114–15, 124–27; Moody, 381–92; Murphy, "Mr. McCone Arrives in Washington," 198; "Atomic Energy's McCone," 16; *New York Times*, 1 June 1950: 12; 2 June 1950: 15, 34; 10 October 1951: 4; 12 October 1951: 7; 13 October 1951: 6. McCone's home state of California—and especially the aviation and astronautics industries in its southern region—benefited hugely from the military buildup of the 1950s, receiving more than $50 billion in military spending during the decade. In 1952, the state ranked third in prime defense contracts (worth over $10,000), with under 13 percent of the total; six years later, it was first with over 21 percent (it also had nearly 24 percent of all contracts). Los Angeles alone received 61 percent of the state's share of US defense outlays. Markusen et al., graphs on 10, tables on 13; James L. Clayton, "Defense Spending: Key to California's Growth," *Western Political Quarterly* 15, no. 2 (June 1962): 280–82, 286. (U)

[15] Transcript of McCone interview with Schlesinger, 26 February 1965, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 3. (U)

[16] Watson, 110–11, 114–15, 124–27; Murphy, "Mr. McCone Arrives in Washington," 198; "Atomic Energy's McCone," 16; McCartney, 98. (U)

[17] *Aircraft Procurement: Hearings Before the Preparedness Subcommittee No. 1 of the Committee on Armed Services, United States Senate, Eighty-Third Congress, First Session, on Contract Award of C-119 Cargo Planes by Air Force, June 2, 3, 4, 5, 23, and 24, 1953*, 5–57, quote on 18. The C-119 later was used as the recovery aircraft for the first CORONA reconnaissance satellite missions. (U)

made him one of the world's premiere shipping tycoons. In 1952, he assembled a makeshift fleet under the Hendy aegis and entered the ore-carrying trade. More significantly, that same year McCone and Stephen Bechtel joined a partnership with Henry Mercer, owner of States Marine Lines and US Lines, whose vast fleet included the largest unsubsidized American-flag cargo operation afloat. Through this arrangement, McCone's Hendy firm prospered by hauling minerals from South America and the Caribbean and chemicals on the US Intracoastal Waterway.[18] (U)

McCone did not forswear public service, however. After he resigned from the Department of Defense, US policymakers continued to seek his advice. In 1952, he went on a five-day inspection tour of air facilities in Korea and on his return recommended more rigorous training for American personnel. McCone declined President Dwight Eisenhower's request that he serve as secretary of the Air Force or undersecretary of State—citing congressional criticism of contracts he had awarded while at the Pentagon—but he often was an unpublicized visitor at the White House for private meetings in the presidential residence, and administration leaders solicited his counsel on defense reorganization, the military budget, and dealings with European leaders he knew from his business travels. In 1954, he joined the Department of State's Public Committee on Personnel—better known as the Wriston Committee, after its chairman, Brown University President Henry Wriston—to recommend ways to strengthen and modernize the Foreign Service. McCone's specific assignment was to find ways to break down the institutional and cultural barriers between "elite" career diplomats and Washington-based civil servants. Through an ingenious job reclassification, McCone and colleagues on his working group were able to force circulation between the two cadre of employees—a process at the time dubbed "Wristonization." Serving on the Wriston Committee enabled McCone to anticipate the problem of bureaucratic cultures he would encounter at CIA.[19] (U)

McCone kept his hand in Republican politics as well during this time. He supported the GOP's internationalist wing in its battle for control of the party in 1952 against the isolationists, led by Ohio Sen. Robert Taft. During the 1956 presidential campaign, he helped raise money in California for the Eisenhower-Nixon ticket and hosted the president for a vacation on the Monterey Peninsula. He caused a local stir when he chastised a group of professors at Cal Tech for defending Democratic candidate Adlai Stevenson's proposal to suspend hydrogen bomb tests. Stevenson made nuclear testing an electoral issue, calling it "the greatest menace the world has ever known." Eisenhower condemned his opponent's "strange new formula" as a "theatrical national gesture," and Nixon called it "catastrophic nonsense," but the Cal Tech scientists said Stevenson's idea was "a useful way to get the [disarmament] talks out of the deadlock stage." McCone, who was heading Cal Tech's fund raising program, wrote the professors a scathing letter that revealed what he thought about nuclear testing and how he believed politically conscious academics should comport themselves in a time of global tension:

> Your statement is obviously designed to create fear in the minds of the uninformed that radioactive fallout from H-bomb tests endangers life.... Your proposition that postponement of tests will delay the time when other nations might possess practical H-bomb experience...has for several years been a prominent part of Soviet propaganda.

The scientists' support for Stevenson's position so incensed McCone that he resigned from Cal Tech's fund raising drive.[20] (U)

---

[18] McCartney, 97; *Current Biography 1959*, 273; Murphy, "Mr. McCone Arrives in Washington," 198. (U)

[19] John McCone oral history (OH) interview by [redacted] Los Angeles, CA, 26 July 1976, 9, 11–13 (hereafter McCone [redacted] OH; transcripts of all oral history interviews are on file in the History Staff unless otherwise noted); "Atomic Energy's McCone," 16; Murphy, "Mr. McCone Arrives in Washington," 198. Columnist Joseph Alsop later wrote that Eisenhower's secretary of defense, Charles E. Wilson, had vetoed the appointment of McCone as secretary of the Air Force because he was "tainted with Trumanism"—i.e., too closely identified with Democratic policies. Alsop, syndicated column, *Washington Post*, 29 September 1961, copy in HS Files, Job 84-00473R, box 1, folder 4. Wilson's supposed action is not mentioned elsewhere. The Wriston Committee's report was titled "Toward a Stronger Foreign Service"; copy in ibid., folder 8. (U)

[20] Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower. Volume II*, 357–60; John Barlow Martin, *Adlai Stevenson and the World*, 365–77; Marine, 308. This was not the only time that McCone expressed concern about liberal-left politics at California institutions of higher education. In January 1965, when students at the University of California at Berkeley were protesting administration policies and organizing the Free Speech Movement, he told FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover about his conversation with a conservative university regent (Edwin Pauley) worried about radicals on campus. According to Hoover, McCone said that the regent "is anxious to get a line on any persons who are communists or have communist associations either on the faculty or in the student body[,] and then at a Board of Regents level handle it without disclosing his source." Hoover told McCone that he would have a memorandum, based on publicly available information, sent to the head of the Bureau's Los Angeles office discussing "some of these individuals causing trouble at Berkeley." Hoover memorandum to Clyde Tolson et al., 28 January 1965, Athan Theoharis, ed., *From the Secret Files of J. Edgar Hoover*, 92; "Reagan, FBI, CIA Tried to Quash Campus Unrest," *USA Today*, 8 June 2002, online version at Internet address www.usatoday.com/news/washdc/2002/06/08/reagan.htm. (U)

Two years later, McCone served as the financial chairman for the unsuccessful 1958 gubernatorial campaign of Sen. William Knowland, who was running against Democrat Edmund G. "Pat" Brown. Knowland was the arch-conservative spokesman for the "China Lobby" that supported Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist Chinese in Taiwan as the rightful government of mainland China. McCone persuaded many conservative Californians to fill Knowland's coffer, but the Republican—known by detractors as the "Senator from Formosa"—lost decisively to the moderate Brown.[21] (U)

The wave of fear and anxiety that swept over the United States after the Soviets' surprise launch of the Sputnik satellite on 4 October 1957 energized McCone against the Eisenhower administration's complacent response.[22] US officials belittled Sputnik as a "silly bauble," "a hunk of iron," and "one shot in an outer space basketball game." McCone thought differently. He traveled to Washington, sought out Eisenhower and Nixon, and implored them to face the Soviets' achievement squarely or risk political disaster by appearing feckless and indifferent. McCone recalled talking to Eisenhower twice about taking the offensive on the technology front to allay concerns of the sort conveyed by an aide to Senate majority leader Lyndon Johnson:

> It is unpleasant to feel that there is something floating around in the air which the Russians can put up and we can't.... It really doesn't matter whether the satellite has any military value. The important thing is that the Russians have left the earth and the race for the control of the universe has started. (U)

The president evidently took the opportunity to apprise McCone of progress in US missile development and the CORONA satellite project. He may also have eased McCone's concerns by letting him know that a special strategic review panel, the Gaither Committee, had been examining US strategic and civil defense programs since early in the year and was about to issue its report. McCone quickly changed his mind about the need for a Manhattan Project approach to missiles, saying that their development was too far advanced and too compartmented to be reorganized. He advised, however, that a deputy secretary of defense be appointed with sole responsibility for missile programs and authority to integrate the military services' separate efforts. Assured that the administration was on top of the space issue, McCone did not react to the launching of Sputnik II on 3 November with alarm, even though the official US response was as understated as before. (U)

Atom Czar (U)

The most extensive public activity—and, for him, the most personally and professionally formative—that McCone engaged in before becoming DCI was his service as chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) from 1958 to 1961. His experiences in managing a high-profile bureaucracy, contributing to the formulation of national security policy, and interacting with political overseers greatly influenced how he would direct the Intelligence Community in the early 1960s. McCone's technical background, conservative Republican credentials, prior government work, and good relations with President Eisenhower all suited him for that post, which Lewis Strauss vacated in June 1958.[23] Strauss had battled constantly with liberal Democrats on the Congressional Joint Committee on Atomic Energy over issues ranging from the lagging state of civilian atomic power development to a nuclear test ban. The debate over private versus public development of atomic power was a perennial one, with the administration in favor of giving business the larger role, while congressional Democrats—influenced by the AEC's first chairman, former New Dealer David Lilienthal—wanted the US gov-

[21] Ross Y. Koen, *The China Lobby in American Politics*; Kurt Schuparra, *Triumph of the Right*, chap. 2; David W. Reinhard, *The Republican Right since 1945*, 142–45; Herbert L. Phillips, *Big Wayward Girl: An Informal Political History of California*, chap. 26; Royce Delmatier et al., *The Rumble of California Politics, 1848–1970*, 37–41; Gladwin Hill, *Dancing Bear: An Inside Look at California Politics*, 142–62; Totton J. Anderson, "The 1958 Election in California," *Western Political Quarterly* 12, no. 1, pt. 2 (March 1959): 276–300. Anderson described the Knowland-Brown race as "a choice between a wealthy, arch-conservative, militantly partisan, austere, Protestant Republican and a self-made, middle-of-the-road, relatively unpartisan, friendly, Catholic Democrat" (285). (U)

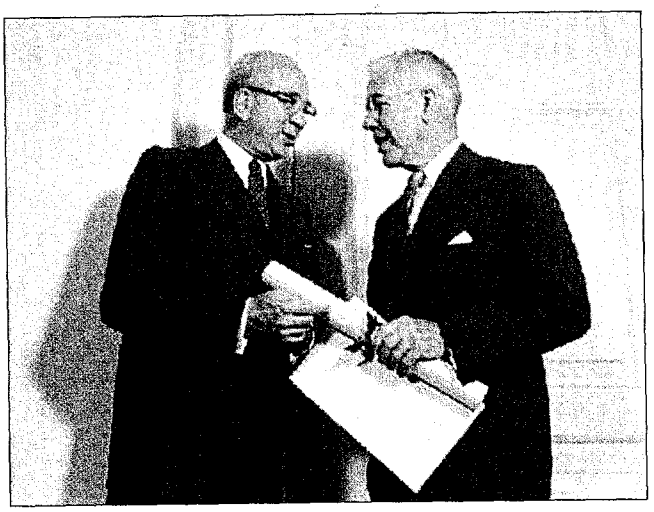
[22] Sources used for this discussion of Sputnik were: Paul Dickson, *Sputnik: The Shock of the Century*, 22, 112, 118–19; Robert A. Divine, *The Sputnik Challenge*, chaps. 1–3; Walter A. McDougall, *The Heavens and the Earth*, chap. 6; "The AEC's 'Quiet Dynamo,'" *Newsweek* 52, no. 28 (14 July 1958): 52; "Energy for Atoms," *New York Times*, 7 June 1958: 8; "AEC Changes Its Top Command," 31–32; Jeffrey Richelson, *America's Secret Eyes in Space*, 18; Arthur Krock, "Origins & Developments of the Missile Program," *New York Times*, 1 November 1957: 26; W.H. Lawrence, "President's Drive to Reassure US Will Open Nov. 13," ibid., 2 November 1957: 1; Arthur Krock, *Memoirs: Sixty Years On the Firing Line*, 320. (U)

[23] McCone met Eisenhower in 1947 when the general was Army Chief of Staff and McCone was on the Air Policy Commission. While he was at the Pentagon in 1950–51, McCone helped Eisenhower prepare for his assignment as commander of NATO and consulted with him after he assumed that responsibility. McCone/[redacted]DH, 1–5. Eisenhower offered McCone a seat on the AEC in 1957, but he declined, stating that he would accept nothing less than the chairmanship. Richard G. Hewlett and Jack M. Holl, *Atoms for Peace and War, 1953–1961*, 490. (U)

ernment to take the lead. Democrats were also incensed at what they regarded as Strauss's deviousness, acerbity, and patronizing attitude. Relations between the AEC and Congress had gotten so bad by 1958 that one Commission staffer remarked, "Those guys on the Hill wouldn't accept the Ten Commandments if they were proposed by Strauss."[24] (U)

The Eisenhower administration saw McCone—who was first on Strauss's list of suggested successors—as a strong-willed pacificator who would champion Republican pro-business policies without antagonizing congressional Democrats. McCone's nomination generally met with bipartisan approval, but three contentious matters arose at his confirmation hearing before the Joint Committee. One was the "Flying Boxcar" contract with Henry Kaiser, which McCone justified as necessary during a wartime emergency. Another was his outburst against the Cal Tech professors. He tried to distinguish their statement from public comments by Edward Teller of the University of California, who opposed any test ban. Teller, the "father of the H-bomb," was speaking as an authority on nuclear weapons and as an individual, whereas the Cal Tech scientists collectively had used their status as faculty members to inject themselves into a political argument. The chairman of the Joint Committee, Sen. Clinton Anderson, got McCone to concede that the professors had signed their statement as individuals, not as representatives of their university.[25] (U)

The third matter—possible conflicts of interest between McCone's financial holdings and AEC affairs—was not resolved as neatly as the others. McCone had warned the White House that this ethics issue might cause a problem. In early June 1958, he wrote Eisenhower's adviser Sherman Adams: "For reasons which I discussed with you, it is not practical for me to divest myself of the ownership of my holdings. Therefore the question of any possible conflict of



Lewis Strauss congratulating McCone at his swearing-in (U)
Photo: Bettmann/CORBIS

interest must be carefully weighed." On the advice of the Department of Justice, McCone agreed to dispose of his stock in two companies that Bechtel (an AEC contractor) controlled, and said he was willing to do likewise with his holdings in Dow Chemical, Union Carbide, and other firms that did business with the AEC. However, he kept all his stock in the Hendy Corporation, which had dealings with AEC contractors, and put it in a trust with the Bank of California, of which he was a stockholder and director. He retained the power to vote it while he was AEC chairman. "I have done a great deal of soul-searching on that question [of conflict of interest]," he assured the Joint Committee, and clearly believed he could separate his private affairs from his public responsibilities.[26] (U)

These brief controversies did not imperil McCone's nomination. The Joint Committee approved it on 2 July 1958, and the Senate confirmed him unanimously a week later. Press coverage was overwhelmingly laudatory. The *New York*

[24] "AEC Changes Its Top Command," 31–32; Corbin Allardice and Edward R. Trapnell, *The Atomic Energy Commission*, 160–61; McCone [redacted] OH, 13–14, 16; Robert A. Divine, *Blowing On the Wind: The Nuclear Test Ban Debate, 1954–1960*, 9–11, 218–19; Richard Pfau, *No Sacrifice Too Great: The Life of Lewis L. Strauss*, chaps. 11–12. Strauss's main antagonist on the committee was its chairman, Clinton P. Anderson from New Mexico, the Senate's senior Democrat. Strauss's and Anderson's egos and visions clashed in a conflict that became highly personal. Strauss said at the end of his term that "this room [where the committee held hearings] is decorated with my blood." Allardice and Trapnell, 176; Murphy, "Mr. McCone Arrives in Washington," 112. (U)

[25] Lewis L. Strauss, *Men and Decisions*, 378; *Hearing Before the Senate Section of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, Congress of the United States, Eighty-Fifth Congress, Second Session, on the Nomination of John A. McCone to be a Member of the Atomic Energy Commission, July 2, 1958*; Marine, 308; "Atomic Energy's McCone," 16; *Current Biography 1959*, 273; "The AEC's 'Quiet Dynamo,'" 52; "Energy for Atoms," *New York Times*, 7 June 1958: 8, and follow-up articles on 3 July 1958: 6; 10 July 1958: 18; and 15 July 1958: 15; Drew Pearson, "John McCone Did Not Sell His Stock When He Became AEC Chairman...," syndicated column, 17 January 1962; and HS Files, Job 84-00473R, box 1, folder 4, Office of Congressional Affairs (OCA) Files, Job 64B00346R, box 4, folders 3–9, and McCone clipping file, HIC, containing many congressional and press items from McCone's DCI confirmation hearings in 1962 at which his AEC nomination was revisited. (U)

[26] Marine, 309; "The AEC's 'Quiet Dynamo,'" 52; "Energy for Atoms," *New York Times*, 7 June 1958: 8, and follow-up articles on 3 July 1958: 6; 10 July 1958, 18; and 15 July 1958: 15; Washington *Evening Star*, 15 July 1958, McCone clipping file, HIC; Lawrence K. Houston (General Counsel) memorandum to Allen Dulles, "Conflicts of Interest," 13 October 1961, OCA Files, Job 64B00346R, box 4, folder 3. (U)

Times ran a glowing profile of McCone entitled "Energy for Atoms." The Washington *Evening Star* called him "the very model of 'modern' Republicanism," and *Time* described him as "handsome, well-knit, [and] professorial-looking." Several periodicals featured his new Regency-style mansion in San Marino, California, and his wife of 20 years, Rosemary (*née* Cooper). He was sworn in as AEC chairman on 14 July. (U)

A Technocratic Approach (U)

Like Lewis Strauss, McCone preferred having the private sector dominate development of nuclear power, but he was not as doctrinaire as his predecessor. The new chairman "was not plagued by Strauss's nagging suspicion that every proposal by the [Joint] Committee's Democratic majority was motivated by a desire to socialize the electric power industry," a historian of the AEC has observed. McCone initially tried to restore some of the apolitical quality the Commission had possessed soon after its inception. He viewed its responsibilities largely in technical and economic terms, sought ideas from many sources, and avoided most of the political and personal controversies that had marred Strauss's tenure. McCone later recalled that he made lasting friendships with several members of the Joint Committee while heading the AEC. He persuaded the legislators that he and the Commission made honest efforts to acquire facts and acted in good faith even when they did not all agree. He showed that he wanted to repair relations with the AEC's constituency by quickly assigning Morse Salisbury—the Commission's public information officer who had many friends in Congress, the press, and other executive agencies—to be a special assistant to the AEC's general manager. McCone's handling of these political and public relations responsibilities suggested some of the approaches he would take toward congressional oversight and publicity while serving as DCI.[27] (U)

Not all of McCone's dealings with the Joint Committee were tranquil, however. When one member issued a press release criticizing McCone's statement to the committee before he actually made it, an enraged McCone shouted at Sen. Anderson: "I just don't know why I am here, Mr. Chairman.... If you want me to come up and testify, listen to me, and then make up your mind what you think about what I say." In addition, on a couple of occasions McCone

McCone begins his chairmanship of the Atomic Energy Commission. (U) Photo: Department of Energy

was caught dissembling in public. After a weapons test in Nevada in late 1958 produced an unusually high level of radiation in Los Angeles, McCone said, with comforting exaggeration, "No harm was done, none whatsoever." He later had to defend the AEC against congressional charges that it had suppressed information about the dangers of fallout. In early 1959, a pro-test ban physicist warned that the Commission was testing a polonium-based propulsion system for missiles and satellites. If the nuclear-powered rockets blew up during the trials, a large area would be contaminated for years. At a press conference, McCone minimized the concern by noting that operational models would not use polonium, but he did not mention what other hazardous nuclear fuel would be loaded on them or what its potential effects were.[28] (U)

Inside the AEC, McCone "made significant strides in bringing systematic evaluation and planning to bear on the Commission's amorphous and inflated programs," according to a history of the AEC. McCone—like Strauss but unlike earlier chairmen Lilienthal and Gordon Dean—was a strong executive who discouraged other commissioners from indulging personal interests through independent contact with the Commission's technical staff. With a businessman's eye for the

[27] Hewlett and Holl, 429, 495, 497, 501, 503ff.; McCone[redacted] OH, 16–18; John McCone oral history interview by [redacted] Los Angeles, CA, 19 August 1970, 3 (hereafter McCone[redacted]); Allardice and Trapnell, 160–61. (U)

[28] Marine, 310; "Tough Man, Tough Job," *Newsweek* 58, no. 42, 9 October 1961: 36; Eleanora W. Schoenebaum, ed., *Political Profiles: The Eisenhower Years*, s.v. "McCone, John A(lex)," 397. (U)

bottom line, he tried to control the burgeoning cost of research in high-energy physics, scrutinized outside scientists' proposals for AEC funds, and made sure that the Commission's scientists conducted applied research instead of entertaining pet ideas. An historian of the AEC has written:

> As an engineer, McCone tended to take a jaundiced view of scientists...he understood the indispensable role that scientists played in establishing the base for technological innovation, but he did not quite accept the idea that turning scientists loose in the laboratory to pursue their own interests in basic research was always a good investment for the federal government.[29] (U)

At the AEC, McCone got a foretaste of the interagency competition he would face while running the Intelligence Community. As he would find later as DCI, the authority of the AEC chairman cut across traditional departmental lines, forcing him to carefully coordinate and negotiate most of the Commission's important decisions. His two principal adversaries in the executive branch were the Departments of Defense and State. One of the main points of contention with the Pentagon was the extent of civilian control of nuclear weapons assigned to NATO troops in Europe. The Air Force wanted as little civilian control as would satisfy US law, while the Joint Committee sought tight controls to keep a nuclear war from starting accidentally. McCone toured European bases with a special congressional subcommittee and helped tip the balance in favor of a supposedly error-proof system of stringent electronic controls. The White House did not act on the idea then, but the Kennedy administration later accepted the approach that he and the Joint Committee recommended.[30] (U)

A major difference McCone had with the Department of State arose over sharing nuclear information with Western European governments. The diplomats took their cue from Eisenhower, who harked back to intelligence and technical cooperation with Great Britain during World War II. McCone, breaking with the Commission's previous position, pointed out that federal law forbade giving nuclear information to foreign countries and cited concerns about security and proliferation. The Joint Committee had the same reservations, and the issue became another subject of political give-and-take between the AEC, the White House, and Congress. McCone did agree with the administration's policy of advancing aid to Western allies so they could develop their own peaceful atomic programs. In 1958, he signed a treaty with West Germany, France, Italy, and the Benelux countries providing a $135 million American loan and a 20-year supply of uranium for reactor fuel. The agreement also called for a $100 million trans-Atlantic research effort on nuclear power.[31] (U)

While at the AEC, McCone worked with CIA on a variety of intelligence matters. As a member of the NSC, he was read in to many clandestine operations dealing with nuclear affairs and was privy to new intelligence about Israel's fledgling nuclear weapons program—particularly the worrisome activity at the Dimona site. (The Eisenhower administration used McCone to put public pressure on Israel by having him appear on *Meet the Press* and provide information to the *New York Times* for a front-page story about the Israeli program.) He sat on the United States Intelligence Board (USIB), the interagency body that set collection requirements for the Intelligence Community and approved national intelligence estimates (NIEs), when assessments dealing with nuclear issues were discussed.

[redacted]

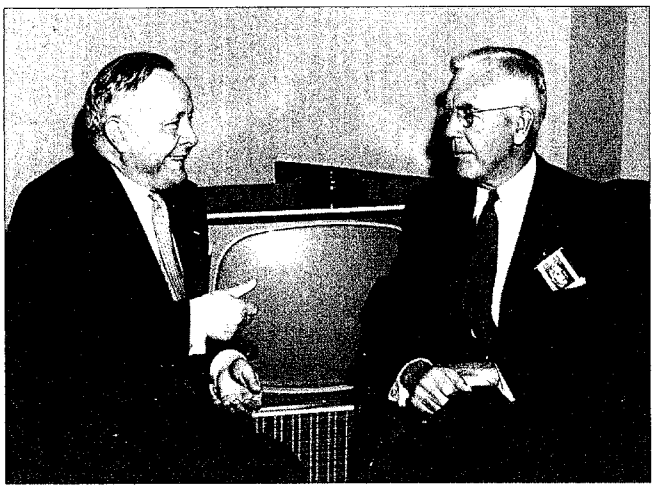
[29] Allardice and Trapnell, 65, 176; Hewlett and Holl, 514, 522–24, 527. (U)

[30] McCone/ [redacted] OH, 21–22. (U)

[31] Ambrose, 478; Hewlett and Holl, 537–38; Richard Dudman, "New CIA Chief McCone Has Respect and Friendship in Both Parties," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 28 September 1961, copy in HS Files, Job 84-00473R, box 1, folder 4; Schoenebaum, 397. (U)

[32] Transcript of McCone interview with Schlesinger, 26 February 1965, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 3; Allen Dulles letter to McCone, 23 August 1958, Charles P. Cabell (DDCI) letter to McCone, 17 September 1958, Dulles letter to McCone, 29 April 1959, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 7, folder 15; Dulles letter to McCone, 6 October 1958, [redacted] Hewlett and Holl, 533–34; Avner Cohen, *Israel and the Bomb*, chap. 5; [redacted] *Fifty Years of Supporting Operations*, 63.

One of the high points of McCone's chairmanship of the AEC was his visit to the Soviet Union in October 1959—one of a series of scientific exchanges inaugurated in the late 1950s between the two countries. McCone's trip followed his signing with his Soviet counterpart of a "Memorandum on Cooperation between the United States and the Soviet Union in the Field of the Utilization of Atomic Energy for Peaceful Purposes." McCone led a delegation of AEC officials and American scientists on a 10-day tour of nuclear facilities in Russia—research institutes, laboratories, reactors, and a uranium mine and ore processing plant—and a voyage on a nuclear-powered icebreaker. McCone's wife and Raymond Garthoff, a CIA analyst functioning as an interpreter and intelligence collector, went along. Soviet security officers kept the American party under close watch—they had learned of Garthoff's CIA affiliation from an agent—and at one point told them not to take snapshots of sites they previously had been allowed to photograph. When McCone asked Garthoff, the most avid picture-taker in the group, to put away his camera, the CIA officer refused, arguing that the features he was photographing were of legitimate interest and had not been declared off-limits until then. "McCone," Garthoff recalled, "was not accustomed to anything but full compliance with whatever position he had taken; indeed, his staff was the most cowed that I have ever seen." He did not press Garthoff further on the matter, however, presumably because the pictures taken might prove useful to analysts.[33] (U)



McCone converses with a Soviet nuclear program official in 1959. (U) Photo: Department of Energy

The trip produced some useful new or collateral intelligence on Soviet nuclear technology and scientists that was reported to the Intelligence Community through CIA channels and to the president by McCone directly. The AEC chairman commented that Soviet nuclear scientists were sufficiently competent that "it is quite clear that their accomplishments are by no means attributable to 'stealing our secrets' although they may have gained marginal advantage from time to time on specific details in this way." Now that he knew how much progress the Soviets had made in the nuclear field, McCone suggested that the administration consider applying one of his favorite concepts, centralized organization, to the US program. The AEC, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the nuclear laboratories, and other related entities should be consolidated into a national scientific agency under the leadership of a "science czar." President Eisenhower, however, preferred the existing, less centralized arrangement. A Soviet delegation came to the United States in November 1959 on a reciprocal visit, and McCone met with the head of the Soviet version of the AEC, both alone and with the president. They discussed a range of technical and political issues.

President Eisenhower also used McCone as a policy troubleshooter while he was head of the AEC. In one instance, McCone resolved a dispute between NASA and George Kistiakowsky, the presidential science adviser, on one side, and the Department of the Treasury and the Bureau of the Budget on the other, over an expensive plan to develop a missile propulsion system that would enable the United States to

[33] Raymond Garthoff, "Intelligence Aspects of Cold War Scientific Exchanges," *I&NS* 15, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 1–6; idem, *A Journey through the Cold War*, 90, 93; Glenn T. Seaborg, *Kennedy, Khrushchev, and the Test Ban*, 201. (U)

[34] Garthoff, "Intelligence Aspects of Cold War Scientific Exchanges," 8–12, and *A Journey through the Cold War*, 94–95; Garthoff memorandum to Dulles, "Intelligence Acquired During the Visit of Chairman McCone, Atomic Energy Commission, and Delegation to the USSR," 9 November 1959, and Garthoff memoranda, "Conversation Between Chairman John A. McCone, AEC, and Professor V.S. Emelyanov, 19 November 1959," "Memorandum of Conversation Between President Dwight D. Eisenhower, Chairman John A. McCone, and Mr. V.S. Emelyanov..., 24 November 1959," "Memorandum of Conversation Between Chairman John A. McCone, AEC, and V.S. Emelyanov, 24 November 1959," "Comments of Prof. Vasily S. Emelyanov...to an American official in private conversation," November 1959, and "Information Gleaned from the Soviet Atomic Energy Delegation in the United States," 1 December 1959,

launch vehicles into space. After his own investigation, McCone advised the president that the United States would be shut out of the space race unless he authorized the expenditure. Eisenhower did.[35] (U)

McCone ended the AEC's role in the J. Robert Oppenheimer *cause célèbre* in a cleverly managerial fashion that enabled him to affirm his skepticism about the scientist while placating aggrieved Commission personnel. In 1954, the AEC had revoked the security clearance of Oppenheimer, the brilliant and enigmatic "father of the A-bomb." A board of inquiry, handpicked by Lewis Strauss and predisposed against Oppenheimer, had declared him a security risk for associating with known communists and suspected Soviet espionage agents in the 1930s and 1940s and for opposing development of the hydrogen bomb. Oppenheimer had been involved in assorted radical causes before World War II, was an enthusiastic fellow traveler (and possibly also a secret member of the Communist Party USA), and had been "cultivated" by Soviet intelligence. He displayed naiveté and poor judgment in choosing and maintaining social contacts with Soviet sympathizers—some of whom had at least indirect links to Soviet intelligence—while he worked on US atomic projects, but allegations that he passed atomic secrets to the Soviet Union were, and still are, doubtful. The commission board's decision effectively ended Oppenheimer's participation in the nuclear program. Issued during the "Second Red Scare," it upset and demoralized many AEC scientists, who thought their organization had sullied its reputation for technical expertise and objectivity by surrendering to political pressure and joining in an anticommunist "witch hunt."[36] (U)

McCone's critical attitude toward Oppenheimer may have been formed or influenced during his service as undersecretary of the Air Force during 1950–51. At that time, the Air Force suspected Oppenheimer's loyalty, opposed his advice about developing tactical atomic weapons to complement strategic bombing, and tried to keep classified information from him. In 1958, in a politically more subdued time, the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy indicated that the AEC should reinvestigate the case. McCone did not want to reopen the controversy and devised a superficially judicious procedure that put the onus on Oppenheimer and his supporters. The chairman set two conditions for ordering a reexamination: new evidence must be available, and Oppenheimer himself must want the case revisited. Neither was so—which McCone undoubtedly knew—and the contentious chapter remained closed. McCone later said that Oppenheimer had committed breaches of security but still deserved the accolades he received for his scientific accomplishments. McCone's apparent fairmindedness impressed AEC scientists and helped raise morale at the Commission.[37] (U)

Test Ban Hardliner (U)

The most turbulent issue McCone faced while running the AEC was the nuclear test ban. His experience with it provides valuable insights into the character traits and managerial methods that he would soon exhibit as DCI—especially his force of will, bureaucratic toughness, technical expertise, emphasis on hard data, and use of political allies. Public fears of the dangers from fallout and the potential for nuclear cataclysm intensified as both East and West tested fusion weapons while Cold War tensions worsened. President Eisenhower initially was skeptical of the value and achievability of a test ban and denounced the Soviets for making propagandistic proposals. (U)

By 1958, however, Sputnik-induced political pressure and Eisenhower's own concerns about controlling US military expenditures and restraining the arms race had risen high enough that he decided to propose test ban negotiations with the Soviet Union. He wrote in his memoirs that "my goal was modest...to reach at least a small, enforceable agreement...which might generate confidence for more ambitious plans in this or related fields." The president told McCone that he had "to take some risk" in order to "do away with atmospheric testing, thus eliminating the health hazard, and at the same time...slow down the arms race." After intensive discussion inside the administration and with Western allies, Eisenhower in April 1958 proposed to Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev that scientific experts from both countries meet to discuss the technical aspects of

[35] McCone [redacted] OH, 32–33. (U)

[36] Pfau, chaps. 9–10; John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr, *VENONA: Decoding Soviet Espionage in America*, 327–30; Gregg Herken, *Brotherhood of the Bomb*, passim, and materials on the book's Web site at www.brotherhoodofthebomb.com/bhbsources/documents/html.; Richard Rhodes, *Dark Sun: The Making of the Hydrogen Bomb*, chap. 26; Herbert Romerstein and Eric Breindel, *The Venona Secrets*, 264–77; Jerrold and Leona Schecter, *Sacred Secrets*, 47–51, 198–206; Pavel Sudoplatov and Anatoli Sudoplatov (with Jerrold L. and Leona P. Schecter), *Special Tasks*, 174–76, 187–90, 193–97, 480; Allen Weinstein and Alexander Vassilev, *The Haunted Wood*, 183–85. (U)

[37] Rhodes, 530–31; McCone [redacted] OH, 19–21. (U)

a test ban. Those talks convened in Geneva on 1 July, just before McCone's confirmation. The following month, the president suggested that a series of negotiations begin on 31 October, and he imposed a one-year moratorium on American nuclear tests effective at the same time.[38] (U)

Throughout his tenure as AEC chairman, McCone fought what a British official called a "stubborn and ultimately successful rearguard action" against prohibitions on nuclear weapons tests. He said at his confirmation hearing that he supported a test suspension with "adequate and proper safeguards"—despite its circumspect sound, a vague and subjective caveat that could justify opposing almost any agreement. In 1959, he declared publicly that "[i]n my Air Force days, I was devoted to the concept of massive retaliation, and I still am." Underlying McCone's adamant opposition were his strong anticommunist views, distrust of the Soviets, and history of support for and involvement with the military-industrial complex. He did not want to do anything that would aid the Soviets in achieving their objective of an unpoliced ban on all nuclear tests and at the same time give them a major victory in the East-West propaganda war. In addition, McCone had bureaucratic and technical objections. He believed that halting the tests conflicted with the AEC's mission of "insuring that we were making maximum use of our atomic resources and that no other country was getting ahead of us," as he later described the problem. He did all he could to persuade the administration that a test ban would seriously impair the Commission's ability to meet military requirements. He did not believe a comprehensive ban was verifiable using current technology (because small underground explosions could go undetected or be confused with seismic activity), and thought that a reliable control system would take four to five years to create. Meanwhile, McCone believed, the Soviets would continue at least underground testing undetected while talks dragged on and pressure built on the United States to accept a treaty. Time was on the Soviets' side, and McCone did not want Eisenhower to gamble on Soviet good faith. Lastly, much of the administration's internal debate on the test ban took place against the backdrop of Soviet threats to conclude a treaty with East Germany that would force the Western powers out of Berlin. McCone did not believe the United States should make concessions on nuclear weapons while the German crisis was underway.[39] (U)

McCone did not, however, explicitly answer the counterargument that a test ban would freeze nuclear weapon development at a time when the United States had strategic superiority over the Soviet Union. DCI Allen Dulles used intelligence estimates that the United States had a nuclear advantage to make the "quit while ahead" argument. McCone read the same estimates but reached the opposite conclusion. Especially after his look at Soviet nuclear facilities in 1959, he judged that the US government should build a large margin of protection into its nuclear deterrent. (U)

McCone and his allies in the administration, the military, and Congress did not deter Eisenhower from pursuing some deceleration of the arms race, but in the end they prevailed. No test ban, comprehensive or otherwise, was achieved during Eisenhower's presidency. Opposition from McCone and others, combined with an overambitious American agenda and Soviet negotiating tactics, slowed the talks until the shootdown of Francis Gary Powers's U-2 over Soviet territory in May 1960 made an agreement politically unachievable. McCone remembered that the president "got very angry with me at times" for opposing the administration's nuclear policy so tenaciously. Eisenhower had to remind McCone soon after his confirmation that an AEC chairman was "not concerned with the question of [the] world political position." "He is an operator," the president said privately, "not a foreign policy maker." As head of the AEC, however, McCone functioned very much as a policymaker, and he knew he could get away with a lot because Eisenhower had always been reluctant to dismiss wayward subordinates. Moreover, McCone proved to be a much more

[38] Divine, *Blowing On the Wind*, chaps. 5, 6, and 8; Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The White House Years*, 352, 474–78; Hewlett and Holl, 546; Harold Karan Jacobson and Eric Stein, *Diplomats, Scientists, and Politicians*, 14–81, 471; Kendrick Oliver, *Kennedy, Macmillan, and the Nuclear Test-Ban Debate, 1961–63*, 5–10; Eisenhower letters to Khrushchev, 8 and 28 April 1958, Department of State, *Documents on Disarmament, 1945–1959*, 982–95, 1006–7; Eisenhower statement, "Experts' Report on Detection of Nuclear Tests, August 22, 1958," ibid., 1112. (U)

[39] This precis of McCone's views on the test ban is based on: *FRUS, 1958–1960, III, National Security Policy; Arms Control and Disarmament*, docs. 168, 171, 194, 216, 220, 221, 223, 232, 233, 244, 246, 250, 254, 257; Jacobson and Stein, 246, 249, 540, 543–44, 557; Bernard J. Firestone, *The Quest for Nuclear Stability: John F. Kennedy and the Soviet Union*, 73–74; Dudman; and *Conversation with McCone*, 16. (U)

McCone told US officials that he found it hard not to get impatient with British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, who was pushing hard for a test ban. "After all," according to McCone, "one of the reasons the UK is in a position to agree to cease British nuclear weapons development activities is that the United Kingdom is now getting weapons information and submarines from the United States under our bilateral agreement with them." At another point, McCone said that "we and the British are not on the 'same wicket.'" "Memorandum of Conversation...Meeting of Principals: Geneva Nuclear Test Negotiations," 6 October 1959, and "Memorandum of Conference with President Eisenhower," 19 August 1960, *FRUS, 1958–1960, III, National Security Policy; Arms Control and Disarmament*, 784, 904. (U)

adroit and successful bureaucratic infighter than his predecessor Strauss had been.[40] (U)

McCone took charge of the AEC just as the president created a new high-level interdepartmental body, the Committee of Principals, to formulate policy on nuclear testing. Its other members were Secretary of State John Foster Dulles (the chairman) and Secretary of Defense Neil McElroy (or their deputies), DCI Dulles, and presidential science adviser James Killian. The president wanted them to work out a consensus on the test ban issue, but the group quickly split into advocates of a ban as a first step toward nuclear disarmament—notably the Dulles brothers and Killian—and supporters of continued testing—McElroy, or more often Deputy Secretary of Defense Donald Quarles, and McCone. McCone and Quarles contended that the political advantages of a test suspension did not outweigh the military disadvantages. McCone also on occasion raised the fear that the AEC's best scientists would quit if testing were stopped and that remobilizing the United States' nuclear production infrastructure would waste time and money. He, Quarles, and others fought behind the scenes to block the unity that Eisenhower wanted and forced the administration to make test ban decisions on an ad hoc, day-to-day basis.[41] (U)

Even as Eisenhower was on the verge of announcing an offer to begin negotiations with the Soviet Union on banning all tests, McCone and the Department of Defense proposed a series of tests to evaluate the feasibility of a new antiballistic missile (ABM) system. Although the president canceled the ABM tests, he let the AEC and the Pentagon carry out a battery of low-level trials of other nuclear weapons. The first test occurred the same day Khrushchev accepted Eisenhower's latest offer to negotiate a ban. At the same time, however, the president overrode McCone's objections and had the Committee of Principals draft guidelines for verifying a test ban. McCone also tried, without success, to persuade Eisenhower to continue underground testing because it had potentially valuable peaceful applications—for example, using nuclear charges to extract oil from deep deposits and to blast tunnels through mountains. Two days before the testing moratorium went into effect, McCone publicly declared that the AEC was ready to resume testing on a moment's notice. He regretted the test ban because it hindered development of new weapons, including the so-called "clean" bomb (a low-radiation, low-fallout device).[42] (U)

McCone recognized that he had to give some ground as public support for a test ban grew. Realizing that the Geneva talks would continue in any event, he tried to get them to focus on the limited objective of suspending atmospheric testing. The Soviets, he believed, could use the United States' insistence on a comprehensive ban to screen their own delaying tactics—"[i]f we continue to negotiate with the Russians indefinitely...we have accepted a test suspension without an agreement"—and, if the talks broke off, as an excuse to blame the Eisenhower administration for the impasse. McCone was less interested in improving the prospects for an agreement than in upholding the AEC's commitment to control and verification, even if doing so lent some credence to Khrushchev's charge that an on-site inspection system was a "military espionage plan" in disguise. In late January 1959, McCone submitted to Secretary of State Dulles a Commission plan for a phased treaty starting with a ban on above-ground tests, followed by a prohibition on underground tests when a satisfactory detection system was developed. This idea became the basis for the new Western position at the Geneva talks that Eisenhower worked out with the British. The proposal, which the president conveyed to the Soviets in April, was widely interpreted as a victory for McCone and his allies. McCone was pleased that he was making headway inside the administration: "I feel that the AEC's position is *now* pretty well recognized as the proper one by everyone concerned."[43] (U)

A further display of McCone's tactical maneuvering came during the "fallout scare" of 1958–59, when studies of the health effects of radioactive fallout alarmed the American people. McCone calculated that he could take advantage of

[40] McCone [redacted] OH, 25–27; Ambrose, 479; Divine, *Blowing On the Wind*, 256; Jacobson and Stein, 471–72; "Memorandum of Conference with President Eisenhower," 18 August 1958, *FRUS, 1958–1960, III, National Security Policy; Arms Control and Disarmament*, 648. (U)

[41] Hewlett and Holl, 544–45; Divine, *Blowing On the Wind*, 219; Jacobson and Stein, 85–88, 471; "Record of Meeting...Revision of US Position on First Phase Disarmament," 18 August 1958, *FRUS, 1958–1960, III, National Security Policy; Arms Control and Disarmament*, 645–46. (U)

[42] Divine, *Blowing On the Wind*, 232, 239; Ambrose, 479–80; Jacobson and Stein, 157–58; McCone letter to Eisenhower, 28 August 1958, *FRUS, 1958–1960, III, National Security Policy; Arms Control and Disarmament*, 658–59. (U)

[43] "Memorandum of Conversation...US Position in Geneva Nuclear Test Negotiations," 30 January 1959, and "Memorandum of Meeting...Meeting on Nuclear Testing," 12 February 1959, *FRUS, 1958–1960, III, National Security Policy; Arms Control and Disarmament*, 696–98, 704; Hewlett and Holl, 551–52, 554; Jacobson and Stein, 168–73. (U)

the popular mood to make both a timely concession on the sensitive issue of atmospheric testing and a more effective case for resuming underground testing. He showed that the AEC was responsive to public concerns by telling the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy in June 1959 that "we should give serious consideration to curtailing atmospheric tests for the simple reason of eliminating this fear [of fallout], whether the fear is warranted or not, because it is there." He also pointed out that underground tests were "cleaner" and necessary for providing data on seismic detection. A summer trip to Geneva further convinced McCone of the talks' futility, and he argued even more forcefully that US negotiators should concentrate instead on banning only atmospheric tests because at least that prohibition was enforceable.[44] (U)


George Kistiakowsky (U)

McCone's influence over nuclear policy declined with the arrival of Eisenhower's new science adviser, George Kistiakowsky, in July 1959. Kistiakowsky—a chemistry professor from Harvard who had fought the Bolsheviks and worked on the Manhattan Project—became the administration's chief defender of the test ban and was insistent about revitalizing the Geneva talks. He and McCone quickly took a dislike to each other, and, as a member of the Committee of Principals, the scientist thwarted the AEC chairman whenever he could. At one meeting he even provoked what he described as a "wild reaction" from McCone. The president, seeking time to let the negotiators make progress, extended the moratorium to the end of the year. McCone tried to counter these setbacks by once again going public with his differences. On *Meet the Press*, he said the moratorium should only be continued week by week, and only if the Soviets stopped stalling at Geneva.[45] (U)

By the latter part of 1959, political sentiment in the United States had shifted decisively in favor of the moratorium and an eventual comprehensive test ban, so McCone bowed to realities and tried to take the initiative by engineering a compromise between the administration's factions. He suggested that the United States call for a new technical conference to examine recent developments in underground testing that called into question the detection system under discussion in Geneva. If the Soviets declined, or if the conference failed to agree on a more elaborate detection system, McCone proposed that Washington continue the moratorium day by day and not resume underground tests unless Moscow did. McCone was making another opportune concession, or calculating that the Soviets would refuse the latest offer, or both. Kistiakowsky termed McCone's idea "a surprisingly sensible proposal which really represents his complete about-face from last summer," the Department of State endorsed it, and, to the Americans' surprise, the Soviets agreed to discuss the new seismic information.[46] (U)

The optimism dissipated quickly when the talks broke down, and McCone and the US military stepped up demands that tests resume. Now it was Kistiakowsky's turn to propose a compromise to McCone. Over lunch in mid-December 1959, the scientist suggested a ban on atmospheric tests and underground experiments above a certain explosive threshold, the level to depend on how many on-site inspections the Soviets would permit. McCone had always wanted on-site inspections and found the plan appealing. He won another point at the end of the year when the president announced that even though no breakthroughs in negotiations were likely anytime soon, "we shall not resume nuclear weapons tests without announcing our intention in advance of any resumption"—in effect, McCone's day-to-day approach.[47] (U)

Eisenhower's determination to reach a more ambitious agreement exceeded McCone's obduracy, and soon the AEC chairman found himself isolated inside the nuclear policy-

[44] Hewlett and Holl, 555–56; Divine, *Blowing On the Wind*, 248, 256–57, 280, 283–84; Jacobson and Stein, 200; McCone notes of Principals meeting on 5 June 1959, *FRUS, 1958–1960, III, National Security Policy; Arms Control and Disarmament*, 696–98, 704; Hewlett and Holl, 749–50. (U)

[45] Jacobson and Stein, 284–86, 290–91; Hewlett and Holl, 557; McCone [redacted] OH, 31; George B. Kistiakowsky, *A Scientist at the White House*, 17–36; Eisenhower, 480. (U)

[46] Kistiakowsky, 106–9; Divine, *Blowing On the Wind*, 291–93; Hewlett and Holl, 553–54; Jacobson and Stein, 159–62; "Memorandum of Conversation...Nuclear Test Negotiations: Meeting of the Principals...," 17 November 1959, *FRUS, 1958–1960, III, National Security Policy; Arms Control and Disarmament*, 797–803. (U)

[47] Hewlett and Holl, 558–59; Divine, *Blowing On the Wind*, 294–95; "Memorandum of Conversation with President Eisenhower," 29 December 1959, "Memorandum of Conversation...Threshold Proposal for Nuclear Test Negotiations," 12 January 1960, "Memorandum of Conversation...Threshold Proposal for Nuclear Test Negotiations," 19 January 1960, *FRUS, 1958–1960, III, National Security Policy; Arms Control and Disarmament*, 816–31. (U)

making coterie. The president was starting to distrust McCone, viewing him as a departmental advocate and defender of the interests of the nuclear industry. In early February 1960, Eisenhower did not argue when Secretary of State Christian Herter charged McCone with a "bad leak" to the *New York Times* about the administration's threshold approach. When told that McCone's Soviet counterpart wanted to talk to the AEC chairman, Eisenhower said he would allow that "so long as Mr. McCone is thoroughly indoctrinated [in US policy] and there is no danger of his going off on his own."[48] (U)

On 11 February 1960, the president announced that he would accept a treaty that ended all nuclear tests in the atmosphere, oceans, and outer space, as well as underground tests that could be monitored. Favorable domestic reaction to the announcement, indications of Soviet willingness to make concessions on inspections, and a sense of urgency resulting from France's first atomic test (just after Eisenhower's statement) helped end the longstanding split within the administration. At a 23 March meeting of the Committee of Principals to discuss a draft policy statement, McCone lost the support of the Pentagon, which now saw an advantage to opening up the Soviet Union to limited international inspection. "McCone is violently opposed," Herter wrote; the AEC chairman contended that parts of the draft were "[a] complete acceptance of what the Soviets proposed." When McCone voiced his objections the next day at the White House, he received an embarrassing rebuke from the president—the second time in as many months that Eisenhower had put him in his place. A few weeks before, after McCone gave what Kistiakowsky called "a rather emotional speech" about the inadequacy of the US nuclear deterrent and demanded a much larger missile program and a full B-52 alert, the president "firmly" said he "would not accept" that position because such a buildup "would so disrupt the national economy that only a highly regimented society or an armed camp could result." Now, after hearing McCone once more make his case against a long-term moratorium on underground testing, Eisenhower had had enough. According to Kistiakowsky, he unleashed his formidable temper, pounded the table, and, in a "sharp voice," rejected McCone's point of view, particularly his suggestion that the agreement was "a surrender of our basic policy."[49] (U)

McCone told Lewis Strauss that he was "pretty damned sore" about the treatment he was getting, but his irritation seemed only to make him more determined not to be outdone. He worked quietly with the administration's opponents in Congress to raise doubts about the test ban proposal and to suppress hopes about the Eisenhower-Khrushchev summit scheduled for mid-May in Paris. Some sources at the time claimed that McCone was the prime mover behind hearings that the Democrat-controlled Joint Committee on Atomic Energy held in April 1960. (The Democrats at this time were criticizing the administration for allowing a "missile gap" to develop.) McCone, figuring that the Soviets must be testing nuclear weapons in secret, regarded the administration's latest proposal as a "national peril" that might force him to resign from the AEC. After the Powers U-2 incident poisoned the atmosphere at the Paris summit, McCone advised Eisenhower to break off the negotiations in Geneva and authorize new underground tests. The president did not do so. Instead, after returning to Washington, he said that there would be no change in US policy. Over McCone's familiar objections, he stated that the United States would refrain from nuclear testing and continue to seek a test ban treaty at Geneva, even though he knew that the U-2 shootdown had ended any chance for an agreement during his presidency. The Soviet Bloc delegation walked out of the talks on 27 June. After meetings resumed later in the year, the negotiators marked time until a new administration took office.[50] (U)

Au Revoir (U)

McCone also marked time after John F. Kennedy's victory in the November presidential election. (He voted for Richard Nixon and consoled the GOP loser by writing, "Let's look forward to 1964.") Although Kennedy supported a moratorium on nuclear testing and efforts to negotiate a test ban treaty, as a senator he had been impressed

[48] "Memorandum of Conference with President Eisenhower," 2 February 1960, *FRUS, 1958–1960, III, National Security Policy; Arms Control and Disarmament*, 833–34. (U)

[49] Eisenhower's statement in Department of State, *American Foreign Policy: Current Documents, 1960*, 727; "Memorandum of Conversation...Geneva Nuclear Test Negotiations: Meeting of Principals," 23 March 1960, and "Memorandum of Conference with President Eisenhower," 24 March 1960, *FRUS, 1958–1960, III, National Security Policy; Arms Control and Disarmament*, 850, 862; Kistiakowsky, 243, 282; Ambrose, 562–65; Divine, *Blowing On the Wind*, 300–301; Eisenhower, 480–81; Hewlett and Holl, 560; Jacobson and Stein, 245–46. To preempt public dissent from administration officials—such as McCone had expressed previously—the president also directed that they clear speeches on the test ban with the Department of State. Secretary Herter, on White House orders, promptly vetoed a speech McCone was scheduled to give that week. McCone protested, pointed out flaws in White House reasoning, and was allowed to give an amended address. Krock, *Memoirs*, 296–97. (U)

with McCone's knowledge of the Soviet nuclear program and indicated that he wanted McCone to remain at the AEC for at least six months to a year. McCone—who repeated his criticisms of the moratorium in an interview with *US News and World Report* in December—did not want to put himself in a dissenting position with the new administration from the outset. While not explicitly refusing to serve out his term, he replied to the president-elect by proposing three possible successors. Kennedy took the hint. After the inauguration, he selected one of McCone's choices: Glenn Seaborg, a chemist and Nobel laureate then serving as chancellor of the University of California at Berkeley. After Seaborg's installation at the AEC, McCone returned to private life, with every intention of staying there.[51] (U)

[50] Hewlett and Holl, 560–61; Kistiakowsky, 290–91, 335; Ambrose, 567; Divine, *Blowing On the Wind*, 306–10, 313–14; McCone, "Memorandum for the Files," 18 May 1960, and "Editorial Note," *FRUS, 1958–1960, III, National Security Policy; Arms Control and Disarmament*, 879–81; Khrushchev letter to Eisenhower, 27 June 1960, *American Foreign Policy: Current Documents, 1960*, 703–4; McCone [redacted] OH, 31. McCone traveled to the United Kingdom in August to discuss the future of the Geneva talks with Prime Minister Macmillan and other British officials. "Memorandum of Conference with President Eisenhower," 19 August 1960, *FRUS, 1958–1960, III, National Security Policy; Arms Control and Disarmament*, 901–4. (U)

[51] Michael R. Beschloss, *The Crisis Years: Kennedy and Khrushchev, 1960–1963*, 417; Herbert Scoville (Assistant Director for Scientific Intelligence) memorandum to Allen Dulles, "Comments on US News and World Report Interview with John A. McCone," 26 December 1960, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 34, folder 2; McCone [redacted] OH, 5–6; McCone [redacted] OH, 7–28; transcript of McCone interview with Schlesinger, 26 February 1965, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 3; John Prados, *The Soviet Estimate*, 129. McCone was mentioned as a nominee for secretary of defense had Nixon won the election. "CIA's New Boss," *Time* 78, no. 38 (6 October 1961): 22. (U)

CHAPTER 2

Setting a New Course (I): Director of CIA (U)

"This is a hell of a way to learn things," President John Kennedy fumed after the disaster at the Bay of Pigs in April 1961.[1] "But I have learned one thing from this business—that is, that we will have to deal with CIA. McNamara has dealt with Defense; Rusk has done a lot with State; but no one has dealt with CIA." Kennedy, who had been so impressed by the Agency's talent and competence when he first took office—"If I need some material fast or an idea fast, CIA is the place I have to go"—decided that he could no longer trust his intelligence professionals. He could not understand how such brilliant men as DCI Allen Dulles and Richard Bissell, the Deputy Director for Plans, could have been so wrong. "[Y]ou always assume intelligence people have some secret skill not available to ordinary mortals." Intensifying the president's frustration was his awareness that he had gone against his instincts and fallen into a trap of his own making. "All my life I've known better than to depend on the experts. How could I have been so stupid to let them go ahead?" (U)

Kennedy would not be guilty of such misplaced faith again. He started relying more on his brother Robert, White House staffers Theodore Sorensen and Richard Goodwin, national security adviser McGeorge Bundy, and military adviser Gen. Maxwell Taylor. He also took steps to diminish CIA's independence by transferring more responsibility for paramilitary operations to the military, reinvigorating the NSC's Special Group, which oversaw covert actions, restricting the size of the DDP presence overseas, and threatening to cut the Agency's budget. A variety of proposals circulated to reorganize and downsize CIA, including some that subsumed it under an interagency Cold War strategic planning group, separated its overt functions from its clandestine undertakings, changed its name, and housed the next DCI in the Executive Office Building instead of at Langley. (U)

The president would not go that far, but he did decide that he had to have his own man in charge of CIA. He regarded Dulles, the "Great White Case Officer," as "an icon of the past, a man with too imposing a reputation for the younger men of the administration to challenge," in journalist David Halberstam's words. Kennedy remarked that

> [i]t's not that Dulles is not a man of great ability. He is. But I have never worked with him, and therefore I can't estimate his meaning when he tells me things.... Dulles is a legendary figure, and it's hard to operate with legendary figures.... I must have someone there with whom I can be in complete and intimate contact—someone from whom I know I will be getting the exact pitch.

The president would not move precipitously, however; having accepted responsibility for the Bay of Pigs botch, he did not want to appear to be shifting the blame by cashiering his intelligence chief. In talks with him during the ensuing weeks, Dulles remembered that "while I did have a feeling that maybe he thought I had let him down, there never was one harsh or unkind word said to me by him at any time thereafter." Also, Kennedy observed, Republicans would be less inclined to attack the administration for mishandling Cuba as long as Dulles, an Eisenhower appointee, was still around. The DCI's departure, nevertheless, was only a matter of when and how. In August, President Kennedy asked Bissell and Dulles to come separately to the White House. He told Bissell that "[i]f this were a parliamentary government, I would have to resign. But being the system of government it is, a presidential government, you will have to resign." Bissell later said the president's statement "did not surprise me or in any way outrage me. I thought it was more or less to be expected." Kennedy may have said much the same thing to Dulles, who the next day told his executive assistant, "I've been fired."[2] (U)

---

[1] Sources for this paragraph and the next are: Robert Amory oral history at JFK Library, in [redacted] ed., *Spymasters: Ten CIA Officers In Their Own Words*, 157; National Security Action Memoranda [NSAM] Nos. 55 and 57, 28 July 1961, *FRUS, 1961–1963, VIII, National Security Policy*, 109–10, 112–13; Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., *A Thousand Days*, 296–97, 428; idem, *Robert Kennedy and His Times*, 452, 458–60; Roger Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*, 78–80; James N. Giglio, *The Presidency of John F. Kennedy*, 62–63; Trumbull Higgins, *The Perfect Failure*, 155–60. (U)

[2] Peter Grose, *Gentleman Spy*, 530–34; David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest*, 152; Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 276, 290; Richard M. Bissell with Jonathan E. Lewis and Frances T. Pudlo, *Reflections of a Cold Warrior*, 191; Herbert S. Parmet, *JFK: The Presidency of John F. Kennedy*, 212; Wayne G. Jackson, "Allen Welsh Dulles as Director of Central Intelligence, 26 February 1953–29 November 1961," CIA Historical Staff Study No. DCI-2, 5 vols. (1973; declassified 1994), vol. 4, 132–35 (copies of this and all internal CIA histories are on file in the History Staff unless otherwise indicated). (U)

A Call from the President (U)

John McCone was not the president's first choice to succeed Dulles.[3] For a while Kennedy considered several candidates, including his brother Robert, the attorney general; Maxwell Taylor; and, by some accounts, capital insider Clark Clifford. Picking the attorney general would not only spell the end of "plausible deniability," but the family tie might suggest that the Kennedys were bent on outdoing the Dulleses. Neither Taylor nor Clifford wanted the job. Fowler Hamilton, a Wall Street lawyer and occasional federal official, was highly recommended and nearly nominated, but Dulles and Bissell thought that choice was "appalling."[4] Roger Hilsman, director of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) at the Department of State, suggested the number-two man in the DDP, Richard Helms, but he was little known outside the Intelligence Community and was not high enough in the CIA hierarchy to vault to the top. Other names circulating in mid-September included Republican congressman Gerald Ford of Michigan; Max Millikan, an economics professor from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and former director of CIA's Office of Research and Reports (ORR); and Gen. Andrew Goodpaster, President Eisenhower's military adviser. Around that time, either Roswell Gilpatric, the deputy secretary of defense who had known McCone since their days together at the Pentagon in the early 1950s, or Sen. Henry Jackson of Washington, a Democratic advocate of strong defense policies, or both, proposed McCone. (S)

McCone was not close to the Kennedys at this time. He had met John Kennedy two or three times between 1958 and 1961, when they were, respectively, chairman of the AEC and a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Their contacts up to then had been brief, either on social occasions or during committee meetings, and they had exchanged only a few words in the months since the inauguration. President Kennedy vetted McCone's name with Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Sen. Clinton Anderson of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, and Allen Dulles. Robert Kennedy urged the president to appoint McCone because of his reputation as a tough but respected executive—just the type of leader the White House believed the mismanaged and dispirited CIA needed.[5] (S)

In early September 1961, McCone recalled, President Kennedy asked him to write a brief assessment of the consequences of recent Soviet hydrogen bomb tests. The president said that because the AEC and the Pentagon differed about aspects of US nuclear policy, he wanted an independent view. When McCone delivered his report two weeks later, the president—after abruptly changing their noontime appointment in the Oval Office to an evening meeting in the private residence upstairs—asked him to become DCI. "This came as a complete surprise to me," McCone remembered, "because no one had opened up the subject with me, I had had none of the usual feelers, no interviews had been conducted...no rumors had appeared in the press—this in effect came out of the blue." McCone later concluded that at their previous interview, Kennedy was "covertly and without disclosure to me...doing a little exploring of my thought processes." "We spent about an hour and a half together, and he discussed, with the greatest persuasion—and he was a very persuasive man—the importance of the work of the DCI and his need for someone in whom he had confidence to take the job.... [H]e reached the conclusion that he had that confidence in me" and asked for a decision within a week.[6] During the next few days, the prospective appointee talked to his wife, the outgoing DCI, and political friends such as Sen. Anderson, settled private business affairs, and then called the president at Hyannis Port to accept. (S)

Why did John Kennedy, who had made such a point of portraying his administration as youthful, vibrant, and

---

[3] Principal sources about McCone's appointment as recounted in this section are: Elder, "John A. McCone as DCI (1973)," 7–12; transcript of McCone interview with Arthur Schlesinger Jr., 26 February 1965, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 3; *The Central Intelligence Agency*, 57–59; Lyman B. Kirkpatrick Diary, vol. 4, entry for 20 September 1961, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 33; Theodore C. Sorensen, *Kennedy*, 630–31; Edwin O. Guthman and Jeffrey Shulman, eds., *Robert Kennedy In His Own Words: The Unpublished Recollections of the Kennedy Years*, 253; Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy*, 459. (S)

[4] According to Robert Kennedy, during World War II Hamilton had worked with another official who passed important information to the Soviets. Hamilton was not involved in the security breach, but the administration was concerned that British suspicions about him would affect the US-UK intelligence relationship. *Robert Kennedy In His Own Words*, 253. (U)

[5] McCone first met Allen Dulles when he was invited to a dinner at Dulles's New York home on election night in 1948. Grose, 290. (U)

[6] McCone, OH, 7; *Conversation with McCone*, 17, 19–20; Walter Elder memorandum concerning McCone's meeting with the SOS Club on 21 February 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1. McCone appeared on a television show on 4 September 1961 to discuss the Soviets' recently renewed underground tests. His comments, which coincided with the administration's position, were brought to the attention of President Kennedy, who then said he wanted to meet with McCone. *FRUS, 1961–1963, VII, Arms Control and Disarmament*, 161. Clinton Anderson, a senatorial friend of McCone's from AEC days, said "I did everything I could to get him to take it [the DCI position]." Butte *Montana Standard*, 30 October 1961, McCone clipping file, HIC. (S)

visionary, in contrast to the materialistic complacency of the graying Eisenhower generation, choose as his DCI a 59-year-old conservative Republican businessman and friend of the previous president?[7] Arthur Schlesinger Jr., historian and White House staffer, has written that Kennedy and his national security advisers "sought, not an intellectual oracle, but a sensible and subdued manager" with demonstrated administrative abilities, a disinclination to wild adventures, and political connections in the Republican Party and Congress. Despite the Bay of Pigs debacle, the White House was still wedded to the use of covert action and planned to employ CIA aggressively, especially in the Third World. Now, however, the president wanted to make sure that the clandestine stratagems he and his policymakers devised would be properly managed and convincingly presented and defended to the political opposition. To the White House, McCone's inexperience with clandestine operations was no hindrance, while his executive abilities and conservative GOP politics were his strongest assets. Moreover, by appointing a Republican from the business sector, Kennedy could claim to be marking yet another difference between him and the Eisenhower/Dulles brothers approach: the administration of US intelligence would be above partisan politics and insulated from family connections to senior officials.[8] (U)

Ivey in The San Francisco Examiner

"I've had experience with explosives."

McCone's hardline views on the Cold War were as much to the point as his conservative Republicanism. His attitudes toward the Soviet Union mirrored those of many of Kennedy's national security advisers—a number of whom had served on the Gaither Committee, whose 1957 report constituted a "call to arms" against the Soviet threat. McCone thus became part of what historian David Kaiser has termed "a carefully balanced foreign policy team" that had "a relatively young and innovative group" situated on "a broad political base" of world-wise establishmentarians.[9] (U)

Anticipating opposition from inside his administration, Kennedy confided his selection of McCone only to a handful of political intimates. According to McCone, the president told him to keep the nomination secret because "if these liberal s.o.b.'s that work in the basement of this building [the White House] hear that I am talking to you about this, they'd destroy you before I can get you confirmed." When idealistic New Frontiersmen did hear, they were appalled that their president had picked an arch-conservative Republican, alleged war profiteer, and opponent of arms control. The reaction of Arthur Schlesinger Jr. to reports of McCone's nomination typified the attitude of many of them:

> Mr. McCone, for all his able administrative qualities, is a man of crude and undiscriminating political views (or, to put it more precisely, political emotions). He sees the world in terms of a set of emotion-charged stereotypes. Nothing in his record suggests that he has the ability to make the subtle distinctions without which an intelligence operation loses all meaning....

[7] "[Kennedy's] appointments were young," diplomatic historian Lawrence Freedman has noted. "[T]he average age of the most senior group was under 50. There were more professors than businessmen, and a number of lawyers. Many were neophytes, without much experience in foreign policy or a grasp of its nuances." Freedman, *Kennedy's Wars*, 39. (U)

[8] Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 429; Parmet, 212; Ranelagh, 410. (U)

[9] David L. Snead, *The Gaither Committee, Eisenhower, and the Cold War*, 174, 176; David Kaiser, "Men and Policies, 1961–69," in Diane B. Kunz, ed., *The Diplomacy of the Crucial Decade*, 13. (U)

> A good test for any proposed CIA director is: what would he have recommended about Cuba? My guess is that, if McCone had been head of CIA in March, we would have got, not a discriminating and careful advocacy of the Cuban operation, but an emotional and moralistic presentation. I would consider him far less inclined than Mr. Dulles to weigh the political significance of proposed clandestine operations....
>
> I greatly fear that McCone's appointment would be the source of continuing mischief, grief and bad counsel for the administration.

None of Kennedy's subordinates, however, broke publicly with the administration over McCone's selection.[10] (U)

A potentially more troublesome source of resistance was the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board (PFIAB), which McCone's selection caught by surprise. Besides feeling slighted that the White House had not consulted them, some PFIAB members who had worked with the Eisenhower administration also were disturbed because McCone persistently opposed the previous president's efforts to achieve a nuclear test ban, and feared that as DCI he might slant estimates to conform to his strong anticommunist views. PFIAB's chairman, James Killian—the president of MIT and one of the country's preeminent scientists—threatened to resign from the Board and publicly oppose McCone's appointment. Robert Kennedy later claimed that his intervention, and possibly a meeting between McCone and Killian, prevented a messy spat. The president also asked Agency covert action officer (and former next-door neighbor) Cord Meyer for advice on how to soothe the disquietude over McCone that he expected from Dulles loyalists at CIA.[11] (S)

Kennedy announced McCone's appointment at the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island, on 27 September 1961, a week and a half after offering him the job. McCone recalled sitting with the president on the porch of the main house at the nearby Auchincloss estate, Hammersmith Farms, just before the announcement. The president asked him if he had any last-minute matters to raise. McCone said he was highly unlikely to change his widely known suspicions about the Soviet Union and that he did not want to be merely the president's special assistant for intelligence or have anyone else in the administration assuming the role of national intelligence officer. Kennedy said he understood McCone's views on both points. After the announcement, the president continued discussing CIA matters with McCone and Dulles while sailing around Narragansett Bay on the family yacht, the *Honey Fitz*.[12] (U)

Allen Dulles, John F. Kennedy, and McCone in Newport, RI (U) Photo: Bettmann/CORBIS

Most politicians and pundits applauded McCone's nomination.[13] The main theme of the favorable commentary was

[10] *Conversation with McCone*, 20; Halberstam, *Best and the Brightest*, 152–54; Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 429; McCone [redacted] OH, 30; *Robert Kennedy In His Own Words*, 254; *Washington Post*, 23 October 1961, A10, copy in McCone clipping file, folder 1, HIC; McGeorge Bundy memorandum to President Kennedy, "Washington News," 28 September 1961, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XXV, Organization of Foreign Policy; Information Policy; United Nations; Scientific Matters*, 188; Schlesinger memorandum to President Kennedy, "John McCone," 27 September 1961, Schlesinger Papers, JFK Library. (U)

[11] James R. Killian oral history interview by [redacted] Cambridge, MA, 2 November 1984 (hereafter Killian [redacted] OH), 28–29; Nina Burleigh, *A Very Private Woman*, 204. (U)

[12] "Remarks in Newport Upon Announcing the Appointment of John McCone as Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, September 27, 1961," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy, 1961*, 631–32; transcript of McCone interview with Schlesinger, 26 February 1965, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 3; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 12–13. (U)

that McCone's business background and political connections would enable him to make the changes needed to restore the demoralized, disorganized, and oversized CIA to its earlier level of competence and capability. The *New York Times* encapsulated the viewpoint of the major Eastern media when it editorialized that McCone "has shown in his past governmental posts that he has the qualities needed for effective performance in Washington: high administrative ability, driving energy and the capacity to get along well with Congress." Well-known *Times* columnists James Reston and Arthur Krock opined that McCone's selection was part of President Kennedy's effort to build a "competent, undramatic and nonpartisan" team of national security advisers drawn from a crisis-tested elite. *Newsweek* called the nominee "a model of well-directed, deliberate energy" and quoted a friend who described him as "a quiet-spoken dynamo...even-tempered, orderly...a conservative dresser with the mien of a banker; a precisionist who carries a memo book and tears off the slips as each job is completed."[14] (U)

Loud objections to McCone emanated from some liberal and leftwing circles.[15] They criticized McCone's strong anticommunism, resistance to a nuclear test ban, close ties to big business, and possible conflicts of interest between his corporate ventures and official duties. The *New Republic*, in several biting pieces on McCone, wrote that he "is not exceptionally gifted with the capacity for cool and unprejudiced judgment" and concluded that making him DCI was like "employing a tone-deaf piano tuner." Two prominent scientists, George Kistiakowsky and Jerome Weisner—the former and current presidential science advisers, respectively—disapproved of McCone because he had worked against a test ban. Second- and third-level officers at the Department of State involved with intelligence estimates on nuclear energy voiced the same objection, regarding McCone as an "operator" whose loyalty to the administration would be questionable. The Democratic Party's elder statesman, Harry Truman, with characteristic bluntness, called Dulles's dismissal "a God damn shame" and attributed the leadership shuffle to a young, inexperienced administration kowtowing to public and media pressure. Other Democrats thought Kennedy already had appointed too many Republicans to senior posts. Further to the left, journalist I.F. Stone declared that McCone was "an appalling choice," "as satisfactory to the far right as J. Edgar Hoover himself." Two of the United States' main foreign antagonists also weighed in. Moscow Radio disparaged McCone as "a big industrialist," and Radio Havana called him "another traditional agent of the powerful imperialist exploiter consortiums." Less ideological critics asserted that McCone's dual role at the AEC as policymaker and administrator was inappropriate experience for the head of CIA at that juncture. What the Agency needed, the argument ran, was a professional manager and technician rather than a policy-oriented advocate.[16] (U)

Entering On Duty (U)

McCone wanted to spend several weeks familiarizing himself with his new responsibilities before he formally took over. On 13 October 1961, he joined CIA as a consultant, pending his swearing-in, and immediately began a whirl of activities to get up to speed. That same day, he left with Bissell to tour CIA stations in the Far East [redacted] He returned 10 days later and started a series of meetings and briefings with Agency and other government officials. In late October, he left with Dulles for two weeks to visit [redacted] London, Paris,

[13] A large sample of representative opinion is in HS Files, Job 84-00473R, box 1, folders 1, 4, and 8; and McCone clipping file, folders 1 and 2, HIC. Unless otherwise indicated, press items cited in this section come from those files. (U)

[14] *New York Times*, 28, 29, 30 September and 1 October 1961; articles in *Washington Post*, 28 September 1961; "CIA's New Boss," *Time*, 6 October 1961; "Tough Man, Tough Job," *Newsweek*, 9 October 1961. On the theme of bipartisanship, Krock noted that McCone was one of 40 Republicans among Kennedy's 250 political appointees. "Kennedy's Republicans," *New York Times*, 1 October 1961. Dwight Eisenhower disapproved of McCone's selection, perhaps because he did not like Kennedy's tactic of appointing Republicans to lend bipartisan respectability to the new administration. The general wrote McCone: "This morning's news says that you have accepted the post of Director of the CIA. As you know, I was not in favor of it, but certainly I want you to know that I shall be wishing you every possible success in the post." Eisenhower letter to McCone, 27 September 1961, quoted in Beschloss, *The Crisis Years*, 417. (U)

[15] Much of this commentary is compiled in Stanley Grogan's memoranda to McCone, 10 and 11 January 1962, HS Files, Job 84-00473R, box 1, folder 8. See also Chalmers M. Roberts, "McCone Selection Criticized by Some," *Washington Post*, 23 October 1961. (U)

[16] "The Miscasting of McCone," *New Republic*, 9 October 1961; "Why John McCone?," ibid., 23 October 1961; "McCone on Fallout," ibid., 6 November 1961; "Case of the Missing Clues," ibid., 20 November 1961; Roberts, "McCone Selection Criticized by Some"; Grogan untitled memorandum to Dulles, 19 October 1961, DCI Files, Job 80M01009A, box 7, folder 106; Bundy memorandum to President Kennedy, "Washington News," 28 September 1961, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XXV, Organization of Foreign Policy...*, 188; "An Appalling Choice to Head the CIA," *I.F. Stone's Weekly* 9, no. 37 (9 October 1961): 1, and "(Triply) Biased Intelligence Guaranteed," ibid. 10, no. 4 (29 January 1962): 1; Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), "Communist Comment on the Appointment of a New Director of Central Intelligence," 6 October 1961, McCone clipping file, HIC. In 1963, the Soviets published a clumsily written propaganda piece about McCone titled *No. 1 Spy: A Pamphlet about the Chief of U.S. Intelligence, John Alex McCone* (Moscow: State Publishing House for Political Literature, 1963). (U)

Bonn, and Rome—and to meet with counterparts in the British, French, and German services, US military commanders, and local political and military officials. He discussed policy matters with senior leaders and their suspicions about CIA made the meetings awkward, introducing McCone to the tensions inherent in intelligence diplomacy and to Britain's Secret Intelligence Service (MI-6) was still reeling from the arrest that spring of KGB mole George Blake; French President Charles de Gaulle's intelligence deputies imagined that the Agency was helping rightist French officers in Algeria plot against the government; and, in probably the most disconcerting encounter of all, McCone met Gen. Reinhard Gehlen, the head of the West German external service, the day that its counterespionage chief, Heinz Felfe, was exposed as a Soviet agent.[17]

Chief Justice Earl Warren, McCone, and President Kennedy at McCone's swearing-in ceremony (U)

On a few occasions during this interregnum, McCone displayed the forceful and often curt leadership style that contrasted so vividly with Dulles's relaxed manner. It was clear to any observer that boardroom efficiency had replaced faculty club collegiality. Besides immersing himself in the substantive details of the job, McCone took a keen—and, to those involved, disruptive—interest in the construction of the new Headquarters complex that would carry over into the first months of his directorship. He was accustomed to deciding what decor and accouterments his corporate and government offices would have, and although he reportedly was "very well pleased with the building" after seeing it for the first time, he countermanded a number of the instructions that Dulles had given.[19] The edifice was being fashioned in sections that components occupied as the work was finished. Dulles had wanted to move in last, so the executive suites were not scheduled for completion until after the rest of the building was filled. McCone, however, announced that he would move into the new building the day he was sworn in and directed that temporary space for him and his staff be ready by then. Meanwhile, he rearranged the architecture of the director's office: walls were moved, furniture switched, and paneling ordered; the intercom system, which Dulles intended to allow senior managers to talk to him without going through secretaries and assistants, was taken out; and a monitoring and recording system was reconfigured. McCone complained about damage caused by movers

[17] Jackson, "Dulles as DCI," vol. 4, 136; McCone personnel file no. 35335, Office of Personnel Files, Job 88-00296R, box 1, folder 8; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 13–14; Elder memorandum about Dulles-McCone telephone conversation on 20 October 1961 and undated "Schedule for European Trip," DCI Files, Job 80M01009A, box 7, folder 105; UPI and AP wire reports, 6 November 1961, HS Files, Job 84-00473R, box 1, folder 1; memoranda about McCone-Dulles meetings in Britain, 29 October–2 November 1961, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1; memoranda about McCone-Dulles meetings in Germany, 7 and 13 November 1961, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 34, folder 30; Grose, 537. Dulles arranged for McCone to be paid a consulting fee at a rate equivalent to the director's salary of $21,000 a year. Lawrence K. White (Deputy Director for Support) diary notes for 9 October 1961, HS Files, HS/HC-849, Job 84-00499R, box 1, folder 9. (S)

[19] The DDS, Lawrence K. "Red" White, later recalled that McCone "never liked the Headquarters Building or at least he said he didn't. And he ate me up any number of times about what a terrible place it was. I never could quite reconcile that with the fact that almost once a week he would bring some visitor out to show it off." Dino Brugioni, "Lawrence K. White on the Directors," *Studies* 31, no. 4 (Winter 1987): 11. (U)

and wanted a closed circuit television link with the White House installed as well. While on the European trip, he went on an excursion alone and commandeered the only available security escort without informing Dulles. When a COS told that to Dulles, he stroked his mustache and said, "Extraordinary...*Extra*ordinary!" Moments before McCone formally took office, he turned to Deputy Director for Support (DDS) Lawrence K. White and asked about the status of something he wanted done. "Red" White said a delay had arisen. McCone replied, "That isn't good enough. See that it's done promptly."[20] ~~(S)~~

McCone's swearing-in took place on 29 November in the Cabinet Room at the White House. As McCone had requested, Chief Justice Earl Warren performed the ceremony. Among the officials invited were Secretary Rusk; the chairman of the JCS, Gen. Lyman Lemnitzer; and McCone's successor as chairman of the AEC, Glenn Seaborg. With due humility, McCone said he was "not unmindful of the very difficult task it will be, following in the footsteps of Allen Dulles," but that he was "encouraged and given hope" because he had found the people at CIA to be "of both great dedication and unusual ability," and that with their support he could meet the president's expectations. Afterward, President Kennedy gently warned the new DCI that he was "now living on the bull's eye, and I welcome you to that spot." McCone immediately left for Langley and started his directorship from a temporary suite set aside for him on the third floor.[21] (U)

The First 100 Days (U)

Perhaps the overriding leadership challenge McCone initially faced was dealing simultaneously with the Kennedy administration's romance with clandestine operations and its loss of faith in intelligence generally, and CIA specifically, after the Bay of Pigs. The White House's enchantment with covert action and counterinsurgency has been described amply in numerous histories, biographies, and memoirs and will be treated in later chapters of this study. It is sufficient to say here that the Kennedy brothers and their advisers had an exaggerated sense of the potential of covert action and paramilitary operations, and wanted CIA to retain its ability to conduct shadow warfare alongside the military's special forces. At the same time, however, they were disillusioned with intelligence professionals and looked outside the Agency for advice and expertise in the "black arts." (U)

The administration's attitude meant that McCone had to change procedures and personnel in the DDP to refine the Agency's covert capabilities and avoid another operational fiasco, while ensuring that CIA did not get swept up in a global clandestine crusade by an administration fixated on "action"—especially of the secret sort. The Agency recovered some of its standing with the president before McCone's arrival with the revelations of Oleg Penkovskiy, a Soviet military intelligence officer who provided the United States and Great Britain with highly sensitive information on Soviet strategic weapons. Still, McCone faced lingering dissatisfac-

---

[20] Lyman B. Kirkpatrick Jr., *The Real CIA*, 235–36; Peyton F. Anderson and Jack B. Pfeiffer, "The Construction of the Original Headquarters Building," in Michael Warner and Scott A. Koch, eds., *Central Intelligence: Fifty Years of the CIA*, 145; Sheffield Edwards (Director of Security) memorandum to Lyman B. Kirkpatrick (Executive Director), "DCI Monitoring System," 13 April 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 19, folder 1; Thomas Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets*, 160; Ranelagh, 415; Grose, 537–78; White diary notes for 4 January, 26 September, 24 October, 18, 21, and 28 November 1961; David Atlee Phillips, *The Night Watch*, 118–19. ~~(S)~~

The terse exchange between McCone and White at the swearing-in may have involved the latter's failure to acquire on time the Cadillac limousine the DCI-designate had wanted ready to ride in to Headquarters after the ceremony. White recalls that later that day he phoned Dulles and said he had to repossess the specially-equipped Agency car that the ex-Director had been given. The well-traveled Cadillac picked up McCone the next morning and broke down on the way to Washington. Dulles was given an old Chrysler that he liked, while McCone had to wait several more days for his Cadillac. White oral history interview by [redacted], Vero Beach, FL, 7 January 1998 (hereafter White/[redacted] OH), 37–38; White diary notes for 29 November 1961. John Ranelagh (*The Agency*, 415) tells the automobile story in a way that makes McCone seem even more imperious:

> On his last day as DCI, Allen Dulles left the agency in the director's limousine, a specially constructed car with sophisticated communications equipment built in. McCone, who had come out to see Dulles off, turned around as the car pulled away and told his aides that he wanted a similar car to be ready for him the following morning. The car was provided after the Agency's technical staff worked all night converting one for him.

This rendering, sourced to unidentified CIA employees, jumbles the sequence of events and does not indicate that McCone had been asking about his official vehicle for several weeks. White diary notes for 9 October 1961. ~~(S)~~

[21] White House press release, "Remarks of the President at the Swearing-In Ceremonies of John McCone," 29 November 1961, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 8, folder 7; UPI wire report, 29 November 1961, HS Files, Job 84-00473R, box 1, folder 2; "Chronology of DCI Office Space," 6 May 1971, HS Files, HS/HC-429, Job 84T00286R, box 3, folder 1. The day before, McCone attended the ceremony at Langley at which President Kennedy awarded Dulles the National Security Medal. (U)

The sudden dearth of McCone's wife of 33 years scarcely a week after he was sworn in left the bereaved DCI uncertain whether he would remain on the job, but after a short time he decided to stay. Rosemary Cooper McCone, 53, died on 6 December of an apparent heart attack while en route to a hospital in Washington. An illness had prevented her from coming to the capital to attend her husband's swearing-in ceremony, but she had recovered sufficiently to move soon after. She was described as "vivacious, attractive...[with] pretty features and the kind of chic that comes from wearing Sophie originals." First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy and many senior administration officials attended her funeral. *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *Los Angeles Times* articles on 7 and 8 December 1961, and Washington *Evening Star*, 29 September 1961, McCone clipping file, HIC. (U)

tion downtown and sought to restore CIA's reputation through a variety of approaches: by managing the Agency firmly,

Further complicating McCone's task was the fact that he had to accomplish all those objectives with CIA seemingly in the psychological doldrums. He recalled that when he became DCI, he thought the Agency "was in a state of shock...a great many people were very discouraged...the spirit of the organization was at an all-time low"—mainly because "a great many people [in the US government] who should have shared in the responsibility for the [Bay of Pigs] failure ducked it and left the responsibility on the shoulders of CIA."[22]

Life with "Jolly John" (U)

It was by no means clear at the outset that McCone's professional experience and leadership style would inspirit the Agency.[23] Many CIA careerists who had made their mark in the "golden age" of the 1950s worried about McCone's unfamiliarity with intelligence issues. They regarded him as "an engineer...a man who knew how to meet a payroll...[but] would just never learn what was going on" inside the Agency, according to McCone's executive assistant, Walter Elder. They thought the administration put him at CIA mainly "to stabilize and refloat the vessel after its near-disastrous foundering on the shoals of the Bay of Pigs," photoanalyst Dino Brugioni recalls. "Few felt that he would remain for an extended period." Devoted to the avuncular Dulles and the pipe-and-tweeds ambience he fostered, Agency veterans—especially those in the Clandestine Services—were jarred by the sudden transition to the button-down, bottom-line McCone and the corporate-world methods he imported from day one and maintained through his directorship. Former senior DDP officer David Atlee Phillips remembered that "[i]n his first appearance at Langley, [McCone] left an impression of austerity, remoteness, and implacability." Some senior analysts involved with nuclear energy estimates thought McCone was "highly prejudiced," McGeorge Bundy wrote at the time. The new DCI was soon tagged with the ironic monicker "Jolly John," and one military-minded wag drew up a "table of organization" showing McCone as a four-star general supported by buck privates.

Today McCone would be called a "Type A" executive—dynamic, resolute, and unsentimental, with exceptionally high standards and a near-total dedication to mission, engendering respect and obedience but little affection. He had enormous energy and a tremendous capacity for work. Officers who knew him used words like "tough," "hard-driving," "sharp," "impatient," "forceful," "brilliant," and "penetrating" to describe him. Anyone meeting him for the first time, especially if caught in his "steely blue" stare, knew immediately that he was accustomed to getting things done his way.[24] Not physically imposing—about five feet, nine inches tall, with a compact build, white hair, and wire-rimmed spectacles—McCone led by power of personality and intellect, amplified by impeccable dress and crisp voice and mannerisms. In his official portrait at Headquarters, McCone grips one chair arm tightly and leans forward slightly, a taut package of energy with a somewhat impatient expression that challenges the viewer to get to the point so he can move on to other business. McCone had a recruiting brochure produced with a photograph of himself springing from a limousine on his way to a crisis meeting at the White House—not out of vanity, but to project an image of an activist CIA close to the levers of power. "[E]verthing he did was action-oriented," according to E. Henry ("Hank") Knoche, at the time the DDCI's executive assistant; "he always thought in terms of what action should be taken...and he wanted such fast action...." McCone did not believe in management systems; "if you'd...talked to

[22] Transcript of McCone interview with Schlesinger, 26 February 1965, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 3. McCone used similar language in a memorandum he wrote after attending a White House meeting a week before his swearing-in: "...the Agency and indeed the Administration appeared to be in a condition of 'shock' as a result of the happenings in Cuba..." Memorandum for the record, 22 November 1961, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 685.

[23] Sources for this paragraph and the next are: Walter Elder oral history interview by McLean, VA, 17 September 1987 (hereafter Elder OH), 10–11; Marshall S. Carter and E. Henry Knoche oral history interview by Mary S. McAuliffe, Colorado Springs, CO, 29 November 1988 (hereafter Carter-Knoche OH), 5–6, 15, 26, 51; Dino Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 64; Ranelagh, 415; Bundy memorandum to President Kennedy, "Washington News," 28 September 1961, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XXV, Organization of Foreign Policy...*, 188; Walter Elder, "Support for John A. McCone," unpublished manuscript, 21, HS Files, Job 87-01032R, box 1, folder 37; Colby, *Honorable Men*, 186; Ray S. Cline, *Secrets, Spies, and Scholars*, 192; Kirkpatrick, 233–35; Phillips, *The Night Watch*, 118, 124; and Richard Helms with William Hood, *A Look Over My Shoulder*, 195–96.

[24] The effect of McCone's gaze was memorable to many on whom it fell. DDCI Marshall Carter recalled that McCone's eyes could turn into "blue steel balls" that "emitted a little lightning." Sherman Kent, CIA's longtime senior estimator, maintained that McCone's eyes were brown, not blue, but that they had the effect of being icy blue. Walter Elder thought they were dark blue but noted that whatever their color, they were transfixing. Carter-Knoche OH, 26; Walter Elder oral history interview by Mary S. McAuliffe, 1 July 1987 (not transcribed; tape recording on file in the History Staff; hereafter Elder/McAuliffe OH1). For the record: McCone's eyes were brown. (U)

him about zero-based budgeting or management by objective, he'd give you ten seconds to get the hell out of there." He delegated substantial responsibility to his deputies and expected them to measure up to his mark; demanded quick and full briefings on any matter that seized his attention; and had his activities thoroughly documented with memoranda and transcripts. His confident bearing, quick grasp of complex material, firmness in making decisions, and strict adherence to schedules and lines of authority left no doubt as to who was in charge. McCone did not assume these character traits and leadership techniques merely as executive suite symbolism to mark the transfer of power from Dulles. "His management style [at CIA]," Elder has said, "was the same management style he had in business and as Undersecretary of the Air Force and Chairman of the AEC: results."[25] ~~(S)~~

McCone in his recruiting poster pose (U)

On a "typical" day McCone followed a brisk, even frenetic, routine that filled his hours from early morning until mid- to late evening. He rose early and began his official business right away, dictating, telephoning, listening to briefers, and often meeting with visitors over breakfast. An Agency chauffeur picked him up at his home on Whitehaven Street in northwest Washington and brought him to Headquarters soon after 0800. (On days when he had morning appointments downtown, he worked out of the DCI suite in the South [or Administration] Building at the E Street complex.) His limousine had a secure telephone and a glass partition so he could work while in traffic. After arriving at his office and tending to immediate business, reading urgent messages, and establishing his schedule for the day, McCone held a staff meeting at 0900. He regarded this daily conference with his principal lieutenants as a vital forum of communication. DDP Richard Helms remarked at the time that the DCI "is an 'organization man' who desires the Agency to be aware of his views and...wishes to be personally aware of all Agency activities of major importance." At first McCone wanted the meetings to be small and short, so he included only the DDCI, the executive director, and the DCI's or DDCI's executive assistant. One of the latter two briefed the others on overnight developments and the content of the current publications. McCone then issued a few orders, and the meeting ended. It was informal, unstructured, and often held as soon as the attendees could be assembled. No minutes were kept. Later on, McCone decided he needed a more comprehensive and ordered presentation of information to ensure that CIA officers "could speak to important issues with a single Agency voice." He expanded the list of attendees to include his main staff officers—the legislative and general counsels, the inspector general (IG), the chief of Public Affairs and sometimes the comptroller—the deputy directors, and the head of the Office of Current Intelligence (OCI), who opened the meeting with a briefing on overnight events. Each participant took his turn as necessary, after which the DCI ticked off a succinct list of issues he wanted addressed, papers he wanted written, and people he wanted contacted. The meeting almost always was over by 0930.[26] ~~(S)~~

[25] DDCI Carter illustrated McCone's capacity for quick study by recounting when the DCI became "the expert on open heart surgery." His sister had been diagnosed with a serious cardiac ailment, but there was some doubt about whether to subject her to the invasive operation usually performed in such cases. McCone had the Agency's medical staff brief him on her condition and supply him with books on cardiology. After this crash self-tutoring, McCone advised his sister to go ahead with the surgery. Carter-Knoche OH, 36. (U)

Regarding McCone's record-keeping, "Hank" Knoche did not believe McCone wrote "CYA memos" because "he was a strong enough fellow, he could withstand any kind of criticism he got." Carter-Knoche OH, 26. Richard Bissell, the DDP when McCone took over, told his staff that the DCI was "very anti-paper, especially internal administrative paper concerning matters that could be handled by telephone," but that he wanted documentation kept on all CIA contacts with outsiders, especially foreign nationals. DDP staff meeting minutes for 15 January 1962, DDO Files, Job 78-02888R, box 1, folder 40. ~~(S)~~

[26] McCone calendars, HS Files, Job 03-01724R, box 8, folder 10 (hereafter McCone calendars); Elder, "Support for McCone," 9, 17; DDP staff meeting minutes for 12 April 1962, DDO Files, Job 78-02888R, box 1, folder 40; Carter-Knoche OH, 48–49; Russell Jack Smith, *The Unknown CIA*, 150; Walter Elder oral history interview by Mary S. McAuliffe, Rosslyn, VA, 14 April 1989 (hereafter Elder/McAuliffe OH2), 13, 15; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 204. ~~(S)~~

The rest of McCone's "day" would be fully occupied with meetings, conferences, nearly always a working luncheon, telephone calls, dictation, and frequent trips to the White House, the Departments of State and Defense, and the Capitol. He regularly attended NSC meetings and rarely missed chairing a USIB discussion. He was accustomed to moving quickly and expected everyone around him to do the same. He would dictate at his residence first thing in the morning and had the tape immediately sent to his office so a transcript would be on his desk when he arrived. He assumed command of every vehicle he rode in and often ordered the Executive Dining Room to prepare meals for distinguished guests with minimal notice. He placed heavy demands on the Watch Office, the Cable Secretariat, and the Executive Registry to feed his 'round-the-clock appetite for information. In the evenings and on weekends, McCone mixed pleasure and business. He and his second wife enjoyed hobnobbing with policymakers, congressmen, corporate executives, foreign officials, and journalists at receptions, dinners, and cultural events around town, and they regularly hosted official associates, well-connected friends, and liaison dignitaries at home. He played golf at the elite Burning Tree Country Club in Maryland, more for the social contact than out of fondness for the game. When he thought a breaking event required immediate high-level attention, he did not hesitate to summon his deputies to Headquarters, the South Building, or his residence at any hour of any day.[27]

McCone's frequent travels provided no respite. During his directorship he took over 130 trips and was away from Headquarters more than 20 percent of the time. He made full use of the Agency's aviation capabilities—especially the [redacted] a proprietary) on his order and plushly outfitted to his specifications—or took commercial or military flights. He considered the US Air Force at his disposal and requested Jetstars, helicopters, and transports whenever he felt the need. As a wealthy businessman, McCone was used to traveling in style, and he expected his staff to arrange the same VIP treatment of first-class airline seats, four-star restaurants, five-diamond hotels, and door-to-door limousine service. He was "a difficult guest," one European station officer remembered. "He demanded the best room in the best hotel.... He would insist on playing golf at a certain time.... His wife would want handworked leather bags picked up for her and shipped home." McCone had Headquarters send a briefing cable for him to read first thing in the morning, and then he embarked on a packed itinerary of meetings and working social functions with minimal down time. After he returned to Washington, it was not unusual for him to drop by the White House to brief the president or the national security adviser on the results of his trip. McCone reenergized himself from the rigors of his schedule with regular vacations to his residences in San Marino, California, and Cat Cay in the Bahamas, although on his West Coast trips he spent a substantial portion of his time on private business matters.[28]

Anecdotes illustrating McCone's executive approach soon proliferated. He showed his impatience with war stories and other digressions at one of his first staff meetings, when J.C. King, head of the DDP's Western Hemisphere Division (WH), started recounting a complicated spy tale of the sort that intrigued Dulles. "Damn it, J.C., shut up!" McCone barked. Soon after he became director, the managers of the Agency's computer center invited him to visit their facility to get acquainted and boost morale. Dulles had often visited components that were having problems to give them a pep talk. McCone declined the invitation, commenting that he was DCI, not a shop foreman, and that if the computer center needed him to raise morale, there must be something wrong with its management. After word of that incident circulated through the corridors, few other offices asked him to drop by. A dismayed staffer looked up from a memorandum McCone had handed him requesting a vast amount of information and said, "I suppose you want it all tomorrow." Without pausing to blink, McCone replied, "Not tomorrow, today—if I wanted it tomorrow, I would ask for it tomorrow." The DCI had a security man summarily removed from his detail for leaving a door open at his house, and for intruding on a meeting with the [redacted] to say that Gen. Eisenhower was on the phone. McCone said he got annoyed at the officer because he did not want the [redacted] to know how close he was to the former president.[29]

[27] Elder, "Support for McCone," 4, 8, 14–16, 20–21; McCone calendars.

[28] McCone calendars; Elder, "Support for McCone," 2–4; David C. Martin, *Wilderness of Mirrors*, 186. Of the 131 trips identified on McCone's calendars, 46 were to the West Coast, including San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Seattle; 28 were to New York; 14 were to the Bahamas; 14 (not counting his honeymoon to France) were overseas; and the remainder were to places such as Boston, Gettysburg, the LBJ Ranch, SAC headquarters in Nebraska[redacted]

[29] Grose, 538; Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 64–65; Cline, *Secrets, Spies, and Scholars*, 193; Kirkpatrick Diary, vol. 5, entry for 16 October 1962.

Some of the most vivid recollections of McCone's demanding nature come from senior officers in the Directorate of Intelligence (DI)—an indication of the great importance he placed on making CIA analysis the best possible so it would have the maximum influence on policymakers. McCone's "mind and persona were steely blue-eyed," recalled R. Jack Smith, head of OCI from 1962 to 1966. "[He] was exacting and direct to the point of brusqueness. He tolerated no shilly-shally or dawdling. When he ordered something[,] there was a steely-eyed glance that conveyed 'right now and do it right!'" Arthur Lundahl, the Agency's chief photointerpreter for many years, remembered that McCone "left no room for doubt and no room for error. It made no difference if you had been all-American on his list 26 weeks in a row, if you faltered in the next instance, you're out. You had to do it every single day, or you didn't get to play…you never let down with John McCone. It was a matter of excellence every time you showed up." Ray Cline, McCone's second DDI, observed that "[h]is sharp, penetrating queries kept everyone in CIA on his toes, and he had little patience with imprecision, inefficiency, or slowness in producing results."[30] (U)

Richard Helms has noted that, despite McCone's cut-to-the-chase style, the DCI more than once met his match with CIA's daunting security practices. Those home-grown arcana may have seemed the antithesis of efficiency to McCone, but he soon understood the operational need for them. On his European orientation trip, he complained that Allen Dulles required that he stay in a private home and not at the local luxury hotel he was used to.

> I've been in and out of that hotel for ten years. I've spent the last five days racing around the Continent, being entertained and examined by [redacted] I've met two prime ministers, half the foreign ministers in Western Europe, and a score of politicians, émigrés and otherwise. As far as I can see, there can't be many people on the Continent who don't know I'm here. Who is Mr. Dulles hiding me from by insisting that I impose myself on you and your wife?

The prospective host, who had known Dulles since their OSS days, explained, "It may be a security reflex…. [Dulles] has his own habits of operating, and rather likes showing the flag…with one or two exceptions, [he] expects the rest of us to keep cover." The DCI–designate relented.[31] (U)

Once in office, however, McCone sometimes made his own security rules. [redacted]

McCone's résumé as a wealthy businessman, dedicated Republican, and devout Catholic, combined with his driving style and aloof personality, raised concerns inside and outside the Agency that he would be intellectually rigid and try to impose his views on his subordinates, particularly the analysts. While the DCI had deep convictions about a few large things—notably the evils of communism and the threat it posed to Western values—Cline remembered that McCone "always did his homework, was anxious to learn, and, although strong-minded, [was] willing to adjust his opinions in the light of evidence and reasoned judgments." Roger Hilsman, head of intelligence at the Department of State, agreed: "McCone was tough and a hard-liner…but it was a sensible and reasonable toughness by and large, and his intelligence judgments and policy predilections were toward a selective, discriminating application of toughness, tailored to the particular situation." Nor did McCone hold personal grudges with deputies with whom he disagreed over management or intelligence issues. He had trouble respecting some subordinates whom he believed had let him down—prominent examples are DDCI Marshall Carter and DDS "Red" White—but once he vented his formidable

[30] Smith, *The Unknown CIA*, 151–52; Arthur Lundahl and Dino Brugioni oral history interview by [redacted] Bethesda, MD, 14 December 1983, 42; Cline, *Secrets, Spies, and Scholars*, 192. (U)

[31] Helms, 192. (U)

[32] Author's conversation with [redacted] 30 October 2001.

temper after a miscue, or when the heat of argument over a judgment or decision subsided, he put the dispute aside. McCone once interrupted a briefing R. Jack Smith was giving to comment that the military had reached the opposite conclusion from CIA's. After Smith replied that the information was ambiguous and could be judged either way, McCone lashed out: "You know damned well that isn't so. Your people are just sitting on their behinds and not doing their job!" Smith retorted reflexively: "I don't agree with you for an instant, Mr. McCone, and I will be glad to discuss this with you on some other occasion!" The DCI glowered at him and went on with the meeting, but the next morning greeted Smith kindly and asked, "Well, Jack, how is your world today?" When a senior Agency officer warned his own wife that he might be transferred or dismissed after a serious confrontation with McCone, she told him not to worry; the DCI had just sent her a gift—a *quart* of expensive French perfume.[33] (U)

A few Agency associates of McCone claim to have discerned a softer aspect of their new boss. Cline observed:

> McCone was deadly serious most of the time, but he recounted his adventures at the White House level in detail with great skill, which frequently occasioned a little humor. He enjoyed the laughs if they did not get in the way of dispatching the day's business. As I got to know him better, I learned that he had a warm and sentimental side beneath the stern Scot's exterior, although it surfaced only from time to time and usually when we were far away from the daily grind.

David Atlee Phillips found McCone to be "an entertaining and stimulating luncheon companion who thoroughly recognized the value of a dry martini and a wry anecdote." Richard Helms thought the DCI was "fundamentally decent" and enjoyed working with him "because you usually knew where you stood." McCone "was not difficult to work for"; he had "high...but not unreal standards"; he was "exacting" but "not unreasonable."[34] ~~(S)~~

Yet even though a sizable number of CIA officers thought Dulles's time had passed, that he was disorganized, feeble, and too interested in covert action, hardly any of them have gone on record as reacting favorably to McCone as a person. The vast majority of recollections about McCone emphasize his cooler qualities, such as his exacting insistence on quality, productivity, and efficiency, that stand out so starkly from his predecessor's relaxed paternalism. "Maybe Allen [Dulles] was a bit of a romantic. But it was fun working for him," reminisced one Agency veteran—"fun" not being a word associated with McCone. Lyman Kirkpatrick observed that "one doesn't get close to John McCone. He's not the type." Marshall Carter remembered that "I never did feel...at all that he knew how to deal with people as people.... I never had the feeling...that he had any direct rapport with any of the senior officers, that he managed by fiat.... He operated more through the vice president concept." As "Hank" Knoche succinctly put it: "I felt every moment that I was going to be fired the next."[35] ~~(S)~~

Despite all the apprehension McCone produced, morale at CIA during his directorship rebounded to levels not experienced since the mid-1950s. He was so well connected to the Kennedy administration and had such success at making Agency operations and analysis an integral part of US national security policy that CIA officers believed they again were doing vitally important work that was appreciated and had influence downtown. "The Agency...felt galvanized... They had a sense of purpose," Elder recalled. Knowing that, most officers were willing to put up with the criticism, strained relations, and organizational changes they endured under McCone, and in the end he earned their respect, if not their affection.[36] (U)

---

[33] Cline, *Secrets, Spies, and Scholars*, 193; Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*, 47; Smith, *The Unknown CIA*, 152; Phillips, *The Night Watch*, 124; Carter-Knoche OH, 26. (U)

[34] Cline, *Secrets, Spies, and Scholars*, 194; Phillips, *The Night Watch*, 124; author's conversation with Richard Helms, 29 January 1998; Richard Helms oral history interview by Mary McAuliffe, Washington, DC, 19 June 1989 (hereafter Helms/McAuliffe OH), 11. ~~(S)~~

[35] Stewart Alsop and Thomas Braden, *Sub Rosa: The OSS and American Espionage*, rev. ed., 263; Lyman B. Kirkpatrick Jr. oral history interview by Mary S. McAuliffe, Middleburg, VA, 22 June 1989 (hereafter Kirkpatrick/McAuliffe OH), 2; Marshall S. Carter oral history interview by Mary S. McAuliffe, Colorado Springs, CO, 28 and 30 November 1988 (hereafter Carter/McAuliffe OH), 10–11; Carter-Knoche OH, 26. ~~(S)~~

[36] Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 39. In the late 1970s, David Atlee Phillips polled 11 senior Agency executives about their attitudes toward the personalities of five DCIs with whom they had worked closely—Dulles, McCone, Raborn, Helms, and Colby. When asked, "If I were to be shipwrecked on a desert island, a pleasant one with abundant food, good climate, a supply of scotch and every hope a ship would pass by, I would choose to be with ___," six voted for Dulles, four for Helms, and one for McCone. When asked, "If I were to be shipwrecked on a terrible desert island, with little food and no amenities, with scant hope for survival, and I wanted to escape badly, I would choose to be with ___," they gave McCone and Helms four votes each and Colby three; Dulles got none. Presumably the officers thought that while Dulles would be the most enjoyable companion for sharing pleasure with, McCone would be better able to get a boat built and get the stranded travelers on their way—and away from each other—quicker. *The Night Watch*, 279–80. (U)

Finessing the Bay of Pigs Postmortem (U)

Almost immediately, McCone had to deal with the recriminations emanating from the episode that had prompted his appointment—the Bay of Pigs. He was first confronted with the dilemma just as he was leaving for California to clear up personal business over the Thanksgiving weekend before assuming the directorship. Lyman Kirkpatrick, at the time the IG, delivered copy number one of his office's just-completed critique of the Agency's role in the operation to the DCI–designate at National Airport, instead of to Allen Dulles, who had requested the report. Kirkpatrick had concluded that the Bay of Pigs task force had bungled badly from the outset, putting into motion an operation that was misconceived, mismanaged, and bound to fail. Wary that Dulles might bury these findings, he chose to bypass the outgoing DCI and deliver his final report to McCone instead. Kirkpatrick's choice of recipients, as well as his findings, set off an uproar within the Agency, and gossip quickly spread that he was just trying to curry favor with the incoming director. The IG's misstep presented McCone with his first opportunity to handle a politically sensitive internal controversy, and many senior officers in the Clandestine Services who lamented Dulles's departure watched how the inexperienced outsider they now called "Mr. Director" would respond.[37] (U)

Kirkpatrick's breach of protocol angered McCone, who thought it was a miscalculated attempt to settle old scores.[38] He realized how disruptive and divisive the IG report would be inside CIA if its contents got outside the closed circle of senior officers responsible for the operation, and he did not want to start his directorship with a major row among his deputies. During the next several weeks, he worked to mitigate the dispute through a calculated mix of tactics: smoothing over Kirkpatrick's gaffe, allowing the DDP a chance to respond, suppressing circulation of the report, avoiding going on record as siding with either conclusion, and shuffling personnel in ways that placated advocates of the two camps. After he arrived in California, McCone called Kirkpatrick, learned that the IG had not yet given Dulles or Bissell their copies, and directed him to do so immediately. Next, he authorized Bissell to prepare a response that he had permanently attached to the IG's report. He ordered that all copies of the report and several attachments written by the DDCI, DDP, and Dulles be accounted for, had all but three (those for Dulles, Kirkpatrick, and PFIAB) impounded in his office, kept the original in his safe, and had several others destroyed. He expressed his own Solomonic view about culpability for the Bay of Pigs in a letter to PFIAB in which he described both Kirkpatrick's analysis and the DDP rebuttal as "extreme" and concluded that all US government agencies involved in the operation shared responsibility for its failure. Lastly, McCone's replacement of Bissell with operations chief Helms and Kirkpatrick's elevation to the new position of executive director helped mollify defenders and critics of the IG and the DDP.[39] (S)

McCone was one of the relatively few officials who saw all three Bay of Pigs postmortems—by a presidential board of inquiry chaired by retired Army Chief of Staff Maxwell Taylor, PFIAB, and the IG. He was not satisfied with the so-called Taylor Report, submitted in June 1961 by Taylor; Robert Kennedy; Allen Dulles; and the Chief of Naval Operations, Adm. Arleigh Burke. Taylor's panel concluded that although the Cuban brigade members fought bravely, there were too few of them to hold out against Castro's troops, even if they had destroyed Castro's air force and won control of the air. Dulles and Burke dissented, contending that had the brigade received air cover and ammunition, it could have succeeded—an outcome which both Taylor and Kennedy thought unlikely, given Castro's vastly larger forces. McCone thought Taylor's inquiry "wasn't...overly

---

[37] Bissell, 193; Grose, 535; Peter Kornbluh, ed., *Bay of Pigs Declassified*, 237, 238, 240, 248; Jackson, "Dulles as DCI," vol. 3, 128, 139–40; Michael Warner, "The CIA's Internal Probe of the Bay of Pigs Affair," *Studies* 42, no. 5 (Winter 1998–99): 93–102. Kirkpatrick later defended his action on the grounds that he was determined to prevent an operational and administrative failure of such magnitude from being whitewashed, and that McCone had asked to see the report, but he conceded that he "probably handled [the episode] the wrong way." Lyman B. Kirkpatrick Jr. oral history interview by [redacted], Providence, RI, 26 April 1967 (hereafter Kirkpatrick [redacted] OH), 5–6. (U)

[38] Sources for this discussion are: Jackson, "Dulles as DCI," vol. 3, 137–38; McCone, "Memorandum for the File...Discussion with Attorney General...January 20, 1962...," and J.S. Earman (DCI executive assistant) memorandum to Bissell and Kirkpatrick, 23 January 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1; Kirkpatrick, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Mr. McCone...December 18, 1961," Lyman Kirkpatrick Collection, section 1, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), College Park, MD; and *Bay of Pigs Declassified*, 243, 252–57. (S)

[39] After Bissell left CIA, he carried on his dispute with Kirkpatrick. In March 1962, Bissell sent a memorandum to McCone accusing Kirkpatrick of "hypercritical" and "objectionable" meddling in operational management and assuming "an air of command...which is not in keeping with his position and his authority." Bissell suggested that the DCI clearly establish the IG's authority along the lines of the US Army's counterpart. Bissell memorandum to McCone, "Definition of Functions of the Inspector General," 5 March 1962, and David R. McLean (Acting IG) memorandum to McCone, "Mr. Bissell's Comments on the Inspector General's Role," 28 March 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 18, folder 12. During 1964–65 at McCone's request, Bissell worked as a consultant evaluating NSA's efforts against encrypted Soviet communications. James Bamford, *Body of Secrets*, 359. (S)

penetrating.... It wasn't a very good report...they didn't get to the bottom of it."[40] (U)

Nearly two years later, Kirkpatrick asked McCone if he thought the IG's report was a "knife job." The DCI replied that he thought it was "tough" and "perhaps in certain instances bore unnecessarily hard on the Agency." As he was preparing to leave Langley, however, McCone remarked that CIA had to assume more responsibility for the operation's failure because besides the JCS, it was the only national security entity unaffected by the transfer of office from Eisenhower to Kennedy and should have served as a check on "this new and untried administration."[41] (S)

McCone added some thoughts about the failed operation in letters to Bissell more than 20 years later:

> Some day soon we will meet again and I would like to get your version of the discussion you and [DDCI Charles P.] Cabell had with Dean Rusk when you were trying to persuade the President to withdraw the "stand down" of the air cover you had arranged for the landing of the Brigade. It was this fatal error that caused the failure....
>
> ...entering CIA as its Director shortly after the Bay of Pigs failure, I heard many explanations and analyses of the invasion effort and the reasons that things went wrong. I have lodged in my mind two and only two serious errors by individuals. First, it seemed to me Allen Dulles made a serious mistake in judgment by darting off to Puerto Rico or elsewhere to make a speech on the very eve of the most serious undertaking of his career as Director of CIA. In my opinion, Allen should have known that a young, inexperienced administration quite possibly would be influenced to make errors in judgment and this, of course, is just what happened. I do not criticize General Cabell or you for not accepting Secretary Rusk's offer that you appeal directly to the President after you learned of the President's critical decision of standing down the B-26s...if Allen had been in Washington and available, he might well have persuasively outlined the tragic results of the President's decision and quite possibly gone to the point of turning around the brigade before the ill-fated landing was attempted.
>
> The second responsibility rests squarely on the shoulders of President Kennedy, who apparently was persuaded by Adlai Stevenson and possibly others to "stand down" the B-26 air support.... Standing down the air strike was, in my opinion, a reckless decision by the President and one that Allen Dulles, had he been on the scene, would not have stood for.[42] (U)

Mulling Over Internal Reorganization (U)

Having directed or served in several different administrative structures in the private and public sectors, McCone had definite ideas about how the organization and management of CIA could be improved. Whatever intentions he may have had initially to shake up the Agency, however, were circumscribed by the White House. After President Kennedy's initial anger at CIA over the Bay of Pigs waned, he left it alone for the most part, entrusting his brother and McCone to keep it on track. "There was no pettiness in the [president's] reaction," Richard Bissell remembered. "Privately he spoke about cutting the agency down to size, but in the end really nothing was done." Robert Kennedy wanted the Agency's clandestine capability refined, not diminished. In one of their first meetings after McCone became DCI, the attorney general showed that he would be monitoring CIA operations closely. He told McCone he was dissatisfied with the Agency's labor and psychological warfare projects, resented CIA's resistance to Gen. Edward Lansdale's heading an interagency group on counterinsurgency, thought Agency activities in Latin America needed review, and singled out Bissell and J.C. King for criticism. With this overall guidance from downtown—make CIA work better and keep it out of trouble—McCone embarked on his own agenda of administrative and programmatic changes affecting the approximately

After McCone was appointed, he requested and received from Kirkpatrick an "EYES ONLY" memorandum containing several pages of blunt thumbnail evaluations of the Agency's major components. Kirkpatrick generally rated the DI higher than the DDP and the DS, but hardly any office

[40] Transcript of McCone interview with Schlesinger, 26 February 1965, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 3. For the text of the Taylor Report, see *Operation Zapata: The "Ultrasensitive" Report and Testimony of the Board of Inquiry on the Bay of Pigs.* (U)

[41] Kirkpatrick Diary, vol. 5, entry for 4 September 1963; transcript of McCone interview with Schlesinger, 26 February 1965, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 3. (S)

[42] Bissell, 194, 196. (U)

or division escaped his trenchant criticism. This appraisal may have provided a baseline from which McCone developed some of the bureaucratic scenarios that buzzed in his mind. Just after his appointment, McCone told Lawrence White confidentially that he was thinking of running CIA somewhat as he had the AEC, where he relied on subordinate commissioners to handle substantive matters and delegated daily administration to a "general manager and chief executive officer." On a trip from California soon after becoming DCI, he drew a completely new organizational chart on the back of a manila envelope. One of the scheme's noteworthy features was the creation of a position of "general manager" for the Agency. On another occasion, McCone considered splitting the DDP into human and technical activities components and contracting out much of the Agency's historical and economics work.[44]

To formalize the process of administrative change, McCone—in one of his first official actions—established a Working Group on Organization and Activities to study the structure and operation of CIA and USIB and its numerous committees.[45] McCone relieved Kirkpatrick of his duties as IG and made him chairman of the Working Group, which soon assumed his name. Gen. Courtland Schuyler, from the staff of New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller, and J. Patrick Coyne, PFIAB's executive secretary, were the other members. McCone realized that despite the blunder with the presentation of the Bay of Pigs report, Kirkpatrick was the best officer for the job; he already had conducted two detailed organization studies of the Agency, and in eight years as IG had inspected all its components. The DCI gave Kirkpatrick the assignment, with this admonition:

> I don't want you to write any long reports. In this organization it seems that every time I ask for something I get a 42-page report with 12 annexes. When you have something you want to talk to me about, I want you to come see me, and when I have some thoughts I want to explore, I will call for you.

In characteristic fashion, McCone closed the interview by telling Kirkpatrick, "Get started on this immediately. Monday will be soon enough." It was then Friday.[46]

After a few weeks at Langley, McCone explored some of his early thoughts about the Agency's structure and management and indicated some problems he had identified. Most broadly, he thought that competition between bureaucracies—which he distinguished from energetic efforts to complement each other's activity—was "very corrosive," especially at the lower levels, and he wanted to have lines of authority, responsibility, and function clearly defined from the top down. He was "a bit disappointed" with the work of ONE, and he suggested that its members "should be more ivory towerish" and leave day-to-day and short-term analysis to OCI. Although he had been "quite favorably impressed" with the DI "except for the quality of some personnel" (who went unnamed), McCone wondered how much analysis could be done on contract by organizations like the RAND Corporation. Lastly, the DCI thought the Clandestine Services should be divided into two major components: one responsible for espionage, counterintelligence, and covert action, and the other involved with scientific and technical collection. He was inclined to establish a separate paramilitary element in the DDP, "highly professional under a top officer and...equipped at all times" for short-notice missions. McCone did not like the idea of the Pentagon's counterinsurgency official, Edward Lansdale, running these activities—"it is our business," he insisted—but neither was he anxious to take them over right away because he thought Lansdale's present mission—subverting Castro with Opera-

[43] Ernest Volkman and Blaine Baggett, *Secret Intelligence*, 130, citing interview with Bissell; James W. Hilty, *Robert Kennedy, Brother Protector*, 417–31; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record: Discussion with Attorney General...November 29, 1961," McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1; "Agency Positions, Ceiling and Total On Duty for the Period 1952 through 1970," "Ceiling and T/O Changes, 30 June 1962–31 December 1963," and "Ceiling and T/O Changes, 1963–71," Human Resources Management (HRM) Files, Job 82-00469R, box 2, folders 1 and 2; "Full-Time Permanent Personnel, 1950–1977," ER Files, Job 79M00467A, box 2, folder 24; "CIA Intelligence Activity Estimates, 1962 through 1969," 21 March 1964, ibid., Job 80B01676R, box 7, folder 4; "Total CIA Obligations, 1947–1977," Intelligence Community Staff (ICS) Files, Job 79M01476A, box 1, folder 12.

[44] Kirkpatrick memorandum to McCone, "Evaluation of Components of the Agency," 13 November 1961, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 18, folder 10; Kirkpatrick memorandum to McCone, "Organization of CIA," 7 November 1961, ibid., Job 80R01580R, box 16, folder 325; White diary notes for 26 October 1961; McCone's jottings on envelope in ER Files, Job 80B00269R, box 4, folder 23; Kirkpatrick Diary, vol. 4, entry for 30 December 1961.

[45] Eisenhower established USIB in 1958 to set intelligence objectives, requirements, and priorities; review and report to the NSC on the overall national intelligence effort; develop and assess security standards and practices; formulate liaison arrangements; and coordinate strategic estimates. Its operating authority came in National Security Council Intelligence Directive (NSCID) 1 as modified in September 1958. [redacted] 177.

[46] Headquarters Notice HN 1-7, 5 December 1961, ER Files, Job 86B00269R, box 4, folder 23; Kirkpatrick Diary, vol. 4, entry for 1 December 1961; Kirkpatrick, 236–37.

tion MONGOOSE (see Chapter 4)—was "impossible" to accomplish.[47] (S)

Winning Confirmation (U)

Before he could do much more, McCone had to finish the statutory process of becoming DCI. President Kennedy had appointed him after Congress adjourned, and he had served without Senate confirmation for two months before that chamber reconvened in January 1962 and took up his nomination.[48] While at the AEC, McCone had established good relations with the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy and some prominent congressional conservatives, and his prospects for working well with the four committees charged with CIA oversight[49] seemed good. McCone faced more opposition from the Senate than any previous DCI nominee, however—an indication that Congress intended to watch CIA more closely after the Bay of Pigs. During the recess period, some senators publicly voiced reservations about McCone, mainly about his strong anticommunism and its potential effect on his objectivity. Eugene McCarthy (D-MN), one of his most outspoken critics, went further and questioned whether he was qualified for the job (without specifying what the appropriate qualifications were). McCone left a private discussion with McCarthy in early January believing that the senator "carries a deep prejudice against CIA...and against me, personally." Opponents of McCone's nomination also expressed concerns about his alleged war profiteering and potential conflicts of interest between his private wealth and public responsibilities.[50] (U)

Muckraking journalist Drew Pearson led the press attack on McCone. In a salvo of radio broadcasts and syndicated columns during January, Pearson assailed him for assorted ethical transgressions. As manager of Calship during World War II, McCone "made more money out of Uncle Sam on war contracts than perhaps any other man now working for the [US] Government." As undersecretary of the Air Force, McCone got his "close associate" Henry Kaiser "off the hook" by "help[ing] swing one of the juiciest airplane contracts in history" to Kaiser's aviation company. As chairman of the AEC, McCone retained large stock holdings in companies doing business with the Commission. Soon after McCone became chairman, the contract for operating the first American atomic-powered merchant vessel (the *Savannah*) was awarded "through a mysterious set of circumstances" to a shipping line that was initially ranked next-to-last in qualification but had a partnership with McCone's Joshua Hendy firm. As prospective DCI, McCone declined to sell his large holdings of stock in American oil companies "whose profits and future are materially influenced" by CIA activities in the Middle East. Most notably, McCone still owned $1 million of stock in Standard Oil of California, a member of the ARAMCO consortium that had significant influence in Middle Eastern affairs.[51] (U)

After Pearson's first three columns appeared, McCone told Robert Kennedy that Sen. McCarthy "very possibly" was the journalist's source. The attorney general advised McCone to pay no attention to the articles, saying they would not affect his confirmation. To try to dispel opposition, McCone met with several senators and representatives, had the Agency's general counsel prepare an opinion on financial conflicts of interest, and privately offered to withdraw his nomination if the controversy worsened. President Kennedy never indicated any concern about the upcoming hearings and had word sent to McCone that he retained the White House's full confidence.[52] (S)

At his confirmation hearing, which began on 18 January, several senators pointedly questioned McCone about the

[47] McCone memorandum, "Discussion with Attorney General Robert Kennedy...27 December 1961," *FRUS, 1961–1963, XXV, Organization of Foreign Policy...*, 195–96; Kirkpatrick, "Memorandum for the Record...Lunch with Mr. McCone...18 December [1961]...," and "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting with Mr. McCone...December 20, 1961," ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 16, folder 325. (S)

[48] On McCone's confirmation generally, see Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 30–51. Source material on this subject—including hearing transcripts and press clippings—is in HS Files, Job 84-00473R, box 1, folder 5; DCI Files, Job 80M01009A, box 7, folder 106; OCA Files, Job 64B00346R, box 4, folders 3–9; and McCone clipping file, HIC. (U)

[49] The Senate and House Armed Services and Appropriations Committees. (U)

[50] AP wire report, 16 October 1961, DCI Files, Job 80M01009A, box 7, folder 105; "McCarthy Has Doubts on McCone for CIA," Washington *Evening Star*, 16 October 1961, McCone clipping file, HIC; McCone, "Memorandum of Discussions with Senators Concerning Confirmation—9 January 1962," McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1. See also "CIA's Conflict-of-Interest Rules Were Kept a Secret from McCone," *I.F. Stone's Weekly* 10, no. 5 (5 February 1962): 2. (U)

[51] Pearson's "Washington Merry-Go-Round" columns in the *Washington Post* on 10, 11, 12, 17, 22, and 24 January 1962, transcripts of his broadcasts on Washington, DC radio stations on 6, 13, and 21 January 1962, and associate Jack Anderson's "Washington Merry-Go-Round" column on 25 January 1962, HS Files, Job 84-00473R, box 1, folder 4. General Counsel Lawrence Houston opined that McCone's stock holdings were permissible because the Agency did not have contracts, and was not then negotiating any, with the affected companies at the time within the meaning of the federal conflict-of-interest statute. Houston memorandum to Dulles, "Conflicts of Interest," OGC 61-3783, and "Memorandum for the Record...Conflicts of Interest," both dated 13 October 1961, OCA Files, Job 64B00346R, box 4, folder 3; and "Memorandum on Conflicts of Interest," 15 January 1962, DCI Files, Job 80M01009A, box 7, folder 106. (S)

subjects Pearson had raised. McCone largely reiterated the answers he gave during the 1946 congressional inquiry into war profiteering; claimed that the Kaiser aircraft company's competitor could not meet the production quota demanded under wartime exigencies, and that he had no financial stake in any Kaiser enterprise at the time; said the *Savannah* contract was decided upon by the US Maritime Administration, not the AEC, and was signed before he joined the Commission; and insisted that his stockholdings would not affect his work as DCI because he would not be a policymaker. McCone's opponents also publicized the intemperate letter he wrote to the scientists at Cal Tech who had endorsed Adlai Stevenson's test ban proposal in 1956. The letter seemed to indicate that McCone did not have the open and impartial mind required to run the Intelligence Community. In testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Sen. McCarthy also suggested that McCone tried to quash a test ban while he was AEC chairman by leaking information about Soviet tests.[53] ~~(S)~~

Taking up the committee's invitation to respond to McCarthy, McCone denied that any leaks came from the AEC while he was chairman. He further claimed that he had expressed "strong disagreement" with the Cal Tech professors to dispel any idea that their opinion represented the university's official position and denied that he had tried to have any of them dismissed. Under questioning from Democrats, McCone added that he did not object to scientists speaking out on political issues. (He later admitted, though, that "my dander was up...pretty bad" because the academics had gotten involved in a political argument.) He also said he supported the Kennedy administration's efforts to negotiate a verifiable test ban and that while he did not consider the DCI to be a policymaker, he would feel free to give his personal views on issues if asked.[54] (U)

Years later, McCone recalled that while some critics of his nomination thought his anticommunist views would skew the Agency's analysis, most senators who voted against him did so to signal displeasure with the Senate's purported lack

'Oh, Boy—I Could Use Him at CIA!'

of control over CIA. J. William Fulbright (D-AR), chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, declared that although he would vote to confirm McCone as secretary of defense, he would not support the DCI nomination to protest the Senate's passivity toward intelligence oversight. Fulbright resented that members of his committee had been excluded from the oversight processes of the Armed Services and Appropriations committees. McCone's hearings gave Fulbright a venue in which to skirmish with the Armed Services Committee chairman, Richard Russell (D-GA), a longtime Agency friend. Russell won the brief contest.[55] (U)

The Senate Armed Services Committee unanimously approved McCone's nomination on 21 January, and the full Senate confirmed him 10 days later in a 71–12 vote. Ten Democrats and two Republicans voted against his nomination. During the floor debate, Fulbright complained again

---

[52] Memorandum of McCone meetings with Robert Kennedy on 11 January 1962 and with members of Congress on 9 and 16 January 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1; memoranda of McCone meetings with President Kennedy on 7 and 17 January 1962, ibid., box 6, folder 1; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 44. ~~(S)~~

[53] *New York Times* on McCone's confirmation hearings, 19, 22, and 23 January 1962, and *Milwaukee Journal*, 28 January 1962, McCone clipping file, HIC; Houston, "Notes for the Director Regarding Confirmation," undated but c. mid-January 1962, OCA Files, Job 64B00346R, box 4, folder 3; Divine, *Blowing On the Wind*, chap. 4. ~~(S)~~

[54] McCone responded to McCarthy in a letter to Richard Russell on 19 January; the letter was soon made public. His recollection of the Cal Tech incident is in *Conversation with McCone*, 18. McCarthy further criticized CIA in two works, "The CIA Is Getting Out of Hand," *Saturday Evening Post*, 4–11 January 1964, 6, 10; and *The Hard Years: A Look at Contemporary America and American Institutions*. (U)

[55] McCone [redacted] OH, 8–9; Elder, [redacted] OH, 57–58; L. Britt Snider, *Sharing Secrets with Lawmakers*, 1–4; Frank J. Smist Jr., *Congress Oversees the United States Intelligence Community, 1947–1994*, 5–9. (U)

that he and his committee were not consulted about the appointment and that he was uncertain of McCone's foreign policy ideas. Other senators questioned McCone's qualifications in intelligence and apparent conflicts of interest. Afterward, the CIA's legislative affairs counsel, John Warner, advised the DCI that in subsequent dealings with Capitol Hill he should ignore those "smoke screen" issues and instead concentrate on courting the Agency's oversight subcommittees.[56] (S)

Changes to the Wiring Diagram (U)

Once confirmed, McCone implemented a series of administrative changes and brought in his own cadre of senior deputies. He thought his two most important management objectives were "assigning responsibilities and then insisting that subordinates measure up" and "controlling the money." Although he tried to "sell" rather than impose them, his changes—some purposefully, some unintentionally—upset the established order and stimulated some bitter infighting at CIA's highest echelons.[57] (U)

A number of McCone's actions, especially toward the Office of the DCI (ODCI), carried out recommendations of the Kirkpatrick Working Group, with which McCone met frequently during the 90 days it conducted its inquiries and prepared its report. In April 1962, McCone moved the key staff positions of general counsel, legislative counsel, and comptroller from under the DDS into the ODCI and created the new position of executive director. The executive director was to be the superadministrator of the Agency and the DCI's and DDCI's liaison with the directorates. McCone reconstituted the Executive Committee, with the DDCI as chairman and the four deputy directors, the DCI's executive assistant, the general counsel, and the comptroller as members. The Executive Committee met weekly to review all important internal policy matters before McCone rendered a decision. With a businessman's eye for the bottom line, and harking back to his days at the AEC, McCone established a budget review panel, the Financial Policy and Budget Committee—comprising the comptroller and the assistant deputy directors—to examine the Agency's budget item by item before it went to him and the DDCI for approval. The revamped and expanded IG's staff now had separate audit and inspection elements, undertook a five-year overall inspection cycle, and scheduled regular visits to overseas stations.[58] (S)

Shuffling Senior Managers (U)

McCone took the selection of his principal executives very seriously because in his management scheme, the welfare of CIA depended on them. As "chairman of the board" of the Intelligence Community, he planned to delegate a large amount of responsibility to his lieutenants in their capacities as his chief officers for operations, administration, intelligence, and science and technology. Though a "hands-on" executive, he was not a micromanager and gave his component chiefs more latitude than they had under Dulles. He made his selections carefully after closely reading personnel dossiers and talking to Agency officers about candidates. In the end, McCone chose to fill the senior posts from within CIA. He wanted to draw on substantive expertise, maintain security, and raise morale, judging that an infusion of outsiders from business and other government agencies would perpetuate the malaise he was trying to dispel. In some cases, the prominence of the position was enhanced by the stature of the officer who filled it; in other cases, by the authority vested in it; and in others, by both.[59] (S)

Chief Operations Officer. At the time McCone was appointed, he and Bissell agreed that the DDP should leave sometime in December 1961. After his wife died early that

---

[56] *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, 1 February 1962, and Washington *Evening Star*, 22 and 30 January 1962, McCone clipping file, HIC; John Warner (Legislative Counsel) memorandum to McCone, "Senate Debate on the Confirmation of John A. McCone as Director of Central Intelligence," 24 February 1962, HS Files, Job 84-00473R, box 1, folder 8. I.F. Stone delivered a polemic on the eve of the Senate vote, "(Triply) Biased Intelligence Guaranteed," *I.F. Stone's Weekly* 10, no. 4 (29 January 1962), McCone clipping file, HIC. *The New Republic* lauded McCone's senatorial opponents in an article rehashing their complaints: "They Said 'No to McCone,'" 12 February 1962, 15–18, ibid. At McCone's swearing-in ceremony weeks before the Senate vote, President Kennedy had shown how prescient the White House's vote counters were when he quipped to the new DCI, "I know of three liberals who are after you, but there are at least a dozen who are after me for appointing you." *Newsweek*, 11 December 1961, ibid. When pairings and communications from absent senators were included, the tally was 84-15 for confirmation. Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 51. For a not-always-accurate look at what a knowledgeable journalistic observer thought was in store for CIA under McCone, see Hanson W. Baldwin, "CIA's Image Changes," *New York Times*, 28 January 1962, McCone clipping file, HIC. (S)

[57] Kirkpatrick/McAuliffe OH, 2–3. (U)

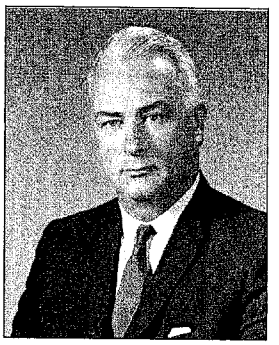
[58] McCone calendar entries for December 1961–April 1962; Kirkpatrick memorandum of McCone discussion with Kirkpatrick Working Group, 16 January 1962, HS Files, Job 84-00473R, box 3, folder 8; Kirkpatrick Working Group report, ER Files, Job 86B00269B, box 11, folder 64; DDP staff meeting minutes for 12 and 19 April 1962, DDO Files, Job 78-02888R, box 1, folder 40; Kirkpatrick, 241–42; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 125; [redacted] "Financial Operations of the Central Intelligence Agency," Directorate of Administration Historical Series No. OF-1, 2 vols. (July 1976), vol. 2, 146–47, 153–55; Earman untitled memorandum, 3 January 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1; [redacted] "The Office of the Inspector General, January 1952–December 1971," Office of the DCI Historical Series No. DCI-7 (October 1973), 106–12. (S)

month, however, McCone asked Bissell to stay on because he was thinking about having the president withdraw his nomination. In early 1962, McCone decided that he wanted Bissell to run the science and technology directorate that he was planning to establish. He had spoken to Robert Kennedy, who had talked to the president, and they agreed that Bissell could remain. That McCone considered putting Bissell in charge of a whole new directorate seems odd because around that time he privately told a well-connected *New York Times* correspondent that although he respected Bissell's intellect, the DDP was "a professor, has no administrative ability, [and] is a dreamer...." McCone presumably judged that he needed Bissell's technical expertise, background in running overhead reconnaissance programs, and allies in the DDP to help him set up the science and technology component. Bissell considered the offer for a few days but declined, citing serious reservations about the new directorate's organization and responsibilities. McCone told him that "the Agency's loss will be great, but from your point of view, I think you're wise."[60] ~~(S)~~

Richard Helms (U)

McCone's replacement of Bissell with Richard Helms may have been his most important selection in symbolism and substance, signaling a shift in emphasis from the Dulles-era Clandestine Services. Helms, deputy chief and chief of operations in the DDP since 1952 and regarded as the frontrunner to succeed Frank Wisner as head of the directorate in 1958, was the all-but-unanimous choice of everyone McCone asked. Helms was the embodiment of the "prudent professional." He was highly respected inside the Agency, provided continuity of leadership, and was an adept bureaucratic player. ~~(S)~~

When asked later what he regarded as Helms's principal strength, McCone answered, "coolness." Kirkpatrick said Helms "deserves great credit for holding the Clandestine Services together during a long period in which the two DDPs [Dulles and Wisner] were poor managers." Moreover, McCone believed that the Agency under Dulles had paid too much attention to covert action and not enough to collection; Helms had a background in espionage, was skeptical about paramilitary operations in peacetime, and had kept his distance from the Bay of Pigs. By all pertinent measures, he seemed McCone's best choice to head CIA's most potentially troublesome component. His selection quieted many of the rumblings in the Clandestine Services caused by Dulles's ouster and a newly implemented program of forced retirements.[61] ~~(S)~~



Lyman Kirkpatrick (U)

Chief Executive Officer. To oversee the reconfigured ODCI and the implementation of his other administrative changes, McCone appointed Lyman Kirkpatrick as executive director despite the controversy the Bay of Pigs report had generated. Kirkpatrick entered the intelligence world with the Office of Strategic Services and rose quickly in CIA until a disabling bout with polio sidetracked his career in operations in the early 1950s. He was made IG in 1953 and in nine years turned that then-innocuous position into an aggressive monitor of all Agency activities—including the hitherto protected area of covert operations. In the process he strained his relations with many CIA officers, particularly in the DDP. McCone believed Kirkpatrick knew more about the Agency than anyone else and did not mind that he was controversial: "if he didn't have his enemies he wouldn't be any damn good in his job." Robert Kennedy had directed McCone not to nominate Kirk-

[59] McCone memorandum, "Discussion with Attorney General Robert Kennedy...27 December 1961," *FRUS, 1961–1963, XXV, Organization of Foreign Policy...*, 195–96; Kirkpatrick, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board...[and] Discussion with DCI," 26 March 1962, Community Management Staff (CMS) Files, Job 92B01039R, box 8, folder 140. ~~(S)~~

[60] Bissell letters to McCone, 7 and 16 February 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 18, folder 10; Kirkpatrick Working Group briefing notes for 2 February 1962, ibid.; Bissell, 203; Peter Wyden, *Bay of Pigs: The Untold Story*, 311; Stanley Grogan (Office of Public Affairs) memorandum about McCone meeting with Hanson Baldwin on 25 January 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1; Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets*, 117–18. McCone hosted a farewell dinner for Bissell at his residence in northwest Washington on 12 March (not at the Alibi Club as stated in Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets*, 118) ~~(S)~~

[61] McCone untitled memorandum to Kirkpatrick, 14 February 1962, HS Files, Job 84-00473R, box 3, folder 8; Headquarters Notice HN [redacted] February 1962, ibid., Job 86B00269R, box 4, folder 23; Elder memorandum about McCone meeting with Benjamin Welles (*New York Times*), 12 December 1969, ibid., Job 80B01086A, box 11, folder 347; Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 15–16; Kirkpatrick, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting of President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board...[and] Discussion with DCI...," 26 March 1962, CMS Files, 92B01039R, box 8, folder 140. The forced retirement program is discussed in footnote 77. ~~(S)~~

patrick as DDCI because of the row over the Bay of Pigs report, so the DCI instead selected him for the new post and gave him broad staff responsibilities and the status of acting director when both the DCI and DDCI were away. (McCone did not consider Kirkpatrick as third in the regular line of authority, however; "no one stood between me and my deputies," Elder recalled him saying.) Because the Agency's major components had been unaccustomed to working under such central direction, McCone told Kirkpatrick to "move slowly and try avoid stepping on toes as much as possible."[62]

Chief Intelligence Officer. DDI Robert Amory, who vigorously opposed McCone's nomination, left the Agency in March 1962 to become general counsel at the Bureau of the Budget. Amory—upset that senior analysts had not been consulted about the Bay of Pigs operation—had threatened to resign over McCone's appointment, telling the White House that it was "just the wrong thing...just a cheap political move to put a prominent Republican in so the heat could be taken off the Bay [of Pigs]...a very bad show...." He also believed he had a fair chance of becoming DDCI and decided to quit when McCone indicated he probably would choose a military officer instead.[63]

Ray Cline (U)

To succeed Amory, McCone picked Ray Cline, a high-ranking intelligence analyst and national estimates officer who had acquired operations experience and an excellent reputation

When Amory resigned, the DCI immediately called Cline back to Washington and, having vetted his name with the White House and the Department of State, to offer him the position of DDI. Cline accepted with the proviso that McCone consult him about covert action projects when an analytical assessment would be helpful. Cline later wrote that "[a]s far as I know he observed this understanding with scrupulous care." The new DDI, an intellectual who had worked his way up through the ranks, helped raise morale in the DI. He also was a blunt and tough bureaucratic infighter, not at all shy about tilting with McCone and the other deputy directors over turf and resources.[64]

Chief Financial Officer. McCone insisted on strengthening the authority of the comptroller to manage CIA finances and manpower. At the Air Force and the AEC, he had considered his comptroller as one of his key advisers, and he intended to do the same at the Agency, whose budget process and money management he found disorganized. He remembered receiving a briefing on the Agency's five-year budget soon after taking over:

> I noticed that the fifth year was just a little over double of the first year. So I said: "Now, gentlemen, I'd like another briefing a week from now, and I would like to see the fifth year the same as this year. We will have a flat line across, and we won't have this growth. I expect to be here five years, and I am not going to see this budget doubled in five years." Their chins dropped down, and so they wondered what kind of a character was going to run the CIA. They had never had that kind of command before.

---

[62] "Office of the Inspector General," 100–101; transcript of McCone interview with Stewart Alsop, 9 April 1963, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 3; Grogan, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting with Hanson Baldwin on 25 January 1962," ibid., box 2, folder 1; Kirkpatrick, 246; Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 16–17. Notwithstanding McCone's comment, Kirkpatrick's tertiary status was formalized as of late 1963 in the "emergency line of succession" at CIA that would be invoked if the DCI were incapacitated. After the DDCI came the Executive Director-Comptroller, the DDP, the DDI, the DDS&T, the DDS, the special assistant to the DDS&T, and the ADDP, followed by several senior DDP officers ranked by the prominence of their areas of responsibility. "Emergency Line of Succession for the Central Intelligence Agency," 7 November 1963, HS Files, HS/HC-488, Job 84T00286R, box 5, folder 6.

[63] Amory oral history interview in *Spymasters*, 163–65; Carter-Knoche OH, 50; Sherman Kent, "Reminiscences of a Varied Life," 295–60.

[64] Cline, *Secrets, Spies, and Scholars*, 194-95; Ray Cline oral history interview by Mary S. McAuliffe, Washington, DC, 30 June 1989 (hereafter Cline/McAuliffe OH), 22; Cline personnel file no. 57829, HRM Files, Job 76-00195, box 7, folder 20. The change of DDI disappointed two assistant directors, Sherman Kent and Huntington Sheldon, who considered themselves more qualified than Cline. 191.

> So they went to to work on a budget and brought it in to show that the fifth year was about as flat as the current year. And five years later when I left, the budget was [redacted] less than when I took over. And in those years there was never a person who came to me and said that he couldn't do anything because he didn't have the money.[65] ~~(S)~~

Previously, CIA's comptroller reported to the DDS and ran a green-eyeshade shop whose main function was compiling and coordinating material for the annual budget. McCone made the comptroller part of the ODCI and gave the position much greater responsibility over financial and personnel matters. In recognition of that expanded authority, he had the position's salary made equal to those of the IG and general counsel. John Bross, McCone's first comptroller, had worked with budgets as a senior planning officer in the DDP. A respected administrator and an uncontroversial personality, he still did not achieve the control over financial matters that the DCI had wanted—partly because of resistance from the directorates, partly because of the distractions of day-to-day fiscal administration. By mid-1963, McCone concluded that hard budget and resource decisions could only be made by a senior manager unburdened by lower-level administrative responsibilities. McCone then turned to Lyman Kirkpatrick, who told McCone that he would be willing to be comptroller if the position were combined with that of executive director. Otherwise, he would regard the move as a demotion and decline it. The DCI and DDCI then had Kirkpatrick draft a statement of responsibilities for the dual position. All were aware that the deputy directors would be unhappy with it, but McCone told the DDCI, "The hell with it. Issue that notice." Kirkpatrick assumed the twin responsibilities in September, and Bross became head of a new Intelligence Community coordination staff. Kirkpatrick later wrote that he doubted whether he could have carried out his duties as executive director had he not also had charge of the Agency's finances.[66] ~~(S)~~

Chief Science Officer. Convinced of the importance of technical collection programs and the need to consolidate CIA's science and technology activities, McCone created a fourth directorate, the Directorate of Research (DR), under Herbert Scoville, previously the head of the Office of Scientific Intelligence (OSI) in the DI. The new component developed slowly—largely due to resistance from the DDP and DI, which were reluctant to part with units and responsibilities, and to Scoville's unassertive leadership. In August 1963, McCone reorganized the DR as the Directorate of Science and Technology (DS&T) and put the aggressive Albert ("Bud") Wheelon in control. McCone's new directorate quickly became a powerful force within CIA and the Intelligence Community. (The origins and activities of the DS&T are discussed fully in Chapter 9.) ~~(S)~~

Deputy DCI. McCone apparently had little to say about the choice of his new DDCI, an appointment that was caught in political currents from the start. President Kennedy suspected that Gen. Charles Cabell, appointed as DDCI in 1953 by President Eisenhower, had leaked information from an official investigation of the Bay of Pigs to the Washington bureau chief of *Fortune*, who then wrote an article highly critical of the administration. Cabell protested his innocence, but rumors of potential replacements soon began to spread around the capital. The White House forced him to resign, effective January 1962. (He subsequently retired from the Air Force.)[67] (U)

---

[65] *Conversation with McCone*, 13–14. McCone's recollection was not entirely accurate. The Agency's budget in 1965 was slightly smaller in real terms than in 1962, but expenditures were not flat; they spiked dramatically in 1963 because of expanded covert action and technical collection programs. "CIA Intelligence Activity Estimates, 1962 through 1969," 21 March 1964, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 7, folder 4; "Total CIA Obligations, 1947–1977," ICS Files, Job 79M01476A, box 1, folder 12. Moreover, President Lyndon Johnson's government-wide economy decree in 1964 put a squeeze on the CIA budget by the time McCone left, so the Agency's frugality was not all the DCI's doing. ~~(S)~~

[66] Earman untitled memorandum, 3 January 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1; Kirkpatrick, 242–43, 247–48; Headquarters Notice HN 1-11, 20 March 1962, ER Files, Job 80B00269R, box 4, folder 23; DDP staff meeting minutes for 9 March 1962, DDO Files, Job 78-02888R, box 1, folder 40; [redacted] "Financial Operations of CIA," vol. 2, 146–47, 153–55; Kirkpatrick Diary, vol. 5, entries for 19 March 1962 and 4 September 1963; John Bross oral history interview by [redacted] McLean, VA, 23 November 1987, 1–2; [redacted] 191–92; White untitled memorandum to Carter, 4 September 1963, Carter memorandum to McCone, "Reassignment of Comptroller Functions," undated, and Headquarters Notice HN 1-40, "Announcement of Organizational Changes," 26 November 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 7, folder 9. As a result of the creation of the joint Executive Director–Comptroller position, the DDS reclaimed responsibility for daily fiscal administration, while a new Office of Budget, Program Analysis, and Manpower reviewed budget and personnel issues and reported directly to Kirkpatrick. ~~(S)~~

[67] Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 59–60. The article at issue was Charles J.V. Murphy, "Cuba: The Record Set Straight," *Fortune* 61, no. 9 (September 1961): 92–97, 223–35. Murphy, who said President Kennedy "went ballistic" when he read the piece, later revealed that his source was Adm. Arleigh Burke, a member of the presidential board of inquiry chaired by Gen. Maxwell Taylor. Military historian Trumbull Higgins has suggested that Cabell, "the [A]ir [F]orce's man in the CIA," was sacked "perhaps as much to please the outraged [A]gency over its last-minute loss of air cover [for the Bay of Pigs landing] as to meet the need for more top-level scapegoats." Cabell had declined Rusk's eleventh-hour offer to let him speak to President Kennedy about reinstituting the second air strike that the president had just canceled. Higgins, *The Perfect Failure*, 164. Cabell does not discuss his departure in his autobiography, *A Man of Intelligence*. (U)

The JCS lobbied to have a military man succeed Cabell. They pointed out that a general or admiral had filled either of the Agency's top two positions since its founding; that a large segment of CIA would fall under military command if war broke out; that the Agency and the Department of Defense had shared operational and logistical responsibilities; and that much of the intelligence that CIA collected pertained to military questions. Also, the Senate Armed Services Committee—particularly its chairman, Richard Russell—clearly indicated at McCone's confirmation hearing in January that it wanted a military officer as DDCI. McCone, however, at first preferred to have a civilian deputy, and specifically mentioned Livingston Merchant from the Department of State—a career Foreign Service officer with experience in Western European and Canadian affairs and then serving as ambassador to Canada. The DCI said a two- or three-star officer would be acceptable, provided that he was "the most competent and experienced...with some intelligence background, and great administrative ability and scientific knowledge." McCone planned to expand the responsibilities of the DDCI, principally by making him the director of CIA's daily activities as well as its representative on USIB, so the main criterion the DCI used was managerial ability, not military or civilian status. President Kennedy told McCone that White House staffers were recommending a civilian, but the military correspondent for the *New York Times* advised the DCI that an administration faction opposed to his anti-test-ban views was trying to get the DDCI slot filled with a moderate military officer whom it could use to undercut him. After reaffirming that competence should be paramount, McCone then suggested that appointing a military professional would be in everyone's best interests.[68] ~~(S)~~

In early 1962, names of many flag-rank officers were floated in the administration's national security coterie, and nearly 20 got an initial screening by McCone.[69] One of them was Maj. Gen. Marshall S. Carter, commander of the

Maj. Gen. Marshall Carter (U)
Photo: Bettmann/CORBIS

Army Air Defense Center. Carter had held staff positions under Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense George Marshall during 1947–51 and served as chief of staff of the Eighth Army in Korea. In February, Carter met McCone for lunch and a discussion that lasted about an hour. The DCI told Carter he was about the 17th interviewee.[70] When asked if he was interested in the job, Carter reservedly replied that he had never asked for any post, went where he was told, and had no experience as a member of the Intelligence Community. This self-effacing response did not strike the right note with McCone. Summoned into the public service several times himself, he could understand Carter's dutiful attitude, but he surely would have preferred a deputy who showed some enthusiasm for working under him at CIA. McCone ended the meeting by telling Carter, "Don't call me. If I am interested, I will call you." ~~(S)~~

Soon, however, McCone picked Carter as the best from the list of candidates he had been presented. On 28 February, he sent Carter's name to the president, emphasizing the general's "experience in international political matters" that he said was "unusual for a regular officer of the military establishment." McCone further noted that Carter had the technical background needed for the deputy's job, and that he was young enough to carry "the heavy work load...under the kind of organization which I am planning."[71] (U)

In early March, the vice chief of staff of the Army tracked Carter down at a hockey game in Colorado and told him to

[68] McCone, "Memorandum of Discussion with the Joint Chiefs...January 8, 1962," *FRUS, 1961–1963, XXV, Organization of Foreign Policy...*, 200; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 144–45, 153–54; E. Henry Knoche oral history interview by Montgomery Rogers, Colorado Springs, CO, 14 May 2001, 34–35; Grogan untitled memorandum about McCone meeting with Hanson Baldwin on 25 January 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1; McCone, "Memorandum of Meeting with the President...January 17, 1962...," ibid., box 6, folder 1; Carter-Knoche OH, 39–40; Amory oral history in *Spymasters*, 164–65 ~~(S)~~

[69] Principal sources for this paragraph and the next are: Carter/McAuliffe OH, 2–5; McCone calendars, entries for January–March 1962; McCone letter to President Kennedy, 28 January 1962, retrievable from Chief Information Officer/Electronic Records WEB Interface (ERWI) database, doc. no. ado-5255, doc. bar code CIA98-960007048000030002; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with the President, 8 March 1962," McCone Papers, box 6, folder 1; author's conversations with Mary Carter O'Conner (Marshall Carter's daughter), 4 June 1998 and 14 January 1999; numerous press reports on the DDCI appointment in HS Files, Job 84-00473R, box 1, folder 8, and Job 84-00161R, box 4, folder 16, and Office of Public Affairs (OPA) Files, Job 81-00468R, box 9, folder 4; "Intelligence Organizer: Marshall Sylvester Carter," *New York Times*, 10 March 1962, McCone clipping file, HIC; Warner, "Memorandum for the Record...Hearing before Senate Armed Services Committee—General Carter's Nomination as DDCI," 29 March 1962, DDO Files, Job 78-02888R, box 3, folder 6. ~~(S)~~

[70] Carter later thought that Robert Lovett, a former secretary of defense and a pillar of the foreign policy establishment, had put his name forward. (U)

[71] McCone letter to President Kennedy, 28 January 1962, ERWI doc. no. ado-5255, doc. bar code CIA98-960007048000030002. (U)

go to Washington immediately to meet the president and the DCI. On 8 March in the Oval Office, Carter recalled:

> McCone said he had selected me as his Deputy Director, providing that was acceptable to the President...they did not ask me if I wanted the job, nor did Mr. McCone at any time ask me if I wanted the job.... I presume that McCone had finally given up finding the guy he wanted and would settle for whatever he could get.... Mr. McCone never told me how he happened to select me, and I never asked him. I have a gut feeling that he probably was shopping around for somebody going back to the era in which he had been with the Atomic Energy Commission and possibly before that. (U)

When the White House announced Carter's appointment, it emphasized his "considerable experience in international affairs." Presumably that and his demonstrated competence at running large military commands made him acceptable to the president (and McCone). Carter's nomination encountered no opposition on Capitol Hill. His confirmation hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee lasted only 15 minutes, and the full Senate approved his appointment unanimously.[72] (U)

Carter presented a near-total contrast to McCone in appearance, personality, and demeanor. The *New York Times* described him as "a relaxed, informal, 'feet-on-the-desk,' non-spit-and-polish type...jaunty, self-confident, articulate.... [M]any girlish hearts flutter at the Pentagon when he strolls down the corridor, laughing heartily in conversation with his colleagues and—shocking for a military man—whistling loudly." One senior Agency officer called him "impish," and another remembered him as "bald, pudgy...an incorrigible prankster whose impudence, roguery, and charm compensated for some of McCone's coldness and aloofness." One of the first things visitors to his office saw was a large sign on his desk bearing the incongruous warning "CRINGE" in bright red letters. Lying nearby was an OSS assassination pistol. Carter always kept within reach what he called his "goosing stick"—a telescoping pointer that he used to prod the backsides of longwinded briefers. He occasionally referred to the Agency as "McConey Island."[73] (U)

Two anecdotes convey Carter's offbeat and irreverent sense of humor, of which the staid McCone was often indirectly the target. The DCI suite at the new headquarters building was designed with a "swing office"—a small meeting room between it and the DDCI's area. Like the telephone system that McCone had removed, the space was one of Allen Dulles's ideas for encouraging informal communication with his deputies—or as "Red" White put it, so that the DCI and DDCI "could scoot back and forth and have a little place they could tuck people into." McCone did not want anyone dropping in unannounced or occupying a room he wanted to use, however, so he ordered the door between the swing office and the DDCI's suite sealed off the night before Carter reported for duty. To needle the DCI for ordering this midnight remodeling, Carter stuck a rubber hand into a seam in the paneling on his side of the wall, making it look as if McCone had been trapped as the last sheet was nailed up. On a later occasion, McCone mentioned at a staff meeting that he wanted special brands of cosmetics and toilet paper put in the private lavatory in his suite for use by the future Mrs. McCone during her visits. Carter lampooned what he regarded as the DCI's high society *hauteur* by jotting on the meeting minutes that he planned to stock his own lavatory with corn cobs, Sunkist orange wrappers, and a Sears catalogue.[74] (U)

Carter's effort to be "one of the guys" did not always sit well with policymakers and Agency colleagues, and undercut his authority and stature. For example, [redacted] an Agency officer who served as executive secretary of the NSC's Special Group and 303 Committee, recalls that McGeorge Bundy "couldn't stand" Carter's habit of opening meetings with an "off-color" joke. Some CIA managers did not always take the DDCI seriously and either avoided raising matters with him while he was acting DCI or bypassed him and dealt directly with McCone. Carter chided senior

[72] US Senate, *Hearing Before the Committee on Armed Services...on the Nomination of Maj. Gen. Marshall Sylvester Carter for Appointment as Deputy Director, Central Intelligence Agency...March 29, 1962* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1962). The Agency announcement of Carter's appointment came in Headquarters Notice HN 20-37, 3 April 1962, ER Files, Job 80B00269R, box 4, folder 23. (U)

[73] "Intelligence Organizer: Marshall Sylvester Carter," *New York Times*, 10 March 1962, McCone clipping file, HIC; Kirkpatrick/McAuliffe OH, 6; Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 85; author's conversation with Mary Carter O'Connor, 14 June 1998; Toni Hiley (CIA Curator) memorandum to author, 15 February 2000; James Bamford, *The Puzzle Palace*, 101. (U)

[74] Ranelagh, 415; Brugioni [redacted] "Lawrence K. White on the Directors," 11; author's conversation with Mary Carter O'Connor, 14 January 1999. According to Carter, McCone first noticed the rubber hand the only time he went into the DDCI's office—just before he left Langley. Carter-Knoche OH, 25. Contrary to Brugioni (*Eyeball to Eyeball*, 85), Carter did not actually put the rustic items in his lavatory. (U)

staffers about these dodges, reminding them that "all of the DCI's authorities relating to Agency administration and operations have been delegated to the DDCI[,] and that when the DDCI approves of various proposals, that approval stands. In the event of a *reclama*, the proposer is to take it up with the DDCI."[75] (S)

Richard Helms described McCone and Carter's relationship as resembling that between a military commander and a subordinate officer.[76] The DDCI reserved his jokes and capers for times when the DCI was not around. When he was, Helms recalled, Carter was "strictly business" and comported himself in a "West Point" manner. Carter described his interaction with McCone as "so formal and so part of a machine operation that there was no interchange of personality...I never did feel that Mr. McCone had accepted me as his true Deputy...." "I don't think I ever had the guts to call him 'John.'" The personal and professional distance between the two men widened after McCone blamed Carter for mishandling the runup to the Cuban missile crisis (discussed in Chapter 5), and the DCI often criticized his deputy for failing to secure consensus among CIA components when they argued over estimates. (S)

Despite their problems, McCone did not backtrack from his commitment to using the DDCI principally as the "general manager" of CIA. Carter's prior record showed he was fully satisfactory as an administrator, and McCone left him in charge as acting DCI over 20 percent of the time. Still, McCone remarked, he thought it necessary to "keep my finger on the [Agency's] day-to-day operations—most particularly those that had to do with the relationship with the other agencies and with the White House and...Congress." Besides being the Agency's resident chief executive, Carter also served as its representative on USIB and McCone's principal liaison with the military hierarchy; frequently briefed PFIAB in the DCI's place; met with new US ambassadors heading overseas; and spent a good portion of his time on training and staffing matters—notably among the latter, terminations of "surplus personnel" and the Agency's special retirement act—and the organization of the new science and technology directorate.[77] (S)

Other Senior Personnel. McCone kept in place four senior officers whose expertise and experience he valued: Lawrence Houston as general counsel, John S. Warner as legislative counsel, Sherman Kent as chairman of the Board of National Estimates (BNE) and head of ONE, and Lawrence White as DDS (even though their relationship was strained from the outset because of the DCI's fussiness about facilities and logistics). McCone moved his executive assistant, John Earman, into the IG post because Kirkpatrick did not get along with him. Walter Elder, a career DI officer then serving as the DDCI's executive assistant, moved up to become the DCI's adjutant. Stanley Grogan, the incumbent public affairs officer, remained until November 1963, when he retired after suffering a heart attack; Paul M. Chretien, a VIP liaison officer, replaced him. Another important fixture on the DCI's staff was Terrence ("Terry") Lee, McCone's private secretary since 1942, whom he brought from California to Virginia to ensure that his wide-ranging personal business did not become entangled in his official duties as DCI. Lee knew more about McCone's affairs than anyone and handled a myriad of administrative and business details for his longtime employer. He could reproduce McCone's signature and saved untold hours of staff time dealing with routine correspondence. He worked so hard that some Agency officers referred to him as "the slave." While at CIA he took a three-week vacation to Europe—seemingly very generous on McCone's part, except that it was Lee's first lengthy time off in 11 years.[78] (S)

---

[75] [redacted] oral history interview by [redacted] Chevy Chase, MD, 27 November 1984 (hereafter [redacted] OH), 23; DCI morning meeting minutes for 31 August 1964, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 17, folder 348. (S)

[76] Sources for this paragraph and the next are: author's conversation with Helms, 29 January 1998; John McCone oral history interview by Mary S. McAuliffe, Pebble Beach, CA, 16–18 May 1989 (hereafter McCone/McAuliffe OH), 26; Helms/McAuliffe OH, 2; Carter/McAuliffe OH, 8–10, 12; Carter-Knoche OH, 13, 41–42; Knoche, "Notes for DDCI, 7 May 1964," ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 10; "DDCI Daily Log," 23 May 1962, ibid., folder 9; Cline/McAuliffe OH, 7; Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 18. (S)

[77] As de facto director of CIA, Carter oversaw implementation of a forced retirement process called the Professional Manpower Control Program for the Clandestine Services—or the 701 Program, as it came to be called after the issuance of Agency regulation 20-701 in February 1961. The program was intended to smooth out the age and grade "hump" in the DDP and allow for the recruitment and promotion of young case officers. The "surplus personnel" were designated before McCone became DCI, but the administration of most terminations occurred during 1962–63 and created some morale problems for him and his deputies to address. Nearly [redacted] were separated from the Agency by the end of 1963, when the 701 Program ended. CIA's overall retirement policy became the subject of the first legislation concerning the Agency since 1949. In October 1964, the CIA Retirement Act became law. Carter and Kirkpatrick took the executive lead in the administrative and legislative work-up of the act, which led to the establishment of the CIA Retirement and Disability System (CIARDS) in late April 1965 just as McCone was leaving. [redacted] "Reluctant Retirees: Outplacement, 'Second Career' Counseling, and Retiree Placement, 1957–1967," DDS Historical Series Paper No. OP-2 (January 1971), part II: [redacted] The Office of Personnel: Special Activities Staff, 1957–70," DDS Historical Series Paper No. OP-3 (November 1971), 13–19; [redacted] The Development of Retirement Policy in the Central Intelligence Agency, 1947–68," DDS Historical Series Paper No. OP-4 (June 1971), parts VIII and IX. (S)

Refocusing on Analysis (U)

McCone quickly set about changing the ways CIA produced and disseminated finished intelligence to policymakers, which he regarded as the Agency's primary mission. He was more engaged intellectually and administratively in the analytic process than his predecessor had been. As DCI, he thought that one of his main responsibilities was assuring that the Agency's evaluated intelligence was disseminated more thoroughly inside the community and downtown and, more importantly, was read and respected. Kennedy administration principals McCone spoke to soon after his appointment told him that was not always the case. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, for one, complained that CIA products needed to be made more meaningful and useful. Other senior officials confirmed McCone's suspicions that significant intelligence reports and analyses were not "getting through" until events had overtaken them, and that Agency publications were not being read because they replicated information available elsewhere sooner.[79]

McCone's intellectual characteristics—broad knowledge, rapid retention, keen logic, intense concentration—influenced his approach to CIA analysis as much as the above-mentioned concerns about what the businessman in him would have called the Agency's "customer base." He was impressed with the caliber of DI analysts and enjoyed the give-and-take involved in developing an assessment. "[T]he thing I like about this work is the intellectual side of it. I've found an amazingly capable organization. There's nothing like this organization here from the standpoint of intellectual ability and academic training...anyplace [else] in government or industry." Understandably, then, an ONE veteran described McCone as "going over each line" of an estimate "as if it were a corporate mortgage," and DDCI Carter's senior aide has remarked that McCone "did his homework.... I've never known him to show up cold to consider an estimate." R. Jack Smith, the head of OCI at the time and a regular briefer of the DCI, has described McCone's thought processes as well as anyone:

> I came to know the quality of John McCone's mind intimately.... He plugged into the briefing like a five-pronged power tube in a high-fidelity amplifier. Nothing got by him. Now and then I would look up from my notes as he barked out a sharp question and realize that he was inexplicably angry. It invariably developed that I had just said something that was contrary to a view he had expressed in some other setting...possibly a year or two previously. Organized like a meticulous file cabinet, his mind could produce everything he knew, precisely and instantly. Before a new entry could be made, his mind had to be satisfied that it accorded with material already filed or that adjustments were feasible and proper.

In contrast to Dulles's reputedly lackadaisical approach to reviewing estimates, Smith recalls that

> McCone would set a meeting at four o'clock, and we would walk through the door at four o'clock and he would have read the estimate. He'd say, "I have three questions on this Estimate, and here they are—one, two, three." And "How would you defend your judgment that this is the case?" And you would defend it. He never overrode anybody. He had a marvelous mind, very disciplined, hard, clean, beautifully controlled, and a marvelous memory.[80] (U)

McCone was not at all reluctant to critique analyses and estimates as a college professor might review a freshman's political science term paper. McCone once called Sherman Kent very early one morning with blunt comments about an estimate, such as "On page 20, you say this...Can you prove it?" On another occasion, he returned an analysis of Vietnamese [redacted] movements because it did not delve sufficiently into the [redacted] organization, goals, and

[78] [redacted] "Office of the Inspector General," 108–9; Elder personnel file no. 315700, Office of Personnel Files; press clippings on Grogan in HS Files, HS/HC-326, Job 84T00286R, box 1, folder 11; Elder, "Support for McCone," 20; Phillips, *The Night Watch*, 124; author's conversation with Dino Brugioni, 30 October 1998. [redacted]

[79] McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Secretary McNamara and Mr. Gilpatric, 4 December 1961," and "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Mr. Walter Rostow, 26 December 1961," McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1; McCone memorandum, "Discussion with Attorney General Robert Kennedy...27 December 1961," *FRUS, 1961–1963, XXV, Organization of Foreign Policy...*, 196. On Dulles's and McCone's different degrees of engagement with the analytic process, see Richard Kovar, "Mr. Current Intelligence: An Interview with Richard Lehman," *Studies* 43, no. 2 (1999–2000): 27; and Jackson, "Dulles as DCI," vol. 2, 14. [redacted]

[80] Transcript of McCone meeting with journalist Marquis Childs, 17 September 1964, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 1; Carter-Knoche OH, 28; Smith, *The Unknown CIA*, 151; Ranelagh, 416, citing interview with Smith on 15 July 1983. A slightly different version of Smith's anecdote is in *The Unknown CIA*, 150–51. (U)

activities. He suggested to Ray Cline that the analyst compare and contrast and he included some *New York Times* articles—perhaps to make the point that CIA analysts should not be outdone by journalists. McCone's attention to detail showed in late 1963 when he sent back to Cline a study on Soviet grain production. He disagreed with its judgment that a "return of normal weather would permit a sharp recovery [in output] in 1964," contending instead that a recovery would be "long and tedious" because of deficiencies in the Soviet Union's agricultural infrastructure. The DCI demonstrated his concern for the reputation of the Agency's analyses after outside academics in 1964 criticized its methods for analyzing the Soviet economy—in particular, how it calculated the gross national product. He sought immediate assurance from ORR that Agency techniques were valid and rigorous.[81]

Different Processes and Products (U)

McCone instituted or, through Cline, ratified new procedures and products that expanded and rationalized Agency analysis, and better enabled it to target issues in response to consumer demands. McCone's selection of Cline, with his brilliant intellect and good connections downtown, was ideal for these purposes. The DCI and the DDI encouraged analysts to inquire about policymakers' concerns, to package finished intelligence in an accessible form, and to deliver it to the right people at the right time. "[W]e undertook to produce whatever they wanted us to produce," recalled OCI officer Richard Lehman. Intelligence memoranda and ad hoc briefings joined serial publications and USIB committee reports as regular vehicles for Agency analysis. Cline set up a new Senior Intelligence Officer Team for Policy Support, under a special assistant for policy support, as a channel for bringing policymakers' immediate interests to the attention of the analytical offices. (Chester Cooper of ONE was the first designee for the special assistant position.) The Special Research Staff, established in late 1962, integrated all DI resources for an in-depth study of a few key political questions, such as the Sino-Soviet split. Also in late 1962, OCI created a cadre of Senior Intelligence Support Officers, drawn from several DI offices and attached to the OCI Watch Office. The SISOs maintained close relations with operational, planning, and policymaking components inside and outside CIA and initiated support activities when problems arose.[82]

McCone did not let Agency analyses speak for themselves, however, nor did he rely solely on senior officers to convey the facts and "bottom line" of the assessments. He delivered many briefings to the president, the NSC, and Congress, especially when major events were breaking. He was adept at identifying the relevant audience and adapting the content and tone of his briefings accordingly. The DDCI's deputy, "Hank" Knoche, later observed that "[McCone's] strength was to be able to take the intelligence product, whether it was written or oral or otherwise, and—I don't mean this in a derogatory way—merchandise it. He knew exactly who to go talk to about it—maybe the President, maybe a senator, maybe the secretary of state, whatever."[83]

Among other durable changes Cline made with McCone's blessing were expansion of the Office of the DDI (ODDI) and movement of some management autonomy away from the subordinate offices to reduce their parochialism. Analysts throughout the directorate received greater access to sensitive compartmented intelligence, and some branched out into military issues after changes at the Department of Defense reduced the analytical capabilities of the service intelligence units. ORR and OCI, for example, both established military analysis elements in mid-1962. ORR, which performed the bulk of the Agency's analysis of the Soviet Union, was reorganized into a five-division Economic Research Area and a new Military Economics Division. The latter quickly became accepted as the community's principal producer of comprehensive assessments of strategic weapons systems in communist countries. CIA's responsibilities for basic research grew substantially in 1962, when the Department of State transferred to the Agency its role in producing the encyclopedic *National Intelligence Surveys*. A new Collection Guidance Staff (CGS) centralized the all-source collection effort that provided the grist for intelligence research and publication. In 1963, the Operations Center came into being, although disputes over its pri-

[81] Victoria S. Price, "The DCI's Role in Producing Strategic Intelligence Estimates," 66–67; McCone untitled memorandum to Cline, 14 September 1964, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 5; McCone untitled memorandum to Cline, 4 November 1963, ibid., box 5, folder 18

[83] Carter-Knoche OH, 5–6.

mary function (producing current intelligence or collecting and disseminating information) and subordination (under OCI or CGS) were unresolved until late 1964, when Cline made it a staff component of the ODDI and gave OCI administrative authority over it. The Office of Central Reference ventured into writing and publishing with the *Biographic Handbooks* and the monthly series *Chiefs of State and Cabinet Members of Foreign Governments*. Over time, both products became highly valued and widely read downtown.[84] ~~(S)~~

McCone wanted to ensure that CIA's daily publication for the chief executive and the very highest-level policymakers, the *President's Intelligence Checklist* (*PICL*), was meeting the needs of its intended readership. The *PICL* appeared in June 1961 as a product tailored to President Kennedy's requirements and carried sensitive material that could not be used in the more broadly disseminated *Current Intelligence Bulletin* (produced since 1951). Soon after taking over at Langley, McCone sent out a "customer satisfaction survey" to find out what the publication's other readers thought of it. Roswell Gilpatric, answering for McNamara, considered the *PICL* "of definite value" and praised "the succinctness and clarity with which information is reported and evaluated." That was the general tenor of the responses, and occasional changes in content and style kept up readers' interest. Its primary audience—and the analysts who wrote it—clearly were pleased, recalled R. Jack Smith:

> President Kennedy...entered enthusiastically into an exchange of comments with [the *PICL*'s] producers, sometimes praising an account, sometimes criticizing a comment, once objecting to "boondocks" as not an accepted word. For current intelligence people, this was heaven on earth! A president who read your material thoughtfully and told you what he liked and did not like![85] ~~(S)~~

As part of his pragmatic consumer focus, McCone wanted to avoid overloading policymakers with superfluous publications that also wasted Agency resources. He discontinued a new DI product, the *Weekly Survey of Cold War Crisis Situations*, in October 1962 after a one-year run. Prepared by ONE, the *Weekly Survey* had been established to warn senior US policymakers of potential flash points in the East-West conflict. Most readers concluded that the publication duplicated information in the *Current Intelligence Bulletin*, the *PICL*, and other current products, so McCone ordered its suspension. In addition, the *National Intelligence Survey* program was simplified to concentrate on producing basic global intelligence for strategic-level planners through annual publications known as *General Surveys* and, slightly later, with the *Basic Intelligence Factbook* (the forerunner of the *World Factbook*). Finally, McCone directed that all DI finished intelligence products be cut in size wherever feasible to make them more readable.[86] ~~(S)~~

McCone took a special interest in the NIEs and special national intelligence estimates (SNIEs) that ONE produced in coordination with other community components. These assessments and forecasts of political, military, and economic developments throughout the world represented the sense of the community and were disseminated over the DCI's signature. Naturally, McCone scrutinized the product and looked for ways by which ONE could improve its work. In early 1962, he directed the IG to examine the estimative machinery to determine whether it had the right personnel and whether its products stood the test of time. Noting that McNamara had said he got as much out of the *New York Times* as he did from ONE estimates, McCone wanted the IG to gauge consumers' reactions. He suggested to Kirkpatrick that the investigators see if the British system of estimates might suggest some improvements in the way the Agency did its own. In general, McCone reinforced a trend begun late in Dulles's term away from CIA-generated country papers and toward policy-specific estimates. (Already by

early 1962, half of the estimates had been unscheduled, added to ONE's program at the request of consumers.)[87] (S)

During McCone's directorship ONE developed a new style of presentation and argumentation in the NIEs. The estimates laid out the various sides of a question rather than reach one "most probable" judgment, as Dulles had preferred. Sherman Kent explained the change by observing that policymakers often preferred that analysts treat the variables in a situation instead of offering a forecast of the outcome.[88] (S)

One point of contention in McCone's generally amiable relationship with Cline concerned the line of authority between the Agency's estimative entities—ONE and BNE—and the DCI and the DDI, respectively.[89] Organizationally, ONE and BNE were located in the DI. Cline believed that the broad mandate he had received under McCone for coordinating, producing, and disseminating finished intelligence extended to the estimates as well. As DDI, he was charged with providing intelligence support to the DCI as both head of CIA and chairman of USIB. Cline found that the distinction McCone drew between the roles of D/CIA and DCI "diluted and fuzzed" the DDI's duties. Where estimates were involved, the DDI lost substantive responsibility over a high-profile analytical activity but still had to care for it administratively. After a "humiliating" experience with an erroneous estimate about Soviet missiles in Cuba (see Chapter 5), Cline told McCone that "you should either make me your USIB estimates spokesman, with authority (under you) for NIEs, or set the Board of Estimates outside my administrative jurisdiction." (S)

McCone would not accept that either-or proposition. He made it clear to Cline that he considered BNE "his" board, speaking for the community and reporting directly to him as USIB chairman and senior intelligence adviser to the president. When it came time for Cline to write a performance evaluation on BNE chairman Kent—which the previous DDI regularly had done—McCone told Kent, "*I* write your fitness reports." The bureaucratic outcome to the dispute came in March 1964 when the headquarters regulation governing the DI was revised. In the wiring diagram accompanying the revision, BNE was placed outside the DI, with a dashed line connecting it to the DCI and ONE. (S)

A Net Plus (U)

For all the abovementioned changes, McCone nonetheless realized early on that a reservoir of dissatisfaction with Agency analysis would always exist downtown, regardless of how convincingly the products were cast and how promptly they were delivered. The intelligence process had a dimension of reciprocity that was not always appreciated across the Potomac River. CIA had an obligation to produce useful products, but policymakers had to be willing to be informed, and to allow themselves to be aware that they had been informed. In April 1962, rebutting criticism about an intelligence failure when, to the West's surprise, the Berlin Wall went up the previous year, McCone wrote: "Successful warning is essentially a two-fold process; if warning is to be effective, not only must the alert be given, but the consumer of intelligence must accept the fact that he has in fact been warned." Similarly, CIA would never avoid falling under the harsh light of hindsight, no matter how proficient it became at analysis. As McCone observed, "The thought that because an indicator turns out to be significant, it must have been recognizable as significant before the event," always would arise in the minds of outsiders who wanted to "substitute an after-the-fact appraisal for the contemporaneous analyst."[90] (S)

On balance, however, McCone's contemporaries thought the improvements he instituted made CIA's analytical products more rigorous, timely, and relevant and were among his most salient and lasting accomplishments. R. Jack Smith has lauded McCone as "the man who did more than any other to improve the quality of our reporting and estimating." McCone himself thought that his main achievement a year and a half into his directorship was upgrading how CIA produced "a careful and considered evaluation and appraisal of all information…which might bear on the contest between international communism and freedom." "Every war of this century, including World War I, has started because of inad-

[87] Kirkpatrick Diary, vol. 5, entry for 22 March 1962; "Semi-Annual Report of the Central Intelligence Agency to the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, 1 October 1961–31 March 1962," 7, CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 12, folder 227. (S)

[88] [redacted]206. (S)

[90] McCone untitled memorandum to PFIAB, 30 April 1962, HS Files, Job 03-01724R, box 1, folder 5. (S)

equate intelligence and incorrect estimates and evaluations...[b]ut war over Cuba was avoided because of intelligence success.... Although intelligence is not a measurable commodity, that is at least a partial measure of its value."[91] (U)

Other Early Administrative Matters (U)

Completing the Move to Langley (U)

By McCone's tenure, CIA had long occupied a scattering of accommodations around the city, including its complex at 2430 E Street NW, an abandoned roller rink nearby, and deteriorating temporary buildings on the Mall left over from World War I. Those quarters were crowded, uncomfortable, and expensive to secure, and created serious communications problems in an era when secure telephones did not exist and classified documents had to be hand-carried between offices. Allen Dulles's solution was to build a single Headquarters building for CIA at a remote and easily protected site in Langley, Virginia. Design work on the campus-like compound began in mid-1956, the first ground was broken in late 1957, the cornerstone was laid in November 1959, and the first occupants (from the DI) began moving in during September 1961.[92] ~~(S)~~

McCone regarded the geographical consolidation of CIA as an important part of his effort to centralize control over it. He wanted the Headquarters building filled up as quickly as possible and made a point of occupying an office there immediately to symbolize his own presence and authority. Moreover, he was sensitive about the perquisites and comforts of high position and insisted on working in surroundings that suited his tastes. Right after his appointment, he began complaining to DDS White about construction and logistical delays, and once he moved into temporary workspace at Headquarters after his swearing-in, he expressed dissatisfaction with the pace of work on his own suite. He was disappointed that only [redacted] employees were in the new building when he took over but reluctantly accepted that no more would relocate until the whole DDP wing was ready in early 1962. He had his personal secretary, Terry Lee, check the progress on the executive offices every day. White wrote at the time that "Mr. McCone is going to be champing at the bit until he is installed in his seventh floor offices, and we should do everything we can to expedite their completion." They were finally ready in March 1962. The DCI was not pleased with the parking arrangements or the heating system, either, and sometimes called White to have the temperature in his office adjusted. By September 1962, the new Headquarters was almost 93 percent occupied, with over [redacted] employees working there. After security concerns were raised about the four parcels of privately owned land adjacent to the compound, McCone ordered a study of the feasibility of buying them. [redacted]

CIA's new environs affected organizational relationships and cultures in ways that reinforced McCone's plans for change. One of his goals was to begin breaching the wall of compartmentation between the DI and the DDP. Now that the overt and covert parts of CIA were sharing quarters for the first time, meetings and casual contacts eroded some of the suspicion and tension that had hindered cooperation between analysts and operators. The relocation also improved communication throughout the Agency—an essential part of McCone's effort to put its sprawling activities under his and his deputies' control. Before the move, strict management was hindered by components' physical separation and the lack of secure telephones and a rapid courier service. Afterward, distances between offices shrank from, in some cases, many city blocks to at most a few floors or corridors. Executives could schedule short-notice meetings conveniently and drop by each other's offices for informal discussions, while secure telephones and pneumatic tubes enabled officers to exchange information and documents quickly. In addition, the collocation of the Office of Central Reference and the DI gave analysts ready access to full library facilities and specialized repositories of informa-

[91] McCone, "Memorandum of discussions between Mr. Stewart Alsop and Mr. McCone...," 12 April 1963, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 5; Ranelagh, 416, citing interview with Smith on 15 July 1983; McCone quoted in Alsop and Braden, 264. (U)

[92] [redacted] "The Construction of the Original Headquarters Building," passim. (U)

[93] [redacted] 235; White diary notes for 29 and 30 November and 4 December 1961, HS Files, Job 84-00499R, box 1, folder 9; Kirkpatrick Diary, vol. 5, entry for 20 September 1962; [redacted] "The Construction of the Original Headquarters Building," 136 n. 9; "Chronology of DCI Office Space," 6 May 1971, HS Files, HS/HC-429, Job 84T00286R, box 3, folder 1. As a civil defense precaution, McCone wanted an emergency relocation center for CIA constructed outside the Washington, DC, metropolitan area. As AEC chairman, he had learned details about the inept evacuation exercise the US government had conducted in 1956, and, especially after the Cuban missile crisis, he wanted to ensure that a small-scale CIA survived a nuclear strike against the capital. [redacted]

McCone looks over a model of the Original Headquarters Building. (U)

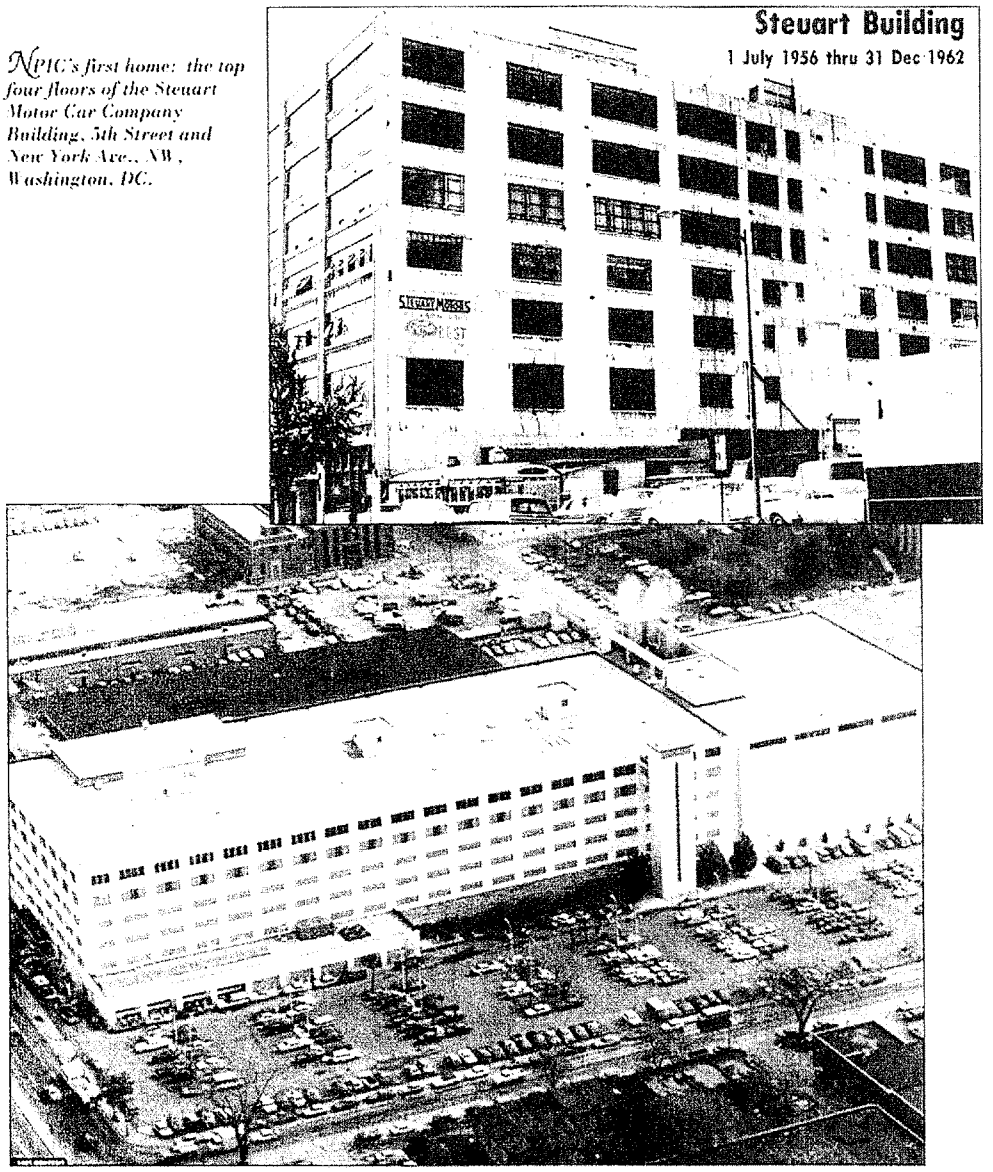
tion, helping them produce the high-quality, timely assessments the DCI demanded. Working conditions at Langley were far superior to those across the river, and the climate controls, availability of food and banking services, new furniture, larger workspaces, and woodland setting improved the morale and, more importantly to McCone, the efficiency and productivity of most employees.[94] (U)

The trek to suburbia took CIA geographically out of the close-knit downtown policymaking community, causing a marked dropoff in day-to-day contacts with the executive branch. Although this isolation forced most Agency employees to turn inward professionally and socially, it forced senior management to work harder at reaching out to administration officials, community counterparts, and allies in Congress and the press. This demand suited McCone perfectly well, given the priority he placed on his responsibilities as DCI and on the "political" roles he assumed as a presidential policy adviser and the White House's intelligence liaison to Capitol Hill and the Republican Party. (U)

One component that the move to Langley put even more out of the mainstream was the National Photographic Interpretation Center (NPIC). When McCone became DCI, NPIC was located, as its predecessors had been, above the former Steuart Motors automobile dealership, a few blocks from Union Station. Although it was "[a] squalid building amid...squalid surroundings," according to Dino Brugioni, it was relatively convenient when most of the rest of CIA was downtown. NPIC had grown rapidly during and after the Cuban missile crisis, and McCone wanted to reward it for its stellar performance in that episode by giving it a bigger and better building. A warehouse called Building 213 at the Washington Navy Yard was selected, and, as with the Headquarters complex, McCone closely watched the renovation and relocation in his best, gruff style. He hectored "Red" White to make the upgrades as quickly as possible—"I want you to come back and tell me in 24 hours when you are going to finish the building.... That's not good enough. You go back and sharpen your pencil again"—and eventually got so impatient that he arbitrarily set a deadline of 1 January 1963 for full occupancy and operation and so informed President Kennedy. At the same time, he insisted that costs be kept down—even though his rush deadline required that contracts be expedited, making them more expensive.[95]

The harried White succeeded. On New Year's Day, he notified McCone that Building 213 was ready. Expecting at least a clipped "Good job," he instead got no answer; the DCI was out of town. After taking a tour in mid-January,

[94] Some older hands, however, found the new building coldly modernistic, gray, and sterile despite its semirural surroundings. As with an old baseball glove, they preferred the Mall and E Street offices for their well-worn "feel," and for the memories they harbored and the sense of shared triumphs and adversities they evoked. "The real trouble with this new building," an Agency officer was quoted as saying in 1964, "is that it tends to make an honest woman of the old madam—you know, no spittoons, keep the antimacassars clean, and no champagne in the morning. We ought to be lurking in scrabby old hide-outs, with the plaster peeling and stopped-up toilets. There's something about the atmosphere of this building that leads to too many memos, too many meetings, and not enough dirty work." Alsop and Braden, 263. (U)



NPIC's first home: the top four floors of the Steuart Motor Car Company Building, 5th Street and New York Ave., NW, Washington, DC.

NPIC's new facility at Building 213, Washington Navy Yard ~~(S)~~

In January 1963, NPIC moved to its present location, Building 213, 1st and M Streets, SE, in the Washington Navy Yard. The building underwent a major renovation and expansion in the early 1980s.

McCone complained that the new facility was "out of line with Headquarters" and claimed that White had [redacted] You've got so much gingerbread out there that I would be afraid to take a congressman within 10 miles of the place." He contended that the only unusual expenditures should have been for dust and temperature control. According to Brugioni, McCone noticed piles of walnut paneling awaiting installation and told NPIC Director Arthur Lundahl that it was too fancy to be used all over the building. Lundahl assured him that the paneling was intended only for the entrance and reception area, even though the architectural plan called for hanging it throughout the facility. The paneling was put up only where Lundahl had told the DCI it would be. McCone told his staff to

[95] Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 191; White [redacted] OH, 36; Brugioni and [redacted] "Lawrence K. White on the Directors," 12; [redacted]

find out how the Building 213 project "got out of hand." White prepared a thick report that said the acquisition and renovation had cost [redacted] was attributable to the DCI's crash schedule, and [redacted] was spent as an emergency fee at his direction. After receiving the report, McCone never said any more about it.[96] ~~(C)~~

A Soft Landing for Dulles (U)

McCone directly handled the potentially delicate task of Allen Dulles's transition although, according to Lyman Kirkpatrick, "he didn't have a high regard for Allen. They conversed, but there was a lack of warmth." McCone and Dulles together formulated the terms of the consulting contract under which the ex-director would work on his proposed book on intelligence. The DCI ratified the procedures whereby Dulles would have access to CIA facilities and records, could discuss his work with Agency officers, and would not rebut open-source accounts with classified information. After Dulles decided his book would be an "independent," commercial product, and because of continuing controversy over his collaborator, *Fortune* writer Charles Murphy—author of the Bay of Pigs story that led to DDCI Cabell's dismissal—McCone had his predecessor moved from the E Street compound and questioned why Dulles had billed the Agency for over [redacted] in consulting fees. Then, for reasons not clear in the record, McCone quickly changed his mind. Possibly his second thoughts owed to his need for good relations with the Clandestine Services; possibly the White House intervened, wanting to make Dulles's exit as gentle and graceful as it could. Whatever the reason, Dulles would remain a consultant, retain access to Agency space, and be able to use Murphy, who was granted a top secret clearance. Dulles's book, *The Craft of Intelligence*, was published in 1963 after undergoing CIA review to prevent unauthorized disclosure of sources and methods. McCone made no recorded comments about it at the time.[97] ~~(C)~~

After One Year (U)

By the end of 1962, McCone had achieved most of his major objectives for changing CIA's organization and senior leadership, exercising greater control over its activities, and raising its stature within the administration. He had overhauled the ODCI and brought under his direct authority the important functions of finance, legislative liaison, legal affairs, and internal inspections. He had delegated day-to-day administration of the Agency to the DDCI, the executive director, and the reconstituted Executive Committee, thus freeing himself to deal with policymakers, the Intelligence Community, and Congress as he and the president had intended he should. His handpicked cadre of senior lieutenants was carrying out his requirements for analysis, operations, and administration. (U)

The improvements he wanted in CIA's analytic processes and scientific and technological undertakings were well underway, as was the implementation of more controls on covert actions (to be detailed in subsequent chapters). Although McCone's unsentimental style had bruised the feelings of a number of officers, overall he had helped restore a good measure of the Agency's morale and prestige. Its work was again regarded as important to the White House, and McCone had positioned it to better perform the clandestine and estimative missions it was assigned.[98] (U)

---

[96] [redacted]; McCone calendars, entry for 16 January 1963; Kirkpatrick Diary, vol. 5, entry for 17 January 1963; White [redacted] OH, 56–57; Brugioni and [redacted] Lawrence K. White on the Directors," 12–13. ~~(C)~~

[97] Hersh, *The Old Boys*, 435 citing interview with Kirkpatrick on 11 May 1982; McCone untitled memorandum to Elder, 13 May 1962, McCone Papers, box 1, folder 12; McCone, "Memorandum of Discussion…on July 9, 1962, with Mr. Arthur Dean," and correspondence between McCone and Dulles during July–August 1962, ibid., box 5, folder 9; Grose, 539. Dulles's book presented an early case of the problem of distinguishing officially acknowledged or releasable information from the larger body of general public knowledge. ~~(C)~~

[98] Two documents provide good synopses of the internal changes McCone instituted during his first year: McCone memorandum to Bundy, "Redefining the Role of the Director of Central Intelligence and Strengthening the Internal Organization of the Central Intelligence Agency," 11 May 1962, HS Files, HS/HC-485, Job 84T00286R, box 5, folder 3; and Kirkpatrick memorandum to McCone, "After Action Report on the Findings of the Working Group," 23 October 1962, ER Files, Job 86B00269R, box 4, folder 23. (U)

CHAPTER 3

Setting a New Course (II): Director of Central Intelligence (U)

John McCone regarded coordinating the work of the Intelligence Community to be more important than overseeing CIA's activities. He believed that the DCI should be the chief intelligence officer in the US government, not merely the head of an intelligence agency, and that he could best serve the country and the president by ensuring that the community, not just CIA, provided the most accurate and timely national intelligence possible. He was forthright about his objective, telling a senior Department of State official early on that "I intend to be a power in this administration and to give the whole Intelligence Community a bigger voice." The extent to which he achieved that purpose depended on his ability to fashion bureaucratic instruments to assist him, to negotiate conflicts with CIA's rival departments, and to maintain good relations with the White House and with Congress and other institutions of accountability.[1] (S)

"Chairman of the Board" (U)

McCone asserted this leadership role from the outset. The day he was sworn in, he got approval from Attorney General Robert Kennedy (the president's personal "overseer" of CIA) to delegate day-to-day authority over the Agency to the DDCI. At his first meeting with his deputy directors, he announced that he intended to devote as much time as he could to managing the work of all Intelligence Community departments. By the end of his first month in office, McCone had developed a management plan under which the DCI would provide overall direction of the Agency and represent the president on USIB, while the DDCI would supervise CIA's activities and speak for it at USIB meetings. McCone did not think the DCI could be USIB chairman and CIA's representative on the board at the same time; trying to perform both functions simultaneously would impair his ability to represent either the president's or the Agency's interests. As a result of the new arrangement, McCone, as USIB chairman, often overruled his DDCI, Marshall Carter, in favor of the Departments of State or Defense in deliberations over collection priorities or NIEs. McCone disagreed with, and did not act upon, several recommendations for managing the community and CIA that PFIAB made after the Bay of Pigs disaster. For example, he believed housing the DCI in the Executive Office of the President would be too disruptive; he thought the DCI should work with USIB, not the Bureau of the Budget, in reviewing intelligence estimates; he strongly disagreed with taking clandestine activities and covert operations out of CIA; and he saw no value in changing the Agency's name to give it a "new look."[2] (S)

To afford himself maximum influence within the community, McCone asked for and received a statement from President Kennedy spelling out the DCI's responsibilities and functions.[3] Issued on 16 January 1962 over the president's signature, the document stated that the DCI was "the Government's principal intelligence officer" charged with leading the total US foreign intelligence effort with advice and assistance from USIB. Although the letter gave the DCI little authority beyond the terms of Dwight Eisenhower's memorandum to Allen Dulles in August 1957 and NSCID No. 1 of September 1958, McCone attached great significance to it. He considered it an unequivocal directive that placed the DCI on a par with the secretaries of state and

[1] Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*, 192; [redacted] 192. (S)

[2] McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Attorney General Robert Kennedy," 29 November 1961, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1; White diary notes for 1 December 1961; transcript of McCone interview with Arthur Schlesinger Jr., 26 February 1965, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 3; McCone memorandum about meeting with Robert Kennedy, 27 December 1961, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XXV, Organization of Foreign Policy; Information Policy; United Nations; Scientific Matters*, 195; [Clark Clifford?], "Memorandum on Central Intelligence Agency," c. November–December 1961, ibid.; McCone memorandum to McGeorge Bundy, "Redefining the Role of the Director of Central Intelligence and Strengthening the Internal Organization of the Central Intelligence Agency," 11 May 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 30, folder 5; Elder, "John McCone as DCI (1973)," 96–100. (S)

[3] Sources used in this discussion of the presidential statement were: John F. Kennedy untitled memorandum to McCone, 16 January 1962, Dwight Eisenhower memorandum to NSC members and Allen Dulles, "Recommendations Nos. 1 and 10 of the Report to the President by the President's Board of Consultants on Foreign Intelligence Activities," 5 August 1957, and NSCID No. 1, "Basic Duties and Responsibilities," in Michael Warner, ed., *Central Intelligence: Origin and Evolution*, 50, 55–60, 67–68; Dulles memorandum to James B. Lay (NSC Executive Secretary), "Seventh Report to the President by the President's Board of Consultants on Foreign Intelligence Activities, dated October 4, 1960...," 24 December 1960, HS Files, Job 03-01724R, box 1, folder 2; McCone/McAuliffe OH, 9; Kirkpatrick Diary, vol. 4, entry for 18 December 1961; Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*, 82; Kirkpatrick, 237–40; McCone memorandum about discussion with President Kennedy, 7 January 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XXV, Organization of Foreign Policy...*, 198–99; McCone memorandum about meeting with Robert Kennedy, 11 January 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1; Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 3–4; Kirkpatrick/McAuliffe OH, 5. (S)

defense and assured that he would not be relegated to the status of subcabinet assistant for intelligence. The memorandum, he believed, represented a sharp break from Dulles's sense that the DCI's "authority for coordination is a recommending one and not a mandate" and almost was tantamount to a new charter. For that reason, he had it entered into the record of his confirmation hearings. (S)

The letter's language, crafted by Lyman Kirkpatrick and Lawrence Houston (the general counsel), survived largely intact through coordination with the secretaries of defense and state, the attorney general, the president's national security adviser, and the director of the Bureau of the Budget.[4] Robert McNamara protested the phrase "coordinate and direct" and had it changed to "coordinate and give guidance." Senior Department of State officials George Ball and Roger Hilsman persuaded Dean Rusk to sign a letter laying down several qualifications. "The letter made McCone mad as a hornet," according to Hilsman. "[H]e demanded that it be withdrawn—and the Secretary complied." (S)

In spite of the turf squabbles, McCone got almost all the standing and authority he wanted without evoking fears that he was trying to become an intelligence "czar." He did not formally have the Cabinet rank he held as chairman of the AEC, but he behaved as if he did. He successfully argued for having the salaries of the DCI and DDCI raised to the levels of Cabinet secretary and deputy or under secretary, respectively, as a measure of the positions' equal status. The author of a respected history of CIA has asserted that "[w]hat Allen Dulles had achieved by personal stature and connections, McCone institutionalized for the [A]gency," but McCone's own characterization of the presidential memorandum probably is more accurate: "it confirmed the authority that Allen Dulles had by statute but really never exercised."[5] (S)

In addition to the presidential statement, McCone's "marching orders" as DCI came in the form of the NSCIDs the National Security Council periodically issued. NSCID No. 1 (New Series), disseminated on 18 January 1961 and revised on 4 March 1964, set forth the DCI's general responsibilities for coordinating the US foreign intelligence effort. They included chairing USIB; implementing NSCIDs by issuing Director of Central Intelligence Directives (DCIDs); with USIB, producing "national intelligence"; and protecting sources and methods. NSCID No. 1 also made clear to community departments that they had responsibilities for assisting the DCI in his interagency tasks.[6] (U)

DCID No. 1/3 (August 1963) proved to be the most important directive McCone signed under the authorities granted him in NSCID No. 1. Revised annually, it dealt with "priority national intelligence objectives" deemed likely to persist for at least five years, such as Soviet, Communist Chinese, and Cuban intentions and capabilities; nuclear proliferation; and stability in Warsaw Pact and key nonaligned countries. Other important DCIDs McCone issued set up controls on dissemination and use of intelligence materials; revised the duties of the USIB SIGINT Committee to evaluate and periodically report on COMINT and ELINT collection programs; and spelled out responsibilities and procedures for handling "critical intelligence" (defined as "information indicating a situation or pertaining to a situation which affects the security or interests of the United States to such an extent that it may require the immediate attention of the president").[7] (S)

The Kirkpatrick Working Group did an informal time study of McCone's schedule in early 1962 and found that he spent 80 percent of his working hours dealing with broad community matters and 20 percent on subjects specific to CIA. McCone made it clear that he wanted this pattern to continue. He directed that his morning staff meeting would focus on "intergovernmental" topics and not internal Agency affairs, which were the province of the Executive Committee. In subsequent months, McCone's community leadership role expanded as he got more involved in

[4] McCone told Kirkpatrick and Houston what he wanted the letter from the president to say in concept, and then had them draft the particulars. Kirkpatrick/McAuliffe OH, 5. (S)

[5] Ranelagh, 412; transcript of McCone interview with Schlesinger, 26 February 1965, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 3. (S)

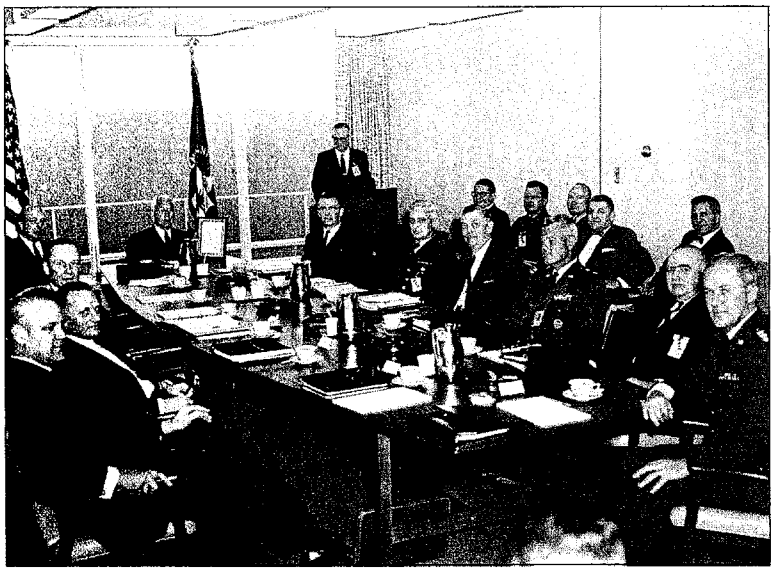
[6] NSCID No. 1, "Basic Duties and Responsibilities," 18 January 1961, revised 4 March 1964, *Central Intelligence: Origin and Evolution*, 61–66, 69–74. The "national intelligence" for which McCone as DCI was directly responsible was defined in NSCID No. 1 as "that intelligence which is required for the formulation of national security policy, concerns more than one department or agency, and transcends the exclusive competence of a single department or agency." The 1961 NSCID dropped four words from the 1958 version, and the 1964 revisions were minor, adding the Defense Intelligence Agency and removing the military services' intelligence shops from the list of USIB members. (U)

[7] DCID No. 1/3, "Priority National Intelligence Objectives," 14 August 1963, revised 23 December 1964; DCID No. 1/7 (New Series), "Controls for Dissemination and Use of Intelligence and Intelligence Information," 21 February 1962; DCID No. 6/1 (New Series), "SIGINT Committee," 31 May 1962; and DCID No. 7/1 (New Series), "Handling of Critical Intelligence," 7 December 1961, revised 25 July 1963, ICS Files, Job 91B01063R, box 1, folders 14 and 15. (S)

interagency intelligence matters, Vietnam and the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO), in particular. By FY 1964, about halfway through his tenure, McCone had direct or nominal coordinating authority over the activities of nearly

USIB Resurgent (U)

Because McCone had command authority only over CIA's relatively small portion of the Intelligence Community's resources—about one ninth of the total—his power as DCI depended in large measure on his ability to gain support from other community agencies. USIB was McCone's principal bureaucratic mechanism for accomplishing that. More dedicated to USIB than Dulles had been, he especially wanted to improve its administration and to enlarge its role in broad community reviews and appraisals of intelligence problems, collection methods and procedures, and counterintelligence and security developments. During USIB meetings McCone often was the most informed and vigorous advocate of carefully managing resources. When necessary, he cited the views of the White House to support his positions. As a corporate board chairman and head of the AEC, he had developed the political skills required to work through a committee structure to get tasks accomplished.[9] ~~(S)~~



McCone and the US Intelligence Board in January 1963 (U)

Organizationally, the USIB Secretariat moved from the ODDI to the ODCI, where it functioned as a non-Agency staff, supporting McCone in his community leadership role. In May 1962, James Lay—one of the original officers in CIA's predecessor, the Central Intelligence Group, and later the executive secretary of the NSC under Presidents Truman and Eisenhower—became the executive secretary of USIB. The board met, usually every Wednesday, first at the South Building in the E Street complex and then at Headquarters, and typically issued more than a dozen actions each week. (During the Cuban missile crisis, McCone convened USIB every morning at the East Building before he went to the White House.) Immediately before these sessions, McCone met with Carter and other CIA officers to thresh out the Agency position on agenda items, including its key judgments on estimates. McCone prepared for all the board's meetings meticulously and ran them efficiently, always trying to steer the participants to closure on agenda items. He did not, however, want estimates "watered down to get everyone on board," as he put it. He retained the practice of having departments use footnotes to express divergent views, as long as "intellectual discipline and restraint" were exercised, "lest the finished product become merely a collection of conflicting opinions rather than a responsible judgment." Only rarely did he have to exercise his chairman's fiat to establish a bottom line.[10] ~~(S)~~

McCone encountered strong resistance from the Department of Defense when he moved to reduce USIB's military membership. Acting largely on the recommendation of the Eisenhower administration's Joint Study Group on Foreign Intelligence Activities of the United States, McCone

---

[8] Kirkpatrick, 240; DCI morning meeting minutes for 22 January 1963, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 17, folder 344; John Bross (National Intelligence Programs Evaluation Staff) memorandum to McCone, "Funding of Intelligence Community Programs," 4 February 1965, CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 7, folder 129; "Minutes of PFIAB Meeting on January 30, 1964," PFIAB record no. 206-10001-10002, PFIAB Records, NARA. ~~(S)~~

[9] James B. Lay, "The United States Intelligence Board, 1958-1965," History Staff unpublished manuscript No. MISC-2, 6 vols. (1974), vol. 3, 70, vol. 6, 274-75. The background and establishment of USIB is discussed in Jackson, "Dulles as DCI," vol. 2, chap. 3. ~~(S)~~

[10] Lay, vol. 3, 78, 86, 142; Kirkpatrick, 217; Elder, "Support for McCone," 18; McCone memorandum to President Kennedy, "Early Warning in National Intelligence," 30 April 1962, HS Files, HS/HC-419, Job 84T00286R, box 2, folder 14. ~~(S)~~

proposed that the board's membership be reduced from 10 to five: the DCI (as chairman) and representatives of CIA (the DDCI), the secretary of state, the secretary of defense, and the JCS, with ad hoc representation from the FBI and the AEC. The military services and NSA would lose their seats. Secretary of Defense McNamara countered with a proposal whereby NSA would keep its place and the new Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) (created in October 1961; see below) would join as representative of both the secretary of defense and the Joint Chiefs. All this chair-swapping proceeded slowly, however, mainly because of opposition from the JCS and the slow startup of DIA. The services were not dropped from membership until March 1964, and they retained the right to send observers and register dissents during coordination discussions and in finished estimates. The Joint Chiefs withdrew at the same time, leaving DIA and NSA as spokesmen for the Department of Defense. Besides the DCI and DDCI, USIB's civilian members were the Department of State's director of intelligence and research and officers from the AEC and the FBI. McCone disapproved of the large number of community personnel who claimed a need to attend USIB meetings to explain or defend their positions, but he decided that overcoming this bureaucratic mindset was not worth the trouble and allowed the backbenchers and briefcase carriers to stay.[11]

McCone thought USIB's committee structure was oversized, cumbersome, and ineffective, and he worked to streamline it. When he became DCI, the board had 20 standing and four ad hoc committees. In mid-1962, after a review by the DCI's Coordination Staff (see below), USIB abolished nine of them, retaining those dealing with topics of growing policymaker interest or increased relevance to the board's changing focus. They included committees on security, SIGINT, scientific intelligence, atomic energy, overhead reconnaissance, guided missiles and astronautics, HUMINT, and defectors.[12]

McCone was especially interested in seeing USIB address administrative issues related to program management, budgeting, and long-range planning. In particular, he wanted to centralize decisionmaking, encourage efficiency, and avoid redundancy of effort. He sought to strike a balance between rapidly expanding intelligence requirements and the rising costs in manpower and resources needed to satisfy them. The problem he confronted had many facets: intelligence targets were increasing in number, size, and complexity; collection technologies were becoming more expensive and drawing funds from other intelligence activities; intelligence agencies had to compete with other federal departments for money; and inflation was diminishing purchasing power. In this area, unlike in others, McCone got the cooperation of Secretary of Defense McNamara, who at the Pentagon was implementing coordinated management systems he had brought in from the corporate world. In this aspect of USIB's work, McCone and McNamara shared objectives. Over the next three years, they transferred a considerable amount of routine intelligence decisionmaking from separate (and often competing) agencies to USIB and its committees.[13]

A Community Coordination Staff (U)

McCone inherited a unit called the DCI Coordination Staff that was created in 1960 to help the DCI and USIB implement the administrative recommendations of the Joint Study Group on Foreign Intelligence Activities.[14] The staff's members were picked during Dulles's tenure, and McCone did not consider them or their mission to be consistent with his own ideas about community management. At first, he considered creating a new position of Deputy for Coordination with a stature equivalent to the deputy directors and subordinate only to him and the DDCI. The incumbent would help the DCI carry out his community guidance responsibilities under NSCID No. 1. McCone enlisted the help of Gordon Gray, Eisenhower's last national security adviser, in finding a person for the job and establishing its responsibilities. The idea did not move forward amid all the

[11] McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Secretary McNamara and Mr. Gilpatric...," 5 December 1961, and "Memorandum of Discussion with the Joint Chiefs...," 9 January 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1; McCone memorandum to President Kennedy, "Reorganization of the United States Intelligence Board," 7 January 1962, McCone memorandum of discussion with the JCS, 8 January 1962, and McCone memorandum to President Johnson, "Proposed Reorganization of the United States Intelligence Board," 21 December 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XXV, Organization of Foreign Policy...*, 197–98, 200, 222–23; McCone memorandum to President Kennedy, "Functions and Composition of the United States Intelligence Board," 11 December 1961, Bundy untitled memorandum to McCone, 5 February 1964, and McCone memorandum to Bundy, "Reorganization of the United States Intelligence Board (USIB)," 3 March 1964, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 6, folder 17; Lay memorandum, "Reorganization of USIB," 16 March 1964, *FRUS, 1964–1968, XXXIII, Organization and Management of U.S. Foreign Policy...*, 433–34; Lay, vol. 5, 5–10; Elder, "Support for McCone," 17–18.

[12] Lay, vol. 4, 180 et seq., vol. 6, 279–80; "Committee and Working Group Structure of the United States Intelligence Board as of 26 September 1960" and "USIB Committees Dissolved, 1961– ," DDI Files, Job 82R00129R, box 3, folder 30; C.P. Cabell (DDCI) memorandum to Timothy J. Reardon (presidential aide), "Interdepartmental Committees and Task Forces," 1 December 1961, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 8, folder 7.

[13] Lay, vol. 4, 161 et seq., vol. 6, 217.

other administrative changes McCone made during his first year and a half, and he relied instead on the USIB apparatus and his dealings with the heads of community agencies. By mid-1963, however, he decided that those instruments still did not enable him to oversee the national intelligence process as effectively as he wanted. He concluded that he needed an office responsible to him to evaluate intelligence programs and projects objectively. ~~(S)~~

After discussing the idea with the White House, Congress, and the Departments of Defense and State, in September 1963 McCone set up the National Intelligence Programs Evaluation Staff (NIPE)—one of the most distinctive examples of his use of bureaucracy as a management tool. Centralized program evaluation would help him assert his coordinating authority over the community. He chose John Bross to head NIPE, drawing on the experience of the former operations officer and comptroller in planning, budgeting, and negotiating with community members. Bross led a staff of over a dozen intelligence professionals from several USIB departments. His deputy was Thomas Parrott, an Agency veteran then serving as CIA representative to the president's national security adviser.[15] ~~(S)~~

McCone gave NIPE a general brief to appraise the cost effectiveness of programs, systems, and technologies used to meet national intelligence requirements. Those assessments became the basis for his consultations with the heads of community departments. McCone also wanted NIPE to evaluate how well USIB committees were implementing the Priority National Intelligence Objectives that the board regularly established. NIPE conducted the first-ever comprehensive inventory of community intelligence activities to find out who was doing what; to identify gaps, overlaps, and jurisdictional conflicts; and to ascertain how effectively different agencies were using resources and meeting objectives.[16] ~~(S)~~

John Bross (U)

Bross and his staff also performed several tasks that promoted McCone's goal of integrating national intelligence efforts under the supervision of the DCI—among them liaison with PFIAB, negotiations with the Bureau of the Budget, an examination of the usefulness of the Department of State's INR, dealings with the Department of Defense on SIGINT and imagery collection, and special studies of COMINT programs, paramilitary projects, and clandestine activities in the Middle East. DDCI Carter's aide-de-camp, E. Henry ("Hank") Knoche, later said that McCone tended to use Bross "as a lightning rod. If McCone didn't want to go bell the cat, he'd send Bross to do it." McCone's establishment of NIPE set in motion further achievements in interagency coordination under his successors, but major impediments persisted, including inconsistent or nonexistent procedures in other departments, continued resistance to cooperation by community members, and the magnitude of the task compared to the resources accorded to NIPE.[17] ~~(S)~~

---

[14] The basic source for this section is John Bross and [redacted] "The National Intelligence Programs Evaluation Staff from Its Establishment, September 9, 1963 until December 31, 1970," History Staff unpublished manuscript No. MISC-11 (1971). See also "The Coordination Staff of the Director of Central Intelligence," 3 January 1962, and "Briefing for the Director, 19 February 1962," CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 7, folder 128; McCone, "Memorandum of Discussion...with Dr. Killian...," 1 August 1962, McCone untitled memorandum to the secretaries of state and defense, the attorney general, and the chairman of the AEC, 4 September 1963, and Bross memoranda to McCone, "CIA Activity Inventory and Community-wide program Analysis," 9 July 1963, and "Possible Approach to Improved Coordination and Management of the Intelligence Community Through Programs Evaluation," 20 August 1963, ibid., folder 122; McCone letter to [redacted] McCone letter to Gordon Gray, 23 August 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XXV, Organization of Foreign Policy...*, 204–5; Lay, vol. 4, 178–79; Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 4–5, 25; Carter-Knoche OH, 20–21. ~~(S)~~

[15] After NIPE was established, the DCI Coordination Staff finished its current projects and was disbanded in 1964. ~~(S)~~

[16] McCone untitled memorandum to the secretaries of state and defense, the attorney general, and the chairman of the AEC, 4 September 1963, and Bross memoranda to McCone, "Terms of Reference and Proposed Activities of the NIPE Staff," 20 November 1963, and "Actions Taken to Improve Effectiveness of Intelligence Effort of the Government as a Whole," 15 April 1964, CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 7, folder 122. Former Agency officer [redacted] in his study of DCIs' relations with the community, has drawn an apt parallel between McCone's creation of NIPE and Walter Bedell Smith's establishment of BNE in 1950. BNE was the vehicle by which Smith and subsequent DCIs exercised *substantive* leadership over the production of national intelligence for the president and other NSC members; and NIPE became the means by which McCone and his successors until 1970 exercised *management-related* leadership over the US government's foreign intelligence effort. [redacted] "Evolution of the DCI's 'Coordination' Role from the 1940s to the 1960s," 8, introduction to "DCI Leadership of the Intelligence Community in the 1970s," draft manuscript, copy in author's possession. ~~(S)~~

[17] Bross memorandum, "Various Assignments to NIPE from the DCI," 31 October 1963, CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 8, folder 146; Lay, vol. 6, 219; Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 5; Carter-Knoche OH, 20; Anna Karalekas, "History of the Central Intelligence Agency," in William M. Leary, ed., *The Central Intelligence Agency: History and Documents*, 88. ~~(S)~~

Jousting With Rival Fiefdoms (U)

The Intelligence Community, journalist Stewart Alsop and former Agency officer Thomas Braden wrote in 1964, "is not...noted for brotherly love and happy fellowship. Intelligence is knowledge. Knowledge is power. Power is the most valuable commodity in government. Intelligence has therefore traditionally been a peculiarly feud-ridden business."[18] In the course of augmenting his authority as DCI, McCone proved the accuracy of that conclusion by clashing continually with community members who sought to protect their prerogatives and interests from his intrusions. McCone faced the most stubborn resistance from the two community departments with the largest intelligence responsibilities and the most combative directors: the Department of Defense under Robert McNamara and the FBI under J. Edgar Hoover. USIB was the most important bureaucratic lever McCone had for exerting force on these agencies. On occasion, he also invoked the power of the White House and, in rare instances, congressional allies to try to get what he wanted. His dealings with the Department of State, in contrast, were much more cordial because he had a collegial working relationship with Secretary of State Rusk and did not threaten the department's small intelligence domain. (U)

The Department of Defense (U)

A fundamental imbalance of authority and resources dominated McCone's interaction with the military components of the Intelligence Community. Although as DCI he was charged with coordinating all national intelligence activities, he had command authority as D/CIA over only [redacted] percent of the community's budget and personnel. His reach inside the Department of Defense was restricted to strategic intelligence; he had no statutory authority over tactical intelligence. [redacted]

[redacted] Even with USIB and NIPE, McCone was unable to consolidate the different intelligence resource packages—the Consolidated Cryptologic Program (the SIGINT community), the Consolidated Intelligence Program (the DIA and the military services), the National Reconnaissance Program (satellites), and CIA's clandestine program—because three of them were principally or exclusively military. Consequently, the DCI heard little or nothing about many incremental, yet substantial, changes made within the programs between annual budget reviews.[19] ~~(S)~~

Some of McCone's difficulties with the Department of Defense can be attributed to his often tense relations with Robert McNamara. "They were fundamentally competitive in nature," Lyman Kirkpatrick remarked, "very strong-minded men and very able men and very aggressive men"—traits that amplified their differences over policy and administrative issues such as Vietnam, CIA's role in counterinsurgency operations, NRO, and the follow-up to the Cuban missile crisis (all topics detailed in later chapters). While McCone was trying to secure his authority over the community, he had to fight off McNamara's attempts to expand the Pentagon's intelligence role. At a time when some finesse may have been called for, the DCI's assumption of bureaucratic parity and blunt managerial suggestions rankled McNamara—"the star and the strong man among the newcomers to the Kennedy team," in presidential speechwriter Theodore Sorensen's words—who advised the president almost daily on a wide range of national security subjects and prided himself on his own expertise at administering large organizations. After seeing a letter the DCI wrote to McNamara urging an overhaul of defense planning, a CIA officer characterized its tone as "typically McCone" and paraphrased its content: "I know of your concern that the Defense Department is running a lot of useless, sloppy, irrelevant, redundant intelligence programs and I think you ought to address yourself to this problem."[20] ~~(S)~~

[18] Alsop and Braden, 243. (U)

[19] McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...DCI Presentation to the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, 7 December 1962," CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 8, folder 140; Bross memorandum to McCone, "Intelligence Community Matters of Possible Interest for Discussion with the Secretary of Defense," 13 December 1963, ibid., box 7, folder 128; CIA budget documents for 1952–64 in Office of Finance and Logistics Files, Job 80-01240A, box 4, folder 6; Carter memorandum to McCone concerning NPIC, 3 January 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 2; Bross and [redacted] "The NIPE Staff," 71–72, 92–93. [redacted]

[20] Kirkpatrick [redacted] OH, 27; McCone letter to McNamara, 10 July 1963, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 7; Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets*, 160. On John Kennedy's high regard for McNamara, see Sorensen, *Kennedy*, 269–70 ("In eleven years with Kennedy I never saw him develop admiration and personal regard for another man as quickly"); and Deborah Shapley, *Promise and Power*, 270 ("Bobby Kennedy later said his brother thought 'most highly' of McNamara, 'more than any other cabinet member'"). On McNamara as Pentagon administrator, see ibid., 236–38, and Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 312–19. ~~(S)~~

Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and Gen. Maxwell Taylor, chairman of the JCS (U)

McNamara, already burdened with many sensitive and time-consuming issues besides intelligence, bridled at McCone's efforts to assume more authority over the military's collection and analysis components, and the DCI had little success at persuading the secretary of defense to use him as an ally on matters of mutual concern. McNamara, McCone wrote in July 1962,

> is not particularly interested in DCI assistance on his internal problems and (although he did not express it) obviously feels that the DCI role should be confined to the interface between the Defense intelligence community and the balance of the national intelligence community. In this respect I feel that SecDef's views differ sharply from those of the President, the BOB [Bureau of the Budget] and the Killian Board [PFIAB].

McCone periodically suggested that a new position of assistant secretary of defense for intelligence be created to centralize the Pentagon's authority over military intelligence activities, but the idea did not appeal to McNamara, who thought DIA performed that function adequately. Nor did the secretary of defense back integration of the four intelligence resource programs mentioned above, and McCone lacked the authority to decree their consolidation. Until July 1963, McNamara resisted giving the DCI full access to the complete intelligence budgets of all Pentagon components.[21] ~~(S)~~

Their differences over large issues encompassed McNamara's unauthorized (by McCone) use of imagery in a press conference to prove that the administration was closely watching the Soviet military withdrawal from Cuba after the missile crisis—"McCone was furious about that," Robert Kennedy said later, "because they were using stuff from the CIA"—and extended to minor matters such as the rank of the military representative to NIPE. McCone wanted a three-star officer who would bring some clout and independence to the position, but McNamara thought a two-star would do. They compromised; a major general would go, but McCone would select him.[22] (U)

McCone had varying relations with the other senior civilian officials at the Department of Defense. He remained friends with Roswell Gilpatric, the deputy secretary from 1961 to 1964, despite some bureaucratic tangles. His mostly amicable but purely professional dealings with Gilpatric's successor, Cyrus Vance, were marred by the increasingly contentious dispute over satellite reconnaissance. McCone never got along with the two Pentagon principals in that controversy, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering Eugene Fubini, and Under Secretary of the Air Force and Director of NRO Brockway McMillan. McCone worked satisfactorily with the uniformed leadership except for the Air Force Chief of Staff, Gen. Curtis LeMay, whom he believed was trying to push CIA out of the satellite program. (The "sky spies" wrangle is detailed in Chapter 9.) (U)

The Defense Intelligence Agency (U)

DIA came into existence on 1 October 1961 to bring, in McNamara's optimistic words, "more effective management of all Department of Defense intelligence activities, and the elimination of duplicating intelligence facilities, organization, and tasks," but it encountered resistance from the service branches and other entrenched interests at the Pentagon. Moreover, the new organization "was a creature of compromise from the outset," in the words of the Church Committee, and did not start off with much bureaucratic

[21] Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 6; McCone, "Summary of Meeting with Secretary McNamara and Secretary Gilpatric, General Carter and Mr. McCone on 5 July 1962," McCone Papers, box 2, folder 2; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Secretary McNamara...," 12 July 1963, ibid., folder 7; Bross and "The NIPE Staff," 71–71, 92–93, 96–97. ~~(S)~~

[22] Robert F. Kennedy oral history at the JFK Library, quoted in Shapley, 182; Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets*, 347 n. 3. (U)

clout. "DIA was born old," one official recalled. "McNamara just gathered the drones and put them all in one building."[23] (U)

McCone had to contend with the conflicts between CIA and DIA that arose as the new organization staked out its areas of responsibility and competence. His view of DIA differed from his predecessor's. Allen Dulles had feared that the proposed DIA would control the Agency's access to raw military intelligence and leave CIA officers dependent on DIA judgments. More generally, he wrote in *The Craft of Intelligence*, "[t]here is...always the possibility that two such powerful and well-financed agencies as DIA and CIA will become rivals and competitors. Some of this could be healthy; too much of it could be both expensive and dangerous." McCone, in contrast, did not see why in theory the two organizations should not get along because, to him, they had different missions and customers. He regarded DIA as a departmental, not a national, intelligence asset; it comprised, he said, "the intelligence resources of the JCS in the same way that G-2 is the intelligence resource of the Chief of Staff of the Army." McCone conceded that some turf battles and duplication of effort were inevitable as DIA built up staffs of political and economic analysts. He was wary of what he saw as McNamara's goal of constructing "a fully integrated intelligence organization under his own control, so that he will not be dependent in any degree on CIA or other intelligence organizations." Moreover, McCone knew of some DIA officers' deep feelings of suspicion toward CIA, especially the DDP.[24] (S)

At the interagency working level, however, significant operational difficulties did not develop. DDP Richard Helms reported in late 1964 that DIA "has exerted an effective influence in the resolution of a number of community problems." McCone's good relations with DIA's top managers, Gen. Joseph F. Carroll and Adm. Rufus Taylor, helped bring that about, as did DIA's need to lean on the authority of the DCI to solidify its own position in the community. Meanwhile, the Agency, which had assumed some military intelligence functions by default—especially analysis of Soviet defense spending—continued some of them as a service of common concern to the community.[25] (S)

By early 1963, McCone had worked with senior Pentagon officials to resolve three administrative points of issue between CIA and DIA. First, a joint analysis group, chaired by a senior CIA analyst, would examine the Soviet and Communist Chinese military threat in an effort to prevent competing assessments from developing along civilian-military or national-departmental lines. Second, instead of creating its own imagery interpretation center, DIA would detail a large number of its officers to NPIC to support military requirements. Third, DIA would continue producing its own daily [redacted] while CIA would provide national intelligence to the community through the *Current Intelligence Bulletin.* This compromise arose from CIA managers' concern that policymakers would be confused if both agencies reported the same intelligence but reached different judgments about its meaning. DIA's daily publication proved a less tractable problem, probably because it was the Pentagon's main way to compete with CIA analysis. In 1964, McCone had to address [redacted] to prevent the printing of raw Agency traffic without clearance and the commission of "numerous [other] examples of slipshod work." An interagency working group agreed to limit dissemination of both publications, and CIA began reserving more sensitive material for its White House-only products.[26] (S)

[23] On DIA's origins, see Deane Allen, "The Defense Intelligence Agency: The First 25 Years," *American Intelligence Journal* 8, no. 1 (January 1987): 4–6; "DIA—A Brief History—35 Years," on DIA Web site at www.dia.ic.gov/admin/historian/35yrs-history; Patrick Mescall, "The Birth of the Defense Intelligence Agency," in Jeffreys-Jones and Lownie, 158–201; idem, "A Creature of Compromise: The Establishment of the DIA," *IJIC* 7, no. 3 (Fall 1994): 251–74; Elizabeth Jeszenszky, "The Defense Intelligence Agency: Jointness is Goodness," *American Intelligence Journal* 13, no. 3 (Summer 1992): 79–83; US Senate, *Final Report of the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities* (hereafter Church Committee), 94th Congress, 1st sess., 7 vols., vol. 1, 349–54 (quote on 350); and David Wise and Thomas B. Ross, *The Invisible Government*, chap. 15. Lyman Kirkpatrick, chairman of the Joint Study Group on the Foreign Intelligence Activities of the United States that in 1960 recommended centralizing and streamlining military intelligence, was dubbed "father of DIA"—an appellation he later termed "flattering in some respects" but "not an unmixed blessing." Kirkpatrick, 225. (U)

[24] Allen W. Dulles, *The Craft of Intelligence*, 47; transcript of McCone interview with Stewart Alsop, 9 April 1963, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 3; transcript of McCone meeting with Eugene Fubini, 16 November 1964, [redacted]

[25] Helms memorandum to Kirkpatrick, "Response to your Action Memorandum No. A-437," 4 December 1964, DDO Files, Job 78-03041R, box 3, folder 6; [redacted] 193; Noel E. Firth and James H. Noren, *Soviet Defense Spending: A History of CIA Estimates, 1950–1990*, 37–38. On Carroll's appointment, see "Intelligence Job Given to General," *New York Times*, 13 August 1961, DIA clipping file, HIC. Taylor served as DDCI under Richard Helms from 1966 to 1969. (S)

The National Security Agency (U)

NSA, the largest entity in the Intelligence Community, remained mostly outside McCone's grasp even though an internal management study in 1961 determined that it needed the same kind of firm direction that McCone would soon apply to CIA. NSA, that report concluded, had "no effective mechanism...to exercise the strong centralized control of national policy, planning, and programming functions, which appears essential to insure concentration on and responsiveness to the Director's national responsibilities." Nonetheless, NSA resisted McNamara's moves toward consolidation at the Department of Defense, viewed CIA and DIA warily, and rejected the notion that the DCI should spend more time coordinating both civilian and military intelligence efforts.[27] ~~(S)~~

Already feeling beleaguered when McCone arrived on the scene, NSA got a short reprieve as the new DCI confined his early dealings with it to formal contacts in USIB. McCone's technical interests and coordination objectives, however, soon led him to seek ways to exert authority over NSA. In 1962, he combined USIB's COMINT and ELINT committees into a single SIGINT committee and chose a former director of NSA (DIRNSA), Lt. Gen. John Samford, to head it. Samford agreed with McCone that the secretary of defense, essentially a department head, should have less authority over NSA, which had extensive responsibilities in national intelligence and thus should fall more under the DCI's purview. By modernizing an antiquated SIGINT requirements system, Samford's committee gave USIB—and McCone—more influence over NSA's day-to-day operations. Unlike most other USIB committees, the SIGINT committee served more to convey policy guidance to NSA than to provide a forum for discussion within USIB.[28] ~~(S)~~

McCone also was partly responsible for the dismissal of a DIRNSA, Adm. Laurence H. Frost, in June 1962.[29] Frost's diffidence (at USIB meetings he was scarcely audible) had not set well with McCone or McNamara; the two may also have been dissatisfied with Frost's efforts to rectify problems identified in the above-mentioned management study in 1961; the embarrassing defection to Moscow of two NSA officers working for the Soviets had occurred on his watch; PFIAB chairman James Killian thought Frost was too parochial; and he resisted relinquishing NSA's control of its SIGINT satellites to the NRO, which would respond only to requirements from USIB. Replacing Frost was Air Force Lt. Gen. Gordon Blake. In experience, Blake seemed suitable—he had run NSA's air branch, the Air Force Security Service, for two years and headed large commands in the Pacific and the continental United States—but he did not want to be DIRNSA, and he disagreed with McCone and McNamara that community SIGINT programs needed consolidation. ~~(S)~~

Notwithstanding Blake's limitations, McCone used the leadership transition as an opportunity to move ahead, particularly after DDCI Carter, his liaison with the military intelligence services, advised him of several serious deficiencies at Ft. Meade. "[T]he NSA staff is overstuffed with a bureaucratic hierarchy consisting of many cliques worrying about their prerogatives rather than doing their jobs," Carter reported. "NSA is too busy attempting to analyze their information...rather than getting the facts out"; "NSA is not really geared up...to do a proper job on their ELINT activity...they need a lot of help in this area"; and, perhaps most damningly for a DCI with McCone's community-wide perspective and policymaking role, "they are oriented too much toward military requirements and not enough toward the diplomatic and cold war aspects of their

[redacted]

[27] Thomas R. Johnson, *American Cryptology during the Cold War, 1945–1989. Book II: Centralization Wins, 1960–1972*, 292–94. ~~(S)~~

[28] Johnson, *American Cryptology*, 340–41; [redacted] "The History of SIGINT in the Central Intelligence Agency, 1947–70," DCI Historical Series No. DCI-4, 4 vols. (October 1971), vol. 3, 118–22; Samford memorandum to McCone, "Recommendations of President's Board of Consultants re NSA," 18 July 1962, HS Files, Job 84B00389R, box 1, folder 33. ~~(S)~~

[29] Sources for this paragraph and the next are: Johnson, *American Cryptology*, 340–41; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 113–14; Kirkpatrick, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board...26 June 1962," CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 8, folder 140; Carter untitled memoranda to McCone, 26 May and 7 July 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 5; Bamford, *The Puzzle Palace*, 99–100; idem, *Body of Secrets*, 96–97; "Biography: United States Air Force: Lieutenant General Gordon A. Blake," on US Air Force Web site at www.af.mil/news/biographies/blake; McCone letter to James Killian, 17 August 1962, CMS Files, 92B01039R, box 7, folder 122; Dwayne A. Day, "Ferrets Above: American Signals Intelligence Satellites During the 1960s," *IJIC* 17, no. 3 (Fall 2004): 452. ~~(S)~~

task." McCone was gratified that Blake had fine interpersonal skills, which made the DCI's job easier. After a luncheon discussion in August 1962, the DCI informed PFIAB that he was "very impressed and pleased with [Blake's] approach to NSA problems" and "also pleased with his contribution to the United States Intelligence Board."~~(S)~~

Once Blake took office, McCone's interactions with NSA would be mainly bureaucratic and conducted through USIB. He visited Fort Meade only twice, both times in 1962—on a get-acquainted tour soon after becoming DCI, and a few months later to attend a welcoming reception for Blake—and he had little direct contact with the longtime deputy director of NSA, Louis Tordella, who served as "The Fort's" liaison to Langley. The Agency officials who regularly worked closest with NSA were Huntington Sheldon, the head SIGINT officer; DDS&T Albert Wheelon; the ELINT officers in the DS&T; and the chiefs of Foreign Intelligence/Division D in the DDP. From these subordinates, and through his own channels, by the end of 1963, McCone had developed an "intuitive feel" that NSA was behind the times. He believed it was failing to adapt organizationally and technologically to new concepts of warfare—the "people's wars" breaking out in the Third World—and to harder cryptanalytic targets. He lacked the authority and political influence, however, to reorient NSA toward those new realities.[30]~~(S)~~

J. Edgar Hoover (U)

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (U)

McCone's work with the FBI was confined to high-level counterintelligence cases, such as the Golitsyn and Nosenko defections, and to setting the boundaries of the investigation of John F. Kennedy's assassination (see Chapters 13 and 14). The Counterintelligence (CI) Staff—particularly James Angleton and [redacted] had, since 1955, handled routine interagency matters and less prominent counterintelligence cases with the FBI's liaison to Langley since 1952, Sam Papich, and with FBI Assistant Director Alan Belmont. Richard Helms kept McCone apprised of significant counterintelligence matters, and the DCI himself saw Papich or senior Bureau officials (such as William Sullivan and William Branigan, chiefs of the Intelligence Division and the Soviet counterintelligence unit, respectively) over a dozen times. McCone got along well with them, although they caused his potent temper to flare at least twice. He got into what Belmont called a "heated exchange" when the FBI preempted an Agency counterintelligence initiative against the Soviets by reporting it, with a decidedly negative cast, to PFIAB. Later, when Papich suggested that McCone had withheld intelligence about the Kennedy assassination from the Bureau, the DCI became "very visibly incensed and left the impression that he might at any moment ask me to leave."[31]~~(S)~~

The cooperation between CIA and FBI deputies contrasted with the tension between their forceful directors, who did not care for each other personally and did not get along well professionally. According to Papich, "By the early sixties, Mr. Hoover had developed a respect for [Allen] Dulles. They didn't like each other necessarily, but each knew what to expect." McCone, however—who as AEC chairman had had some dealings with the Bureau on Soviet espionage—did not try to ingratiate himself with Hoover as Dulles had. Instead, he adopted his characteristic all-business attitude and was not reluctant to assert Agency prerogatives over counterintelligence and to insist that domestic security could not be divorced from foreign intelligence when another country was involved. "No question, McCone was *tough*," Papich recalled. "He probably would have liked to toss Hoover into the Potomac." Hoover, in turn, suspected that all DCIs, and particularly the aggressive McCone, wanted to trespass on Bureau territory. On the day McCone became DCI, Hoover told a deputy that "[t]his constant harping [by Papich and other Bureau officials] upon the sensitivities of CIA is getting irksome." Over two years later, when told that McCone had inquired about his health and was informed it was excellent, Hoover jibed, "That news probably didn't please him."[32] (U)

---

[30] McCone calendars; [redacted] "SIGINT in the CIA," vol. 3, 128–29; Parrott memorandum, "Meeting with DCI—9 December 1963," CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 8, folder 146.~~(S)~~

[31] McCone calendars; Elder memorandum to William Colby (DCI), "Special Activities," 1 June 1973, "Family Jewels" compendium, 458–59, ER Files, Job 79M01476A, boxes 16–17, folders 343–45; D.J. Brennan Jr. memorandum to W.C. Sullivan (both FBI), "Relations with Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)," 23 December 1963, William K. Harvey FBI FOIA File, doc. no. 62-80750-4186.~~(S)~~

An index of the nature of the two directors' relationship is the character and infrequency of their contacts. They met only five times during McCone's 42 months as DCI, and always at the Department of Justice, as Hoover refused to come to Langley. Moreover, according to Helms, liaison with the FBI was "always a one-way street," with Bureau officials regularly asking for, but rarely providing, information and assistance. Helms once told a congressional committee (speaking metaphorically, not geographically) that "Mr. Hoover always 'liaised' on the other fellow's playing field.... Nobody 'liaised' down on his playing field." On another occasion, Helms remarked that "the Agency and the Bureau did not have what you would call connubial relations.... [T]here was nothing we could do in the Agency to make Mr. Hoover happy about the fact that he didn't like the Agency in the first place. He didn't like its people, in the second, and as far as he was concerned, it was quite unnecessary." Despite these deep differences, McCone saw no reason to seek White House backing to resolve them; the Kennedys' reluctance to take on Hoover was well known at the time.[33] (U)

The Department of State (U)

According to McCone, Secretary of State Rusk told him several times that CIA's relations with the Department of State during the early 1960s were the best Rusk could recall since joining the Foreign Service years before. At the start of the Kennedy administration, however, a substantial amount of resentment had built up between the two organizations because their missions conflicted at times, they had different institutional cultures, and they competed for resources and influence. The diplomats functioned largely in the open and often had strong misgivings about the covert action operators and spyrunners, whose clandestine activities, if mishandled, could cause foreign policy flaps that embassies would have to quell. In addition, the Foreign Service believed that, as of 1961, CIA had so much money and—because the DCI and the secretary of state were brothers—so much pull that it could undertake cloak-and-dagger activities that sometimes seemed to be conducted for their own sake and not to advance a clear-cut policy objective. "The basic trouble [from the diplomats' perspective]," Roger Hilsman has written, "was that the Agency was simply too powerful for the narrow function for which it was responsible." "It combined in one organization just too many of the resources and instruments of foreign policy...." Many Clandestine Services officers, in turn, regarded the diplomats as high-living showboaters who took credit for the successes achieved by the secret operatives' dangerous labors in the shadows. DDP veterans thought of themselves as the true area experts who took the real risks, not the ticket-punching partygoers and press release writers from Foggy Bottom.[34] (U)

McCone recalled that on day one of his tenure, he encountered remnants of what he termed "a frightful problem between CIA and State" that "grew up from the fact that the Brothers Dulles would work out understandings that would cut across all organizational lines."

> [H]ence, when Foster died and [Christian] Herter took over[,] there were two or three years of extreme difficulty...[and] a number of places where serious tensions existed between Station Chiefs and Ambassadors.... I made a point to go around to each one of those places all over the world and to sit down and straighten the situation out.

In most cases, according to McCone, he did not have to deal with operational problems resulting from the Kennedy administration's "Country Team" concept, which explicitly affirmed the ambassadors' full authority over all US government personnel and activities in-country and all communications sent from the embassies—[redacted] A CIA chief of station, however, did not have to reveal specific sources and methods—only general information on the types of collection and counterintelligence operations being run—to the ambassador, who for the most part did not want to know anyway unless some political row might occur. On collection activities generally, McCone thought diplomats sometimes were too skittish about possible fallout from espionage operations, and he resisted having political restraints placed on aerial reconnais-

[32] Mark Riebling, *Wedge: The Secret War Between the FBI and CIA*, 186, citing interview with Papich; Sullivan memorandum to Belmont, "Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)," 29 November 1961, Harvey FBI FOIA File, doc. no. 62-80750-3882; and Brennan memorandum to Sullivan, "Relations with Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)," 23 December 1963, ibid., doc. no. 62-80750-4186. (U)

[33] McCone calendars; author's conversation with Richard Helms, 28 May 1998; [redacted] Helms comments at CIA Center for the Study of Intelligence conference on "Origins and Development of the CIA," March 1994, transcript on file in the History Staff. (U)

[34] The tensions between CIA and the Department of State at the time McCone became DCI are well described in Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*, 63–82; quote on 77. (U)

sance flights. In addition, the DCI questioned whether Agency intelligence reports got the attention they should at the Department of State because they were channeled through INR. "INR is a problem," he observed; "either it is too much of a bottleneck for intelligence going to policymakers or it doesn't have enough stature in the Department."[35] ~~(S)~~

McCone's contacts with the Department of State's leadership occurred principally on the policy level with Rusk; Under Secretary Ball; Deputy Under Secretary for Political Affairs (1961–64) U. Alexis Johnson; and Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs (1961–63) and Under Secretary for Political Affairs (1963–65) W. Averell Harriman. Johnson and Harriman were McCone's referents on covert action and counterinsurgency. On most intelligence matters he worked through USIB with successive directors of INR, Roger Hilsman and Thomas Hughes. After Hilsman succeeded Harriman in 1963, McCone dealt with him on Vietnam. (U)

McCone and Rusk maintained an amicable relationship and did not have serious policy differences except over Vietnam. Rusk, who in 1946 had supported the creation of a central intelligence organization, was one of the administration's staunchest supporters of CIA. He avidly consumed its intelligence products, which he regarded as "exceptionally good," and he did not lose faith in it after the Bay of Pigs, as other administration officials had. Although he thought the Agency had miscalculated badly and did not serve the president well in that instance, overall he attributed the operation's shortcomings to inherent defects in the intelligence process rather than to incompetence, faulty analysis, or misrepresentation by CIA. Rusk had a genteel sense of propriety about espionage and a pragmatic concern that covert action might reap unintended diplomatic consequences.

[redacted]

As secretary of state he vetoed several anti-Castro projects as ill-timed or ill-conceived; and, worried about CIA's enlarging role in Vietnam in the early 1960s, rejected the appointment of Edward Lansdale, a counterinsurgency official at the Pentagon, as ambassador to South Vietnam.

Dean Rusk (U)
Photo: CORBIS

[redacted]

McCone met informally with Rusk on most Sundays, and their personal and professional rapport showed in other ways as well. In early 1964, Rusk sought to make Agency analyses and community estimates more useful by passing privileged diplomatic communications to McCone so they could be factored into finished intelligence. Late in McCone's directorship, Rusk confided that he was considering resigning because he was tired and financially strapped. McCone suggested that Rusk consider serving as president of the University of California after leaving the administration. Rusk seemed interested, so McCone said he would discuss the idea with the university's trustees when he returned to California.[37] ~~(S)~~

McCone's relations with other senior officers at Foggy Bottom were professionally respectful but marked by occasional policy differences. McCone and George Ball stood at opposite ends of the "hawk-dove" policy spectrum on Vietnam. U. Alexis Johnson had worked directly with CIA in Southeast Asia in the 1950s and was charged by the White House with strengthening the department's ability to deal with the Agency and the Pentagon. He saw McCone regularly in Special Group meetings, where he was dubbed "Dr. No" because he objected so often to covert action proposals.

[35] Transcript of McCone interview with Schlesinger, 26 February 1965, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 3; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 53; Kirkpatrick, "Memorandum for the Record…Meeting of the DCI with the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board…," 28 December 1962, CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 8, folder 140; Parrott, "Memorandum for the Record…Meeting with the DCI," 2 December 1963, ibid., folder 146; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record…Discussion with Secretary Rusk…November 14th[,1963]," McCone Papers, box 2, folder 8; Director 5454 to all Chiefs of Station, 10 August 1961, and Director 23620 to all Chiefs of Station, 9 November 1961, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 6, folder 11; [redacted]

[36] Dean Rusk, *As I Saw It*, 553, 556; Thomas J. Schoenbaum, *Waging Peace and War*, 142, 303–4, 392; Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 7. ~~(S)~~

[37] McCone, "Memorandum for the Record…Discussion with Secretary Rusk…," 6 January 1964, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 10; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record…Discussion with Secretary Rusk…," *FRUS, 1964–1968, XXXIII, Organization and Management of U.S. Foreign Policy…*, 69. Whether McCone mentioned Rusk to the regents is unclear; in any event, Rusk became a professor of international law at the University of Georgia in 1970. ~~(S)~~

He generally thought the department's relations with CIA during McCone's tenure were "healthy and effective." As with Ball, McCone differed with Averell Harriman over Vietnam policy and had other disputes with him about covert action and counterinsurgency activities (Harriman often represented the department on the Special Group Counterinsurgency during 1964–65). Roger Hilsman liked McCone personally, finding in him "a rough and ready sense of decency." He observed that the DCI was content with his policy involvement through the NSC and "made no special effort to use the power of CIA to try to dominate the whole range of foreign policy." McCone and he were skeptical about the United States' long-term prospects in Vietnam, but they disagreed on how to improve them, with the DCI taking a much harder line on military action against the North. Among the ambassadorial corps, McCone had noteworthy squabbles with John Kenneth Galbraith and Henry Cabot Lodge over [redacted] Agency personnel and activities in Vietnam, respectively (to be described in subsequent chapters).[38] (U)

Presidential Policy Adviser and Political Emissary (U)

McCone assumed, or the White House assigned him, policy and political roles that broadened his responsibilities well beyond Intelligence Community management. He became an important formulator of the Kennedy administration's national security policy and an agent of some of its domestic political stratagems. No DCI before him had such a large portfolio, and none, except William Casey, has since. McCone, used to traveling in the highest circles of power in Washington, saw no conflict in serving simultaneously as a foreign policy adviser, political go-between, and intelligence chief. He regarded the first two functions as useful for raising CIA's prestige and expanding his influence over the community. McCone did not see himself as a free-wheeling national security expert. Rather, he believed that he limited himself to giving advice on areas in which intelligence information or analyses gave him special insight. Moreover, he was well aware of the danger of politicization—"[Y]ou have to be very, very careful...[that] your views on the policy are not affecting the purity of your intelligence...and you have to be awfully sure that nobody suspects that it is"—and largely succeeded at compartmenting policy from analysis.[39] (U)

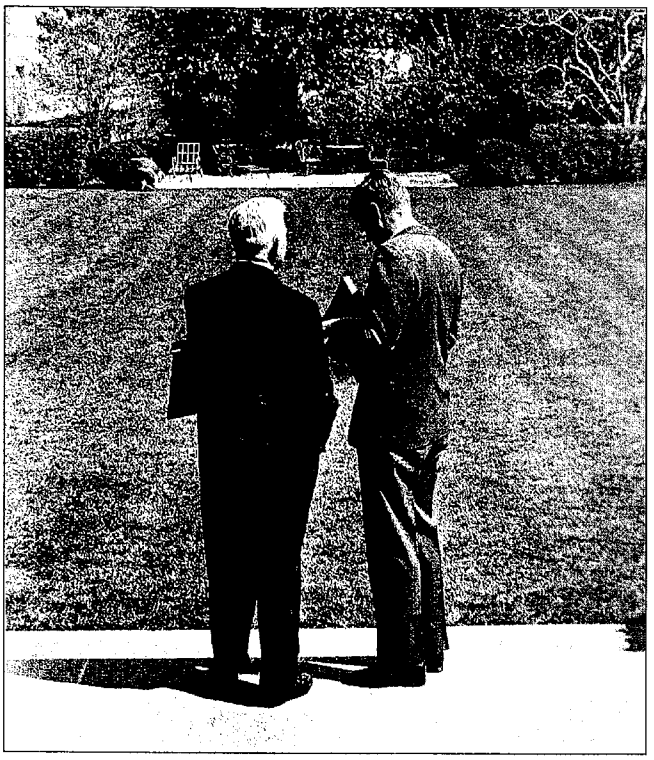
As a member of the NSC, McCone joined in fashioning the administration's foreign policy on matters great and small, sensitive and mundane. At a "typical" NSC meeting, McCone would start the discussions with an intelligence briefing, sometimes helped by a senior CIA officer—usually Helms, Cline, or a substantive expert. After dismissing his subordinate, McCone would then answer questions from the president and other NSC members. At times he would take positions oblique to or at odds with the Agency information or analysis just presented, but he often qualified his remarks by indicating that he then was speaking as a "private citizen." At times he went beyond the meeting agenda to warn the president, Rusk, or McGeorge Bundy about developments they were overlooking because of the press of current events. Several times in 1963, for example, he reminded them of potential crises in the Middle East while they were preoccupied with Cuba and Vietnam. Because McCone did not believe he could carry out his dual roles as presidential coordinator for intelligence and policy adviser if he was not privy to complete information about administration dealings with foreign leaders, he requested and received from President Kennedy copies of all memoranda that Bundy and top Department of State officials wrote about their conversations with heads of state or government.[40] ~~(S)~~

On the issue of nuclear weapons, the DCI spoke with special authority as a former AEC chairman. One of the clearest examples of the president calling on him for policy advice on a nonintelligence topic occurred in May 1963 during a high-level discussion about whether the United States should develop a nuclear "super bomb." After listening to Pentagon and AEC officials describe the weapon's capability and scenarios for its deployment, Kennedy asked McCone for his views. He proceeded to step well outside his role as DCI by outlining the military drawbacks of the bomb, suggesting how it should be tested if development were approved, assessing whether B-52s would still be able to penetrate Soviet airspace by the time the weapon was

[38] U. Alexis Johnson with Jef Olivarius McAllister, *The Right Hand of Power*, 317-18, 347–49; Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*, 47, 82. For a brief account of INR during McCone's directorship, see Mark Stout and Dorothy Avery, "The Bureau of Intelligence and Research at Fifty," *Studies* 42, no. 2 (1998): 20–22. (U)

[39] Transcript of McCone interview with Alsop, 9 April 1963, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 3. (U)

[40] Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 65–66; McCone, "Memorandum of Discussion with Mr. Bundy...," 28 February 1963, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Secretary Rusk...26 March 1963...," "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting with the President, December 2[, 1963]...," and "Memorandum for the Record...Discussions with President Johnson...27 December 1963," *FRUS, 1961–1963, XVIII, Near East, 1962–1963*, 374–75, 436–37, 817, 858–59; Kirkpatrick untitled memorandum to Cline, Action Memorandum A-318, 4 December 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 2, folder 2. ~~(S)~~



McCone with President Kennedy at the White House in April 1963 (U) Photo: JFK Library

ready, and proposing that a lighter, more easily deliverable version be built instead. The president agreed with McCone for the most part and instructed the AEC to consider a smaller bomb like the one the DCI preferred.[41]

The main reason McCone "could wear two hats," in Richard Helms's phrase, was that he enjoyed excellent relations with John and Robert Kennedy. McCone and the president were not close personally, and the DCI neither shared in the youthful camaraderie of the White House's "Irish Mafia" nor had a relative in the Cabinet. Nevertheless, he was an accepted and respected member of the national security coterie and bore the status of a Cabinet officer and the informal prestige of an experienced, well-connected public figure with unique knowledge and perspectives. McCone met alone with President Kennedy about every two weeks, on no particular schedule, but as the need arose. He also saw the president frequently with one or two others (typically McGeorge Bundy or Gen. Maxwell Taylor from the White House, or Helms or Far East Division chief William Colby from the Agency). In addition, spontaneous and informal discussions often occurred between them before and after they met in larger group settings—for example, the NSC or its ancillary components such as the Standing Group and the Special Group—and at times, if the presidential calendar permitted, McCone arranged quick visits to the Oval Office to discuss new developments.[42]

McCone found President Kennedy "exceedingly interested" in all aspects of intelligence and willing to spend a good deal of time learning ways to use the information and capabilities the Intelligence Community afforded him. The president, McCone observed, conducted his relationship with the community with far less structure than Eisenhower. He dismantled much of his predecessor's staff machinery (such as the NSC Planning Board, the Operations Coordination Board, and the Cabinet secretariat) and instead used a loose agglomeration of ad hoc working groups and catch-as-catch-can meetings with advisers. Moreover, McCone also noted, Kennedy had more intellectual curiosity toward intelligence than had Truman or, later, Johnson. In addition to his often-noted infatuation with counterinsurgency and covert action, Kennedy was fascinated with imagery intelligence. Robert McNamara estimated that the president in his first month in office spent up to a fifth of his time examining IMINT (and other reporting) on Soviet missiles. Accordingly, McCone—who also thought technical intelligence had great value—made sure that the take from U-2 flights and satellite missions figured prominently in CIA briefings at the White House.[43] (U)

A few months into the job, McCone grew concerned that the NSC was meeting too infrequently for him to maintain

[41] McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion on the Development of a High-Yield Nuclear Weapon...," 21 May 1963, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 4. McCone also served on a White House committee to develop policies for stockpiling strategic materials. The other members of this Executive Stockpile Committee were the secretaries of state, defense, interior, commerce, and labor, the head of the General Services Administration, and the acting director of the Office of Emergency Planning, who served as chairman. The committee submitted its report to the president on 19 March 1962. It recommended executive actions and legislation to increase the flexibility the several departments had to acquire, maintain, exchange, and dispose of nearly $8 billion worth of strategic materials. NSAM No. 126, "Review of Principles and Policies Guiding the Stockpiling of Strategic Materials," 7 February 1962, and "Report of the Executive Stockpile Committee to President Kennedy," 19 March 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, IX, Foreign Economic Policy*, 776, 779–86.

[42] Richard Helms oral history interview by R. Jack Smith, Washington, DC, 3 June 1982, 24 (hereafter Helms/Smith OH); McCone calendars; Carter-Knoche OH, 9–10. The NSC Standing Group—comprising the under secretary of state for political affairs (who acted as chairman), the deputy secretary of defense, the president's national security adviser, and the DCI—organized and monitored the work of the full NSC. "Standing Group Meeting, January 5, 1962: Record of Actions," ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 24, folder 5.

necessary access to the president. (The NSC held 21 meetings in Kennedy's first year, compared to 51 during Eisenhower's.) He did not want his relationship with the president to become a casualty of bureaucratic inertia, and he raised the problem with the national security adviser, McGeorge Bundy. Bundy said while his own staff kept Kennedy "generally informed" on intelligence matters, the DCI should insist on seeing the president at least once a week. McCone did not get on Kennedy's schedule that often, but he took advantage of the free-wheeling nonbureaucracy at the White House to maintain regular contact. He regarded his "face time" with Kennedy as perhaps his most important leadership asset—so important that when he lost it under Lyndon Johnson, he began to think about resigning (see Chapters 15 and 18).[44] (U)

In the case of Robert Kennedy, the president's "brother protector" and closest adviser, McCone did not have to worry as much about keeping in touch; the business came to him. The attorney general took an active, personal interest in the Agency's affairs after the Bay of Pigs, particularly in counterinsurgency and covert action. The president was determined that another such intelligence disaster would not occur and wanted his brother to make sure CIA would be an effective tool of the administration's activist foreign policy. According to U. Alexis Johnson, "You always had the feeling when dealing with Bobby that he was the fearless watchdog in behalf of the President. He had enormous possessive pride in the President, and he was looking after the President's interests in a way in which he felt that the President could not."[45] (U)

McCone had not met Robert Kennedy until after his appointment as DCI but soon became close friends with the much younger attorney general and his wife. They socialized privately at the Kennedy's estate in McLean, Virginia—Hickory Hill—and sometimes attended Mass together. Senior Agency officers differ, however, on whether Robert often stopped at Headquarters unannounced on his way to or from his nearby home in McLean to see McCone or check on anti-Castro operations. Lyman Kirkpatrick says he did, but Richard Helms does not recall frequent, unscheduled drop-ins, and Walter Elder did not mention any when questioned about the DCI's relationship with the attorney general. (Perhaps it was McCone who came calling; "Hank" Knoche remembers that the DCI occasionally arrived at work late because of a last-minute breakfast at Hickory Hill.) McCone cultivated his connection with the president's brother as the next best thing to access to the president himself. Helms has said that McCone drew even closer to Robert after the Cuban missile crisis, when his alarmist assessment of Soviet intentions in Cuba proved correct, upstaging every senior administration official (including the president) and antagonizing many. More than ever, McCone needed the attorney general as his patron at the White House. The DCI regretted that Robert resigned to run for the Senate in 1964, saying that he was "very fond of Bobby personally—I think he's a great little fellow." McCone consequently never understood why Robert did not publicly credit him with anticipating the Soviet nuclear missile deployment in Cuba, even though he should have realized

McCone and Robert Kennedy at the DCI's swearing-in (U)

[43] Transcript of McCone interview with Schlesinger, 26 February 1965, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 3; Christopher Andrew, *For the President's Eyes Only*, 258–59; John Prados, *Keepers of the Keys*, 99–102; Freedman, *Kennedy's Wars*, 40; Meena Bose, *Shaping and Signaling Presidential Policy*, 11–14. (U)

[44] McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with McGeorge Bundy," 7 April 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XXV, Organization of Foreign Policy...*, 202. James Angleton recounted an incident involving McCone and President Kennedy that he thought provided a good snapshot of their relationship. Angleton was in the DCI's office when the president called to ask McCone to come to Camp David for the weekend. The DCI declined, saying his wife was not feeling well. "I don't think there is any Director who would not have had his wife out of intensive care to go to Camp David," Angleton later remarked, but McCone was on such good terms with the White House that he could demur for personal reasons. Angleton oral history interview by [redacted] 27 July 1984, tape 2, 27. (~~S~~)

[45] Parmet, 214. On the JFK-RFK relationship, see Hilty. (U)

that the president's ever faithful brother would put family loyalty first.[46]

McCone functioned as a political envoy for the Kennedy administration to the Republican opposition, particularly through his regular meetings with the GOP's elder statesman, former President Eisenhower.[47] The general's views still carried weight with millions of Americans, and the new administration worked to keep his support or, at a minimum, forestall his criticism. According to Robert Kennedy, the president, "feeling Eisenhower was important and his [own] election was so close...always went out of his way to make sure that Eisenhower was brought in on all matters and that Eisenhower couldn't hurt the administration by going off and attacking." McCone's assignment in part was to counteract the alleged misinformation the general received from the administration's Republican critics and keep him from making intemperate remarks out of ignorance. The DCI recalled that the president insisted that he see Eisenhower every four or six weeks, and immediately when a major international development arose. McCone was to "exercise all persuasion [on Eisenhower] to support foreign policies and particularly foreign trade issue[s]. [The] President recognized, and in no way resented[,] differences on domestic issues, but emphatically urged Eisenhower's assistance on foreign policy matters."

McCone found that Eisenhower was "bitterly critical, privately," of the administration, especially its handling of Vietnam, and would recommend courses of action to which President Kennedy "responded very thoughtfully" when the DCI passed them on. As the 1962 congressional campaign heated up, Eisenhower used McCone to convey to the White House the fact that he was "disturbed that foreign policy was getting into politics" and quoted a speech by President Kennedy that referred to "eight years of drifting" under the previous administration. The general later told McCone that he and other Republicans would feel free to criticize what they regarded as the White House's flawed conduct of foreign policy but would refrain from commenting on diplomatic details. During the Cuban missile crisis, the president dispatched McCone to Gettysburg to brief the general and, he hoped, to secure a public statement of support. Eisenhower obliged by declaring that the administration's actions should not be debated in public.

The White House also drew on McCone's extensive ties to the American business community to assuage corporation executives' qualms that the reformist "New Frontier" would depart from the Eisenhower administration's benevolent attitude toward private enterprise. After the major American steel companies announced a large and unexpected price increase in April 1962, President Kennedy created an informal task force to work on the issue. Its members included McCone, Washington lawyer Clark Clifford, Secretary of Labor Arthur Goldberg, and Robert McNamara. As an industrialist since before World War II, McCone probably knew as much about steel making as any senior government official. He, his colleagues on the task force, and many of the administration's other members with Republican or corporate backgrounds called or met with their contacts in the business world to build pressure on the steel companies to roll back the price hike. During the next three days, the companies' united front broke, and they rescinded the increase. McCone kept in touch with his boardroom associates on behalf of the administration while tempers cooled in the ensuing weeks. After attending the annual Business Council meeting in Hot Springs, Virginia, in mid-May 1962, McCone reported to the president that although corporate leaders were still perturbed about the steel price affair, they probably did not plan to carry on a "cold war" with the administration. The DCI also communicated their complaints about proposed tax legislation, especially a levy on foreign corporations. He proved to be one of the Kennedy White House's more important sources of information about how it was regarded in executive suites across America.[48]

---

[46] Transcript of McCone interview with Schlesinger, 26 February 1963, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 3; *Robert Kennedy In His Own Words*, 14, 346; Hilty, 424; Kirkpatrick OH, 24–25; Helms/McAuliffe OH, 2–3; Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 27, 36; Carter-Knoche OH, 8; Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets*, 132; transcript of McCone meeting with Marguerite Higgins, 9 September 1964, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 11.

[47] Sources used on McCone and Eisenhower were: *Robert Kennedy In His Own Words*, 55, 346; McCone OH, 38–42; McCone, "Memorandum of Discussion between President Kennedy and DCI on...January 7, [1962]...," McCone Papers, box 6, folder 1; McCone, "Memorandum of Conversation with General Eisenhower...," 26 September 1962, and "Memorandum for the File...Discussion with former President Eisenhower...," 5 October 1962, ibid., box 2, folder 3; McCone, "Memorandum for the File...Conversation with General Eisenhower...," 17 October 1962, Mary S. McAuliffe, ed., *CIA Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962*, 165–68 (hereafter *CMC Documents*); McCone calendars, entries for 17 October–30 November 1962.

[48] *Robert Kennedy In His Own Words*, 334; Richard Reeves, *President Kennedy: Profile in Power*, chap. 27; Parmet, chap. 10; Giglio, 123–40; Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 631–40; Sorensen, *Kennedy*, 443–69; McCone, "Memorandum of Meeting with the President...May 15, 1962...," McCone Papers, box 6, folder 1. McCone continued to work with the White House on the steel price issue for at least another year. See, e.g., material about a meeting with the president on 10 April 1963 in ibid., folder 4.

Accountability: Congress, PFIAB, and the Media (U)

McCone took charge of the Intelligence Community at a time when official and unofficial monitors were paying more attention to it and subjecting it to greater criticism than in the past. Operational and counterintelligence setbacks (the U-2 shootdown, the defection of two NSA officers to the Soviet Union in 1960, and the Bay of Pigs debacle); the dismissal of Allen Dulles; the Kennedy administration's aggressive use of covert action; and charges of intelligence failure before the Cuban missile crisis combined to put the community—and McCone's leadership of it—under heightened scrutiny from Congress, PFIAB, and the media. McCone's methods for dealing with each of these institutions of accountability ranged from cordial cooperation to prickly aloofness to distrusting disengagement. (U)

Working the Hill (U)

McCone was satisfied with the traditional benign system of oversight by four congressional subcommittees—of the Appropriations and Armed Services committees of both houses—that existed when he was appointed. The chairmen of the so-called "CIA subcommittees" during McCone's tenure were Clarence Cannon (D-MO) and Carl Vinson (D-GA) in the House, and Carl Hayden (D-AZ) and Richard Russell (D-GA) in the Senate. These powerful legislators believed in the importance of intelligence and in presidential preeminence in foreign affairs. They took a hands-off approach to monitoring CIA and protected it from congressional critics. McCone's relationships with them and other key lawmakers were "just truly excellent," recalls his legislative counsel, John Warner. From his experience at the Pentagon and the AEC, the DCI understood legislative-executive dynamics and grasped the unique features of CIA's interaction with Congress. He prepared his presentations to the committees thoroughly, answered questions candidly, and did not regard seeing a staffer as beneath his station. Congressman Jamie Whitten (D-MS) said McCone "gave [intelligence] to you straight and unadulterated. That's the way we liked it." Sen. Stuart Symington (D-MO) recalled that the Hill always welcomed and looked forward to McCone's appearances. Some observers believed the DCI never forgot that an unprecedentedly large number of senators had opposed his nomination, and he was determined to prove his worth.[49] (S)

McCone worked hard at maintaining good personal ties to Congress in part to prevent lawmakers from instituting more aggressive oversight processes.[50] The U-2 shootdown in May 1960, the failed Bay of Pigs operation in April 1961, and the controversy over his own nomination in September 1961 had prompted some members of Congress to call for a joint committee to monitor the Agency. Like the administration and the chairmen of the CIA subcommittees, McCone did not support establishment of such an entity, which was first proposed in the mid-1950s and had persistent backers on the Hill—notably Sen. Eugene McCarthy (D-MN) and Rep. John Lindsay (R-NY). The Agency's official position was that the historical system of oversight had matured, that a joint committee would not necessarily support CIA any better, and that the Agency's oldest congressional allies would be insulted. McCone—who privately decried "this continual prattle about this watchdog committee"—furthermore believed it would likely have a staff of disgruntled ex-CIA officers who had, in Walter Elder's words, "a particular ax to grind and who would know where the bodies were buried." If Congress wanted to increase its supervision of intelligence matters, McCone thought the best way to do so without compromising security or the Agency's congenial relations with its oversight panels was to include on them members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee. He believed the three committees dealing with defense, dollars, and diplomacy had a rightful interest in CIA matters, and that periodic, informal briefings of them would afford Congress adequate opportunity to supervise the Agency. (S)

McCone also gently encouraged members of the CIA subcommittees to meet more often with him and Agency briefers as a way to demonstrate to critics that genuine over-

---

[49] Gerald K. Haines and [redacted] "The CIA and Congress: Early Oversight, 1947–1965," chap. 3; John Warner oral history interview by [redacted] Washington, DC, 22 August 1983 (hereafter Warner/[redacted] OH), 7–9, 11; Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 66. Congressional oversight of CIA during the early 1960s is covered in Haines and [redacted] chap. 3; Snider, 1–4; Smist, 4–9; and David M. Barrett, "Glimpses of a Hidden History: Sen. Richard Russell, Congress, and Oversight of the CIA," *IJIC* 11, no. 3 (Fall 1998): 271–98. (S)

[50] Sources for this paragraph and the next are: Haines and [redacted] 89–92, 97–101, 104–5; Elder, [redacted] OH, 58; McCone, "Memorandum of Meeting with Secretary Rusk [et al.]...April 27, 1962," and "Memorandum of Discussion with Dr. Killian and Dr. Land...," 24 June 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 2; transcript of McCone telephone conversation with Sen. Bourke Hickenlooper, 6 December 1963, ibid., box 10, folder 4; McCone letter to William Raborn (DCI), 4 April 1966, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 3, folder 67; Warner memoranda to McCone, "Report on CIA Relations with Congress—1962," 3 December 1962, and "Legislative Matters," 29 November 1963, HS Files, HS/HC-260, Job 84-00473R, box 3, folder 18; Warner memorandum about McCone meeting with Carl Vinson, 16 January 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1; Smist, 5, citing interview with Clark Clifford on 27 May 1983. (S)

sight was occurring. He and other CIA officers held 32 formal and informal meetings with Congress in 1962—more than in any previous year—and over 30 in 1963. The Agency also provided information to, or in other ways assisted, several committees besides those charged with oversight, such as the House Government Operations and Un-American Activities committees, the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, and the Joint Economic Committee and the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy. Gradually the impetus for more intrusive oversight waned, largely owing to lack of interest on the Hill. A CIA subcommittee chairman confided that he had "no desire to pry into Agency affairs," and Clark Clifford later described the prevailing sentiment: "Congress chose not to be involved and preferred to be uninformed." As a measure of that attitude, CIA briefed congressional committees only 13 times in 1964.(S)

The debate on the joint oversight committee took a spiteful turn during 1963–64 when McCone and Marshall Carter refused to share sensitive intelligence with Rep. Lindsay, who then called for an investigation of CIA and argued for a joint committee in an article in *Esquire* magazine. A similar essay by Sen. McCarthy appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post* around the same time, and together they attracted wide attention. The two pieces enraged McCone, who privately denounced them as "a series of absolute misstatements," called the lawmakers "sons of bitches," and threatened to resign to protest their accepting royalties for attacking the Agency. President Johnson "deplored" McCarthy's article and asked McCone to see the senator to "try to put an end to the type of criticism that he has been directing towards the Agency." When tempers subsided, the DCI had other CIA officers court Lindsay, apologize for the refusal to share information, politely and privately correct his inaccuracies, and respond in detail to the criticisms he had made of the Agency. That treatment seemed to mollify the congressman. He still advocated a joint oversight panel but stopped criticizing CIA itself. Nothing came of proposals for the joint committee while McCone was DCI. Agency lobbying of key senators and representatives, and the efforts of CIA's congressional allies, succeeded in stalling the measure.[51](S)

McCone stayed attentive to the holders of CIA's purse-strings—the chairmen of the two Appropriations Committees, Clarence Cannon in the House and Carl Hayden in the Senate. The DCI took special pains with Cannon, who had started looking more carefully at Agency expenditures late in Dulles's directorship. One of Cannon's staffers advised McCone early on that the congressman "has long regarded CIA as something special and has put it under his wing," and Warner told the DCI that "Mr. Cannon has been heard to say in effect 'if an agency head is not sufficiently interested in his appropriation to appear personally to defend it, maybe he does not need an appropriation.'" Accordingly, McCone met with Cannon frequently and briefed his committee personally. The efforts paid off. The CIA appropriations subcommittee looked closely at the Agency's budget for only "a matter of hours each year," Warner wrote. More intense examination was unnecessary because Cannon believed the CIA was "one of the few [agencies] in government that had a proper regard for economy and utilized its funds in a conscientious manner."[52](S)

For the most part, McCone encountered much the same attitude of salutary neglect in the Senate, although, starting in 1963, he began to quarrel with the Armed Services Committee over how to budget [redacted] for joint Pentagon-CIA paramilitary operations in Southeast Asia. The DCI could not persuade Richard Russell and other Senate friends to resolve the dispute in the Agency's favor. Indeed, Russell—more as an exercise in political symbolism than from any disfavor he felt toward CIA—was more inclined than any Agency benefactor on the Hill to make a token cut in its appropriation. When Russell's committee proposed a [redacted] reduction, McCone was distressed at what he called "this most unwelcome surprise." He argued that "when [the reduction is] distributed against an already tightly prepared program level[,] the impact is serious." Russell was too powerful, however, and the reduction went through.[53](S)

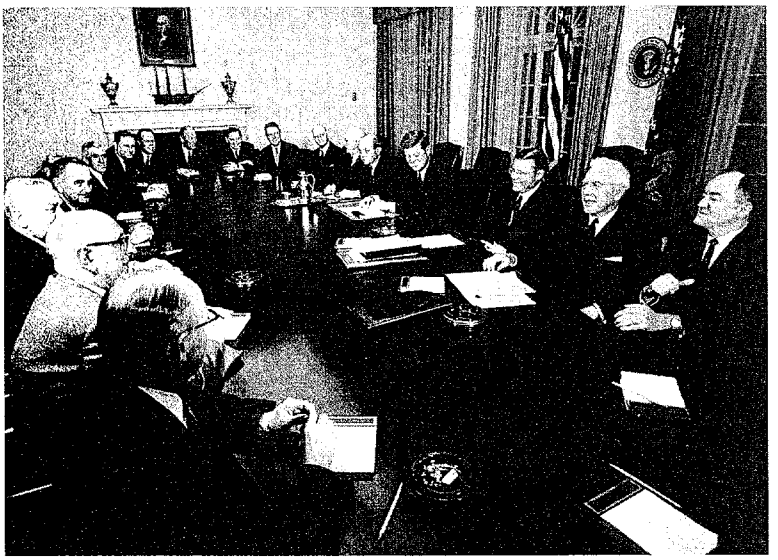
On another occasion, McCone found himself in an unenviable position: on the receiving end of a Russell rebuke. Just before he was to testify before Russell's Armed Services committee in early 1964, the chairman lambasted

[51] Haines and [redacted], 94–97; transcripts of McCone telephone conversations with Sen. Stuart Symington, 5 February 1964, and Sen. Thomas Dodd, 18 February 1964, McCone Papers, box 10, folder 5; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with President Johnson...on January 4th, [1964]," ibid., box 6, folder 7; Harry Howe Ransom, *The Intelligence Establishment*, 172.(S)

[52] Haines and [redacted], 110–13.(S)

[53] Ibid., 113–18.(S)

him for having DDI Cline provide unclassified information about the Soviet economy to journalists. This release of CIA material was widely but erroneously described at the time as a "press conference." Richard Helms, who was present at McCone's dressing-down, recalled the senator telling the red-faced DCI, "If you ever do this again, if you ever go public in this manner on things of this kind again, I simply am not going to support the Agency in its works or its budget or anything else.... The Agency must stay in the background. I just want to tell you this is my warning to you about this." The disclosure also disturbed other powerful figures on the Senate CIA subcommittees, such as Leverett Saltonstall (R-MA) and John Stennis (D-MS), as well as Congressmen Vinson and Cannon, all of whom conveyed their concerns to the Agency. The controversy perplexed McCone, who explained to Stennis that for years CIA had released information on the Soviet economy in unclassified materials bearing the Agency's name and in speeches and public testimony by Allen Dulles and other senior CIA executives. Instead of accepting responsibility for a miscue that rankled important congressional champions, however, an uncontrite McCone blamed his public affairs chief and all but accused unidentified Department of State officials of "harassing CIA in the press."[54] ~~(S)~~



McCone, President Kennedy, and Secretaries Rusk and McNamara brief congressional leaders at the White House in September 1963. (U)
Photo: JFK Library

Watching the President's Watchdog (U)

In 1956, President Eisenhower—acting on recommendations of blue-ribbon commissions on intelligence and government organization—established the President's Board of Consultants on Foreign Intelligence Activities, composed of prominent private citizens and retired senior government officials, to "conduct an objective review of the foreign intelligence activities of the government and the performance of the functions of the Central Intelligence Agency." President Kennedy regarded the board as a relic of Eisenhower's military-style staff system and a needless layer of review, and he deactivated it soon after taking office. Scarcely two weeks after the Cuban fiasco, however, he reestablished it as PFIAB. During the next seven months, PFIAB met 25 times—more than the Board of Consultants had met in the previous five years combined—and during Kennedy's term it submitted 170 formal recommendations. The president privately called PFIAB the most useful of all his advisory boards. McCone's effort to assert personal authority over the intelligence process did not set well with PFIAB, and he, in turn, did not like a group of outsiders interposed between him and the president. The board had open-ended authority to second-guess his conduct as DCI and as head of CIA, but no operational or administrative responsibility for carrying out its recommendations.[55] ~~(S)~~

McCone had 28 meetings with the board in 42 months as DCI (most of them during 1962–63) and several discussions with PFIAB chairmen alone. (While McCone was DCI, the board had two chairmen: James Killian until April 1963, and then Clark Clifford.) His sessions with the board

[54] Helms, [redacted] OH, 12-13; McCone letters to Sen. John Stennis, 14 January 1964, and Clifford, 16 January 1964, CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 7, folder 122; [redacted]

[55] Philip K. Edwards, "The President's Board: 1956–60," *Studies* 13, no. 3 (Summer 1969): 113–28; Executive Order 10938, *Federal Register*, 4 May 1961, 3951; Andrew, 272; "Minutes of PFIAB Meeting on January 30, 1964," 3, PFIAB record no. 206-10001-10002, PFIAB Records, NARA; Clark Clifford with Richard Holbrooke, *Counsel to the President*, 349–56; Kirkpatrick [redacted] OH, 23–24; [Helms] memorandum to McCone, "Notes on President's Board Practices and Procedures," c. August 1964, CMS Files, Job 92B01038R, box 7, folder 121. ~~(S)~~

followed a pattern. He would make some introductory remarks, and then the group would work its way through the usually lengthy agenda one item at a time. More often than not, they ran out of time before completing their intended business. The discussions included much give-and-take and were businesslike in tone. McCone's answers were candid but not detailed. On occasion, he got somewhat defensive, but usually he was willing, when pressed, to admit that the community had been inadequate in some regard.[56]

James Killian (U)

Clark Clifford (U)

McCone's relationship with PFIAB got off to a strained start when, less than two months after he became DCI, the board criticized the Intelligence Community for failing to forecast the construction of the Berlin Wall in August 1961 and a military coup in Syria one month later. It concluded that US intelligence reporting and analysis needed to be more responsive to breaking events and disseminated more efficiently, and it suggested that a new watch system be established. The White House requested a response from USIB. In reply, McCone and the USIB-member department heads disagreed with many of PFIAB's contentions and instead recommended that existing procedures be fine-tuned, not scrapped. McCone did not want the community's credibility to suffer because of a "hair trigger" warning system:

> [O]ne of the disciplines our community must impose on itself is the careful evaluation and screening of the flood of reports received on possible crisis situations. I believe it [is] preferable to accept the occasional risk of surprise, rather than disseminate many unjustified alarms as insurance against charges of failure.[57]

McCone replied directly to Chairman James Killian with a strong defense of community analysts and their methods:

> It is essential to useful intelligence dissemination that discretion and selectivity be used by intelligence officers. A system which highlighted all the contingent situations where trouble or a change in circumstances might occur would be of little use to a policymaker; it would debase its own currency. Any exercise of selectivity runs the risk of omission of developments which with hindsight can be criticized. The opposite practice of indiscriminate reporting would, perhaps, protect the Intelligence Community from charges of sins of omission, but would overwhelm and invite indifference from the policymaker.
>
> ...With the advantage of hindsight, it is often possible to construct a case supporting a charge of intelligence failure. The professional analyst, exercising his judgment before the fact, must be wary of unwarranted forecasts, especially when these require choices amongst numerous plausible alternatives.

The DCI went on to criticize the board's reasoning from hindsight that "because an indicator turns out to be significant it must have been recognizable as significant before the event." Analysts cannot always gauge that importance when they must make their judgments. McCone and PFIAB would repeat many of the themes of this exchange when they examined the intelligence aspects of the Cuban missile crisis in late 1962 and early 1963.[58] (U)

Other points of contention between the DCI and the board soon arose. McCone questioned whether PFIAB was

[56] Memoranda about McCone's briefings to PFIAB in CMS Files, Job 92B01038R, box 8, folders 139–41; Kirkpatrick memorandum to McCone about PFIAB briefings, 3 January 1963, ibid., folder 140.

[57] Lay, vol. 4, 216–24; McCone memorandum to the president, "Early Warning in National Intelligence," HS Files, HS/HC-419, Job 84T00286R, box 2, folder 14.

[58] In his memorandum to Killian, McCone made other points about the two issues at hand. On the Berlin Wall, he pointed out that CIA's current publications had suggested that the East Germans might close the Soviet zone in Berlin. On the Syrian coup, he remarked that the country's endemic instability and the frequency of coup plots and rumors made the threshold for reporting them very high. There was, he claimed, no reason to attach greater urgency to the intelligence about the plot that proved successful than to information about several other recent conspiracies. McCone memorandum to Killian, "Review of Advance Intelligence Pertaining to the Berlin Wall and the Syrian Coup Incidents," 30 April 1962, ERWI doc. no. ado-14555, doc. bar code no. CIA98-96000707710003025. (U)

authorized to look into covert action operations, but the Agency's general counsel advised him that a "legalistic hassle" over the CIA charter and President Kennedy's executive order reestablishing the board "would not be very productive." Instead, the DCI decided to restrict detailed discussions about covert actions to a PFIAB subcommittee and to apprise the full membership only on a need-to-know basis. He did not like PFIAB members dealing with USIB departments without discussing the results with him, and he became especially irritated when the board "picked up what I had reported to them as activities under way, and had used them as a basis for their recommendations on what should be done." "I felt the board had no obligation to accept my views or to support my actions, and I felt no obligation to look with favor on their recommendations." He believed, for example, that the board's prescriptions concerning NRO and the satellite reconnaissance program would subordinate CIA's interests to the Pentagon's and turn space espionage into an Air Force operation. Finally, McCone was thoroughly unhappy with PFIAB's postmortem on the Cuban missile crisis, which charged the Intelligence Community—and, by inference, him—with serious lapses in collection, analysis, and management.[59] (S)

McCone's dealings with Killian, dating back to the former's AEC days, were professionally cordial, if a bit stiff at times, but an edge clearly is detectable in his contacts with Clifford, whom he regarded as more threatening and more arrogant. McCone had preferred that another scientist succeed Killian because of the growing importance of scientific and technical intelligence collection and analysis. He did, however, support making Clifford—already a board member—the new chairman, probably figuring that fruitless opposition to the selection would only poison their future relations. By the time Clifford took over in April 1963, the DCI was thoroughly disillusioned with PFIAB, complaining to the White House that the "strange things" it did were "very annoying and very disturbing...more of a detriment than a help" and made it "the most dangerous instrument around." These sentiments probably got back to the strong-willed Clifford, who planned to make the board an independent oversight body regardless of what the DCI thought. McCone must not have concealed his reservations very well. "I think Mr. Clifford has the impression that I resent the Board," he wrote in ironic surprise.[60] (S)

McCone was right. From Clifford's standpoint, the DCI viewed the board with undisguised suspicion, regarded meetings with it as a nuisance, continually delayed providing it with information (notably during the Cuban missile crisis), and tried to take it over as a personal advisory group. Moreover, Clifford mistakenly wrote, McCone ignored PFIAB's recommendation that he concentrate on managing the Intelligence Community and delegate responsibility for running CIA to a career intelligence officer. Lastly, Clifford concluded from his own experience in government that the community's competence was debatable.[61] (U)

Adding to the antipathy was McCone's justified belief that PFIAB's executive director, J. Patrick Coyne, often exceeded his authority and, by insisting that he receive a presidential appointment and act as USIB chairman in the DCI's absence, showed his ambitions for power. A lawyer and former FBI special agent, and previously an adviser to the NSC on covert action, Coyne was tough and inquisitive and, in McCone's mind, showed he was no friend of CIA by writing PFIAB's missile crisis critique. Neither McCone nor Clifford backed down on matters of substance, but the DCI recognized that he was in the weaker position bureaucratically. When Clifford threatened to resign from the board if, in his words, McCone "was going to set himself up as a censor of what PFIAB could and could not see," President Kennedy stepped in and told the DCI to be more cooperative. McCone later said "I accepted [Clifford's] statement

[59] Houston memorandum to McCone, "Charter of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board," 21 June 1962, CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 7, folder 121; Kirkpatrick memorandum to McCone, "Meeting of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board," 20 June 1962, ibid., box 8, folder 140; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Clark Clifford—14 May 1963," ibid., folder 122; McCone, "Memorandum of Discussion with Dr. Killian and Dr. Land," 24 June 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 2; McCone, "Notes on Killian Board Recommendations," 25 March 1963, ibid., folder 5. (S)

[60] McCone letter to Bundy, ER 63-2547, 28 March 1963, and McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Luncheon Meeting with Mr. Clark Clifford[,] 20 June 1963," CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 7, folder 122; transcript of McCone telephone conversation with Bundy, 7 March 1963, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 4. McCone may have shared the objections that the *New York Times* raised to Clifford's selection: "Mr. Clifford has a brilliant mind, but, as a long-time trouble-shooter for the Democratic party, he is inextricably associated with partisan politics. He replaces a skilled and objective scientist-administrator. The selection is at best unfortunate. It is bound to give the impression that our intelligence activities will now be monitored—not by a chairman who is an expert in the field—but by one who is essentially a politician." *New York Times*, 29 April 1963, McCone clipping file, HIC. (S)

[61] Clifford later told an interviewer that "in some instances in the foreign intelligence field, you had the feeling that you were in a ball park and a ball had been hit out to midway left-center field, and the center fielder and the left fielder would both go for it and crash and the ball would fall to the ground. Other times—and [in] some dramatic instances—a ball would be hit out to left center field and each would think that the other was going to get it and the ball would fall on the ground again." Quoted in Parmet, 212. (U)

that the board is established for life, and if the President wanted, I would work with them." With other intelligence matters placing larger demands on his time and equities, McCone largely withdrew from this stalemate and turned over much of the undesirable PFIAB liaison responsibility to DDCI Carter.[62]

Shunning the Spotlight (U)

In contrast to the greater openness he sought with Congress, McCone hunkered down when it came to public relations and media contacts. He believed the Intelligence Community should remove itself from public view wherever possible because too much information about its activities had appeared in the media. He spurned suggestions that he should try to correct popular misconceptions about CIA, saying that the president and the secretaries of state and defense had the responsibility for refurbishing the Agency's image. After all, he noted to a visiting journalist, "they're the ones that keep the lights burning all night in this building." McCone would not give outside addresses or on-the-record interviews (although he had numerous background contacts with the Washington press corps), minimized public appearances, would not accept new honorary degrees from universities, and tried to discourage journalists from writing about the Agency. He dissuaded *Time* and *Newsweek* from preparing cover stories about him and tried to persuade Stewart Alsop not to write a piece for the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1963. He also directed all CIA officers to report any contacts with the press—a longstanding requirement that had been routinely ignored.[63]

Evaluations of McCone's approach varied. Killian and Bundy thought he went too far to lower the Agency's profile and suggested he make some "appropriate" public appearances, but Arthur Krock of the *New York Times* urged him to continue his present reticence. McCone was scarcely more forthcoming in speeches to official audiences in closed venues—the Foreign Service Institute and the military war colleges, for example. His talks were mostly bland descriptions of the Intelligence Community structure combined with potted assessments of current intelligence issues that rarely conveyed more information [redacted]

McCone relented a few times and met with influential journalists when they said they would go ahead with a story even without a DCI interview. These occasional sessions helped McCone maintain good relations with most of the press, although they did not assure favorable treatment. In the summer of 1963, for example, McCone (along with Bundy and Deputy Secretary of Defense Gilpatric) met with Alsop to refute the journalist's contention that rivalry between CIA and the Department of Defense was hurting the national interest. The DCI confronted Alsop about the article after it ran, charging that it "totally ignored the facts." Alsop replied that lower-level sources in the Agency and DIA corroborated his thesis. In part, McCone worried that media criticism would depress employee morale and impair recruitment of new personnel. Later in 1963, McCone told *Life* staffers that he was afraid college graduates seeking careers in international affairs would be dissuaded from working at CIA and choose to join the Foreign Service instead.[65]

Incremental Gains (U)

Looking back on his directorship, McCone was satisfied with his accomplishments in increasing the DCI's ability to manage the Intelligence Community. From a more recent vantage point, however, McCone's achievements as DCI seem less impressive than he regarded them at the time, and certainly were less extensive than the changes he implemented as D/CIA. They were also more transient, depending for their durability on the administrative inclinations of subsequent DCIs. For example, the revitalized

[62] Clifford, 354–55; McCone untitled memorandum about Coyne, 10 April 1962, CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 8, folder 140; idem, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Clark Clifford—14 May 1963," ibid., box 7, folder 122; Kirkpatrick, 218; Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 24; Thomas Parrott oral history interview by Michael Warner, Washington, DC, 15 October 1999 (hereafter Parrott/Warner OH), 12; McCone, "Memorandum of Discussion with Dr. Killian and Dr. Land...," 24 June 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 2.

[63] McCone untitled memorandum to Carter, 14 August 1962, McCone Papers, box 5, folder 12; Stanley J. Grogan (Office of Public Affairs), "Memorandum for the Record...DCI-John Steele Conference...15 August 1962...," ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 16, folder 330; McCone, "Memorandum of Discussions Between Mr. Stewart Alsop and Mr. McCone...," 12 April 1963, McCone Papers, folder 5; transcript of McCone-Alsop interview, 9 April 1963, ibid., box 7, folder 3; transcript of McCone meeting with *Newsweek* reporters, 22 October 1963, ibid., folder 6; transcript of McCone meeting with John Chancellor (NBC), 13 January 1965, ibid., box 9, folder 2.

[64] McCone, "Memorandum of Discussion...with Dr. Killian," 1 August 1962, and "Memorandum Covering Discussion with Mr. Arthur Krock...August 10, 1962," McCone Papers, box 2, folder 2; McCone speech files, ibid., box 5, folders 15–17, and box 9, folder 6.

[65] McCone untitled memorandum to Elder, 1 August 1963, and Kirkpatrick memorandum to Coyne, "The Alsop Article," 6 August 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 30, folder 1; transcript of McCone meeting with John Jessup and John Steele (both with *Life*), 17 October 1963, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 6.

USIB—in McCone's "chairman of the board" paradigm, his most important success—had much less visibility after Richard Helms became DCI. Helms instead relied more on NIPE—probably McCone's key management innovation inside the Agency—to assist him in running community affairs. Overall, McCone's experience as DCI provides a case study of the observation that "[t]he organization and leadership of the Intelligence Community is a structural oddity."

> It is something of a holding company, with the DCI more "first among equals" than someone with true executive authority. He is the principal adviser to the president on matters of intelligence, but his relations with the heads of other key intelligence organizations are more that of a colleague than a boss. As a result, the primary tool available to the DCI is persuasion.[66]

The institutional and political constraints under which the DCI must function became starkly apparent to McCone as CIA took on major roles in the Kennedy administration's foreign policy initiatives—especially those in Latin America and Southeast Asia. (U)

[66] McConc[redacted]DH, 8; Council on Foreign Relations, *Making Intelligence Smarter: The Future of U.S. Intelligence*, 25. (U)

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

CHAPTER

4

Into the Cuban Crucible (I): Covert Action against Castro (U)

Almost as soon as he had taken his oath of office, John McCone was caught up in the Kennedy administration's fixation with Cuba and its communist leader, Fidel Castro. McCone participated—both as Intelligence Community leader and policy adviser—in many of the US government's most sensitive, high-level discussions about removing Castro from power and, during the Cuban missile crisis, responding to the Soviet Union's challenge to US strategic interests. He agreed with administration strategy toward Cuba but not with its tactics. McCone shared official US animosity toward *Fidelismo* and believed the United States must make Cuba's experiment with communism fail, but as DCI he faced a bureaucratic imperative: keeping CIA out of another questionable covert enterprise while restoring its reputation and capabilities after the Bay of Pigs debacle. His dilemma was in having to minimize the risk of further damage to the Agency without appearing feckless or obstructionist to a White House whose mantra was "action." (U)

President John F. Kennedy and his senior policymakers, determined counterrevolutionaries almost to a man, probably spent as much, if not more, of their time on Cuba than on any other foreign policy issue. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara went so far as to say that he and his colleagues "were hysterical about Castro at the time of the Bay of Pigs and thereafter." Just before Kennedy took office, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev had declared his support for "wars of national liberation," and the White House regarded the presence of a pro-Soviet revolutionary dictatorship just offshore, in a region the United States historically had treated almost as a protectorate, as a serious threat to national security and to the welfare and stability of America's Latin neighbors. This determination to be rid of Castro—whose ideology was, wrote then-White House aide Walt Rostow, "a moral and political offense to us"—intensified after the Bay of Pigs operation, a humiliation to the president personally and the United States politically.[1] (U)

"El jefe maximo" (U)

The president made his intentions known publicly and privately. In a speech a few days after the US-backed invasion brigade was routed in April 1961, Kennedy declared that "We intend to profit from this lesson...to re-examine and reorient our forces of all kinds...to intensify our efforts for a struggle in many ways more difficult than war." Around that time, he told the NSC that "US policy toward Cuba should aim at the downfall of Castro." The Taylor Report—the administration's official after-action review of the Bay of Pigs project, prepared by the Cuba Study Group under the direction of Gen. Maxwell Taylor—declared that

> there can be no long-term living with Castro as a neighbor. His continued presence within the hemispheric community as a dangerously effective exponent of Communism and anti-Americanism constitutes a real menace capable of overthrowing the elected governments in any one or more of weak Latin American republics. There are only two ways to view this threat; either to hope that time and internal discontent will eventually end it, or to take active measures to force its removal.

Or, in the blunter words of Robert Kennedy, "We will take action against Castro. It might be tomorrow, it might be in five days or 10 days, or not for months. But it will come."[2] (U)

By July 1961, the NSC's Special Group had endorsed that conclusion and stated that the basic American objective toward Cuba was to implement "a US program to develop

[1] Thomas G. Paterson, "Fixation with Cuba: The Bay of Pigs, Missile Crisis, and Covert War Against Castro," in Thomas G. Paterson, ed., *Kennedy's Quest for Power: American Foreign Policy, 1961–1963*, 123–55; Church Committee, *Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders*, 142 n.; W.W. Rostow (Department of State) memorandum to Dean Rusk, Robert McNamara, and Allen Dulles, "Notes on Cuba Policy," 24 April 1961, Laurence Chang and Peter Kornbluh, eds., *The Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962: A National Security Archive Document Reader*, 16. (U)

[2] John F. Kennedy, speech to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, 20 April 1961, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy, 1961*, 306; "Record of Actions at the 483rd meeting of the National Security Council, 5 May 1961," and Cuba Study Group memorandum to President Kennedy, "Recommendations of the Cuba Study Group," 13 June 1961, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 482, 606; Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 181. (U)

opposition to Castro and to help bring about a regime acceptable to the US." In September, CIA's most valuable Soviet agent, GRU colonel Oleg Penkovskiy, reported that "Khrushchev considers it an accomplishment on his part" that "you [the United States] still tolerate Castro in Cuba." The White House concluded that it must dispel this image of weakness and prove that the Kremlin could not take advantage of it.[3] (U)

Domestic politics also was a factor. As a presidential candidate, Kennedy had pledged to take a harder line against communism than Dwight Eisenhower had. During the 1960 campaign, he needled the administration by noting that "[i]n 1952 the Republicans ran on a program of rolling back the Iron Curtain in Eastern Europe. Today the Iron Curtain is 90 miles off the coast of the United States." After Castro declared himself a Marxist-Leninist in May 1961, it was evident that the Bay of Pigs setback needed to be redressed quickly to prevent a pro-Soviet, communist spearhead from penetrating the Western Hemisphere, and to deny the Republicans an issue in the 1962 elections.[4] (U)

The Kennedy administration soon took overt steps to isolate and weaken Castro. In September 1961, it announced that it would stop sending foreign aid to any country that assisted Cuba, and in December it extended the US embargo on Cuban sugar imports through mid-1962. Judging that reliance on diplomatic and economic measures would be futile, however, and without ruling out the use of massive military force against Castro, the administration in November 1961 decided to develop a more comprehensive and aggressive program to, as an NSC document later put it, "help the people of Cuba overthrow the Communist regime from within Cuba and institute a new government with which the United States can live in peace."[5] (U)

"Boom and Bang" (U)

The result was a large-scale, interdepartmental covert action program best known by its Pentagon codename MONGOOSE—a sustained campaign of sabotage, propaganda, espionage, and work with resistance networks and exile groups that went far beyond CIA's previous low-grade and sporadic harassment and propaganda activities.[6] This "command operation," as presidential counsel Richard Goodwin called it, would build on existing activities against Cuba that included developing and maintaining intelligence and resistance cells on the island, broadcasting propaganda from Radio Swan and other facilities, inducing defections from Castro's revolutionary cadre, having Cuban diplomats declared *personae non grata*, sponsoring speaking tours by regime critics, cooperating with expatriate groups to build a credible post-Castro leadership, and recruiting assets and collecting intelligence in third countries. MONGOOSE would be combined with highly compartmented projects to assassinate Castro, separately run military "psyops" activities, and overt efforts to ostracize Cuba diplomatically within the Organization of American States (OAS), damage its economy with trade sanctions, reduce Castro's appeal to Latin America's dispossessed masses by promoting modernization through the Alliance for Progress, and bolster the region's internal security forces with military assistance.[7] (U)

[3] Thomas A. Parrott (NSC) "Minutes of Meeting of Special Group, July 20, 1961," *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 632; Jerrold L. Schecter and Peter S. Deriabin, *The Spy Who Saved the World*, 249, citing transcripts of CIA's 33rd meeting with Penkovskiy on 22 September 1961. (U)

[4] Kent M. Beck, "Necessary Lies, Hidden Truths: Cuba in the 1960 Campaign," *DH* 8, no. 4 (Winter 1984): 37–59, quote at 45. (U)

[5] Taylor Branch and George Crile III, "The Kennedy Vendetta: How the CIA Waged a Silent War Against Cuba," *Harper's Magazine* 251, August 1975: 50; Richard N. Goodwin untitled memorandum to President Kennedy, 1 November 1961, President Kennedy untitled memorandum to the secretary of state et al., 30 November 1961, and Edward Lansdale memorandum, "The Cuba Project," 18 January 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 664, 688, 710. On contingency planning for an invasion of Cuba, see James G. Hershberg, "Before 'The Missiles of October,'" *DH* 14, no. 2 (Spring 1990): 163–98. (U)

[6] Details about MONGOOSE can be found in Samuel Halpern oral history interview by Mary S. McAuliffe, Alexandria, VA, 15 January 1988 (hereafter Halpern/McAuliffe OH), and Halpern oral history interview by Brian Latell and Michael Warner, Chantilly, VA, 7 April 1998 (hereafter Halpern/Latell OH); Helms, chap. 19; "CIA Operations Against Cuba Prior to the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy on 23 [sic] November 1963," CIA memorandum prepared for the House of Representatives Select Committee on Assassinations, undated but c. 1978, OCA Files, Job 80T01357A (hereafter CIA JFK Assassination Records), box JFK35, folder 7; Church Committee, *Alleged Assassination Plots*, 139–48, 333–37; *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, under numerous index entries for MONGOOSE; *Bay of Pigs: 40 Years After. A Documents Briefing Book for An International Conference, Havana, Cuba*, numerous documents at tab 7; and secondary sources on MONGOOSE noted in the Appendix on Sources.

[7] The Kennedy administration's diplomatic efforts to isolate Cuba within the Western Hemisphere can be followed in *FRUS, 1961–1963, XII, American Republics*, 250–355. Its program to shift military aid from collective defense to internal security is described in [redacted] and Edwin Lieuwen, *Generals vs. Presidents*, 124–27. Incisive critiques of the administration's Latin American policies are Michael E. Latham, *Modernization as Ideology*, chap. 3; Bruce Miroff, *Pragmatic Illusion*, 111–42; and Stephen G. Rabe, "Controlling Revolutions: Latin America, the Alliance for Progress, and Cold War Anti-Communism," in *Kennedy's Quest for Power*, 105–22. (U)

The Special Group Augmented (SGA), a slightly expanded version of the Special Group, had overall control of MONGOOSE.[8] The SGA's chairman was Maxwell Taylor, the president's military adviser, and its other members were McCone; McGeorge Bundy; Gen. Lyman Lemnitzer, the JCS chairman; Roswell Gilpatric, the deputy secretary of defense; U. Alexis Johnson, the deputy under secretary of state for political affairs; and Robert Kennedy. Air Force Brig. Gen. Edward G. Lansdale, the vaunted counterinsurgency specialist who had devised and implemented covert action programs in the Philippines and Vietnam, was put in charge of MONGOOSE operations. Administratively, the project fell under Pentagon authority,[9] but it drew on the resources of CIA, the Departments of Defense and State, and the US Information Agency (USIA). CIA's large part was run by a special working group, Task Force W, led by DDP officer William Harvey, of Berlin Tunnel fame, with Richard Helms and McCone above him in the chain of command.[10] ~~(S)~~

The full Special Group usually met on Thursday afternoons at 1400. When it finished its business, Robert Kennedy would come in, and it became the Special Group Counterinsurgency. When MONGOOSE was discussed at the end of the agenda, the SGC—with most of the same people—converted into the SGA. McCone often attended back-to-back meetings of the three groups.[11] ~~(S)~~

McCone's attitude toward and involvement in MONGOOSE were directly affected by the project's two driving forces, Robert Kennedy and Edward Lansdale. Kennedy, charged by the president after the Bay of Pigs to accomplish something against Castro, was MONGOOSE's catalyst at the policy level. If anything, he was even more dedicated to deposing Castro than the president, and, as a senior CIA operations officer recalled, "wanted boom and bang all over the island." "My idea," the attorney general declared in November 1961, "is to stir things up on [the] island with espionage, sabotage, general disorder, run & operated by Cubans themselves with every group but Batistaites & Communists. Do not know if we will be successful in overthrowing Castro but we have nothing to lose in my estimate." Getting rid of Castro, he stated at one of the early SGA meetings, was "the top priority in the United States Government—all else is secondary—no time, money, effort, or manpower is to be spared," and he told the head of the DDP at the time, Richard Bissell, to "get off his ass" and do something about Cuba. "It is untenable to say," he was quoted as telling MONGOOSE project officers, "that the United States is unable to achieve its vital national security and foreign policy goal" toward Cuba. Kennedy sent memoranda and made telephone calls to CIA continually—often bypassing the project hierarchy to contact junior officers and even Cuban exiles directly—and asked for copies of the daily reports from refugee interrogations in Florida. He spent many hours of his work week on the telephone with McCone, Helms, and Harvey, and at Taylor's and Lansdale's offices. He grew frustrated with what he called "half-assed" operations—"just going in, blowing up a mine or blowing up a bridge...some of them ended in disaster. People were captured, tried—and confessed. It wasn't very helpful." Kennedy's mounting impatience and pressure were largely responsible for creating what Helms later called the "white heat" conditions in which "nutty schemes were born." McCone's personal relationship with the attorney general made it all the harder for him as DCI to support the administration's covert campaign while maneuvering to keep CIA from having to shoulder the blame for failure.[12] (U)

Edward Lansdale, as assistant for special operations to the secretary of defense, was MONGOOSE's strategist and visionary. A former advertising executive and OSS officer, he

---

[8] On the formulation of the Kennedy administration's covert operations against Cuba, see Goodwin untitled memorandum to the president, 1 November 1961, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 664; "Types of Covert Action Against the Castro Regime," 8 November 1961, DDO Files, Job 78-01450R, box 5, folder 3. Well before MONGOOSE was developed and approved, CIA had outlined a project of its own with an estimated cost of [redacted] "Program of Covert Action Aimed at Weakening the Castro Regime," 19 May 1961, and untitled CIA memorandum on covert action in Cuba, undated, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 554–60, 636–37; and *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI/XII, American Republics; Cuba 1961–1962; Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath: Microfiche Supplement*, docs. 269–71. ~~(S)~~

[9] The decision to make MONGOOSE a military-run project largely appears to have been Robert Kennedy's, with some input from Lansdale. The attorney general—already mad at CIA for the Bay of Pigs—did not appreciate the Agency's skepticism about the project, and Lansdale urged him to ignore the intelligence experts' assessments. Evan Thomas, *Robert Kennedy: His Life*, 149; *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 687. (U)

[10] The "W" in Task Force W stood for William Walker, an American adventurer who led unsanctioned military expeditions ("filibusters") to Central America in the 1850s. Helms, 197. After Task Force W was established, the DDP area divisions coordinated their independent operations against Cuba through it. ~~(S)~~

[11] McCone calendars, entries for November 1961–October 1962. ~~(S)~~

[12] Samuel Halpern quoted in Thomas, *The Very Best Men*, 287–88; Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy*, 476; Helms memorandum to McCone, "Meeting with the Attorney General of the United States Concerning Cuba," 19 January 1962, "Memorandum from the Chief of Operations, Operation MONGOOSE (Lansdale) to the Members of the Caribbean Survey Group," 20 January 1962, and McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Cuba," 26 April 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 719–21, 800–801; Church Committee, *Alleged Assassination Plots*, 141, 150, 334; *Robert Kennedy In His Own Words*, 378–79; Hilty, 424. (U)

CHAPTER 4

Brig. Gen. Edward Lansdale (U)

While there, he helped mastermind a counterinsurgency operation that quashed communist rebels and brought a pro-Western democrat, Ramon Magsaysay, to power in 1953. After the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, Lansdale was sent to Vietnam to try to repeat that accomplishment.[13] As an exemplar for US intervention in Cuba, Lansdale looked to the American War of Independence:

> Americans once ran a successful revolution. It was run from within, and succeeded because there was timely and strong political, economic, and military help by nations outside who supported our cause. Using this same concept of revolution from within, we must help the Cuban people to stamp out tyranny and gain their liberty.

His zeal for deposing Castro approached, if not equaled, that of the Kennedys:

> [T]here will be no acceptable alibi.... I appreciate the difficult problems inherent in getting bureaucratic procedures and personnel aroused to do the dynamic thinking and actions demanded by this project. However, I also am very clear about the unreserved requirement laid upon us.... It is our job to put the American genius to work on this project, quickly and effectively. This demands a change from business-as-usual and a hard facing of the fact that we are in a combat situation—where we have been given full command.[14] (U)

DCI Doubts (U)

McCone had had no direct dealings with Cuban affairs before he became DCI, and his "knowledge base" about Castro's leadership, policies, and objectives mainly came from Agency briefings and analyses he was given during the period between his appointment and swearing-in. His study of CIA assessments, operational plans, and liaison information led him to have strong reservations about the efficacy of covert action in Cuba. Figuring in his thinking was the judgment of BNE in early November 1961 that "[t]he Castro regime has sufficient popular support and repressive capabilities to cope with any internal threat likely to develop within the foreseeable future." Castro's removal "by assassination or by natural causes, would certainly have an unsettling effect, but would almost certainly not prove fatal to the regime. The revolution is by now well institutionalized; the regime has firm control of the country; its principal surviving leaders would probably rally together in the face of a common danger." Moreover, MONGOOSE potentially conflicted with what McCone saw as his most important early mission as DCI: restoring the Agency's prestige downtown after the Bay of Pigs. Accordingly, he wanted CIA's participation in MONGOOSE carefully controlled to minimize damage to the Agency if the project failed. Two covert action disasters in a row were unacceptable.[15] (U)

McCone first presented his cautionary views on MONGOOSE to policymakers at a meeting on 22 November 1961 (a week before he was sworn in) with the president, Robert Kennedy, and Lansdale. After hearing the attorney general express "grave concern" over Cuba and call for

[13] Lansdale's exploits in the Philippines made him the model for a memorable literary figure who epitomized the altruistic side of America's postwar internationalism, Col. Edwin Hillandale in *The Ugly American* (1958). Lansdale is often regarded as the man after whom British author Graham Greene created his naïve yet sinister embodiment of American "imperialism" in Vietnam, Alden Pyle, in *The Quiet American* (1955). However, Greene was writing about Vietnam circa 1952 while it was still under French control and before Lansdale arrived. (U)

[14] Robert Smith Thompson, *The Missiles of October*, 138; "Memorandum from the Chief of Operations, Operation MONGOOSE (Lansdale) to the Members of the Caribbean Survey Group," 20 January 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 721; Cecil B. Currey, *Edward Lansdale: The Unquiet American*, 196–200, 239–50. The Caribbean Survey Group, the cover name for MONGOOSE's planning and administrative apparat, comprised the project officers in the Departments of State and Defense, CIA, and USIA who had day-to-day responsibility for managing the project. (U)

[15] BNE memorandum to DCI Dulles, "The Situation and Prospects in Cuba," 3 November 1961, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 672. The paper was published on 28 November 1961 as SNIE 85–61 with the same title but a somewhat reworked text. Apropos MONGOOSE, it judged that "[i]n view of the regime's repressive capabilities...it is highly improbable that an extensive popular uprising against it could be fomented" (4); copies of unreleased estimates are on file in the History Staff. In a memorandum, Lansdale took issue with the SNIE's conclusions, which he called "the major evidence to be used to oppose your project." Lansdale untitled memorandum to Robert Kennedy, 30 November 1961, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 687. On McCone's general circumspection toward covert action, see Carter memorandum to Helms, "Covert Actions," 16 October 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 4, conveying "the Director's desire that covert actions conducted by the Central Intelligence Agency must be fully and totally justified as in the national interest and must be limited to objectives of our national policy," and including this note from Carter to Helms: "Dick: This is designed to be helpful in case you get harebrained ideas coming in from the outside...." (U)

"immediate dynamic action" that "would embody a variety of covert operations, propaganda, all possible actions that would create dissentions [sic] within Cuba and would discredit the Castro regime, and political action with members of the OAS in support of the action," the DCI urged that the administration not compensate for its current state of "shock" by embarking on a "reckless" course. McCone supported the concept of Lansdale heading an interdepartmental program, but the potential for bureaucratic overreach bothered him. He insisted that "under no circumstances" should Lansdale try to "'lift' elements of departments or agencies out of their 'in place' position" and put them under the new group. CIA components, he argued, could not function properly without direct support from the Agency's logistics and communications complements. McCone won his point, at least for the time being, but he wrote that the attorney general "resented CIA resistance" to the Lansdale project.[16] (U)

While Lansdale was developing his operational program during the next several weeks, McCone tried to dampen what he evidently regarded as excessive enthusiasm for getting rid of Castro by covert means. He pointed out to Robert Kennedy "the very great difficulty of creating an effective internal political resistance to a well-organized, authoritarian regime equipped with a substantial military force and an effective internal security police." As evidence, McCone said that only 12 of more than two dozen agents in Cuba could communicate with the Agency, and that a recent infiltration team was quickly captured and some of its members displayed on a Cuban television "confession show" for propaganda value. He called the SGA's attention to the fact that most Cubans were apathetic, not disgruntled, and that the Cuban leader could rely on a "fanatical pro-Castro minority" and an efficient security apparatus to support him. The DCI had to be careful, however, lest the administration perceive him and CIA as ineffectual or even disloyal. The policy of removing Castro was established, so, operating on the tactical and administrative level, McCone tried to make sure that the Agency supported Lansdale's grandiose plans in ways that either stood a fair chance of succeeding or that would not embarrass CIA and the administration if they failed. This task was difficult given the Kennedys' ebullience toward covert action and their intense pressure on MONGOOSE operators to produce results quickly.[17] (S)

The administration's decision to have Lansdale supervise MONGOOSE and run it out of the White House and the Pentagon enabled McCone to keep some bureaucratic distance from the project. He assigned responsibility for CIA's role to Richard Helms, who turned over day-to-day direction of Task Force W to William Harvey. Helms put Harvey in charge of the special working group to remove the whole potentially messy business from the regular DDP chain of command. It was a tactic he had used in previous positions, Harvey's executive officer Sam Halpern recalled, "so when [operations] blew up[,] they didn't blow up in his face. He could see there was no profit whatever for the Agency in this thing [MONGOOSE]." (Perhaps as a signal of his effort at detachment, Helms attended only seven of 40 MONGOOSE meetings.) McCone tacitly assented to Helms's arrangement. Although he shared his DDP's doubts about covert action in general and wanted to be especially cautious—and bureaucratically insulated—in the case of MONGOOSE, McCone still needed to accomplish something, and having the experienced, imaginative, and tireless Harvey run the Agency's part increased the likelihood of that.[18] (U)

Lansdale presented his detailed operational plan in a lengthy memorandum to the SGA on 18 January 1962. MONGOOSE's objective of "bring[ing] about the revolt of the Cuban people" would be accomplished by 32 tasks, to be formulated or under way by the end of February. They included debriefings of refugees, agent infiltrations, cultivation of assets inside Cuba, encouragement of defections, sabotage operations, economic sanctions, and dissemination of propaganda. The Departments of State, Defense, Commerce, and Treasury, as well as CIA, USIA, the FBI, and the Immigration and Naturalization Service, would be involved.

[16] McCone memoranda about 22 November 1961 meeting with the president, the attorney general, and Lansdale, and about 29 November 1961 meeting with Robert Kennedy, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 684–87. (U)

[17] McCone, "Memorandum for the File...Discussion with Attorney General Robert Kennedy...27 December 1961," J.S. Earman (DCI executive assistant) memorandum about McCone meeting with Robert Kennedy on 11 January 1962, and Parrott, "Minutes of Special Group Meeting, 11 January 1962," *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 700–703

McCone, "Memorandum of Luncheon [redacted] January 16, 1962," McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1 (S)

[18] Halpern/Latell OH, 15–16, 18; Church Committee, *Alleged Assassination Plots*, 140. (U)

When completed, the tasks would create "a strongly motivated political action movement" within Cuba that could "capitalize on the climactic moment"—an incident that sparked an angry public reaction, or a fracturing of the leadership cadre—and initiate an open revolt against Castro's regime. The US government also would plan to support the revolt with military force if necessary. The Intelligence Community's most recent assessment that such an approach probably would not succeed—the above-mentioned special estimate of late November 1961—was flawed, according to Lansdale, because it "contain[ed] operational conclusions not based on hard fact." A month later, Lansdale—warning that "[t]ime is running against us" and that the Cuban people "are losing hope fast"—laid out a set of operational target dates in six phases ("Action," "Build-up," "Readiness," "Resistance," "Revolt," and "Final") that posited the establishment of a new government in Cuba during October 1962.[19] (U)

In part owing to McCone's efforts, the momentum for "action" slowed in early 1962. McCone told Robert Kennedy that he found Lansdale's premises and forecasts "extreme in some regards." He specifically cited the criticism of the Cuba special estimate and the claim that CIA had taken upon itself the responsibility for "creating the political climate and plausible excuse for armed intervention," which Lansdale thought was up to the Departments of State and Defense. McCone also questioned whether many of the tasks either could be completed on time or were feasible at all—for example, Lansdale's projection of 155 agents recruited and 85 of them trained by the end of May 1962, and another 100 recruited and 70 of them trained by the end of July. McCone approved the DDP's response to the 16 tasks it was assigned, with the caveat that "the imposition of arbitrary scheduling upon clandestine operations can be used only to prod the participants but not to predetermine results." He also warned the SGA that the Cuban regime might suppress an uprising as brutally as the Soviets had in Hungary in 1956. "In such an event, unless the U.S. is prepared to give overt [military] assistance, future opportunities to unseat the Castro government would be lost." McCone's points apparently registered. On 30 January, the SGA approved Lansdale's first plan, but after reviewing his later six-phase scenario, which presumed success at every stage, it directed him on 1 March to concentrate on intelligence collection during the initial March–May time frame. The SGA would then decide what to do next. Moreover, CIA was given until July to complete its espionage activities in Phase One. President Kennedy approved the revised operational guidelines on 14 March.[20] (U)

While Helms and Harvey were scripting CIA's part, BNE produced, over McCone's signature, an updated estimate on Cuba that did not encourage Lansdale and MONGOOSE's advocates and reinforced the DCI's skepticism about the whole covert undertaking. Popular discontent was growing, according to the estimate, but Castro's security forces—improved in part through Soviet Bloc assistance—could contain any widespread resistance. At the same time, Havana was turning more toward Moscow because of its US-engineered expulsion from the OAS in January and the embargo that Washington imposed against it in February. Harvey asked BNE to review its conclusions; it did and saw no reason to change them. Meanwhile, McCone posed some probing operational questions to Helms and Harvey that bespoke his strong reservations about how effectively the Agency could conduct its MONGOOSE activities. Hearing nothing that might make him think the project had some chance of succeeding, he came out vigorously for "more aggressive action[,] including military intervention" at an SGA meeting on 5 April. "Our national policy was too cautious," he contended, especially because aerial photography indicated that Castro's armed forces were not nearly as large and effective as previously reported. When asked whether US military action would not upset regional allies, he replied that "maybe a show of strength would assist us to win friends rather than lose them."[21] (U)

McCone did not again press the SGA to endorse military intervention in the short term, perhaps because BNE soon

[19] Lansdale memorandum, "The Cuba Project," 18 January 1962, Helms memorandum to McCone, "Meeting with the Attorney General...Concerning Cuba," 19 January 1962, and Lansdale, "The Cuba Project," 20 February 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 710–20, 745–47; *FRUS, 1961–1963, X/XI/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 279; SNIE 85-61, "The Situation and Prospects in Cuba," 28 November 1961. Lansdale added a 33rd task—incapacitating Cuban sugar workers during the harvest—on 19 January, but it was canceled after it was shown to be unworkable. Church Committee, *Alleged Assassination Plots*, 143. Lansdale had presented a preliminary operations plan to the SGA in early December 1961. The program he proposed the following month was a refined and much expanded version of the earlier one. See *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 691–95. (U)

[20] McCone, "Memorandum for the File of Discussion with Attorney General...January 20, 1962...," Lansdale, "The Cuba Project," 18 January 1962, CIA memorandum to the Special Group, "The Cuba Project," 24 January 1962, Parrott memorandum, "Minutes of Special Group Meeting, 25 January 1962," Lansdale memorandum, "The Cuba Project," 2 March 1962, Maxwell Taylor untitled memorandum of guidelines for Operation MONGOOSE, 14 March 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 718, 722–29, 765, 771–72; Lansdale memorandum to the SGA, "Institutional Planning, Operation Mongoose," 13 March 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X/XI/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 280. (U)

judged that a prolonged American occupation probably would be necessary to pacify Cuba. However, Harvey's modest appraisal of the likely accomplishments during Phase One of MONGOOSE would not have dissuaded him from believing that the Agency was headed for trouble, and that the administration consequently should use military force sooner rather than later. On 10 April, Harvey advised him that

> The current plan does not constitute and does not permit a maximum intelligence and covert action program against Cuba. The plan is not likely to result in the overthrow of the Castro regime unless followed by extensive additional preparation and action based on a firm decision to use U.S. military force at the appropriate point to destroy the regime.... If a maximum [covert] effort is to be mounted, the decision to use military force must be made *now* and the planning must go forward in phase to permit a concentrated and planned uprising with the immediate support of military forces to prevent its destruction.

On the managerial level, Harvey warned the DCI that unless "the tight controls exercised by the Special Group and the present time-consuming coordination and briefing procedures" were "made less restrictive and less stultifying," his unit would lack the "flexibility and professionalism" needed for "a maximum operational effort against Cuba."[22] (U)

The president still had not decided to use military force to overthrow Castro, so planning and training for an invasion—including well-publicized mock amphibious assaults and exercises in Puerto Rico and the southeastern United States—continued during this time. Meanwhile, Phase One of Lansdale's plan moved ahead. As McGeorge Bundy later wrote, MONGOOSE "was not a prelude to stronger action but a substitute for it." If that was the policy, then McCone, never one for half-measures, wanted the covert action done on a scale and at a speed that would achieve significant results. Lansdale's management of the project, and the limits the SGA put on it, frustrated him. "I was very disagreeable," he wrote after hearing that little had been accomplished during much of April, and urged "more action...a more dynamic effort."[23] (U)

During this time, CIA analysts continued producing assessments that could be interpreted as undercutting the administration's policy. First, they questioned the efficacy of a key weapon against Cuba—economic sanctions. "Economic dislocations and deprivations are unlikely to affect the attitudes of pro- and anti-Castro groups...we do not foresee an economic situation in Cuba during the next two or three years which will be the critical factor in the ability of the Castro/Communist regime to maintain control of the country." In addition, Agency analysts concluded that the Castro regime was far along toward becoming a Soviet-style state and was in no danger of being toppled, largely because active resistance was small and scattered. McCone did not question those judgments or try to steer his estimators toward different conclusions.[24] (U)

By late spring 1962, the MONGOOSE principals had settled into a routine of meetings and memoranda writing. McCone, presumably satisfied with Phase One's concentration on developing espionage capabilities, was not as directly engaged as before. He did not hold out any hope that MONGOOSE would soon achieve its purpose, but he did believe that it might induce resentment and disarray in the political leadership or defections in the military. He thought low-level covert actions of the MONGOOSE sort were the most aggressive course the administration could follow at that time. "[D]ynamic action such as mass landings [akin to the Bay of Pigs operation] and a more positive military approach...would face disaster unless U.S. military forces en masse were committed in support of such movement." He did not disagree with Robert Kennedy's observations in mid-July that, so far, MONGOOSE mainly had been useful

---

[21] NIE 85-62, "The Situation and Prospects in Cuba," 21 March 1962, Sherman Kent (Chairman, BNE) memorandum to McCone, "The Internal Situation in Cuba," 6 April 1962, McCone, "Memorandum on Special Group-MONGOOSE Project," 5 April 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 772–76, 779–82; McCone, "Notes for Discussion with Helms and Harvey concerning MONGOOSE," 16 March 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X/XI/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 282. (U)

[22] Kent memorandum to McCone, "Probable Reactions to a US Military Intervention in Cuba," and Harvey memorandum to McCone, "Operation Mongoose—Appraisal of Effectiveness and Results which can be Expected...," both dated 10 April 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 783–85, 788–89. (U)

[23] Hershberg, 181; McGeorge Bundy, *Danger and Survival*, 416; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Cuba," 26 April 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 798. (U)

[24] DI, OCI Memorandum No. 1265/62, "The Economic Situation in Cuba," 25 April 1962, and idem, unnumbered memorandum, "Cuban Situation," 3 July 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 798–800, 835–42. (U)

for intelligence collection and that the situation in Cuba would have to worsen before the United States would take "drastic action."[25] (S)

[redacted]

Phase Two of MONGOOSE—"Exert all possible diplomatic, economic, psychological, and other pressures to overthrow the Castro-Communist regime without overt employment of [the] U.S. military"—got underway after the SGA approved Lansdale's operational proposal on 16 August. (Phase Two was also known as "Alternate Course B" because Lansdale listed it as the second of four options for the SGA's consideration; the options ranged from cancelling the project to sending in US troops.) During Phase Two, CIA would covertly support exile groups; recruit, train, and supply resistance cells; sabotage economic targets; disseminate propaganda; and collect intelligence.

[redacted]

The SGA reached its decision despite McCone's doubts—reinforced by BNE and Harvey—about MONGOOSE's prospects for success without the use of military force. McCone, leery of backlash against the Agency, persuaded the SGA to accept a less robust "CIA variant" to Lansdale's first version of Phase Two. He argued that

> a stepped-up B will risk inviting an uprising, which might result in a Hungary-type bloodbath if unsupported. Not only would the U.S. be blamed, but there would also be a high noise level in the press and eventually a situation would be created which would require [military] intervention.... The CIA variant now proposed would...avoid all these dangers because it would not invite an uprising.[27] (S)

Lansdale's synthesis of his original proposal in July and the Agency's modifications gained the SGA's endorsement on 16 August. McCone liked neither the plan nor the decisionmaking process that led to its approval. "The meeting [at which the SGA accepted Lansdale's outline] was unsatisfactory, lacked both purpose and direction and left me with a feeling that very considerable reservation exists as to just where we are going with Operation Mongoose." He did not further oppose the SGA's decision, however, perhaps figuring that because the administration would take "action" in any event, Phase Two was the least unappealing of the probable alternatives. President Kennedy approved the plan on 20 August. The stated objective was "the further containment, undermining and discrediting of the target regime while isolating it from other Hemisphere nations." The

[25] McCone, memoranda about MONGOOSE operations, 7 May and 20 July 1962, McCone Papers, box 6, folders 1 and 2; McCone, "Memorandum of Discussion...July 18, 1962, with Mr. Robert Kennedy," *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 850. (S)

[26] McCone, "Memorandum for the Record—The MONGOOSE Operation," 20 July 1962, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 2; Harvey memorandum to Lansdale, "Operation Mongoose—End of Phase I," 24 July 1962, and Lansdale memorandum to SGA, "Review of Operation Mongoose," 25 July 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 872–84; Judith Edgette, "Domestic Collection on Cuba," *Studies* 7, no. 4 (Fall 1963): 41–45; Giglio, 190–91. HUMINT collection against Cuba before this phase of MONGOOSE was haphazard. See George McManus (Helms's deputy for Cuban affairs) memorandum to Helms, "Cuba—Foreign Intelligence Collection," 4 January 1962, ER Files, Job 80R01284A, box 17, folder 4. (S)

[27] Lansdale memoranda to the SGA, "Review of Operation Mongoose," 25 July 1962, and "Alternate Course B," 14 August 1962, McCone, "Memorandum on Meeting of the Special Group, Augmented, to Discuss Mongoose—16 August 1962," Taylor untitled memorandum to the president, 17 August 1962, and NIE 85-2-62, "The Situation and Prospects in Cuba," 1 August 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 884, 893–94, 928–36, 940–41, 944–45; Harvey memorandum to McCone, "Operation MONGOOSE—Future Course of Action," 8 August 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XIXIIXII: Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 289; McCone untitled draft memorandum about MONGOOSE, 10 August 1962, HS Files, Job 84-00499R, box 1, folder 1; Parrott, "Minutes of Meeting of Special Group (Augmented) on Operation MONGOOSE, 10 August 1962," ER Files, Job 79M01476A, box 14, folder 316. At the same time, McCone argued against Rusk's on-again-off-again idea of using Brazil as an intermediary in a diplomatic approach to Castro that would exploit supposed differences between the Cuban leader and communist hardliners in his regime. McCone insisted that the "previously cited frictions between Castro and the old-line Communists have been resolved in Castro's favor, and no issue currently exists." Parrot, "Minutes of Meeting of Special Group (Augmented) on Operation MONGOOSE, 10 August 1962." See also James Hershberg, "The United States, Brazil, and the Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962 (Part I)," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 6, no. 2 (Spring 2004): 3–4, 12–14. (S)

intent of MONGOOSE no longer was to overthrow Castro but to "create added difficulties for the regime and...increase the visibility of its failures" through covert activities that would not commit the United States to intervene militarily in Cuba. Intelligence collection remained the priority, with greater emphasis to be given to developing assets in country and sowing disagreement inside the Cuban leadership. Finally, "[w]hile a revolt is not sought at this time, we must be prepared to exploit it should one unexpectedly occur."[28] (U)

McCone soon learned that the Soviets were providing more military materiel and personnel to Cuba than ever before. He decided that, before he left on his month-long honeymoon in France, he must try again to persuade the president and the NSC to take an even tougher line against Castro. "[W]ith the passage of time," the DCI wrote starkly in a proposed plan of action,

> it is possible there will evolve in Cuba a stronger rather than a weaker Castro-dominated communist state, fully oriented to Moscow, to serve...as a model for similar actions by disciplined groups throughout Latin America, and...as a bridgehead for Soviet subversive activities in Central and South America. Being dominated by Moscow, such a Cuba would also serve as a possible location for MRBMs, for COMINT and ELINT facilities targeted against United States activities...and finally as an ECM [electronic countermeasures] station which might adversely affect our space and missile work.

McCone then advised the administration to take "more aggressive action...than any heretofore considered." Along with a full diplomatic offensive through the United Nations and the OAS to "awaken and alarm" Latin American and the West to the dangers Castro posed, he suggested the "[c]reation of a provocative action against Guantánamo or some other vital United States interest, including possibly a neighboring friendly country...of sufficient proportions and sufficiently provocative to cause instantaneous retaliatory action on our part." That incident should be followed by "[t]he instantaneous commitment of sufficient armed forces to occupy the country, destroy the regime, free the people, and establish in Cuba a peaceful country which will be a member of the community of American states."[29] ~~(S)~~

The White House did not agree with McCone's more belligerent approach and, on 23 August, ordered that MONGOOSE "Plan B plus" move forward "with all possible speed." The Departments of State and Defense were directed to study the pros and cons of going beyond "Plan B plus"—for example, imposing a blockade or invading Cuba—should a new Berlin crisis break out. In addition, the United States' NATO allies were to be apprised of "this new evidence of Castro's subservience to the Soviets" and encouraged to limit trade with Cuba. The same day, McCone headed for the Riviera with his new wife.[30] (U)

"Covert" Operations Commence (U)

The "boom and bang" phase of MONGOOSE was finally due to get underway after the SGA (minus McCone) received Lansdale's next operational plan on 31 August and approved it two weeks later with slight changes. The plan included 56 "activities" designed to achieve six objectives: discrediting and isolating the Castro regime; harassing the Cuban economy; intensifying intelligence collection; splitting the Cuban leadership and aggravating its relations with the Soviet Bloc; assisting Cuban exile groups and regional neighbors to act against Castro; and positioning the United States to take advantage of an indigenous revolt. The plan tasked CIA with many responsibilities, including supporting diplomatic moves, trade sanctions, and military contingency planning; conducting propaganda and intelligence gathering operations; assisting exile groups; recruiting, training, and supplying resistance and collection cells in Cuba; and launching sabotage missions against Cuban economic targets on and off the island. The first target to be hit was the Matahambre copper mine, the largest facility of its kind in Cuba. Other proposed operations included "encouraging

---

[28] McCone, "Memorandum on Meeting of the Special Group, Augmented, to Discuss Mongoose—16 August 1962," and Taylor untitled memorandum to President Kennedy, 17 August 1962, with covering memorandum dated 20 August 1962 and undated attachment, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 940–41, 944–46. (U)

[29] McCone, "Memorandum for the File...Discussion in Secretary Rusk's Office...21 August 1962," and OCI Memorandum No. 3047/62, "Recent Soviet Military Aid to Cuba," 22 August 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 947–56; McCone, "Memorandum of Meeting with President Kennedy," 23 August 1962, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 2. McCone's proposed provocation resembled part of an operation the JCS was considering around then. Called NORTHWOODS, the project detailed several invasion pretext scenarios, including sinking a US ship at Guantánamo in a staged "Remember the *Maine*" incident, and "false flag" terrorist attacks in American cities (to be blamed on Cuba). It is not known if McCone knew about the program. "Operation NORTHWOODS," 12 March 1962, *Bay of Pigs: 40 Years After*, tab 7, doc. 9. ~~(S)~~

[30] NSAM No. 181, 23 August 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 947–58; McCone calendars, entry for 23 August 1962. (U)

destruction of crops by fire, chemicals, and weeds, [and] hampering of harvest by work slowdown, destruction of bags, cartons, and other shipping containers."[31]

Task Force W and the CIA base in Miami—codenamed JMWAVE—grew rapidly in size and scope during this phase of MONGOOSE.

The chief of JMWAVE since early 1962 was Theodore Shackley, a fast-rising DDP officer nicknamed "the Ghost" or "the Blond Ghost,"

MONGOOSE accomplished little over the next several weeks while McCone was away, however. Throughout the project's existence, the administration feared that US-sponsored covert operations, in combination with unauthorized activities of freelance exiles, might implicate the United States and trigger an uprising in Cuba that would force an American military incursion. The Department of State's representative on the SGA, U. Alexis Johnson, recalled that while President Kennedy strongly supported MONGOOSE, he often drew back when he had to approve specific operations with "fairly high 'noise' levels." In response to directions from "Higher Authority" (President Kennedy) to rein in the exiles, Acting DCI Marshall Carter in early September told the Agency's MONGOOSE managers that if they learned that refugee elements were "cooking up an [unsanctioned] operation which could provoke uprisings which would be fruitless and provocative" or result in "a total crackdown," CIA should "bring its influence to bear to prevent incidents" and avoid "bloody suppression [like that] which occurred in Hungary." This circumspection took much of the drive out of MONGOOSE. A CIA officer who attended an SGA meeting in mid-September reported that "no decisions were made, no new ideas were brought up, and nothing useful emerged" from the discussion.[33]

Two US-inspired operations were not carried out during September, one because of unforeseen circumstances and the other because of political qualms. In the first instance, an exile team of saboteurs sent to bomb parts of the Matahambre mine ran into a militia unit and withdrew after a brief firefight. (Harvey dryly reported that "the execution of the operation was effective with the exception of the performance of the team itself.") In the other instance, the SGA decided to interdict a cargo of contaminated sugar bound from Cuba for Eastern Europe. MONGOOSE operatives had tainted the sugar with a drug that would sicken anyone who ate it and, it was hoped, frighten Soviet Bloc countries

[31] Lansdale memoranda to the SGA, both titled "Phase II, Operation Mongoose," 31 August and 12 September 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 974–1000, 1057–58; Harvey memorandum to Lansdale, "Operation MONGOOSE—Proposed Sabotage Operation, Matahambre Mine," 29 August 1962, and Harvey memorandum to Marshall Carter, "Operation MONGOOSE—Sabotage Operation[,] Matahambre Copper Mine...," ER Files, Job 91S00741R, box 1, folder 5. This phase of MONGOOSE was jump-started on 24 August when members of an exile group that CIA was aiding slipped two boats into Havana Bay and fired on a hotel where visiting advisers from several communist countries were meeting—possibly, it was thought, with Castro. Ten Russians and Cubans were killed. Two weeks later, the same group shelled one British and two Cuban merchant ships north of the island. Raymond L. Garthoff, "The Cuban 'Contras' Caper," *Washington Post*, 25 October 1987: C5. A freighter owned by McCone's shipping company was nearly sunk in another such attack. After the DCI vented his anger on some deputies, they reminded him that he had been told of the operation and that in the future he should advise his ships to sail clear of possible areas of hostile action. Albert D. Wheelon oral history interview by Santa Barbara, CA, 17 October 1998 (hereafter Wheelon/ OH), 60.

[32] "CIA Operations against Cuba prior to the Assassination of President Kennedy," passim; David Corn, *Blond Ghost*, 74–75; Warren Hinckle and William W. Turner, *The Fish Is Red*, 113–16; Branch and Crile, "Kennedy Vendetta," 51–52; "How the CIA Operated in Dade," *Miami Herald*, 9 March 1975, 1A; Helms, 202ff.;

[33] Johnson, *The Right Hand of Power*, 345; Carter memorandum to Helms, Harvey, and Cline, Action Memorandum No. A-39, 7 September 1962, and untitled memorandum, 11 September 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 5; Walter Elder, "Memorandum for the Record...MONGOOSE Meeting of 14 September 1962," *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 1067–68.

from buying any more of Cuba's chief export. On order from the White House, the US government purchased the cargo and dumped it.[34] ~~(S)~~

When McCone returned from his honeymoon during the last week of September, he immediately confronted several vexing Cuban developments. Some, such as the continuing construction of Soviet surface-to-air missile sites, the cutback in U-2 overflights of the island, and the policy implications of the special estimate on "The Military Buildup in Cuba" (issued over Carter's signature on 19 September) were related to what would soon become the missile crisis, which will be discussed in the next chapter. At the same time, McCone also addressed MONGOOSE's lack of accomplishments since the SGA approved "Plan B plus" nearly a month before. He found himself caught between criticisms from the White House—particularly the attorney general—that so little was being done operationally and complaints from project officers that the administration's anxiety about deniability was hampering the program. (U)

At first, the DCI—perhaps detecting the same policymaker ambivalence that had impaired the Bay of Pigs plan—sided with the operators. At a tense SGA meeting on 4 October, he asserted that "hesitancy in government circles" had caused "a lack of forward motion" in the plan. Robert Kennedy "took sharp exception" to that claim and retorted that the SGA had "urged and insisted upon action by the Lansdale operating organization." Instead, only "meager results" had occurred, and now "massive activity" was needed. After a "sharp exchange," the SGA members agreed that Phase Two of the MONGOOSE plan was outmoded, that sabotage operations would be increased, restrictions on attributability of operations would be relaxed, higher levels of "noise" would be accepted, and "new and more dynamic approaches" would be examined. Also, the attorney general said he would take over as chairman of the SGA.[35] ~~(S)~~

McCone soon began leaning on William Harvey, however, probably because he recognized that the White House was wedded to Lansdale and would back him in any dispute with CIA. The DCI may also have concluded that Task Force W's chief was personally and professionally unsuited for running CIA's part in MONGOOSE. Harvey had had a brilliant career as a counterintelligence expert and manager of clandestine COMINT projects (most notably the Berlin Tunnel) since coming to CIA from the FBI in 1947. He had little background in Latin American matters or covert action, however, and he lacked the tact essential for dealing with high administration officials. ~~(S)~~

William Harvey (U)

The frequent quarrels Harvey had with Lansdale, Robert Kennedy, and SGA chairman Maxwell Taylor were hindering the program. The free-wheeling Harvey had nothing but disdain for Lansdale's military mindset—Task Force W called him the "FM," for field marshal—and complained that the general's demands for meticulous detail were "excruciating." "It went down to such things as the gradients of the beach and the composition of the sand," according to one of Harvey's deputies. McCone, however, may have reached the same utilitarian conclusion as did George McManus, Helms's special assistant for Cuba: resistance to Lansdale was futile. "General Lansdale is a fact of life—let's live with him," McManus wrote. "In his position, he can be extremely helpful as a friend—as an unfriendly colleague[,] he can influence others to evaluate our performance in a less favorable or even unfavorable light." Moreover, "Lansdale, within the framework of the existing organizational structure, performs a function with which we might otherwise be saddled...Let's begin handling Lansdale from a political point of view...."[36] ~~(S)~~

Harvey, the gun-toting career operative, did not like the Kennedy brothers, either, regarding them as espionage fantasists and referring to them privately as "fags" and "those fuckers." McCone may have heard from his friend the attorney general about two exceptional altercations the latter had had with Harvey. During a visit to JMWAVE in early 1962,

[34] Harvey memorandum to Carter, "Operation MONGOOSE—Sabotage Operation[,] Matahambre Copper Mine...," ER Files, Job 91S00741R, box 1, folder 5; Johnson, *Right Hand of Power*, 345; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Special Group 5412 Meeting—23 May 1963," McCone Papers, box 1, folder 5; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 351–52; [redacted] vol. 2, 250–52. ~~(S)~~

[35] McCone, "Memorandum of MONGOOSE Meeting Held on Thursday, October 4, 1962," *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 11–13; Parrott, "Minutes of Meeting of the Special Group (Augmented) on Operation MONGOOSE, 4 October 1962," ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 17, folder 18. ~~(S)~~

[36] Thomas, *The Very Best Men*, 289–90; Corn, 82; McManus letter to Helms, 7 September 1962, ER Files, Job 80R01284A, box 17, folder 4. ~~(S)~~

A MONGOOSE operations team (U)

Kennedy started to head out the door with a classified Agency cable in his hand. Harvey yelled at him to stop, hurried over, and snatched the paper from his hand. On another occasion, after hearing that an infiltration team was not yet in Cuba because it had not finished training, the attorney general said he would take the operatives to Hickory Hill and train them himself. Harvey asked Kennedy what he was going to teach them—babysitting? Harvey also griped that the SGA's too-frequent requests for reports, briefings, and coordination meetings stifled clandestine activities inside Cuba. "Harvey complains that Taylor never approves anything," Helms told Thomas Parrott, a CIA officer serving as the Special Group's executive secretary. "He [Harvey] goes in week after week and they're all turned down. Can't you do something about this?" For their part, White House officials involved with MONGOOSE thought Harvey was disreputable and unreliable—especially after he returned from an alcohol-laced lunch and fell asleep at a meeting. "Your Mr. Harvey does not inspire great confidence," McGeorge Bundy confided to Parrott.[37] (U)

As an SGA member and Harvey's superior, McCone could have intervened on his officer's behalf, but when faced with the choice of responding to White House pressure for "action" and defending an unseemly subordinate, the DCI for a time chose the former. He seemed almost livid after reading a memorandum on sabotage attacks Harvey drafted a week after the White House demanded "massive activity" against Castro. On his copy of the paper, in a hurried, agitated script, McCone wrote: "This is the poorest plan of action I know...This is merely a 'bugle' operation. I wish one or two or better five or ten operations layed [sic] down at Tuesday's meeting...Totally and completely disagree with this paper and will not forward as CIA document." Beside specific paragraphs he penciled, "Words...Words...We asked for a plan, not a study...Why not submit[?]...When[?]...More checking, no action...No action here, merely consideration...," and, portentously, "Replace Harvey[.] Put Helms on job more actively." McCone's most notable display of disfavor toward Harvey occurred at a White House meeting during the missile crisis, when Task Force W was told to concentrate on intelligence collection and to stand down from sabotage operations. McCone sat silently while Robert Kennedy, intensely displeased with how little the Cuban operatives had done, launched into a tirade against Harvey that lasted several minutes. McCone may have calculated that it would be better for him and the Agency in the long term to let Harvey take the heat for operational failings while he maintained his own good relations with, and access to, the Kennedys.[38] (S)

October 16 proved to be a seminal day in US-Cuban relations. The SGA showed unusual venturesomeness in approving over a dozen sabotage operations against targets

[37] Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets*, 177, 179; Corn, 82; Thomas, *The Very Best Men*, 289–90. Other MONGOOSE principals in and out of the White House shared Harvey's sentiment toward Robert Kennedy. Thomas Parrott remembered that "Bob Kennedy was very difficult to deal with. He was arrogant. He knew it all, he knew the answer to everything. He sat there, tie down, chewing gum, his feet up on the desk. His threats were transparent. It was, 'If you don't do it, I'll tell my big brother on you.'" Thomas, *The Very Best Men*, 297, citing interview with Parrott. Maxwell Taylor, the head of the SGA until early October 1962, observed, "I don't think it occurred to Bobby in those days that his temperament, his casual remarks that the President would not like this or that, his difficulty in establishing tolerable relations with government officials, or his delight in causing offense was doing harm to his brother's administration." Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 69. (U)

[38] Harvey memorandum to Lansdale, "Operation MONGOOSE—Sabotage Actions," 11 October 1962, ER Files, Job 91S00741R, box 1, folder 3; D.J. Brennan memorandum to W.C. Sullivan (both FBI), "Central Intelligence Agency, Anti-Castro Activities, Internal Security—Cuba," 30 October 1962, Harvey FBI FOIA File, doc. no. 62-80750-4186. (S)

that included a railroad bridge, port facilities, Cuban-registry vessels, a power station, a nickel plant, two oil refineries, an oil tanker from the Soviet Bloc, and—remarkably, given all the previous worry about "noise"—[redacted] Bundy cautioned that the attacks should not be conducted too efficiently so that they could plausibly appear to have been staged by less competent exile organizations. Later in the day, Robert Kennedy met with MONGOOSE operations officers; Helms attended in place of Harvey. The attorney general passed on the president's "general dissatisfaction" that MONGOOSE "had failed to influence significantly the course of events in Cuba." In view of that lack of progress, he said he was going to give the project "more personal attention," including meeting every morning with the project managers. The reason for this new "push," Kennedy told Helms, was "the change in atmosphere in the United States government during the last twenty-four hours," caused by the discovery that the Soviet Union had deployed offensive nuclear missiles in Cuba. With that news, Operation MONGOOSE moved into an exponentially more sensitive phase.[39] ~~(S)~~

Plots to Kill Castro: What Did McCone Know? (U)

CIA was involved in at least eight plots to assassinate Fidel Castro between 1960 and 1965, and in early 1961 the Agency established an "executive action capability" (codenamed ZRRIFLE) that included the assassination of foreign leaders. Four plots were formulated and two were initiated while McCone was DCI. In the first, William Harvey worked with John Rosselli, a Mafia figure, who passed on Agency-supplied weapons, munitions, electronic equipment, and poison pills to Cubans who had agreed to try to kill Castro. The planning and preparation took place from April 1962 to January 1963, but the plan was not carried out.[40] The next two schemes were thought up in early 1963, when Task Force W looked into two unorthodox ideas for assassinating the Cuban leader: rigging a seashell with explosives and depositing it in an area he often went skin diving; and giving him a diving suit with a breathing apparatus contaminated with tuberculosis germs. The former was deemed impractical, and the latter did not go beyond laboratory development. In the fourth instance, Rolando Cubela Secades, a highly placed Cuban official codenamed AMLASH, in late 1963 asked CIA for an assassination weapon after DDP officer Desmond FitzGerald promised him the United States would support a "real coup" against Castro. Cubela had told his Agency contacts that killing Castro was a necessary part of the "inside job" he was planning. CIA, which had been in touch with Cubela sporadically, and usually indirectly, since early 1961, subsequently offered him a poison pen—ironically, on the day President Kennedy was shot—and delivered weapons to him, including a telescopic rifle and a silencer, during the period March 1964–February 1965. The Agency-supplied materiel was not used in attempts on Castro's life, and CIA terminated contact with Cubela for security reasons in June 1965.[41] (U)

The dispute over how much McCone knew about these plots and about the White House's general intention to use "executive action" against Castro remains unresolved.[42] The basic difference arises over whether McCone heard about, or was aware of, the predilection of some administration officials to have Castro killed, or whether he was witting of specific operations. In congressional testimony in 1975,

---

[39] Carter memorandum to the SGA, "Operation MONGOOSE/Sabotage Proposals," 16 October 1962, ER Files, Job 80R01284A, box 17, folder 11; Parrott, "Minutes of Meeting of the Special Group (Augmented) on Operation MONGOOSE, 16 October 1962," ibid., Job 80B01676R, box 17, folder 18; Helms, "Memorandum for the Record...MONGOOSE Meeting with the Attorney General," 16 October 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 45–47. ~~(S)~~

[40] Harvey's simultaneous dealings with Rosselli and MONGOOSE, and Lansdale's mention of "liquidation of leaders" in a MONGOOSE memorandum (see below) have led to confusion that the CIA assassination plots were part of the anti-Castro covert action plan. They were not, though in the minds of certain US officials involved in both—for example, Robert Kennedy, Helms, Harvey, and his successor, Desmond FitzGerald—the permanent removal of Castro from the scene certainly would have improved the prospects of the regime change operation. In a historical parallel, some Agency officers witting of the earliest plots to kill Castro, such as Richard Bissell, were so strongly committed to the Bay of Pigs operation because they anticipated that Castro would have been, or would soon be, killed by the time *La Brigada* landed in Cuba. (U)

[41] Church Committee, *Alleged Assassination Plots*, 71, 83–90, 181–89; CIA Inspector General, "Report on Plots to Assassinate Fidel Castro," 23 May 1967, 37–54, 75–106, retrievable in Chief Information Officer/Information Management Staff, Management of Released Information (MORI) database, doc. no. 277331; Howard Osborn (Director of Security) memorandum to Helms (DDCI), "Maheu, Robert A.," 24 June 1966, ER Files, Job 79M01476A, box 14, folder 316; Church Committee, *The Investigation of the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy: Performance of the Intelligence Agencies* (hereafter *Church Committee JFK Assassination Report*), 13–14, 17–20, 77–79; Scott D. Breckenridge (Inspector General) et al., "Comments on Book V, SSC Final Report, *The Investigation of the Assassination of President Kennedy: Performance of the Intelligence Agencies*," August 1976, Tab D passim, CIA JFK Assassination Records, box JFK36, folder 11. Cubela had demonstrated his revolutionary bona fides by assassinating Fulgencio Batista's intelligence chief in 1956 and seizing the presidential palace before the triumphant Castro entered Havana in 1959. He claimed to have become disaffected over the totalitarian turn in Castro's leadership. In addition to Agency-instigated plots, Cuban exiles with whom CIA had contact proposed or plotted at least three assassination attempts against Castro of which the Agency was aware. None of these proposals or plots occurred during McCone's directorship. *Church Committee JFK Assassination Report*, 26–33; George Crile III, "The Riddle of AMLASH," *Washington Post*, 2 May 1976, Kennedy Assassination clipping file, HIC. (U)

McCone denied under oath that CIA officials told him about assassination efforts made before he became director, or that he discussed them with President Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, or any other senior administration official. No one but Richard Helms has claimed that he personally informed the DCI about plots underway after McCone's confirmation. No documents prove any particular argument, and statements and recollections of officials involved in the plotting lead to different conclusions. Some Agency officers have said they did not apprise McCone of certain projects because the plans were inactive or not ready to be implemented. For example, Richard Bissell, McCone's first DDP, told the Rockefeller Commission in 1975 that he did not inform the new DCI about ZRRIFLE's assassination aspect because it was "in abeyance" at the time McCone took over, and that he did not mention the plots against Castro because "really nothing was happening worth bringing to his attention." Sheffield Edwards, the chief of security who had dealt with the Mafia in plotting during 1960–61, said similarly that "I did not want to drag Mr. McCone into this thing that in my opinion had petered out." William Harvey told the Church Committee that he did not brief McCone on plots to kill Castro because he assumed the DCI knew about them already. He and Helms decided later that they would tell McCone if a given assassination operation moved farther along. For the time being, Helms later explained, they did not inform him of the Mafia activities. "Mr. McCone was relatively new to the organization, and this was...not a very savory effort."[43] (U)

Several former administration and Agency officials—including some who were not witting of the plots at the time—have said McCone would not have approved of them because he thought they were morally reprehensible and violated his Catholic beliefs. For example, Harvey testified to the Church Committee that McCone said, "if I got myself involved in something like this, I might end up getting myself excommunicated." Soon after leaving Langley, McCone wrote that "[t]hrough the years the Cuban problem was discussed in terms such as 'dispose of Castro,' 'remove Castro,' 'knock off Castro,' etc."—meaning, he claimed, "the overthrow of the Communist Government in Cuba." He used similar words when testifying before the Church Committee. Helms took issue with that interpretation, suggesting to the committee that McCone could hardly have failed to understand what those euphemisms meant. During the MONGOOSE period, Helms said, "it was made abundantly clear...to everybody involved in the operation that the desire was to get rid of the Castro regime and to get rid of Castro.... [N]o limitations were put on this injunction.... No member of the Kennedy administration...ever said that [assassination] was ruled out...." (U)

Drawing conclusions about McCone's cognizance of the plots to kill Castro is complicated by questions about the quality and reliability of the evidence. Some exculpatory statements come from Agency officers who may have tried to establish "plausible denial" for McCone; who might not have been in positions to know whether he had been told or not; or who concluded that, based on their evaluation of his character, he did not act like he knew about the plots and so must not have known about them. For example, according to Helms, McCone could tell the Church Committee that he did not know about the operations because his former assistant and the Agency's referent to the committee, Walter Elder, might have told him about gaps that existed in the material CIA had provided to the Senate investigation. Because no available documents demonstrated that he was aware of the plots, he could safely deny knowing of them. Samuel Halpern, one of Harvey's assistants on Task Force W, has said that McCone never heard about the AMLASH plot, but Halpern might have been too far down in the chain of command to know if the DCI had learned of it or other assassination schemes from senior administration officials—such as Robert Kennedy. George McManus, Helms's deputy for Cuban operations, opined to the Church Committee that if McCone had been asked to approve an assassination, he "would have reacted violently, immediately"—but McManus said he was not aware of that happening and concluded that McCone did not know of the plots.[44] (S)

[42] Sources for this paragraph and the next are: *Spymasters*, 72; Church Committee, *Alleged Assassination Plots*, 101–3, 105, 149; McCone untitled memorandum to Helms, 14 April 1967, ER Files, Job 91S00741R, box 1, folder 5; transcript of McCone's testimony to the Church Committee, 6 June 1975, 3, 5-7, 44, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Activities (SSCIA) Records, record no. 157-10011-10052, JFK Assassination Records Collection, NARA. (The body of records hereafter will be cited as NARA/JFK Assassination Records. McCone's testimony will be cited as McCone Church Committee testimony). (U)

[43] FBI official Sam Papich—the Bureau's liaison with CIA—told the Church Committee that after Edwards and Harvey told him about the Mafia plots, he never discussed them with McCone. Andrew Postal memorandum to Charles Kirbow (both Church Committee staffers), "Interview with Sam Pappich [sic]," 25 August 1975, SSCIA record no. 157-10005-10069, box 265, folder 14, NARA/JFK Assassination Records. (U)

[44] Helms/McAuliffe OH, 4–5; Elder untitled memorandum, 5 May 1975, with attachment, "A Briefing Paper," ER Files, Job 79M01476A, box 14, folder 316; Halpern/McAuliffe OH, 13, 19–20; Church Committee, *Alleged Assassination Plots*, 101. (S)

Other, less provable, factors also need to be considered in evaluating the extent of McCone's knowledge. For example, his friend Robert Kennedy might have told him about such highly sensitive activities going on in his own organization—especially because he had been appointed DCI in large part to prevent operational lapses and failures that would embarrass the White House and needed that foreknowledge to head off "flaps." Also, McCone's intellectual curiosity and insistence that Agency deputies inform him of potential controversies—so evident in other aspects of his directorship—make it likely that he would have tried to find out, or demanded to be told, about CIA involvement in something as grave as killing a foreign leader once he realized that policymakers had raised it as an option, however extreme. (U)

Most empirical evidence indicates that McCone did not hear about the Mafia plots from the outgoing DCI and DDCI; that at least as early as August 1962, he knew about the inclination of some administration officials to have Castro killed; but that he did not know of any individual operations to accomplish that objective until August 1963 at the earliest. He told the Rockefeller Commission that he had not been briefed on ZRRIFLE, and he testified to the Church Committee that "[d]uring those days it was almost common for one person or another to say, 'we ought to dispose of Castro'...[b]ut at no time did anyone come to me, or come to other authorities to my knowledge, with a plan for the actual undertaking of an assassination." His testimony is corroborated by the recollections of other Agency principals, which the Church Committee report summarized in this way:

> McCone testified that he did not know about or authorize the plots. Helms, Bissell and Harvey all testified that they did not know whether McCone knew of the assassination plots. Each said, however, that he did not tell McCone of the assassination efforts either when McCone assumed the position of DCI in November 1961 or at any time thereafter until August 1963, when Helms gave McCone a memorandum from which McCone concluded that the operation with underworld figures prior to the Bay of Pigs had involved assassination. The [CIA] inspector general's report [of 1967] states that Harvey received Helms's approval not to brief McCone when the assassination efforts were resumed in 1962. Harvey testified [that] this accorded with his recollection. On other occasions when it would have been appropriate to do so, Helms and Harvey did not tell McCone about assassination activity. Helms did not recall any agreement not to brief McCone, but he did not question the position taken by Harvey or the inspector general's report. Helms did say that McCone never told him not to assassinate Castro.[45] ~~(S)~~

McCone directly heard that at least one senior administration policymaker interpreted the words "knock off" and "dispose of" literally. The DCI and over a dozen other officials were present at an SGA meeting on 10 August 1962 when the subject of killing Castro was raised—by Secretary McNamara, according to Harvey and Elder. (McCone later said he did not remember who mentioned it, and McNamara did not recall bringing it up.) Either then or within a few days, McCone objected to the idea. "I took immediate exception to this suggestion," he claimed a few years later, "as the [US government] could not consider such actions on moral or ethical grounds." However, Harvey, who was present at the SGA meeting, disputed that the DCI said any such thing then. Elder testified that McCone telephoned McNamara after the meeting and told him that "the subject you just brought up...is highly improper. I do not think it should be discussed. It is not an action that should ever be condoned...and I intend to have it expunged from the record." After receiving a memorandum dated 13 August 1962 from Lansdale that referred to "liquidation of leaders" as part of a MONGOOSE operational plan, McCone said he insisted to McNamara that the document be withdrawn. Later that day, according to Elder, McCone told Harvey that he disapproved of assassination, and Elder conveyed the same message to Helms personally. (Helms testified that he did not recall meeting Elder on this matter.)[46] (U)

---

[45] Elder untitled memorandum about McCone meeting with Rockefeller Commission staff, 17 April 1975, OIG Files, Job 80B00910A, box 25, folder 11; Church Committee, *Alleged Assassination Plots*, 92, 94–95, 99–108, 161–66; Donald F. Chamberlain (OIG) memorandum to E.H. Knoche (Director, Office of Strategic Research), "Questions Raised by Mr. John McCone with Director Colby...," 25 April 1975, and Elder untitled memorandum, 5 May 1975, with attachment, "A Briefing Paper," ER Files, Job 79M01476A, box 14, folder 316; Elder memorandum to Chamberlain, "Background on memorandum by John A. McCone dated 14 April 1967," and McCone untitled memorandum to Helms, 14 April 1967, ibid., Job 91S00741R, box 1, folder 5; Halpern/McAuliffe OH, 13, 19–20. McCone explained his understanding of "executive action" to the senators: "an Executive Action Plan in the jargon of the intelligence world means a plan for the removal by any means of an undesirable head of state or senior person in a country. It doesn't necessarily mean assassination. It might mean setting them up on the Riviera with a blonde and a Swiss bank account, but getting rid of them [nonetheless]." McCone Church Committee testimony, 41. ~~(S)~~

The first documented instance of McCone's knowledge of a specific assassination operation—the Rosselli plot of August 1960–May 1961—was in mid-August 1963. After hearing of press reports that linked CIA to Mafioso Sam Giancana, McCone asked Helms for an explanation. The DDP gave him a copy of a lengthy memorandum dated 14 May 1962 from Sheffield Edwards to the attorney general, outlining the Agency's connection with the underworld figure. The document referred only to "the operation," but Helms wrote to McCone that he assumed the DCI knew what that meant. McCone was relieved to learn that "the operation" had not occurred on his watch and returned the memorandum to Helms without special comment. That this was McCone's first inkling of the gangster plot—as he claimed to the Church Committee—is borne out by Edwards's statement in another memorandum (same date) that "any future projects of this nature should have the tacit approval of the Director of Central Intelligence"—implying that as of the time the memorandum was sent, McCone did not know about the CIA-Cuba-Mafia link. Lawrence Houston, who helped draft the document, told the CIA inspector general in 1967 that normally he would have briefed the DCI at the time, in view of the attorney general's interest, but did not recall doing so. McCone's calendars for May 1962 show that he met with Houston alone and with Helms and Harvey on the 15th, and with Houston and Helms on the 17th, but no accounts of those meetings exist. The inspector general's 1967 investigation likewise found no evidence that McCone knew about the Mafia plots before August 1963. Like the attorney general, McCone had inferred from the first of Edwards's memoranda mentioned above that the gangster operation had ended. However, he did not know then—and no available information shows that he was informed later—that Harvey had reactivated the plan a month earlier.[47] (S)

McCone knew about later reports from Cuban exiles that the Mafia was planning to assassinate Castro. He received a memorandum from Helms in June 1964 on the subject, which was discussed at a meeting of the 303 Committee (the Special Group's successor, which was named for the number of the NSAM establishing it) that month. He discounted the reports, attributing them to "Miami cocktail party chatter." Other 303 Committee members took them more seriously and stated that the administration should find out all it could about the plans and prevent them from being carried out. Helms's memorandum to McCone said that CIA officers in touch with the exiles had told them that "the United States government would not, under any circumstances, condone the planned actions." McCone clearly did not think CIA was involved and apparently took no further notice of the reports.[48] (S)

McCone's possible knowledge of an anti-Castro assassination plot is suggested in a memorandum by Lansdale about an SGA meeting on 16 March 1962, attended by President Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, Bundy, Gilpatric, Lemnitzer, U. Alexis Johnson, and the DCI.[49] Amid a discussion of MONGOOSE operations, the attorney general "mentioned Mary Hemingway [the fourth wife of author Ernest Hemingway], commenting on reports that Castro was drinking heavily in disgruntlement over the way things were going, and the opportunities offered by the 'shrine' to Hemingway." Lansdale said he knew of that and similar reports, "and that this was worth assessing firmly and pursuing vigorously. If there are grounds for action, CIA had

[46] Church Committee, *Alleged Assassination Plots*, 161–67; Harvey's handwritten annotations to his copy of ibid., reproduced in Gus Russo, *Live By the Sword*, 5 of photograph section; McCone untitled memorandum to Helms, 14 April 1967, ER Files, Job 91S00741R, box 1, folder 5; Lansdale memorandum to Harvey et al., "Alternate Course B," 13 August 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 924–25; McCone Church Committee testimony, 29–34, 37–39. The minutes of the 10 August 1962 meeting do not mention assassination, but the SGA's executive secretary who prepared them, Thomas Parrott, has said that he did not record proposals that were quickly rejected. Church Committee, *Alleged Assassination Plots*, 162–63; Parrott/Warner OH, 14–15. After the meeting, Lansdale inexplicably wrote in a memorandum sent to some of the attendees that "liquidation of leaders" had been discussed. Harvey immediately pointed out to one of Lansdale's deputies the "inadmissibility and stupidity" of using such words, and he had all copies of the paper retrieved. Harvey memorandum to Helms, "Operation MONGOOSE," 14 August 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI/XII/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 290. (U)

[47] Sandy Smith, "CIA Sought Giancana Help for Cuba Spying," *Chicago Sun-Times*, 16 August 1963: 1–2, Kennedy Assassination clipping file, HIC; Helms memorandum to McCone, "Sam Giancana," 16 August 1963, ER Files, Job 79M01476A, box 14, folder 316; Church Committee, *Alleged Assassination Plots*, 107–8, 132–33, 333; McCone Church Committee testimony, 7–8, 13–14; Edwards, "Memorandum for the Record...Arthur James Balletti et al.—Unauthorized Publication or Use of Communications," 14 May 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 807–9; Edwards, "Memorandum for the Record...John Rosselli," 14 May 1962, CIA JFK Assassination Records, box JFK1, folder 10; "Report on Plots to Assassinate Castro," 67–70; McCone calendars, entries for 15 and 17 May 1962. The most recent examination of the Agency's dealings with organized crime in plots to kill Castro does not address McCone's knowledge of them; see J. Alan Wolske, "Jack, Judy, Sam, Bobby, Johnny, Frank...: An Investigation into the Alternate History of the CIA-Mafia Collaboration to Assassinate Fidel Castro, 1960–1997," *I&NS* 15, no. 4 (Winter 2000): 104–30. (S)

[48] Peter Jessup (NSC), "Minutes of the Meeting of the 303 Committee, 15 June 1964," McCone Papers, box 1, folder 7; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...303 Committee Meeting—18 June 1964," ibid., folder 8; Elder untitled memorandum, 5 May 1975, with attachment, "A Briefing Paper," ER Files, Job 79M01476A, box 14, folder 316. (S)

[49] Sources for this paragraph and the next are Lansdale memorandum in *Bay of Pigs: 40 Years After*, tab 7, doc. 7, and David Corn and Gus Russo, "The Old Man and the CIA: A Kennedy Plot to Kill Castro?," *Nation* 272, no. 12 (26 March 2001): 15ff. (U)

some invaluable assets which might well be committed for such an effort." McCone asked Lansdale if CIA's "operational people were aware of this. I told him that we had discussed this, that they agreed the subject was worth vigorous development, and that we were in agreement that the matter was so delicate and sensitive that it shouldn't be surfaced to the Special Group until we were ready to go...." (U)

Members of *La Brigada* in training (U)

What Robert Kennedy meant by "the opportunities offered by the 'shrine' to Hemingway"—and what McCone made of that comment—are not known for sure, and there are no further references to the matter in McCone's papers or other available documents about Cuban operations. The attorney general may have been referring to the possibility of luring Castro into an ambush at Hemingway's farm outside Havana. The Cuban leader had told Mary Hemingway that he was fond of her husband's work, and he visited the farm—with minimal security protection—in July 1961 while she was there soon after Hemingway's suicide. The "shrine" was a three-story tower, built for the writer as a study, that especially impressed Castro. Edward R. Murrow, who as head of USIA was involved in some Special Group activities, spoke to her about Castro's visit; according to a Murrow letter, he "passed her remarks on to one or two interested parties down here"—presumably NSC or SGA members. When shown Lansdale's memorandum, Theodore Shackley said, "[i]t certainly has the earmarks of an assassination plot," and [redacted] remarked that the document was "as close as we're likely to get" to proof of White House knowledge of efforts to kill Castro. (U)

Lastly, no available information indicates that McCone ever knew about the plot by Rolando Cubela Secades (AMLASH) to kill Castro. The DCI testified to the Church Committee that he had not heard about that operation in 1963, and he told the House Select Committee on Assassinations in 1979 that he first learned about it in 1975. On the weekend after President Kennedy was killed in November 1963, Desmond FitzGerald told Walter Elder that he and an agent had been meeting with Cubela but did not mention offering the Cuban official a poison pen or promising him a specially equipped rifle. Elder may have told McCone about the contacts with Cubela, but as he did not know about the assassination scheme himself, he could not have told the DCI about it.[50] (U)

Freeing *La Brigada*: Phase One (U)

Concurrent with its assorted endeavors to oust or kill Castro, the Kennedy administration negotiated with *el jefe maximo* to win the release of more than 1,200 members of the Bay of Pigs brigade captured in April 1961.[51] Robert Kennedy said in 1964 that "we wanted to do whatever was necessary, whatever we could, to get them out. I felt strongly about it. The President felt strongly about it."[52] The political limits on the White House's humanitarian instincts soon

[50] McCone Church Committee testimony, 58–59; McCone deposition to House Select Committee on Assassinations, 17 August 1978, Los Angeles, CA, 12, HS Files, Job 03-01724R, box 4, folder 11; Scott D. Breckinridge (Deputy IG) letter to William G. Miller (Staff Director, Church Committee) with attachment, "AMLASH Operation," 10 July 1976, CIA JFK Assassination Records, box JFK36, folder 9; Thomas, *The Very Best Men*, 307; Church Committee, *Investigation of the Assassination of President Kennedy*, 69–78. (U)

[51] Sources for this paragraph and the next are: Thomas G. Smith, "Negotiating with Fidel Castro: The Bay of Pigs Prisoners and a Lost Opportunity," *DH* 19, no. 1 (Winter 1995): 59–86; Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy*, 468–69; Haynes Johnson, *The Bay of Pigs*, 229–46, 279, 282–93, 303–6; Néstor T. Carbonell, *And the Russians Stayed*, 185–89; [James B. Donovan,] "Chronology—The Bay of Pigs," undated but c. September 1962, *Bay of Pigs: 40 Years After*, tab 8, doc. 5; McCone, "Discussion with Robert Anderson, 23 July 1962," and transcript of telephone conversation between McCone and James B. Donovan, 26 July 1962, McCone Papers, box 4, folder 9; Victor Andres Triay, *Bay of Pigs: An Oral History of Brigade 2506*, 133–35; "Cuba Invaders Given 30 Years; Castro Sets $62 Million Ransom," *New York Times*, 9 April 1962, 1, and "Cuban Trial Holds 1179 for Ransom," *Washington Post*, 9 April 1962, A1, Bay of Pigs clipping file, HIC; "Cuba Prisoner Deal Rumored," Washington *Evening Star*, 20 August 1962, A-1, Western Hemisphere—Cuba clipping file, box 1, HIC. (U)

became clear, however. Castro's initial proposal to swap the prisoners for 500 tractors or an equal value in dollars foundered in a storm of opposition from American politicians, citizens, and newspapers, who regarded the trade as a surrender to blackmail. An ostensibly private committee formed to negotiate an agreement—its members were educator Milton Eisenhower, former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, and labor leader Walter Reuther—disbanded in frustration. (U)

In early 1962, as the prisoners' trial approached, the administration quietly began investigating other ways to free them. That task was made harder because Congress had enjoined the executive branch from supporting any prisoner exchange financially, and the president had publicly abhorred the idea that "men were put on the block." After the prisoners were sentenced to 30 years of hard labor, Castro proposed releasing them for a ransom of $62 million. The Cuban Families Committee for Liberation of Prisoners of War, the organization representing the prisoners' interests in the United States, countered with an offer of $26 million in agricultural products. Castro stuck to the higher figure but released 60 sick and wounded prisoners for a promised payment of almost $3 million.[53] Robert Kennedy then recommended to the committee that it form a fundraising group with James B. Donovan as its spokesman. Donovan was the well-connected New York lawyer who had recently arranged the trade of Soviet spy Rudolph Abel for U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers. Donovan was assured that he would not be accused of violating the Logan Act, which forbade US citizens from engaging in unauthorized private diplomacy, and agreed to work *pro bono*. The committee proceeded to solicit sponsors, and on 26 June announced that it had secured support from several dozen prominent personages in business, labor, education, religion, and the arts.[54] (U)

At this point, McCone's responsibilities as DCI and his business and political connections converged to establish him as a liaison between the administration, the fundraisers, CIA's congressional overseers, and corporate executives. Over the next several months, McCone held many discussions with them in several cities on the politics and terms of the release agreement. Unlike most conservative Republicans, he supported negotiating with Castro over the prisoners. He based his view on humanitarianism, a feeling of American obligation to *La Brigada*, the pragmatic need to maintain good relations with the Cuban exile community, the hope of creating an opening for gaining the freedom of nearly two dozen Americans—including three Agency officers—in Cuban jails, and concern that Castro would use prisoners as pawns in disputes with the United States. McCone wanted to drive a hard bargain, as he did not want the "ransom" to help the Cuban regime stabilize itself or leave the administration vulnerable to charges that it "sold out" to Castro. He thought that if a fundraising effort by private citizens gained momentum, the US government might find a way to make up the difference—possibly in kind with food and medicine. After hearing that an anxious Donovan would not accept Castro's invitation to talk unless he had some assurance of support from the administration, the DCI persuaded the NSC principals to encourage Donovan to negotiate firmly with the expectation that Congress could be prevailed upon to lift the ban on using CIA funds for ransom. Donovan then accepted Castro's offer to visit Havana by the end of August 1962. Before he left on his honeymoon to France, McCone established an Agency task force, codenamed MOSES, to provide covert support for Donovan's discussions; designated [redacted] the assistant general counsel, as Donovan's case officer; and ordered that he be kept fully informed about the mission while he was away.[55]

McCone had scarcely settled in on the Riviera when Acting DCI Carter cabled him that "Donovan is back from Havana with new price list from Fidel": $3 million in cash and $25 million in food and medicine, with all details to be settled within 10 days. McCone offered to return to Washington early to help lobby congressional leaders to allow the

[52] White House aide Richard Goodwin recalled President Kennedy saying, "They [the Cuban Brigade] trusted me, and they're in prison now because I fucked up. I have to get them out." Goodwin, *Remembering America: A Voice From the Sixties*, 186. (U)

[53] Since the prisoners' capture, CIA had paid support money to their dependents in the United States; by mid-1962, the payments exceeded [redacted] Dependents of the several dozen prisoners released in April 1962 continued to receive the benefits until the men's medical treatments were finished. The families were then placed under the jurisdiction of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare as political refugees. [redacted] vol. 2, 244; McCone memorandum to the president, "Payments to Dependents of Cuban Brigade Members," 20 July 1962, HS Files, HS/HC-528, Job 84B00389R, box 1, folder 28.

[54] Kennedy declared his refusal to negotiate at a press conference on 11 April 1962; see *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy, 1962*, 321. The roster of sponsors that the Cuban Families Committee developed included Richard Cardinal Cushing, archbishop of Boston and a Kennedy family friend; Princess Lee Radziwill, sister of the First Lady; Gen. Lucius D. Clay, former military governor of Germany; James Farley, a Democratic Party luminary; former senator and New York governor Herbert Lehman; Dame Margot Fonteyn, the ballerina; television celebrity Ed Sullivan; and David J. McDonald, president of the United Steel Workers of America. Robert Kennedy opposed using covert CIA money as contributions to the committee's fund; McCone did not disagree with him. McCone, "Memorandum of Discussion with the Attorney General...July 3, 1962," *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 842. (U)

use of Agency funds if necessary, but Carter replied that the White House had not yet committed itself to the latest terms. Once back in the United States in late September, the DCI urged the president and the attorney general to pursue the deal. President Kennedy wondered whether the situation could be put off until after the elections, but McCone said time was running out and that at least exploratory talks should continue. Kennedy then told McCone to brief former President Eisenhower. If he reacted favorably, then McCone was to raise the issue with the Republican leadership and members of the CIA oversight committees while the White House did the same with congressional Democrats. Kennedy directed the DCI to portray the negotiations to Eisenhower as a CIA matter; "the president should not be put in the foreground." The general listened to McCone and agreed to support the initiative. Around this time, McCone received BNE's judgment that Castro was serious about negotiating, and that he would benefit politically from accepting a ransom for the prisoners.[56]

The DCI and Donovan then worked out the terms of a pharmaceuticals-for-prisoners swap: $62 million worth of medicine at Cuban retail prices, or about $25 million wholesale in the United States, to be purchased by special arrangement from several American drug companies at cost, or about $20 million. (Medicine was regarded as preferable to food because it was cheaper and easier to ship, and Castro needed it more.) Donovan, Agency officers, bankers, and corporate lawyers held a flurry of meetings, the upshot of which was that by early October, CIA transferred [redacted] CIA never intended to release the money; it was to serve only as indemnification for the drug firms' bills of lading that Donovan would present to Castro as evidence of performance. Donovan left for Havana on 3 October with the "unofficial" US offer. By this time, McCone doubted whether the Cuban leader would accept the all-drugs proposal.[57]

McCone and the administration confronted a potentially damaging political complication at this phase of the negotiations. In mid-September, Donovan had accepted the Democratic nomination to seek Republican incumbent Jacob Javits's Senate seat from New York. Republicans charged that Donovan was using the prisoner release for political gain. Donovan's case officer, [redacted] recalled the high-level concern. "John McCone was beside himself about this. The attorney general was beside himself. How can we be working with this guy, he's running for office, he's on this very secret kind of thing, we don't want US government involvement in this thing, how can we control him?" McCone kept close watch on Donovan's campaign to see if any hint of official involvement in the prisoner discussions came out. According to [redacted]

> I was in Philadelphia one morning with Jim Donovan and I got a call about 7:00 in the morning from John McCone saying, "Okay, what did he say? Did he say anything? What is he going to do today?" John was just...very, very concerned about this whole thing. He could see...that if the press decided to make a story of this, it would implicate the electoral process, the Government involvement trying to manipulate [sic]—it was a mess.

[55] Harvey memorandum to McCone, "American Prisoners in Cuba," 10 April 1962, McCone Papers, box 5, folder 19; McCone, "Memorandum of Discussion with Attorney General...July 3, 1962," "Memorandum of Discussion...July 18, 1962, with Mr. Robert Kennedy," untitled memorandum to Robert Kennedy, 21 August 1962, and memorandum for the file, "Discussion in Secretary Rusk's Office...21 August 1962," *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 842–43, 850–51, 946, 949; transcripts of McCone telephone conversations with Robert Anderson (former secretary of the treasury) on 2 July 1962, Donovan on 26 July 1962, and U. Alexis Johnson on 22 August 1962, McCone memorandum about discussion with Anderson on 24 July 1962, Ray Cline (DDI) memorandum to McCone, "Estimate of the Effect of Any Decision by the U.S. Government to Pay the $62,000,000 Ransom of Cuban Prisoners," 23 July 1962, [redacted] "Memorandum for the Record...Conversations with James B. Donovan," 31 August 1962, E. Henry Knoche, untitled Action Memorandum No. B-21, 31 August 1962, McCone Papers, box 4, folder 9; transcript of McCone telephone conversation with Donovan, 21 August 1962, ibid., folder 11; McCone, "Memorandum for the File...Discussion with Attorney General...24 September [1962], Subject 'Donovan Negotiations,'" ibid., box 2, folder 3; Johnson, *Bay of Pigs*, 307–8; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 353. Besides [redacted] the other members of Operation [redacted] were its head, General Counsel Lawrence Houston; George McManus of the DDP's Cuban Task Force; and [redacted] Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 353; [redacted] memorandum to Chief, Signal Center, "Subject: [redacted]" OGC 62-2029, and [redacted] memorandum, "Subject: Donovan," 28 August 1962, McCone Papers, box 4, folder 9. [redacted] knew Robert Kennedy from a Catholic retreat for lawyers they had attended a few years before. Thomas, *Robert Kennedy*, 236. Nothing in the documentary record indicates that McCone knew about Kennedy's earlier attempt to use criminal elements, with an undercover CIA officer as a go-between, to make a deal with Castro for the prisoners. Ibid., 178.

[56] [redacted] McCone memoranda of meetings with Robert Kennedy, 24 September 1962, with President Kennedy, 25 September 1962, and with Eisenhower, 26 September 1962, ibid., box 2, folder 3; BNE memoranda to McCone, "Cuban Prisoner Ransom Deal," 27 September 1962, HS Files, HS/HC-738, Job 84B00443R, box 5, folder 5.

[57] McCone memoranda of discussions with Donovan on 27 and 29 September 1962 and Eisenhower on 3 October 1962, and transcript of McCone telephone conversation with Donovan, 25 September 1962, HS Files, HS/HC-738, Job 84B00443R, box 5, folder 5; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 359.

To help keep the negotiations with Castro confidential, McCone told Javits about Donovan's role as representative of a private effort, but he did not divulge the US government's interest to the senator. When Donovan's talks with Castro reached a highly sensitive stage, and with CIA so heavily involved, McCone told Robert Kennedy that he "would take all, or his full share of responsibility" if the settlement failed and a political controversy ensued.[58]

Castro made a stiff counterproposal: the quantity of medicine was to be determined by much lower *Cuban* wholesale prices. That change would significantly increase the amount of drugs needed to make up the proposed value, raising the potential cost significantly and forcing the administration to inform congressional leaders. McCone, along with Legislative Counsel John Warner and General Counsel Lawrence Houston, quickly briefed—and lobbied—the chairmen of the CIA subcommittees, the Senate majority and minority leaders, and other senior legislators. Their reaction ranged from full support to outright opposition, but most of them approved of the administration's approach, with qualifications. On White House instructions, McCone flew to Miami on 7 October to meet Donovan at a safehouse. (For security reasons, he and his four CIA colleagues were the only passengers on a specially chartered commercial flight.) He listened to a rambling discourse from an ill and fatigued Donovan and left more convinced than before that the deal would not come off. A whirl of meetings and airflights followed. After a stopover in Washington to brief the president, McCone flew to New York to see the attorney general [redacted] Back in Washington, McCone heard Vice President Johnson say he would support the agreement only if his patron in the Senate, Richard Russell, did.[59]

Despite some congressional dissent and the likelihood of political backlash from critics of "appeasement," President Kennedy on 10 October directed the negotiations to proceed. Serious snags had developed by then, however. The *New York Herald Tribune*—apparently drawing on leaks from Cuban exiles and the pharmaceutical industry—embarrassed the administration with a story describing the deal. Probably to take advantage of the bad publicity, Castro became less cooperative and decided that the price he would pay for the medicine should be reduced by over one third. On hearing that, Donovan walked out of their meeting, wrote a message asking the Cuban leader to indicate when he was ready to bargain again, and left for Miami.[60]

Finally, the discovery of Soviet offensive missiles in Cuba several days later forced the administration to put the negotiations on hold. McCone was surprised to learn from a [redacted] official that Donovan—his walkout and instructions from Washington notwithstanding—had told [redacted] that an agreement was imminent. If definitive news of secret talks with Castro came out then, the DCI told Robert Kennedy, the public reaction could be severe and make resolving the missile situation harder. He advised that all discussions about the prisoners be suspended, [redacted] The president approved McCone's recommendations. The fate of the Bay of Pigs prisoners—and perhaps even of the Castro regime—would have to await the outcome of the missile crisis.[61]

---

[58] McCone, "Memorandum of Telephone Conversation with Mr. Donovan…September 29, 1962…," memorandum of discussion with Eisenhower, 3 October 1962, and "Memorandum on Donovan Project," 11 October 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 3; Johnson, *Bay of Pigs*, 314; [redacted] oral history interview by [redacted], 12 January and 23 February 1998 (hereafter [redacted] OH), 30–31.

[59] McCone, "Memorandum for the Record…Discussions with Senator Kuchel and Mr. Halleck…," "Memorandum for the File…Discussion with Senators Mansfield and Saltonstall…," and "Summary Memorandum of Discussions with Congressional Leaders on the Donovan Project," 8 October 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 3; McCone memorandum of meeting with the president, the attorney general, and others on 9 October 1962, ibid., box 6, folder 2; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 354–58; "Memorandum of Agreement" between the Government of Cuba and the Cuban Families Committee, undated but c. early October 1962, *Bay of Pigs: 40 Years After*, tab 8, doc. 3.

[60] McCone, "Memorandum on Donovan Project," 11 October 1962, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 2; Johnson, *Bay of Pigs*, 317–18; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 359–60; [Donovan,] "Chronology… ," undated but c. December 1962, *Bay of Pigs: 40 Years After*, tab 8, doc. 5 (part 2). Besides the *New York Herald Tribune*, other major American newspapers were on the story. The *Washington Post* ventured in one headline that "Part of Ransom Cash for Castro Is Expected to Come from CIA" (11 October 1962, Western Hemisphere—Cuba clipping file, box 1, HIC).

[61] Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 359–60.

CHAPTER 5

Into the Cuban Crucible (II): The Missile Crisis (U)

In about April 1962, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev decided to develop Cuba into a nuclear missile base, and, by mid-summer of that year, Moscow had begun the buildup of forces and materiel that would culminate in the Cuban missile crisis, the famous "Thirteen Days" of October 1962. This deployment and the US government's reaction to it would constitute for John McCone and the Kennedy administration—indeed, for all Americans—what the president referred to in his first State of the Union address as "the hour of maximum danger."[1] (U)

"No episode in the history of international relations," historian John Lewis Gaddis has noted, "has received such microscopic scrutiny from so many historians" as the Cuban missile crisis.[2] These studies, as well as works by journalists and former officials, concentrate on the activities of the White House and the Departments of Defense and State, with CIA being mentioned frequently and DCI McCone occasionally. Most treatments of McCone and the missile crisis emphasize his forward-leaning early warning to the administration that the Soviets probably planned to install offensive nuclear missiles in Cuba, and his post-crisis "I told you so" posture that strained relations with senior officials and reduced his access to the White House. While McCone may have demonstrated the tack a DCI should take when he disagrees with his analysts, one historian recently concluded that "[McCone's] discrepant judgment holds no interesting general lesson for intelligence assessment and hardly seems worth the attention it has received."[3] There is much more to the story than McCone's augury, however. McCone's interaction with policymakers, his contributions to their decisions, his leadership of the Intelligence Community, and his efforts to cope with charges of intelligence failure would reshape his role and the role of intelligence in the Kennedy administration and define it in unintended ways in the administration that would unexpectedly follow. (U)

Prelude to Crisis (U)

The Soviet Union had been supplying conventional arms to Cuba since the summer of 1960, but by early 1962, when Khrushchev was close to making his fateful decision, the pace of shipments had slackened. Still, by May, the growing frequency of rumors in Miami's emigré community of a Soviet military buildup had given cause for heightened vigilance. Despite an extensive array of assets targeted at Castro's regime—including CIA collection teams and technical operations, US military intelligence sources and FBI assets, twice-a-month U-2 flights, official and nonofficial third-country sources, and travelers—the Intelligence Community could not substantiate hundreds of reports, dating to before mid-1960, of large, shrouded shapes, stringent security measures, and strange nocturnal activities by European-looking foreigners. (U)

In fact, implementation of Khrushchev's decision was underway by mid-July 1962, with the introduction of sophisticated defensive weapons—surface-to-air missiles and guided missile patrol boats, among others.[4] After that came medium-range ballistic missiles (MRBMs), launchers for intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBMs), and more bombers. US intelligence services detected the stepped-up military shipments in mid-1962, almost as soon as they had begun. As a result, refugee debriefing was broadened and

[1] The new president, steeling the country for the time when, as he said in his inaugural address, "the trumpet summons," stated to Congress and the public a few weeks later that "[n]o man entering upon this office...could fail to be staggered upon learning...the harsh enormity of the trials through which we must pass in the next four years. Each day the crises multiply. Each day their solution grows more difficult. Each day we draw nearer the hour of maximum danger, as weapons spread and hostile forces grow stronger.... The tide is unfavorable. The news will be worse before it is better." *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy, 1961*, 22–23. (U)

[2] John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know*, 260. The spate of books, articles, and collections of essays on the crisis published since 1990 bears out Gaddis's observation. See the Appendix on Sources for references to them and other publications consulted for this work. (U)

[3] Walter Elder provided a nearly hour-by-hour account of the DCI during the missile crisis in his 1973 unpublished manuscript, "John McCone as DCI." Peter S. Usowski, a former Agency officer, examined McCone's actions in the context of intelligence and policymaking in "John McCone and the Cuban Missile Crisis," 547–76. See also James J. Wirtz, "Organizing for Crisis Intelligence: Lessons from the Cuban Missile Crisis," *I&NS* 13, no. 3 (Autumn 1998): 133–39, 144–45. The quotation is from James G. Blight and David A. Welch, "What Can Intelligence Tell Us About the Cuban Missile Crisis, and What Can the Cuban Missile Crisis Tell Us about Intelligence?," ibid., 6. (U)

accelerated, U-2 coverage—already increased earlier in the year, owing to McCone's unease about the earlier buildup—was extended to ships offloading at Cuban ports, and "cratology," the analysis of shipping packages, was applied to the acquired images. McCone told Arthur Lundahl, the head of NPIC, to check all HUMINT reports about the shipments from every source against high-level photography and to disseminate the findings to the community. (U)

Throughout the summer, US policymakers and intelligence officials speculated about the meaning of the buildup. Many thought Moscow was demonstrating its commitment to, and possibly exerting greater control over, the Castro regime while bolstering Cuba as an outpost for communist subversion in Latin America. An estimate (NIE 85-2-62) issued on 1 August 1962 concluded that although "[b]y force of circumstances, the USSR is becoming ever more deeply committed to preserve and strengthen the Castro regime...[it] has avoided any formal commitment to protect and defend the regime in all contingencies." The Soviets "have sought to create the impression that Cuba was under the protection of their missile power," but they "would almost certainly never intend to hazard their own safety for Cuba's sake." The community's consensus was that Moscow's actions in Cuba were basically defensive, designed mainly to shore up a revolutionary ally while marginally improving its own political position in the region.[5] (U)

McCone was virtually alone in concluding that the Kremlin had more malevolent intentions. He first conveyed his concern about a potential Soviet offensive threat at a meeting of the NSC's Special Group Augmented—Robert Kennedy, Dean Rusk, Maxwell Taylor, Roswell Gilpatric, and McGeorge Bundy—on 10 August. He had made his judgment after reviewing aerial photographs and clandestine reports. These had included reports on Soviet weaponry from GRU agent Oleg Penkovskiy and sightings made by Cuban agents on the island. McCone held firm even though four complete photographic mosaics could not corroborate the HUMINT and DDI Ray Cline and BNE chairman Sherman Kent disagreed. McCone later suggested his businessman's intuition enabled him to evaluate *possibilities* and did not confine him, as intelligence analysts were, to relying on known facts to assess *probabilities*. After the crisis, McCone's fears were deemed high prescience, but Taylor later said no one at that early meeting acted surprised at the idea, which almost certainly already had been discussed in the national security bureaucracy as a low-probability event that would have severe consequences. (McCone's critics would later fault him for not raising his views with USIB, where he might have been able to sell his argument to others.) Nevertheless, the administration could not act on the DCI's intuition without proof. All the president's advisers in the SGA could do with McCone's judgment was not to dismiss it and be ready to reconsider if evidence warranted.[6] (U)

[4] USIB report, "The Military Buildup in Cuba," 11 July 1961, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 621–24; CIA, Current Intelligence Memorandum No. 3047/62, "Recent Soviet Military Aid to Cuba," 22 August 1962, ibid., 950–53; Richard Lehman (OCI) memorandum to McCone, "CIA Handling of the Soviet Build-up in Cuba, 1 July–16 October 1962," 15 November 1962 (hereafter Lehman Report), 1, 3, 23–24, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 17, folder 18; CIA memorandum, "Phasing of the Soviet Military Deployment to Cuba," *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 535–37; Dino Brugioni, "The Cuban Missile Crisis—Phase I," *Studies* 16, no. 3 (Fall 1972): 1–51; Thaxter L. Goodell, "Cratology Pays Off," *Studies* 8, no. 4 (Fall 1964): 1–10. (U)

[5] Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 80–81, 87–88; NIE 85-2-62, "The Situation and Prospects in Cuba," 1, 5; McCone meeting with the president on 22 August 1962, Ernest R. May, Philip D. Zelikow, and Timothy Naftali, eds., *The Presidential Recordings: John F. Kennedy: The Great Crises*, 3 vols., *Volume I, July 30–August 1962*, 600–602. *The Presidential Recordings* corrects a few erroneous attributions of McCone's words to Deputy Secretary of Defense Roswell Gilpatric or Secretary of the Treasury C. Douglas Dillon (or vice versa) made in Ernest R. May and Philip D. Zelikow, eds., *The Kennedy Tapes: Inside the White House During the Cuban Missile Crisis*. The changes do not affect our understanding of what McCone thought or did during the crisis. "Cratology" was the term applied at the time to the study of the exteriors of shipping containers (e.g., their size, shape, composition, and markings) to determine their contents. See Goodell, cited above. The Soviets' elaborate effort to conceal their missile deployment in Cuba is described in James H. Hansen, "Soviet Deception in the Cuban Missile Crisis," *Studies* 46, no. 1 (2002): 49–58. Beginning in 1954, the Intelligence Community identified each Soviet NIE by a three-part numerical code, with the geographic subject area first, followed by the topic of the estimate and the year in which it was produced. Estimates on the Soviet Union, for example, bore the geographic designator 11. The numbers assigned over the years to the principal topics were 1 for space, 2 for atomic energy, 3 for strategic air defense, 4 for military policy, 5 for economics, 7 for politics, 8 for strategic forces, 14 for general purpose forces, and 15 for naval forces. Thus NIE 11-8-62 concerned Soviet strategic forces and was disseminated in 1962. Donald P. Steury, ed., *Intentions and Capabilities: Estimates on Soviet Strategic Forces, 1950–1983*, xxi–xxii. (U)

[6] "Chronology of DCI's Position Re Cuba," 21 October 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 19, folder 11; McCone, "Memorandum...Soviet MRBMs in Cuba," 31 October 1962, *CMC Documents*, 13; Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 87–88; Walter Elder oral history interview by Mary S. McAuliffe, Rosslyn, VA, 19 October 1989 (hereafter Elder/McAuliffe OH3); *Conversation with McCone*, 29. "The prospect of the USSR locating medium-range missiles in Cuba," BNE wrote on 10 August, "is slight." BNE memorandum attached to McCone untitled memorandum, 10 August 1962, HS Files, Job 03-01724R, box 1, folder 6. Administration officials—presumably trying to justify their actions (or lack thereof) during the late summer and early fall—later claimed, wrongly, that they were not aware of McCone's suspicions. In 1965, Robert Kennedy said, "I never heard about it [the DCI's assessment], and I used to see him [McCone] all the time.... It was certainly never communicated to the President." He added that if the DCI had been so concerned, he would not have gone ahead with his honeymoon in September. Also in 1965, former presidential speechwriter Theodore Sorensen wrote, "[McCone's] absence on a honeymoon prevented his views from reaching the President." The attorney general's posthumously published memoir of the crisis, altered by Sorensen, included the statement that "No official within the government had ever suggested to President Kennedy that the Russian buildup in Cuba would include missiles." Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy*, 506; Sorensen, *Kennedy*, 670; Robert F. Kennedy, *Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 27–28; Beschloss, *The Crisis Years*, 419. (U)

The administration's inaction bothered McCone, and he continued to press his judgment. McCone thought the administration should at least energize its covert action plan against Castro in light of the August NIE's conclusion that internal forces would not topple Castro, the evident Soviet buildup, and the link he presumed existed between Soviet actions in Cuba, Berlin, and elsewhere. He again made his case for a Soviet nuclear missile deployment at meetings with the president and senior Defense and State officials during 21–23 August, arguing that the latest intelligence on Cuba indicated that, among a few other possibilities, the Soviets were setting up SAM sites. The DCI later recounted what he thought that development implied:

> The obvious purpose of the SAMs was to blind us so we could not see what was going on there. There they were with 16,000 men with all their ordnance equipment[,] and then came the ships. There was nothing else to ship to Cuba but [offensive] missiles. That was my argument. We didn't see the missiles. They were on the ships and we had no agents on the ships. We really didn't know what was on the ships, but some things you can deduce. That was one of them.[7] (S)

McCone's suspicions that the still-undetected SAMs were intended to protect offensive missile sites may have been reinforced by information from [redacted] just back from Cuba, told McCone on 22 August that he had seen no fewer than 4,500 Soviets and large quantities of Soviet military materiel and speculated that the buildup was intended to quell an anti-Castro uprising. [redacted] did not mention missiles, but McCone no doubt took the first-hand observations of an intelligence professional as corroboration that something drastic was afoot. The DCI quickly passed on the intelligence to the president, Rusk, McNamara, Taylor, Bundy, and Gilpatric. (S)

If the SAMs were not there "to protect Cuban cane cutters," as McCone said, why were they there? He thought Khrushchev, behind the façade of crude bluster, was a risk-taking strategist who had made a dangerous but rational move to right a strategic imbalance. When McCone put himself in Khrushchev's place to explain Soviet behavior in Cuba, he may have had in mind the Intelligence Community's first estimate of Soviet strategic forces during his tenure (NIE-11-8-62, "Soviet Capabilities for Long-Range Attack," approved on 6 July), which argued that US strategic superiority over the USSR had widened since the "missile gap" myth was dispelled the year before. McCone argued that the Soviet leader was responding to US nuclear superiority by putting MRBMs aimed at the United States in Cuba and saying, "Mr. President, how would you like looking down the barrels of a shotgun for a while[?] Now, let's talk about Berlin. Later, we'll bargain about your overseas bases." McCone doubted Khrushchev would deploy such missiles inside Warsaw Pact territory "for fear the local people would…fire them on Moscow." Cuba, on the other hand, "was the only piece of real estate that the Soviets controlled where they could put a missile that could hit Washington or New York but couldn't hit Moscow." The DCI was so anxious about the possibility that he told the attorney general privately that he would "readily compromise our missile bases in Italy and Turkey…[or] our Berlin situation rather than see Cuba develop into a viable Communist state and a potential national threat.… Cuba was the key to all of Latin America; if Cuba succeeds, we can expect most of Latin America to fall."[9] (As the missile crisis worsened, McCone lost his willingness to make such concessions.) (S)

McCone's interpretation of Khrushchev's motives was one of several policymakers and observers would advance as

[7] "Chronology of DCI's Position Re Cuba," 21 October 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 19, folder 11; McCone untitled memorandum, 21 August 1962, "Memorandum…Soviet MRBMs in Cuba," 31 October 1962, and "Memorandum for the File: Discussion in Secretary Rusk's office…21 August 1962," McCone Papers, box 2, folder 2; idem, "Memorandum of the Meeting with the President…on August 22, 1962," and "Memorandum of Meeting with the President…Subject: Cuba," 23 August 1962, ibid., box 6, folder 2; Lehman Report, 4, 6; Schecter and Deriabin, 331, citing interview with McCone on 29 August 1988. The presence of the SAMs was not confirmed until U-2 photography taken on 29 August showed eight sites on the western half of the island. (S)

the crisis developed or in retrospect. These explanations included: Khrushchev was gauging Kennedy's will to resist and picked Cuba as the testing ground; he was diverting Western attention from designs on his real target, West Berlin; he was protecting his newest client state, Cuba, from American aggression and Maoist enticements; and he was seeking to overcome US strategic superiority by establishing a nuclear outpost near US territory. Most reliable evidence now suggests Khrushchev primarily was trying to accomplish the latter two purposes and was not directly engaging in diplomatic extortion, as McCone suspected.[10] (U)

In late August 1962, the DCI's judgment sounded like a worst case scenario at best, an unfounded hunch at worst, and it might have been discounted because of his widely known, visceral distrust of the Soviet Union. After hearing McCone's dismal forecasts, the JCS reviewed contingency plans for attacking and invading Cuba, and the president requested analyses on the political, military, and psychological impact of surface-to-air or surface-to-surface missile deployments in Cuba, and a study of the possibility of removing US missiles from Turkey. Otherwise, the administration concluded that the available intelligence did not merit a more assertive response. Clark Clifford of PFIAB later described McCone's warnings as "highly emotional and impressionistic" and criticized him for not pressing the community to substantiate them—for example, by ordering more reconnaissance flights. R. Jack Smith, at the time head of OCI in the DI, thought McCone's analysis was faulty in overlooking a key psychological factor: the mentality of the Soviet apparatchik. The Kremlin's military machine was producing large numbers of SA-2s and planting them all over the country, including in places that made no military sense. "It looked as though they had them to give out like candy, and that tended to indicate they were putting SA-2s into Cuba. It would make the Cubans feel great."[11] (U)

McCone found his case harder to make because of headline-grabbing allegations by Kenneth Keating, the Republican senator from New York and an ardent critic of the administration's policy toward Castro, that the Soviets had built missile installations and placed thousands of technicians in Cuba. Keating made over two dozen public statements on the subject from late August to mid-September. He urged President Kennedy to act quickly, proposed that the OAS investigate the situation, and attacked the administration for concealing the Soviet moves from the American public. Keating's alarmist but authoritative-sounding assertions provided fodder for GOP candidates in the congressional campaigns then getting underway and inclined administration officials to discount intelligence that tended to corroborate them. McCone asked Keating, a political friend, to reveal his sources so USIB could better plan reconnaissance flights. The senator refused, possibly because he thought government investigators would try to track down his sources. Years later, McCone described the awkward position he felt his bold conclusion had left him in: "[T]he whole Kennedy administration was opposing me, all Democrats. Here I was[,] the sole Republican with a very different view. I had a devil of a time to persuade the President and his brother...that I was not the source of information to a Republican senator [Keating]."[12] At the time, McCone privately speculated that Keating's sources were either refugees trying to force the administration into rash action, or members of the US Seamen and Longshoremen's Union who had heard details about the Soviet cargoes shipped to Cuba. Afterward, however, he said that he concluded the senator had no sources and "was just using an Irishman's intuition."[13] (U)

---

[9] Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 105; Schecter and Deriabin, 332, citing interview with McCone on 29 August 1988; Walter Elder's comments at CIA symposium on the missile crisis, Langley, VA, 19 October 1992, videotape in the History Staff; *Conversation with McCone*, 23–25; [redacted] 69–70. McCone's comment exemplified what one scholar later called the "gains that justify the risks" explanation for Khrushchev's decision. Two postcrisis analyses by CIA reached the same judgment about Khrushchev's geopolitical motive, but later research has found that he was more interested in protecting Castro's revolution and acquiring leverage to get the US missiles in Turkey removed. ORR, "Cuba 1962: Khrushchev's Miscalculated Risk," 13 February 1964, ER Files, Job 81B00401R, box 1, folder 4; DDI Research Staff, "The Soviet Missile Base Venture in Cuba," 17 February 1964, ibid., Job 80B01676R, box 18, folder 6. [redacted]

[10] Richard Ned Lebow, "The Cuban Missile Crisis: Reading the Lessons Correctly," *Political Science Quarterly* 98, no. 3 (Fall 1983): 434–36; James Blight and David Welch, *On the Brink*, 226–96; Len Scott and Steve Smith, "Lessons of October: Historians, Political Scientists, Policy-Makers, and the Cuban Missile Crisis," *International Affairs* 70, no. 4 (1994): 667. (U)

[11] McCone, "Memorandum of Meeting with the President...Subject: Cuba," 23 August 1962, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 2; NSAM No. 181, 23 August 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–62*, 957–58; Graham T. Allison, *Essence of Decision*, 190; Clifford, 357; Ranelagh, 395–96, citing interview with Smith on 23 July 1983; Smith's comments at the above-cited CIA missile crisis symposium. (U)

[12] Thomas G. Paterson, "The Historian as Detective: Senator Kenneth Keating, the Missiles in Cuba, and His Mysterious Sources," *DH* 11, no. 1 (Winter 1987): 67–70; Roger Hilsman, *The Cuban Missile Crisis: The Struggle Over Policy*, 39–43; Thomas G. Paterson and William J. Brophy, "October Missiles and November Elections: The Cuban Missile Crisis and American Politics, 1962," *JAH* 73, no. 1 (June 1986): 95; Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 112–14, 170–72; *Conversation with McCone*, 30. (U)

McCone was preoccupied with personal affairs or out of the country as crucial intelligence, especially aerial photography of SAM sites, arrived during September. On 23 August, he left Washington to prepare for his marriage on the 29th to Theiline McGee Pigott—widow of industrialist Paul Pigott, a friend of the late Mrs. McCone, and a college classmate of his—at her home outside Seattle. Immediately after, the newlyweds left to honeymoon on the French Riviera and did not return to the United States until 23 September. Had McCone been in Washington, he might have swayed policymaker assessments of Soviet intentions. Having made his case early and been drowned out by the overwhelming chorus of the intelligence and policy communities, however, he went about his private business. One of his last official actions before leaving was to request more low-level reconnaissance flights over Cuba.[14] (U)

McCone and his second wife, Theiline, at their wedding (U)

While McCone was away, he heard of several important developments concerning Cuba. On 31 August and 4 September, Sen. Keating and his colleague Bourke Hickenlooper declared that the Soviets had sent missiles and torpedo boats to Cuba. Also on the 4th, after receiving Khrushchev's private assurances that offensive missiles would not be placed there, President Kennedy announced that SAM sites and more Soviet military personnel had been detected on the island and warned Moscow against deploying offensive missiles. (He repeated the warning on the 13th.) At about the same time, restrictions were placed on Air Force U-2 flights because one flown by a Nationalist Chinese pilot had been brought down by a SAM over the PRC on the 8th and the Soviet Union had protested an accidental U-2 overflight of Sakhalin Island on 30 August. The restrictions limited aerial reconnaissance over Cuba to a few peripheral and "in-and-out" flights by CIA-piloted U-2s. On the 13th, the president declared that if "at any time the Communist buildup in Cuba were to endanger or interfere with our security in any way...or if Cuba should...become an offensive military base of significant capacity for the Soviet Union, then this country will do whatever must be done to protect its own security and that of its allies." One week later, by an 86–1 vote, the Senate passed a resolution sanctioning the use of force to defend the Western Hemisphere against Cuban aggression or subversion; the House did the same on the 26th by a 384–7 vote. Meanwhile, community departments worked on creating a full picture of Soviet activities in Cuba, producing numerous summaries and assessments derived from aerial photography, refugee and agent reports, [redacted] and shipping information. On the 21st, DIA received reports of "a first-hand sighting" nine days before of "a convoy of 20 objects 65 to 70 feet long which resembled large missiles." Still, no reliable intelligence confirmed the presence of offensive missiles. Unbeknownst to anyone in Washington, the first MRBMs had arrived at the port of Mariel on the 15th. (Their warheads were not delivered until 4 October.)[15] (U)

During the next several weeks, McCone kept in touch with Headquarters through a series of transatlantic messages later dubbed the "honeymoon cables." (After receiving the latest of the DCI's frequent communications, an officer in the Agency's cable section joked that "I have some doubts that the old man knows what to do on a honeymoon.") CIA's day-to-day response to events devolved upon DDCI Carter, who attended meetings at the White House and

[13] "Minutes of the 507th Meeting of the National Security Council," 22 October 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 154; DCI morning meeting minutes, 1 February 1963, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 17, folder 344; *Conversation with McCone*, 30; Schecter and Deriaban, 331–32, citing interview with McCone on 29 August 1988. Richard Helms was certain that Keating got his intelligence from Cuban expatriates—in particular, a weekly digest published by the Cuban Student Directorate. "I went into his charges in detail because my ass was being roasted every day on what Keating was using for his information. You know senators can get away with that." Helms memorandum to McCone, "Background of Senator Keating's Statements on Soviet Missiles in Cuba," 19 November 1962, National Security Files, Countries, box 53, Cuba/Subjects/Senator Keating's Statements, JFK Library; Schecter and Deriabin, 330, citing interview with Helms on 8 December 1988. One of Keating's GOP Senate colleagues, Bourke Hickenlooper of Iowa, said a few months after the crisis that "I had the same information...basically it came from Cuban refugees...." Paterson and Brophy, 98. Keating would only say that his information was "furnished or confirmed by Government sources." "My Advance View of the Cuban Missile Crisis," *Look* 28, 3 November 1964: 96–106. For a somewhat speculative case that Keating got his information from two former ambassadors, Clare Boothe Luce and William Pawley, who had contacts with dissident Cuban exiles, see Max Holland, "A Luce Connection," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 1, no. 3 (Fall 1999): 136–67. McCone and Luce were good friends, but there is no indication that she told him anything she might have heard from the exiles about the missiles. One student of the missile crisis suggests (without evidence) that McCone, dissatisfied with what he regarded as the administration's ineffectual response, leaked information about the Soviet military buildup to congressional Republicans and journalists to build pressure on the White House and the Department of State to act more aggressively. Thompson, *The Missiles of October*, 162–63. (U)

[14] *Seattle Times*, 29 August 1962, and Pigott Family press release, 29 August 1962, McCone clipping file, HIC; McCone calendars; Lyman Kirkpatrick memorandum to McCone, "Action Generated by DCI Cables...Concerning Cuban Low-Level Photography and Offensive Weapons," n.d., *CMC Documents*, 39. (U)

briefed administration officials and congressional leaders. Carter received McCone's regular missives repeating his prior arguments but, besides mentioning news of SAM sites and missile boats detected during a U-2 mission on 29 August, offered no new evidence to substantiate his predictions. The Acting DCI, in turn, notified McCone of new intelligence, Republican pressure on the president, Cuban exile operations, and Soviet propaganda statements.[16] (U)

Carter kept McCone well informed, but his handling of the Cuban issue thoroughly displeased the DCI—so much so that, according to McCone's executive assistant, Walter Elder, McCone considered firing his deputy.[17] McCone thought Carter had made three serious mistakes or misjudgments: not forwarding the "honeymoon cables" to the White House; not trying hard enough to override Secretary of State Rusk's objections to extended U-2 overflights (the secretary worried about another shootdown); and approving a soon-to-be notorious SNIE that said the Soviets were unlikely to put offensive missiles in Cuba because they never had done so outside their own territory and had little to gain by putting them so close to the United States now.[18] (S)

In his 20 September cable to Carter—the one that took on the greatest significance in crisis postmortems—McCone suggested that "most careful consideration" be given to the SNIE's conclusion that deploying offensive missiles "would indicate a far greater willingness to increase the level of risk in US-Soviet relations than the Soviet Union had displayed thus far...." "As an alternative," the DCI wrote, "I can see that an offensive Soviet Cuban base will provide [the] Soviets with [a] most important and effective trading position in connection with all other critical areas[,] and hence they might take an unexpected risk in order to establish such a position." Implicit in McCone's argument was the judgment that Khrushchev would not have attempted such a brazen move without a plan for backing away from a confrontation or pulling out the missiles once he had achieved his diplomatic objectives. In short, the US government could react vigorously without risking a military confrontation.[19] (S)

Between the lines of the cable, McCone was all but directing Carter to withdraw the SNIE and recast its conclusions, although he did not go farther to risk a "politicization" controversy. Carter offered several explanations for his actions. In France, McCone did not have access to the all-source intelligence available at Headquarters. There were still many reasons for questioning his analysis, and no compelling reason for accepting it. "[T]he entire atmosphere [at the White House] during this period was to maintain as low a noise level as possible," Carter recalled. In that atmosphere, pressing for expanded overflights was pointless. Lastly, as acting DCI, Carter was responsible for deciding

[15] Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*, chap. 13, Prados, *The Soviet Estimate*, chap. 9, and Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, chaps. 3–4, give good descriptions of the emerging intelligence picture. The problematic U-2 flights are described in "Reds Charge New U-2 Violation," Washington *Evening Star*, 4 September 1962, "Red China Asserts It Brought Down Nationalists' U-2," *New York Times*, 10 September 1962, and "Chiang's U-2 Felled Over Eastern China," *Washington Post*, 10 September 1962, Overhead Reconnaissance clipping file, box 1, HIC; White House discussions about the errant 30 August mission are in "Meeting on U-2 Incident," *Presidential Recordings: JFK, II*, 5–16. The changes in aerial reconnaissance procedures are reviewed in undated maps of U-2 missions over Cuba during August and September 1962, Kirkpatrick memorandum to McCone, "White House Meeting on 10 September 1962 on Cuban Overflights," 1 March 1963, and "U-2 Overflights of Cuba, 29 August through 14 October 1962," 27 February 1963, *CMC Documents*, 1–2, 61–62, 127–37; and [redacted] (DDCI executive assistant) memorandum to Kirkpatrick, "Genesis of White House Meeting on 10 September [1962]," *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–62*, 1054–55. The DIA report is paraphrased in *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 1083. It was subsequently accepted as the first definitive intelligence that MRBMs were in Cuba. (U)

[16] Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 97; Carter's activities in *Presidential Recordings: JFK, II*, 34–50, 54–58; McCone's cables to Carter dated 7, 10, 13, 16, and 20 September 1962, and Carter's cables to McCone dated 4–8, 10–14, 17–19, and 21 September 1962, McCone Papers, box 4, folder 10, and (with redactions) *CMC Documents*, 45–60, 63–69, 75, 77–90, 95–98. (U)

[17] The principal sources for the following paragraphs are: "Chronology of DCI's Position Re Cuba," 21 October 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 19, folder 11; Lehman Report, 12–13; Helms/McAuliffe OH, 11; Kirkpatrick/McAuliffe OH, 7; Krock, *Memoirs*, 379. (S)

[18] The infamous estimate was SNIE 85-3-62, "The Military Buildup in Cuba," 19 September 1962. Its key judgments are in *CMC Documents*, 92–93, and the full text is in *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 1070–80. Sherman Kent explains how and why BNE reached its conclusions in "A Crucial Estimate Relived," in Donald P. Steury, ed., *Sherman Kent and the Board of National Estimates: Collected Essays*, 173–87. Useful examinations of intelligence analysis during the missile crisis, with specific reference to the SNIE, include Klaus Knorr, "Failures in National Intelligence Estimates: The Case of the Cuban Missiles," *World Politics* 16, no. 3 (April 1964): 455–67; Roberta Wohlstetter, "Cuba and Pearl Harbor: Hindsight and Foresight," *Foreign Affairs* 43 (1965): 691–707; Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*, chaps. 13–14; Prados, *The Soviet Estimate*, chap. 9; Walter Laqueur, *A World of Secrets*, 159–70; and Willard C. Matthias, *America's Strategic Blunders*, 177–83. Gil Merom, "The 1962 Cuban Intelligence Estimate: A Methodological Perspective," *I&NS* 14, no. 3 (Autumn 1999): 48–80, is a withering critique of how BNE framed its arguments and evaluated the available evidence. The authors of the SNIE, principally BNE Chairman Sherman Kent, did not take into account that the Soviet Union had placed MRBMs in East Germany for a few months three years before, the first time it put nuclear weapons beyond its borders. Matthias Uhl and Vladimir I. Ivkin, "'Operation Atom,'" *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, Issue 12/13 (Fall–Winter 2001): 299–306; "Geheimoperation Fürstenberg," *Der Spiegel*, 17 January 2001: 42, 44, 46. (U)

[19] Roger Hilsman has added the following useful point to the debate over the SNIE that makes McCone's perspective less supportable: "When intelligence analysts predict without qualification that the other side *will* take a belligerent action, they force a policy decision. In effect, they preempt the policymakers. They *cannot* make this kind of estimate, and they will *never* make this kind of estimate unless the evidence is totally overwhelming." Hilsman, *Cuban Missile Crisis*, 57–58 (emphasis in original). To personify Hilsman's point: McCone, functioning as both the president's intelligence officer and as a national security adviser, *could* be so venturesome; Kent, in his sole role as the Agency's senior estimator, *should not* have been. (U)

what material to include in reports to the White House and what estimates to release under the auspices of USIB.[20]

Their clashing personalities aside, the underlying problem between McCone and Carter was a reflection of the DCI's character: he could delegate responsibility but not authority. As Elder later put it, "McCone was of two minds here. One, I'm on leave...He's a big boy, and he has to run this thing.... [B]ut McCone never let go of the reins." Despite their differences, McCone left the issue with Carter and did not try to run around him by contacting members of USIB. Adding to the difficulty of the situation, Carter and senior Agency analysts continued to disagree with McCone's judgment about the offensive missiles and saw no reason to circulate reiterations of his still-unfounded speculations outside of Headquarters. According to Elder, "there was a strong current in the Agency that this Director was completely off base and that the best thing we could do was [ignore him] until it went away." Consequently, Carter showed only the first honeymoon cable to Bundy and passed the others only to Sherman Kent. "I don't recall any action evolving from those cables, nor can I visualize any action that we should have taken in the light of [them,]" he said later. Moreover, Carter did not mention McCone's analytic differences with Agency estimators to any policymaker, presumably surmising, correctly, that repeating the DCI's view without additional evidence would persuade no one downtown.[21]

When McCone returned, he found a large intelligence gap, which he quickly set about filling. He was incensed to learn of the restrictions on aerial reconnaissance of Cuba and that Carter had not told him of the change in overflight policy on 10 September. Moreover, a streak of bad weather had left the western end of the island unphotographed for a month. According to Arthur Lundahl, when McCone saw a map showing the limited coverage during his honeymoon, "[he] nearly came out of his chair." He took on Rusk and McNamara directly at a tense Special Group meeting on 4 October, objecting "strenuously" to the overflight restrictions. Subsequently, the Special Group approved flights based on more reliable HUMINT reports of dubious Soviet activities in western Cuba. The slowness with which missile-related intelligence was processed also irritated McCone. After looking at photographs of a Soviet ship taken nearly two weeks before, he remarked, "How in the hell did the Navy get them to Washington—by rowboat?" At another time, he shook his head on hearing some dated information, saying that by then it was history, not intelligence.[22]

In the meantime, McCone encountered the same skepticism and political concerns at the White House that had prevailed a month earlier. Bundy doubted the Soviets would place offensive missiles in Cuba, and when the DCI showed President Kennedy photographs of crates in Havana harbor that looked as if they contained parts for medium bombers, the president focused on the impact leaks of the information would have on the November elections and the potential that congressional critics, such as Sen. Keating, would have more substantiation of charges that the administration was refusing to tell the public about Soviet missiles in Cuba. (Keating claimed on 10 October, for example, that he had information that the Soviets were constructing six IRBM bases in Cuba.) The president directed that this latest intelligence not be disseminated beyond the White House. McCone replied that several community components had it already, and that it would be reported in CIA's daily bulletin the following morning. At the president's request, the DCI agreed that the story would be worded "to indicate a probability [that bombers had been deployed] rather than an actuality because...we only saw crates, not the bombers themselves." Kennedy wanted all future information on the

---

[20] Carter memorandum to McCone, "Overhead Reconnaissance of Cuba," 21 October 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 17, folder 18.

[21] Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 19–20; Kirkpatrick memorandum to McCone, "Action Generated by DCI Cables [redacted].Concerning Cuban Low-Level Photography and Offensive Weapons," *CMC Documents*, 40; E. Henry Knoche memorandum to McCone, "CIA Responses to your cables [redacted] 7 March 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 17, folder 12; Carter-Knoche OH, 2–3; E. Henry Knoche, "Intelligence Won One in Cuba," *IJIC* 5, no. 4 (Winter 1991–92): 469–70. McCone also was annoyed that Carter had forgotten to tell him that, at President Kennedy's direction, sensitive information on the missiles was being handled in a special compartment called [redacted] After he was told about the SAMs in early September, the president said he "wished [the information] put back in the box and nailed tight." The intelligence was later released to working-level analysts in the PSALM channel. Kirkpatrick memorandum to McCone, "Action Generated by DCI Cables...Concerning Cuban Low-Level Photography and Offensive Weapons," undated, *CMC Documents*, 39; Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 174.

Time did not mellow McCone's harsh evaluation of his DDCI. Years later, he said that Carter "just sat on his duff and didn't do anything about anything." McCone/McAuliffe OH, 22.

[22] McCone/McAuliffe OH, 4; Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 139, 159–60, 168, 172–73; Elder/McAuliffe OH3; McCone memoranda, "Soviet MRBMs in Cuba," 31 October 1962, and "U-2 Overflights of Cuba, 29 August through 14 October 1962," 27 February 1963, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 3; Knoche untitled memorandum to McCone, 31 October 1962, ibid., box 1, folder 1; Lehman Report, 23–25, 30–31; James Q. Reber (Chairman, USIB Committee on Reconnaissance) memorandum to Carter, "Historical Analysis of U-2 Overflights of Cuba," ER Files, Job 80R01284A, box 17, folder 5; Hilsman, *Cuban Missile Crisis*, 39–40. CORONA satellites were operational by this time, but the intervals between launches, poor film resolution, and unpredictable cloud cover over Cuba made the system useless during the missile crisis.

Soviet build-up "suppressed," but McCone said doing so would be "extremely dangerous." After further discussion, they decided that such intelligence would be disseminated just to members of USIB, with instructions that they provide it only to officers responsible for preparing analyses for the White House.[23] (U)

McCone had been back in Washington barely two weeks when a personal tragedy pulled him away again. His stepson, Paul Pigott Jr., was killed in a race car crash in California on 14 October. Just in from a weekend on the West Coast when they heard the news, McCone and his wife flew to Los Angeles the next day and took Paul's body to a funeral service and burial in Seattle. While McCone was away, Carter—presumably at the DCI's behest, in his informal capacity as Agency liaison to the Pentagon—tried to have reversed a White House decision on 12 October giving the Air Force control of U-2 missions over Cuba. The White House supposed that if a U-2 were shot down, CIA's cover story would be less convincing than the Department of Defense's Carter unsuccessfully fought to retain CIA command and control of the U-2 flights at least for a few weeks. Remarking that the immediate turnover was "a hell of a way to run a railroad...perfectly obviously a geared operation to get SAC in the act," he talked to senior Air Force and administration officials to get it revoked. McGeorge Bundy dismissed the dispute—"the whole thing looks to me like two quarreling children"—and McCone (who had opposed the turnover on the grounds that the overflights were national intelligence collection and within CIA's jurisdiction) relented, telling Carter, "If that's the way they're going to run the railroad, let them run the goddamn thing."[24]

The infighting, bad weather, and a slow-moving bureaucracy delayed the first U-2 mission under the new reconnaissance schedule until 14 October. The flight traversed western Cuba and brought back photographs of what NPIC analysts determined were three MRBM launch sites in the San Cristobal region. DDI Cline passed the momentous news to Bundy on the evening of the 15th. Bundy told the president the following morning. Speaking over an open line to McCone in Seattle early on the 16th, Elder told the DCI, "That which you and you alone said would happen, has happened."[25] (U)

The "Knot of War" Tightens (U)

During the most intense period of the missile crisis, 16–28 October, McCone attended more than two dozen meetings with the full NSC, the Executive Committee or "ExComm" (the core group of NSC members and outside advisers that met continually through the crisis), one of several ad hoc study groups broken out of the ExComm to deal with specific topics, and the president himself.[26] It was the most grueling episode of McCone's directorship—a frantic marathon of 16-hour-plus workdays filled with urgent discussions and telephone calls, hurried limousine trips, briefings and corridor conferences, meals on the run, political frustrations, bureaucratic wrangles, and social commitments (fulfilled to avoid arousing suspicion before President Kennedy revealed the crisis to the world on 22 October), all conducted under the pall of looming nuclear war. McCone can be seen in some photographs of ExComm meetings in the Cabinet Room at the White House, either sitting at the far end of the large conference table on the president's right under the portrait of George Washington, or giving a briefing while standing next to an easel holding NPIC imagery boards. (His morning intelligence updates, sometimes conducted with Ray Cline and Arthur Lundahl, were held in such a solemn ambience that some ExComm members

[23] McCone, "Memorandum of Discussion with Mr. McGeorge Bundy...," 5 October 1962, and "Memorandum on Donovan Project," 11 October 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 13–15, 17–18; *Presidential Recordings: JFK, II*, 361, 364, 381–82. (U)

[24] *New York Times*, 14 October 1962, and CIA press release, 15 October 1962, DCI Records, Job 80M01009A, box 7, folder 105; McCone calendars; Gregory W. Pedlow and Donald E. Welzenbach, *The Central Intelligence Agency and Overhead Reconnaissance*, 207–9; Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 162–67; Carter memorandum to Bundy, "Command and Control Responsibility for Cuban U-2 Reconnaissance," 13 October 1962, DCI Files, Job 98B01712R, box 1, folder 3; Norman Polmar, *Spyplane: The U-2 History Declassified*, 187–89; Sanders A. Laubenthal, "The Missiles in Cuba, 1962: The Role of SAC Intelligence," paper prepared for US Air Force, SAC, May 1984 (declassified 1999), 16–17; Carter's memoranda and transcripts of telephone conversations in ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 17, folder 18.

[25] CIA memorandum, "Probable Soviet MRBM Sites in Cuba," 16 October 1962, Carter untitled memorandum, 17 October 1962, and Cline, "Memorandum for the Record...Notification of NSC Officials of Intelligence on Missile Bases in Cuba," 27 October 1962, *CMC Documents*, 140, 145, 151; Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 187–217; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 366. At another time, Elder recalled saying, "That which you always expected has occurred." McCone was not informed about the missile sites on the 15th because no one in CIA told Elder about them until the next day. The DCI spoke to Robert Kennedy about the missiles on the morning of the 16th and returned to Washington later in the day. In his absence, Carter, Cline, Arthur Lundahl of NPIC, and missile expert Sidney Graybeal from the Office of Scientific Intelligence briefed senior administration officials. Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 219; 384; McCone meeting schedule for 17–23 October 1962, *CMC Documents*, 157–58; meetings at the White House on 16 October 1962, *Presidential Recordings: JFK, II*, 397–468. (U)

referred to them as "saying grace.") The DCI also attended other ExComm meetings held in a second-floor room in the White House, and in the under secretary of state's conference room at the main Department of State building.[27] (U)

McCone's activities during this period can be tracked through documentary material and transcripts of secretly recorded White House meetings. During the summer, President Kennedy had had the Secret Service install a concealed taping system in the Cabinet Room. Only a handful of people other than the president knew about it: his personal secretary, the two Secret Service agents who installed and maintained the system, Robert Kennedy, and possibly presidential aides Kenneth O'Donnell and Dave Powers. McCone's voice on the tapes, rising above the cracking and hissing, usually sounds flat and authoritative; occasionally it is opinionated or argumentative. The DCI later said he believed his role on the ExComm was to inform it of day-to-day intelligence developments without advocating particular policies. That reflection was not entirely accurate, for in the early days of the crisis, he not only provided intelligence updates but also argued for a forceful military response. He usually offered his opinion only when asked, however, and after a few days, as consensus formed around the quarantine, he did not try to change anyone's mind. Only occasionally, late in the crisis, did he join in policy discussions.[28] (U)

The details of McCone's activities during the crisis can be best understood in the context of his overall perspectives on nuclear weapons and Soviet strategy. His early suspicion of Soviet intentions and his advocacy of a military response to the deployment of offensive missiles generally can be attributed to his views on and experience with nuclear diplomacy. McGeorge Bundy has remarked that McCone "was a believer in nuclear superiority and in the high cost of losing it."

> [He] shared with Khrushchev a great belief in the political utility of nuclear weapons.... He did sincerely and deeply believe that there was reason to attend closely to nuclear balance, to worry about the other man's deployments and possible deployments, and generally to conduct one's self as if a marginal change in the nuclear arms race was a highly important matter. That was his mind-set. He was therefore very well equipped to understand Khrushchev. The rest of us [in the administration] in a way were not.[29] (U)

---

[26] The members of the ExComm—McCone called them "the high-priced help"—included Robert Kennedy, Theodore Sorensen, Dean Rusk, Under Secretary of State George Ball, Deputy Under Secretary of State U. Alexis Johnson, Assistant Secretary of State Edwin Martin, Robert McNamara, Roswell Gilpatric, Assistant Secretary of Defense Paul Nitze, Maxwell Taylor, and Secretary of the Treasury C. Douglas Dillon. Occasional attendees included Vice President Lyndon Johnson, UN Ambassador Adlai Stevenson, presidential assistant Kenneth O'Donnell, USIA Director Donald Wilson, former ambassador to the Soviet Union Llewelyn Thompson, and former US government officials Dean Acheson and Robert Lovett. The president formally established the ExComm on 22 October. NSAM No. 196, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 157; Allison, 133. The metaphor in the section title comes from Khrushchev's letter to Kennedy on 26 October 1962 that signaled the Soviets' interest in a peaceful resolution:

> ...we and you ought not now to pull on the ends of the rope in which you have tied the knot of war, because the more the two of us pull, the tighter that knot will be tied. And a moment may come when that knot will be tied so tight that even he who tied it will not have the strength to untie it, and then it will be necessary to cut that knot, and what that would mean is not for me to explain to you, because you yourself understand perfectly of what terrible forces our countries dispose. Consequently, if there is no intention to tighten that knot and thereby to doom the world to the catastrophe of thermonuclear war, then let us not only relax the forces pulling on the ends of the rope, let us take measures to untie that knot....

FRUS, 1961–1963, VI, Kennedy-Khrushchev Exchanges, 157. (U)

[27] A sense of comedy occasionally arose amid the tension that gripped the ExComm. McCone remembered an occasion when most of the ExComm members packed themselves into one vehicle to avoid newsmen. "We were pushed into the car like the clowns at the circus." After making the comparison at a meeting soon after, "[w]e were all having a good laugh when it suddenly dawned on me, 'What a wonderful target for an assassin—all of the government leaders in one car.'" From then on, he said, ExComm members drove separately to meetings in personal or unmarked official vehicles. Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 300–301. (U)

[28] McCone meeting schedule, 17–23 October 1962, *CMC Documents*, 157–58; McCone calendars, entries for 17–28 October; Allison, 208; *Presidential Recordings: JFK, I*, xvii–xviii, xlix–l, and CD-ROM that accompanies the book set; *Conversation with McCone*, 27; Timothy Naftali, "The Origins of 'Thirteen Days,'" *Miller Center Report* 15, no. 2 (Summer 1999): 23–24. The mechanics of Kennedy's taping system is discussed on the Web site of the University of Virginia's Miller Center for Public Affairs, Presidential Recordings Program, at address www.whitehousetapes.org/pages/tapes_jfk.asp; and in William Doyle, *Inside the Oval Office: The White House Tapes from FDR to Clinton*, 102–4. The accuracy of published transcripts of the tapes is a matter of dispute among historians; see the Appendix on Sources for references to the literature. (U)

The portrayal of McCone in the movie *Thirteen Days* is overdrawn and at times inaccurate, although the actor playing him (Peter White) bears a strong physical resemblance and conveys the DCI's decisive personality. McCone is depicted as a major figure throughout and an assertive advocate of massive airstrikes; he was neither. The movie shows him informing the president at the peak of the crisis that the Agency believed a hardline coup had ousted Khrushchev (no such analysis was made) and that the Soviets had deployed tactical nuclear weapons in Cuba (the US government knew that FROG [free rocket over ground] missiles were on the island, but did not know whether they had been armed with nuclear warheads). Also contrary to the screenplay, McCone did not attend the secret meeting at which the president and a few selected ExComm members decided to trade the nuclear-tipped Jupiter missiles in Turkey for a withdrawal of Soviet offensive missiles from Cuba (discussed below). (U)

[29] Bundy, 420. (U)

McCone anticipated that Khrushchev, living under fear of American nuclear weapons, would try to redress the Soviets' *strategic* disadvantage through a daring *tactical* stroke by forcing the United States to accept a forward offensive deployment, completed in secret, as an accomplished fact. Unlike McNamara, McCone certainly did not think "a missile is a missile." Once the missiles were in place, however, the United States still held the advantage. McCone and like-minded "hawks" on the ExComm judged that the Soviets' strategic inferiority (17 to 1 in deliverable warheads and bombs, 4 to 1 in ICBMs) would have precluded them from doing anything drastic if the United States attacked the sites or invaded the island. In their years in the national security establishment, McCone and like-minded supporters C. Douglas Dillon, Paul Nitze, and Dean Acheson, among others who were not averse to using military force against the Soviets in Cuba, had employed nuclear diplomacy, explicitly or implicitly, to achieve foreign policy objectives in both long-term and crisis situations. They saw the Cuban missile crisis as another in a protracted series of conflicts they had resolved satisfactorily because of US nuclear superiority. As historians James Blight and David Welch have observed, these leaders

> had developed a powerful faith in nuclear coercion during the forties and fifties, the era of American dominance in nuclear weapons. This experience seems to have taught them two lessons: that nuclear superiority and inferiority ought to be judged in the same relative terms as those for non-nuclear weapons; and that the Soviets, vastly behind in deliverable nuclear weapons, could and should have been coerced into behaving themselves. To Dillon and Nitze [and, it could be added, McCone], it was absolutely, inarguably obvious that the nuclear superiority of the United States rendered the Soviets as helpless in the Cuban missile crisis as they were in Berlin—even more so, perhaps, because the United States also enjoyed conventional superiority in the Caribbean. In their view, the United States could and should have moved with impunity.[30] (U)

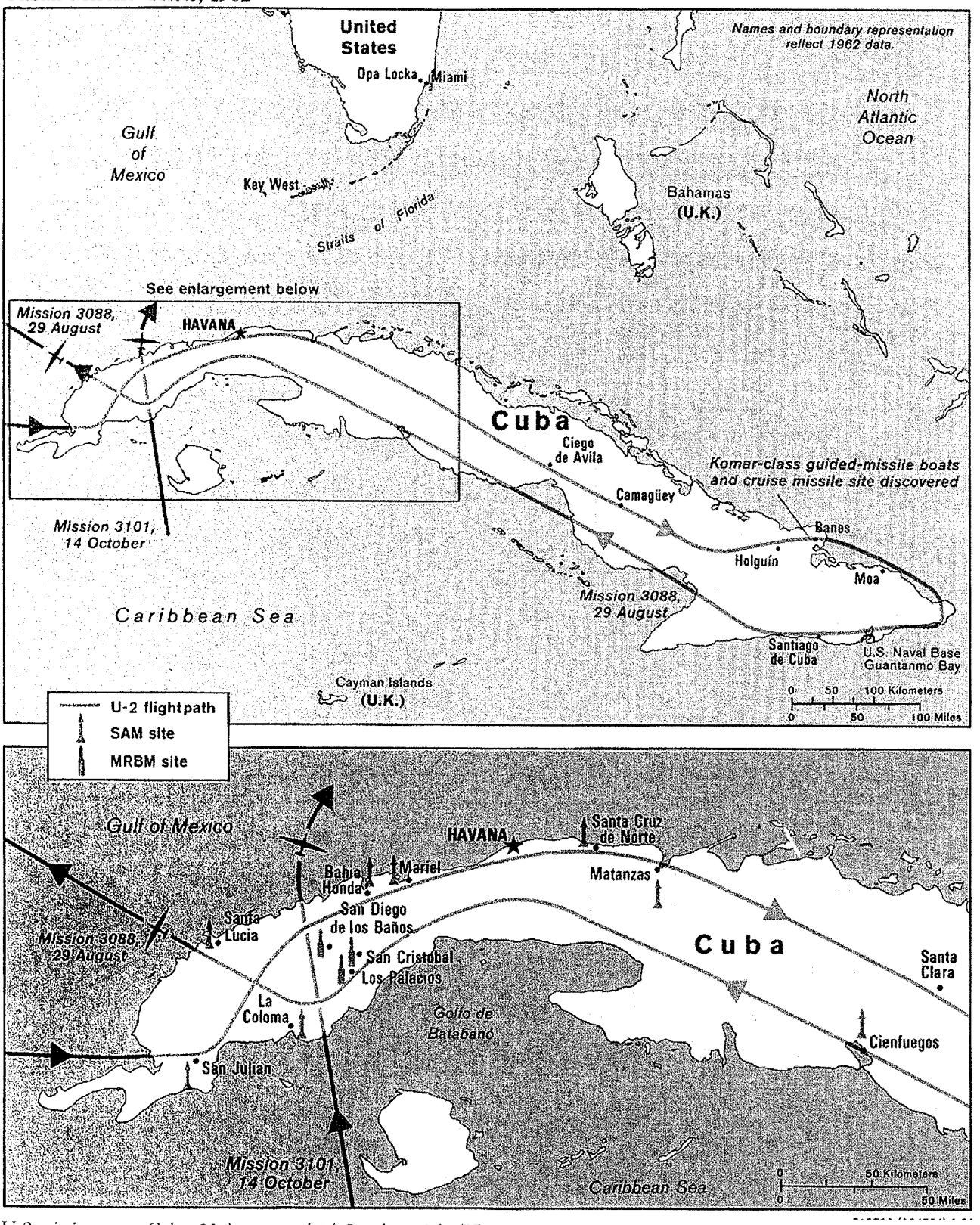
McCone's interpretation of the Soviet Union's action was baldly nationalistic. He construed the deployment of offensive missiles as a direct challenge to the national security of the United States. He believed that unless the Kennedy administration forced Khrushchev to back down, American influence and prestige abroad would decline—especially because US lack of resolution at the Bay of Pigs and inaction after the Berlin Wall went up had led the Soviet leader to think he could get away with such a gambit. Though McCone was one of the few ExComm members who knew all the United States was doing to remove Castro from power, he never suggested that Moscow or Havana might be justified in fearing a US invasion of Cuba. Neither then nor later did he ever indicate that he thought the Kennedys' obsession with Castro or their sometimes truculent posture toward Khrushchev might have helped provoke the crisis. (U)

The DCI's views corresponded with those of what several historians have designated as "traditionalists"—administration defenders such as Theodore Sorensen and Arthur Schlesinger Jr., who believe President Kennedy had to force the Soviet Union to withdraw the missiles to defend the balance of power, preserve NATO, and stand up to Khrushchev's personal affront—as opposed to the interpretations of "revisionists"—mostly academics, independent scholars, and journalists who contend that the president needlessly risked nuclear war so the Republicans could not portray him as "soft" on the communists, and consequently missed opportunities for reaching an early détente with Moscow.[31] Rather, McCone would have agreed with Sorensen's later description of the immediacy of the threat Khrushchev's move posed: "Soviet long-range missiles in Cuba represented a sudden, immediate and more dangerous and secretive change in the balance of power, in clear contradiction of all US commitments and Soviet pledges. It was a move which required a response from the United States, not for reasons of prestige or image but for reasons of national security in the broadest sense." McCone differed with some ExComm members and White House advisers on what tactics the administration should use, but his strategic perspective was "traditionalist." (U)

[30] Idem, "Kennedy and the Nuclear Question," in Kenneth W. Thompson, ed., *Portrait of American Presidents. Volume IV,* 210; Blight and Welch, 219 (see also the interviews with Dillon and McNamara on 169–70 and 196–97, respectively). The formative experience of the "hawks" during the early Cold War is detailed in Gregory Mitrovich, *Undermining the Kremlin.* (U)

[31] Elie Abel, *The Missile Crisis,* 35; SNIE 85-3-62, "The Military Buildup in Cuba," 19 September 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962,* 1071 ("the main purpose of the present military buildup in Cuba is to strengthen the Communist regime there against what the Cubans and Soviets conceive to be a danger that the US may attempt by one means or another to overthrow it"); Thomas G. Paterson, "Commentary: The Defense-of-Cuba Theme and the Missile Crisis," *DH* 14, no. 2 (Spring 1990): 249–56; Richard Ned Lebow, "Domestic Politics and the Cuban Missile Crisis: The Traditional and Revisionist Interpretations Reevaluated," *DH* 14, no. 4 (Fall 1990): 471–92; Theodore C. Sorensen, *The Kennedy Legacy,* 187; Paterson and Brophy, 102. (U)

Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962



U-2 missions over Cuba, 29 August and 14 October 1962 (U)

While McCone certainly was cognizant of the domestic political implications of the crisis, at no time did he interpret it primarily in that context, nor at any point did he advise the president to act in a way principally calculated to benefit the Democratic Party in mid-term elections. He did not, for example, invoke the prospect of electoral defeat to move the president and the ExComm toward a more belligerent course. Nor did McCone, a present-minded empiricist, invoke lessons from history, such as Munich or Korea, as others did to justify a firm approach. The potential political fallout certainly was on his mind, especially when he dealt with the provocative Sen. Keating or when briefing congressional leaders, but in the ExComm, he concentrated on intelligence and national security matters. He most likely would have agreed with Dillon's later assessment: "I don't accept the premise that we were swayed by the question of public opinion or how our choices would fly politically or anything else like that. Obviously, every president has to consider that sort of thing, but that wasn't *our* job."[32] (U)

McCone's attitudes and emotions during these days on the brink were also affected by his encounters with the harried atmosphere and on-the-fly management style of the White House. It was hard for an organized and meticulous executive like McCone to find that the New Frontiersmen had not thought out the implications of their demands on the Soviet Union—that the president was forcing Khrushchev's hand but had little control over the outcome. "No one, as far as I can remember," Bundy later wrote, "thought it necessary in September to consider what we would do if our warnings were disregarded.... President Kennedy...had to begin on the sixteenth [of October] almost from a standing start."[33] This instinctive, reactive approach to a policy matter of such grave import did not endear a hands-on planner like McCone to the Kennedy White House—least of all when the Intelligence Community was under unprecedented and incessant pressure to produce more information than ever before, faster than it ever had, in the rapidly unfolding scenario the DCI had predicted weeks earlier. (U)

While most of the ExComm members shifted positions on specific issues at one time or another, they soon aligned themselves into three groups, depending on their calculation of the risk of nuclear war and the course of action they advocated to end the crisis. "Hawks" favored early and strong use of military force, beginning with airstrikes against the missile sites and moving toward an invasion. "Doves" wanted to avoid any use of force and reach a diplomatic settlement that might even include the dismantling of US nuclear missiles in Turkey. "Owls" sought to maneuver between the hawk and dove positions by mixing mild military force with negotiation. In one scholar's characterization, "hawks were invaders...doves were traders...[and] owls were persuaders."[34] (U)

McCone, Acheson, Dillon, Nitze, and Maxwell Taylor strongly favored an airstrike/invasion/occupation course at first. The hawks' most compelling argument was that if military action were to be carried out, it had to be done quickly, before the missiles became operational. Otherwise, some

[32] Lebow, "Domestic Politics and the Cuban Missile Crisis," 477 n. 31. (U)

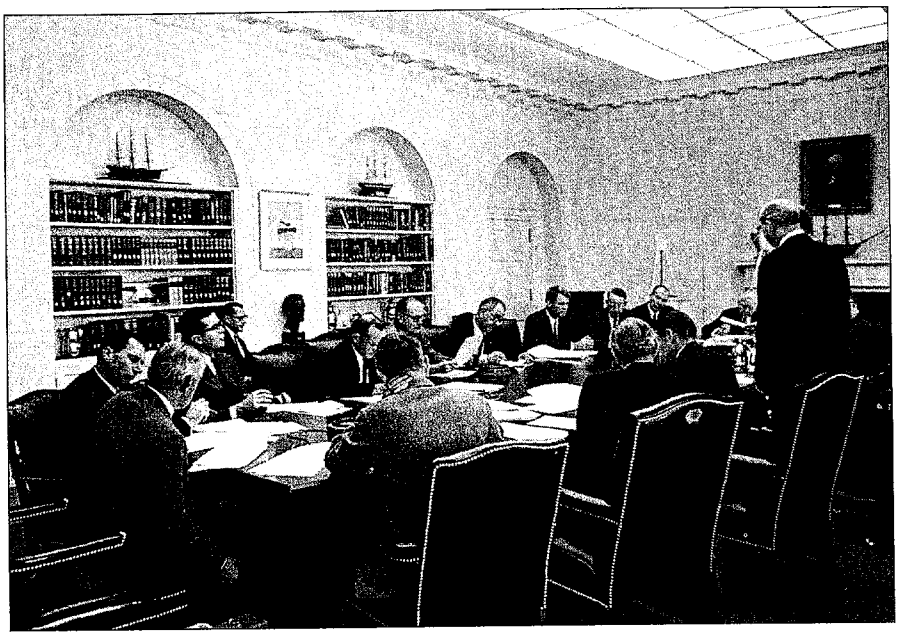
[33] Bundy, 413–14. (U)

[34] James G. Blight, Joseph S. Nye Jr., and David A. Welch, "The Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited," *Foreign Affairs* 66, no. 4 (Fall 1987): 173; Allison, 204. The ExComm's hawks have been mentioned; Stevenson was the principal dove; and Bundy, McNamara, and Ball would be its most influential owls. Maxwell Taylor later termed the ExComm's three options toward the Soviet missiles as "talk them out, squeeze them out, or shoot them out." Thomas G. Paterson, "When Fear Ruled: Rethinking the Cuban Missile Crisis," *New England Journal of History* 52, no. 1 (Fall 1995): 15–16. The group dynamics of the ExComm have been extensively studied from a variety of perspectives. Perhaps the best known is the model of bureaucratic bargaining by rational actors, set forth by Graham Allison in *Essence of Decision*. The basic argument is repeated in the second edition of the book, co-authored by Philip Zelikow, which includes new historical material as well as discourses on epistemology and analytical methodology that are often opaque and irrelevant; see the reviews by Barton J. Bernstein, "Understanding Decisionmaking, U.S. Foreign Policy, and the Cuban Missile Crisis," *International Security* 25, no. 1 (Summer 2000): 134–64; and Bruce Kuklick, "Reconsidering the Missile Crisis and Its Interpretation," in *DH* 25, no. 3 (Summer 2001): 517–23. A nearly impenetrable attempt at political science modeling of the ExComm is Mark L. Haas, "Prospect Theory and the Cuban Missile Crisis," *International Studies Quarterly* 45, no. 2 (June 2001): 241–70. (U)

An interpretive concept used in analyzing the missile crisis that entered the common parlance was "groupthink"—the tendency of a cohesive body of decisionmakers to seek consensus because of social pressures to conform to group norms. See Irving L. Janus, *Victims of Groupthink*, chap. 6. Janus concluded that the ExComm "avoided succumbing to groupthink" because its members "never attained that complacent sense of security that so often emerges when a groupthink-dominated group arrives at a consensus"; because they did not "stereotype" the enemy; and because new developments continually forced them to reconsider their views and, in some cases, reverse their judgments more than once (149, 155, 158–60, 165). A slightly different take on the ExComm's consensus-building derives from Kenneth O'Donnell's recollection that Kennedy already had opted for the quarantine by 19 October—raising the possibility that the president used the ExComm mainly as a vehicle for getting his senior deputies to ratify his prior decision rather than to weigh alternatives. See Michael P. Riccards, "The Dangerous Legacy: John F. Kennedy and the Cuban Missile Crisis," in Paul Harper and Joann P. Krieg, eds., *John F. Kennedy: The Promise Revisited*, 92–95. (U)

Another angle on the ExComm, "crisis-induced stress on decisionmaking," was developed by political scientist Alexander L. George in his contribution to Fredric Solomon and Robert Q. Marston, eds., *The Medical Implications of Nuclear War*, 529–52. According to George, a senior Kennedy administration official told him that two important members of the ExComm (their names were not revealed) "had been unable to cope with the stress, becoming quite passive and unable to fulfill their responsibilities. Their condition was very noticeable, however; others took over their duties..." (541). A review of McCone's participation on the ExComm clearly indicates that he neither was pressured, nor pressured others, toward "groupthink" and that he did not become dysfunctional under the strain. (U)

might survive the airstrikes and be launched against US cities. Moreover, the current deployment was but the entering wedge for a more massive and threatening buildup in Cuba and had to be dealt with rapidly and decisively. The DCI moderated his view during the first few days. Of the four approaches that emerged from the ExComm discussions by 20 October—airstrikes, a blockade cast as an ultimatum to be followed by air attacks, a blockade as a delaying tactic to gauge Soviet intentions, and a blockade as an opening to negotiations—McCone supported the second alternative. Although he came to oppose an airstrike as a first step, he did not believe a blockade alone was enough. He doubted Khrushchev would recognize it; "[w]ith his prestige at stake...he would go right through." Accordingly, McCone argued for a quarantine with the proviso that if the Soviets did not dismantle the offensive missiles within 72 hours, US aircraft would destroy them.[35] (U)



The NSC ExComm shown meeting in the Cabinet Room at the White House. McCone is at center-right near the fireplace. (U) Photo: JFK Library

Details of the ExComm meetings McCone attended chronicle the evolution of his thinking. He first attended a crisis meeting on the morning of 17 October at the Department of State. The previous day, the ExComm had set the outlines for the early discussions he participated in by raising four possible courses of action: selective airstrikes against the missile sites; broader airstrikes that also hit airfields, aircraft, and potential nuclear storage sites; a blockade; and a large-scale amphibious invasion. The informal conference on the 17th, scheduled to precede a meeting with the president at the White House an hour later, included several national security advisers, among them Bundy, Taylor, Ball, and Llewelyn Thompson, a former ambassador to the Soviet Union. The DCI agreed with Thompson that Khrushchev had deployed the missiles in Cuba as a prelude to confrontation over Berlin, and added that the Soviets also wanted to "satisfy their ambitions in Latin America by this show of determination and courage against the American Imperialist" and "establish a 'hallmark' of accomplishment by other Latin American countries...within strike range of the United States." When McNamara raised the subject of Soviet nuclear warheads, McCone noted that recent debriefings of GRU agent Oleg Penkovskiy indicated that Soviet field commanders had much more autonomy than their US counterparts—suggesting they might fire the missiles without Khrushchev's explicit order.[36] (U)

---

[35] "Minutes of the 505th Meeting of the National Security Council," 20 October 1962, and "Minutes of the 506th Meeting of the National Security Council," 21 October 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 132, 143; McCone, "Memorandum for the Files," 20 October 1962, ibid., 137; Sheldon M. Stern, *Averting the "Final Failure"*, 107. See also McCone, "Memorandum of Meeting with the President, Attorney General, Secretary McNamara, General Taylor, and Mr. McCone," 21 October 1962, *CMC Documents*, 241; and McNamara, "Notes on October 21, 1962 Meeting with the President," *The Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962*, 144–45, wherein McCone said the United States should start with a blockade—a surprise airstrike would be seen as a Pearl Harbor-type of attack—but "should be prepared for an air strike and thereafter an invasion." McCone moved to the "blockade plus" option on the 18th or 19th; Robert Kennedy's notes of an ExComm meeting on one of those days listed McCone's name under the heading "strike" with a question mark and the notation "switched" next to it. Thomas, *Robert Kennedy*, 217. By the 20th, the ExComm divided as follows: Taylor and Bundy wanted to start with airstrikes; McCone, Robert Kennedy, Thompson, and Dillon supported the blockade-then-airstrikes approach; Rusk wanted to use the blockade to buy time; and McNamara, Stevenson, and Sorensen wanted to use it as an opening to negotiations. NSC meeting on 20 October 1962, *Presidential Recordings: JFK, II*, 601–2, 614; "Minutes of the 505th Meeting of the National Security Council," 20 October 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 126–36. (U)

[36] McCone, "Memorandum of Meeting...in Secretary Ball's Conference Room...at 0830, 17 October [1962,]" and "Memorandum for Discussion Today, October 17, 1962...The Cuban Situation," *CMC Documents*, 160–62. (U)

McCone then attended the full ExComm meeting at the White House. He presented the latest intelligence—IRBM launch sites had been sighted and IL-28 bombers able to deliver nuclear payloads had been detected—participated in the ensuing discussion, and then, as the White House's informal liaison to the Republican Party, was dispatched to Gettysburg to describe the situation to Dwight Eisenhower. He reported that the former president regarded the situation as "intolerable," would support any decisive military move the administration took, and preferred a "concentrated attack on Havana first." McCone's briefings contributed to Eisenhower's decision to declare publicly on 23 October that "the president's immediate handling of foreign affairs was not a legitimate topic" for debate—a declaration that helped undercut GOP accusations that the administration was playing politics with Cuba on the eve of congressional elections.[37] (U)

From Gettysburg, McCone returned to a late-night ExComm meeting at the Department of State, where he endorsed Taylor's proposal for an airstrike, without prior negotiation, against the missile sites and bombers. (Community analysts now judged that the MRBMs could be ready to launch in as little as 18 hours.) The DCI questioned the value of parleying with Khrushchev at this stage, anticipating that the Soviet leader would stall to delay the US government's response. "[I]t would be somewhat like the Geneva test suspension business. We got into it and we couldn't get out of it!"[38] (U)

While giving the president and the ExComm intelligence updates and joining them in discussions of policy options during the next few days, McCone also oversaw the community's collection and analysis efforts. Every morning, before he went to the White House, he received briefings on the missile sites from NPIC and USIB's Guided Missiles and Astronautics Intelligence Committee (chaired by the head of CIA's Office of Scientific Intelligence, Albert Wheelon). McCone relayed the assessments to the ExComm and received tasking from its members. He then met with USIB to assign requirements for gathering intelligence and assessing its significance. (Because he was so closely involved in policy matters, he temporarily turned over formal chairmanship of the board to DDCI Carter.) USIB reviewed all intelligence on Cuba, approved estimates prepared by BNE and special papers written in response to ExComm or presidential taskings, and reviewed and endorsed recommendations for aerial reconnaissance.[39] (S)

McCone and the other crisis managers were leaning toward a blockade when CIA's senior analysts issued special estimates on 19 and 20 October that inferentially questioned whether that option would work. The Soviets had put the missiles into Cuba, according to the estimates, "to demonstrate that the world balance of forces has shifted so far in their favor that the US can no longer prevent the advance of Soviet offensive power even into its own hemisphere." Consequently, Soviet leaders had too much at stake to back down in the face of a blockade. Moreover, contrary to the judgment of most ExComm members, a blockade would not reduce the likelihood of war. Instead, "the Soviets would be somewhat less likely to retaliate with military force in areas outside Cuba in response to speedy, effective invasion than in response to more limited forms of military action against Cuba." A forceful US response "would be more likely to make the Soviets pause in opening new theaters of conflict than limited action or action which drags out"—such as a blockade.[40] (U)

The estimates notwithstanding, President Kennedy had decided by the 19th to impose a "quarantine" and announce it in a televised speech two days later. McCone commented on the draft text and engaged in other matters related to the address. He cautioned the White House that, in its preoccu-

[37] ExComm meeting on 18 October 1962, *Presidential Recordings: JFK, II*, 535–36; McCone memorandum, "Brief Discussion with the President...17 October 1962," "Memorandum for the File...Conversation with General Eisenhower...," 17 October 1962, and "Memorandum of Discussion with the President Alone, October 21, 1962," *CMC Documents*, 165–68, 243–44. McCone briefed Eisenhower once more during the height of the crisis and twice during November. One of the briefings took place at McCone's Washington residence and was recorded, presumably for use at the White House. At the president's request, McCone also briefed Vice President Johnson privately. McCone calendars, entries for 17 October–30 November 1962; McCone, "Memorandum of Discussion with the President Alone, October 21, 1962," and "Memorandum for the File...Meeting with the Vice President on 21 October 1962," *CMC Documents*, 243–45; Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 325–26. The Soviets never delivered IRBMs to Cuba. Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble"*, 276. (U)

[38] McCone memorandum summarizing meetings on 17 October 1962, dated 19 October 1962, *CMC Documents*, 172; ExComm meeting on 18 October 1962, *Presidential Recordings: JFK, II*, 537. (U)

[39] Carter-Knoche OH, 17; Lay, vol. 3, 419–46; Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 282–84. (S)

[40] SNIE 11-18-62, "Soviet Reactions to Certain US Courses of Action on Cuba," 19 October 1962, and SNIE 11-19-62, "Major Consequences of Certain US Courses of Action on Cuba," 20 October 1962, *CMC Documents*, 197–202, 211–20. The latter SNIE concluded that 16 MRBM launchers were operational, and that the missiles could be fired within eight hours of a decision to launch them. Also on the 20th, a nuclear warhead bunker was identified at one of the missile sites for the first time. US intelligence never confirmed during the crisis that nuclear warheads were in Cuba, but the ExComm assumed—correctly, as it turned out—that they were. (U)

pation with Soviet missiles, it should not overlook its original *bête noire* in the Caribbean—Fidel Castro. "We must not lose sight of the very important objectives of removing the Castro Communist government from Cuba and establishing a climate which would permit the Cuban people to establish a government of their own choice." (Soon after, the attorney general told McCone that he had discussed these concerns with the president, and that the DCI need not worry about them further.) McCone also warned President Kennedy to anticipate criticism that the administration had given too little credence to early HUMINT reports about the missiles and so failed to detect them until the 14 October U-2 mission. Lastly, McCone had a prominent part in the decision to seek support from the governments of the United Kingdom, France, West Germany, and Canada by showing their leaders copies of the aerial photographs before the president's speech.[41] ~~(S)~~

After delivering the quarantine speech on the evening of the 22nd, the president employed McCone's political skills and connections to explain the decision to congressional leaders and prominent journalists. The DCI knew it would be a tough assignment, given the saber rattling of several prominent legislators he had briefed just before the address. "I have been forced to defend the executive branch of the government and CIA against the questions (1) why did we not know about this sooner and (2) [why] did we not estimate or forecast this eventuality." The lawmakers—members of the CIA oversight committees—thought President Kennedy's speech had been effective but still wanted the administration to take stronger military action. McCone, alluding to the White House's tactic of retaining the initiative in the crisis, replied that the United States had put the Soviet Union on notice and could now take military action "at a time of our own choosing and by means of our own determination." The journalists—columnists Arthur Krock and David Lawrence, and investigative reporter Paul Scott—were skeptical of the administration's justification and wondered why official statements as recently as 18 October had indicated that the Soviet buildup was defensive. These exchanges gave McCone a preview of the criticism CIA and the administration would have to weather in the coming months of postmortems about "intelligence failure."[42] (U)

For the next few days, the DCI and the ExComm monitored the Soviet reaction to the blockade—especially the courses of Soviet ships sailing toward the quarantine line, but also Warsaw Pact military activities—and braced themselves for hostilities. To help UN Ambassador Adlai Stevenson make a compelling case before the Security Council, McCone authorized the release of some of the better U-2 and low-level reconnaissance photographs, and sent Cline and Lundahl to New York to brief the ambassador.[43] The weary ExComm members were whipsawed between good news—the OAS unanimously approved the blockade—and bad news [redacted] Soviet submarines moving into the Caribbean. McCone also reported worrisome military developments behind the Iron Curtain: [redacted] The DCI lightened the somber tone on the 23rd with an ironic quip. While waiting for many minutes to be connected to Stevenson in New York, the DCI asked Ball, "George, if it's this

[41] McCone untitled memorandum, 20 October 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 137–38; NSC meeting on 22 October 1962, *Presidential Recordings: JFK, III*, 45; Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 319–21, 328–34. Senior US government emissaries and CIA officers briefed Prime Minister Harold Macmillan of the United Kingdom, President Charles de Gaulle of France, Chancellor Konrad Adenauer of West Germany, and Prime Minister John Diefenbaker of Canada in their respective capitals at various times on 22 October. Sherman Kent, "The Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962: Presenting the Photographic Evidence Abroad," in Donald P. Steury, ed., *Sherman Kent and the Board of National Estimates*, 189–209. Several days later, McCone repeated his admonition about not losing sight of Castro. He opposed any agreement that would "insulate" Cuba from further actions; getting rid of the missiles would not get rid of Castro. ExComm meeting on 26 October 1962, *Presidential Recordings: JFK, III*, 308. Thinking like the maritime magnate he was in private life, McCone had an exchange with McNamara about how requisitioning merchant vessels for an invasion of Cuba would harm the American shipping industry and sectors of the economy that depended on ocean transport. ExComm meeting on 23 October 1962, ibid., 117–19. ~~(S)~~

[42] ExComm meeting on 23 October 1962, *Presidential Recordings: JFK, III*, 105–7; meeting with congressional leadership, 22 October 1962, ibid., 60–99; Stern, *Averting the "Final Failure"*, 159–62; McCone, "Memorandum of Meeting of Executive Committee of the NSC...," "Meetings with Senator Russell, Senator Hickenlooper, and Chairman Vinson," and "Meetings with Mr. Krock, Mr. David Lawrence, and Mr. Scott," all dated 23 October 1962, *CMC Documents*, 283–90; Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 356–62. Arthur Lundahl had an equally important role in the congressional briefing. In keeping with his policy of encouraging congressional oversight, McCone during the crisis appeared twice before joint meetings of the Senate Armed Services and Foreign Relations Committees and once before a joint session of the House Armed Services and Foreign Affairs Committees. In addition, CIA officers gave 15 personal briefings to legislators during the peak of the crisis. Haines and [redacted] 101. ~~(S)~~

[43] Stevenson—humiliated when he was caught using deceptive photographs provided by CIA during the Bay of Pigs debate at the UN—required assurances that the present pictures were as persuasive as claimed. He told the Agency officers, "I hope you are in a position to prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that the missiles exist in Cuba." Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 395. (U)

hard to start a blockade around Cuba, how the hell did we ever start World War II? [Laughter.]"[44] (S)

At the ExComm meeting on the morning of the 24th, McCone interrupted the discussion to report information from the Office of Naval Intelligence that Soviet ships carrying missiles to Cuba had stopped or turned back. "[T]he other fellow just blinked," said Dean Rusk famously, but the danger of war remained high. The Soviets were still hurrying to make their offensive missiles operational, and a naval confrontation at the quarantine line was still possible even though most of the Soviet ships headed toward Cuba had reversed course by the 25th. As Rusk told reporters, "the key issue is the presence of these weapons in Cuba. The object is to get them out of there, without war, if possible." The ExComm agreed that any acceptable resolution to the crisis must include withdrawal of the missiles and an immediate end to construction on the launch sites. In addition, UN inspectors must be permitted into Cuba at once. Two Soviet approaches on the 26th, a back-channel message to an ABC newsman and a discursive but essentially conciliatory personal letter from Khrushchev to the president, suggested the outlines of an agreement: the Soviets would dismantle and remove the offensive missiles in return for a US pledge not to invade Cuba.[45] (U)

That was as far as the ExComm was willing to go just then. McCone and several other members bluntly rejected Stevenson's suggestion, first made on the 20th and reiterated six days later, that the administration propose withdrawing from Guantánamo Naval Base as part of a plan to demilitarize Cuba and removing Jupiter missiles from Turkey in exchange for Soviet withdrawal of their missiles from the island. Stevenson further proposed a "standstill" that included suspending construction on the missile sites, halting ship traffic to Cuba, and lifting the quarantine. His ideas evoked a heated reaction from McCone. Until then, the DCI had restricted himself mostly to dry recitations of the latest intelligence and exchanges about technical operations (such as the use of neutron detectors to determine if ships were carrying nuclear warheads). Except in a few brief, private meetings and telephone calls, he had refrained from entering into policy discussions in detail. Now, however, he thought the administration might be compromising too much. He denied that obsolete Jupiter missiles in Turkey pointed at the Soviet Union were analogous to newer Soviet SS-4 and SS-5 missiles soon to be aimed at the United States. Believing the administration had the upper hand, the DCI snapped back:

> I don't believe, I don't agree with that [Stevenson's proposal], Mr. President. I feel very strongly about it.... [T]he real crux of this matter is the fact that he's got these [missiles] pointed, for all you know, right now at our hearts. And this is going to produce...a situation when we get to Berlin after the elections, which changes the entire balance of world power. It puts us under a very great handicap in carrying out our obligations, not only to our Western European allies, but to the hemisphere. And I think that we've got the momentum now... *That threat must be removed before we can drop the quarantine.* If we drop that quarantine once, we're never going to be able to put it in effect again. And I feel that we *must* say that the quarantine goes on until we are satisfied that these are inoperable. [Italics indicate vocal emphasis. McCone hit the table when he said "inoperable."]

The DCI further insisted that American or Western technicians, not UN officials, inspect the missile sites. "[W]e ought to have sophisticated people on this mission.... We ought to be able to nominate the people that go...British, French... Swedes or Austrians. I want somebody that knows something about this business."[46] (U)

---

[44] 391–93; Bamford, *Body of Secrets*, 112; McCone, "Memorandum for the File...Executive Committee Meeting on 23 October 1962...," McCone Papers, box 6, folder 2; ExComm meeting on 23 October 1962, *Presidential Recordings: JFK, III*, 133–36; Stern, *Averting the "Final Failure"*, 189; McCone, "Memorandum of Meeting of Executive Committee of the NSC, 10:00 a.m., October 23, 1962," *CMC Documents*, 285. (S)

[45] ExComm meeting on 24 October 1962, *Presidential Recordings: JFK, III*, 191–92, 196; Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 391–92; Bamford, *Body of Secrets*, 115–16; Abel, 143; McCone, "Memorandum for the File...Executive Committee Meeting 10/25/62—10:00 a.m.," *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 201. Robert Kennedy later described Khrushchev's letter—transmitted as a cable to the Department of State from the US embassy in Moscow—as "very long and emotional." Kennedy, *Thirteen Days*, 86; *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 235–41. (U)

[46] Stern, *Averting the "Final Failure,"* 190; ExComm meeting on 26 October 1962, *Presidential Recordings: JFK, III*, 310, 312, 317. McCone first conveyed his objections to Stevenson's idea about Guantánamo when the ambassador raised it on the 20th. The DCI called Robert Kennedy, who confirmed with the president that there was no plan to relinquish the installation. McCone thought doing so would "place a crown of jewels on the head of Castro." "Minutes of the 505th Meeting of the National Security Council," and McCone untitled memorandum, both dated 20 October 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 136–37. Sheldon Stern, formerly the historian at the JFK Library, has identified the speaker of the words quoted in the text above as banker-diplomat John McCloy, a latecomer to the ExComm, who would soon lead the US team that negotiated the details of the missile withdrawal. *Averting the "Final Failure"*, 273 and n. 241. However, as indicated below, George Ball—who was present at this meeting—identified McCone as the speaker. (U)

By this time in the crisis, McCone's willingness to trade the missiles in Cuba for those in Turkey had evaporated, falling victim to the reality of Soviet *offensive* missiles, not just SAMs, in Cuba and the conclusion reached in the White House that Khrushchev must be forced to stand down. "I believe the strategic situation has greatly changed with the presence of these weapons in Cuba," he told the ExComm on 26 October. He believed the Soviet escalation had made such a deal neither feasible nor appropriate. Moscow had challenged Washington in its own backyard; no compromise could be made under that kind of duress.[47] ~~(S)~~

McCone leaves the White House after an ExComm meeting. (U)
Photo: Bettmann/CORBIS

In his memoir, George Ball described the reaction of McCone, Dillon, and other hardliners to Stevenson's proposal as "outraged and shrill." The DCI and the other ExComm members, Ball wrote, "violated the calm and objectivity we had tried to maintain...when they intemperately upbraided Stevenson...indicating more the state of anxiety and emotional exhaustion pervading the discussion than any reasoned reaction." Recordings of the ExComm's deliberations indicate, however, that while McCone spoke more rapidly and with more feeling than usual, he did not raise his voice, address Stevenson disrespectfully, or join others in berating the ambassador. Ball's sympathy with Stevenson's proposal may have caused him to exaggerate the tone and tenor of McCone's remarks. By the time of this meeting, the blockade option had been chosen, and McCone believed that Stevenson's idea moved the discussion backward and introduced an extra, unneeded concession (Guantánamo). Contributing to the DCI's uncompromising attitude was his awareness that airstrikes stood a better chance than before of immobilizing most of the missiles because more was known about the sites' locations and defenses. The United States held the advantage strategically and tactically and, by his way of thinking, need not make concessions.[48] (U)

Right after the exchange with Stevenson on the 26th, McCone sought and received a private audience with the president (his only one during the crisis). With Lundahl, he showed the president new, low-level photographs of the MRBM sites. He said he was "growing increasingly concerned about following a political route...unless the initial and immediate step is to ensure that these missile are immobilized." When the president responded that the only other ways to accomplish that besides diplomacy were sabotage, an airstrike, or an invasion, the DCI discounted the prospects for commando raids and cautioned that "[i]nvading is going to be a much more serious undertaking than most people realize" because the "very lethal stuff" the Soviets had deployed to Cuba would "give an invading force a pretty bad time." "[I]f we invade, by the time we get to these sites after a very bloody fight...they'll [still] be pointing [the missiles] at us." When the president asked what he would advise doing, McCone replied, "This would lead me to moving quickly on an airstrike" if negotiations failed. "[W]e feel there's a higher probability of immobilizing these missiles—all of them—with a strike than...our thinking has tended in the last few days." Later in the day, the White House issued a public statement that "the development of ballistic missile sites in Cuba continues at a rapid pace...there is no evidence to date...that there is any intention to dismantle or discontinue work on these missile sites."[49] (U)

---

[47] McCone, "Memorandum of Meeting with the President," 23 August 1962, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 2; ExComm Meeting on 26 October 1962, *Presidential Recordings: JFK, III*, 312. ~~(S)~~

[48] George W. Ball, *The Past Has Another Pattern: Memoirs*, 295; ExComm meeting on 26 October 1962, *Presidential Recordings: JFK, III*, 312. The definitive treatment of the Jupiters' relationship to the Cuban missile crisis is Philip Nash, *The Other Missiles of October*, chaps. 5 and 6. Also on the 26th, McCone told the ExComm that Soviet FROG missiles had been detected in Cuba after a reconnaissance flight the day before. Knowledge of their destructiveness moved US policymakers more toward the airstrike option. ExComm meeting on 26 October 1962, *Presidential Recordings: JFK, III*, 327; Mark Kramer, "Tactical Nuclear Weapons, Soviet Command Authority, and the Cuban Missile Crisis," and James G. Blight, Bruce J. Allyn, and David A. Welch, "Kramer vs. Kramer: Or, How Can You Have Revisionism in the Absence of Orthodoxy," *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, Issue 3 (Fall 1993): 40–50. (U)

[49] McCone meeting with President Kennedy on 26 October 1962, *Presidential Recordings; JFK, III*, 323–29; Stern, *Averting the "Final Failure"*, 281–84; Department of State, *American Foreign Policy: Current Documents, 1962*, 437–38. (U)

MONGOOSE Bites Back (U)

As the crisis deepened, problems with Operation MONGOOSE caused a furious row among the project's overstressed, overtired principals. The causes were disagreements over bureaucratic authority and operational priorities and confusion over the scheduling of clandestine missions. Personal differences made already brittle tempers snap. At meetings on the 26th, the animosity between Robert Kennedy, Task Force W chief William Harvey, MONGOOSE director Edward Lansdale, and McCone was laid bare. MONGOOSE project officers suffered the most in the end. (U)

Lansdale resisted CIA's plan to divert resources from MONGOOSE to collect intelligence on the Soviet missile sites and assist a possible military invasion—specifically, the infiltration of 10 five-man "pathfinder" teams into Cuba via submarine. Lansdale complained that the Agency was not supporting MONGOOSE sufficiently and that the JCS and the secretary of defense had not kept him informed of preinvasion planning. McCone—noting that "there was considerable criticism by innuendo of the CIA/Lansdale relationship"—termed Lansdale's general complaint about CIA's lack of assistance to MONGOOSE "completely erroneous" and defended the pathfinder operation as a crisis collection activity fully within the Agency's area of responsibility. He allowed that Lansdale may have "misunderstood" some Agency actions taken according to "longstanding arrangements" to support military activities. For McCone, the question was whether espionage and invasion-related missions should be undertaken in MONGOOSE channels, which he regarded as too cumbersome to be timely in a crisis, or as joint CIA-Pentagon activities. Pending a decision by "Higher Authority" about how the operations should be managed, he decided to halt the 50-man infiltration. He did not want CIA pressured into launching the operation at that politically precarious time. If there was a military requirement for the mission, then the White House and the Pentagon would have to take clear responsibility for ordering it.[50] ~~(S)~~

Sabotage and harassment missions at this phase of the crisis presented a problem of a different kind and degree, however, and Harvey got into deep trouble with McCone and Kennedy—even though he thought he was carrying out their wishes. Just after the presence of the Soviet missiles was confirmed and Robert Kennedy had criticized MONGOOSE managers for not accomplishing much, the SGA authorized stepped-up sabotage operations on the island. Even though the White House did not want any operational "flaps" that would give the Kremlin a justification for having or keeping missiles in Cuba, it told MONGOOSE officers to proceed with their missions. At no time during the missile crisis did the White House order project managers to curtail or suspend operations; they were only told to be especially careful that none caused problems. Following up on the SGA's instructions, Harvey and Task Force W decided to again mount an attack on the Matahambre copper mine and so informed the attorney general and Lansdale. A six-man team landed on the night of 19 October. Four operatives responsible for caching weapons were recovered two days later, but the two who were to conduct the sabotage were not.[51] ~~(S)~~

When the collection and sabotage missions were discussed at an SGA meeting on the 26th, several members sensed a disaster in the making.[52] Lansdale disavowed any knowledge

---

[50] Carter memorandum to McCone, "...MONGOOSE Operations and General Lansdale's Problems," 25 October 1962, and McCone memorandum, "...Meeting of the NSC Executive Committee, 26 October 1962...," *CMC Documents*, 311–12, 317–18; [Lansdale,] "Operation MONGOOSE: Main Points to Consider[,] 26 October 1962," McCone, "Memorandum of MONGOOSE Meeting...October 26, 1962...," and Harvey memorandum to McCone, "Chronology of the Matahambre Mine Sabotage Operation," 14 November 1962, ER Files, Job 91S00741R, box 1, folder 3; Bromley Smith (NSC), "Summary Record of the Sixth Meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Security Council," and Thomas Parrott, "Minutes of Meeting of the Special Group (Augmented) on Operation Mongoose...," both dated 26 October 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 221, 230; ExComm meeting on 26 October 1962, *Presidential Recordings: JFK, III*, 288–90; *Robert Kennedy in His Own Words*, 378; Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy*, 533; Samuel Halpern, "Revisiting the Cuban Missile Crisis," *Society of Historians of American Foreign Relations Newsletter*, March 1994: 6–7; Halpern/McAuliffe OH, 1–2; Corn, 93; D.J. Brennan memorandum to W.C. Sullivan (both FBI), "Central Intelligence Agency, Anti-Castro Activities, Internal Security—Cuba," 30 October 1962, Harvey FBI FOIA file, doc. no. 62-80750-4026; Carter untitled memorandum, 30 October 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 4; McCone untitled memorandum to the attorney general et al., 30 October 1962, National Security Files, Cuba, Subjects: Intelligence Materials, 1 October–12 November 1962, JFK Library. ~~(S)~~

[51] Harvey memorandum to McCone, "Chronology of the Matahambre Mine Sabotage Operation," 14 November 1962, ER Files, Job 91S00741R, box 1, folder 3; Halpern, 4–5; Branch and Crile, 62. ~~(S)~~

[52] Sources for this paragraph and the next two are: Seymour Hersh, *The Dark Side of Camelot*, 375, citing interview with Halpern; Martin, *Wilderness of Mirrors*, 144; Church Committee, *Alleged Assassination Plots*, 148; [Lansdale,] "Operation MONGOOSE: Main Points to Consider[,] 26 October 1962," McCone, "Memorandum of MONGOOSE Meeting...October 26, 1962...," and Harvey memorandum to McCone, "Chronology of the Matahambre Mine Sabotage Operation," 14 November 1962, ER Files, Job 91S00741R, box 1, folder 3; Smith, "Summary Record of the Sixth Meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Security Council," and Parrott, "Minutes of Meeting of the Special Group (Augmented) on Operation Mongoose...," both dated 26 October 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 221, 230; Brennan memorandum to Sullivan, "Central Intelligence Agency, Anti-Castro Activities, Internal Security—Cuba," 30 October 1962, Harvey FBI FOIA file, doc. no. 62-80750-4026. ~~(S)~~

of or responsibility for the operations, and Maxwell Taylor said the JCS had not laid on any such requirements. Robert Kennedy recalled that he was "furious" because "nobody knew what they were doing," and that he had learned about the missions only because an exile contact had called him. He said he told Harvey, "You were dealing with people's lives...and then you're going to go off with a half-assed operation such as this." He also questioned the rationale for using valuable expatriate assets at a time when Cuban security was so tight and the chance of capture so high.

At this point, McCone perceived the correlation of forces and made a bureaucratic calculation to side with the White House. "Mr. Harvey's defense of the [Matahambre] plan was not conclusive," he tersely recounted. "He could not demonstrate a need, he could give no direct answers as to either the casualties or the specific successes of the teams which have been infiltrated, and he could not explain why or when three teams were reported 'en route by small craft today,' when he...had been specifically ordered by DCI on 10/25 to withhold ten scheduled teams until after the meeting." To make matters worse, Harvey added that the teams could not be recalled because they could not be contacted. According to Harvey's deputy Samuel Halpern, at some point in the meeting—whether before, during, or after Kennedy harangued Harvey is unclear—the Task Force W chief said "in essence, 'We wouldn't be in such trouble now if you guys had had some balls in the Bay of Pigs.'" By some accounts, Kennedy then stormed out of the room. Once the atmosphere cooled a bit, the SGA decided to suspend all agent infiltrations of any kind for the time being. Lansdale, reaffirmed as overall coordinator of MONGOOSE-related activities, was directed to develop requirements from the Joint Chiefs and the Department of State for future operations, but the overall project was put in abeyance pending the outcome of negotiations between Washington and Moscow.[53]

By the time McCone returned to Langley that evening, he had had enough of wrong-headed subordinates. He must have been especially riled that a celebrated CIA officer, rather than the Kennedys' protégé Lansdale, had blundered, thus reflecting badly on the Agency's competence and his own management ability. He told Ray Cline that "Harvey has destroyed himself today. His usefulness is ended." The

Sherman Kent (U)

DCI summoned Harvey for a dressing down, immediately after which he called in Sherman Kent, who had written the estimate that had failed to predict the Soviet missile deployment. "I've just been made a charter member of the bleeding asshole society," the salty tongued Kent recalled telling a colleague after the woodshed session with the DCI, "but Bill Harvey's the president." Harvey's fate was sealed when, just over two weeks after the president instructed Task Force W to suspend "all action, maritime, and black infiltration operations," Radio Havana announced on 13 November that Cuban security forces had "smashed" an attempt to sabotage the Matahambre mine and described two apprehended raiders as CIA agents.

McCone had wanted to fire Harvey several times before—perhaps most so when Harvey dozed off during a meeting with him soon after he took over—but Richard Helms always dissuaded him. This time, McCone removed Harvey from Task Force W—"When you take a plant supervisor and make him president of the company, it doesn't always work out," the DCI reportedly said—and replaced him with Desmond FitzGerald, the suave chief of the DDP's Far East Division. Harvey spent the next several months at a desk in the basement of Headquarters, without an assignment while the Seventh Floor considered what to

[53] McCone and President Kennedy briefly discussed another kind of sabotage—having MONGOOSE operatives attack the missile sites—on the 26th. The president asked whether the sites were vulnerable from the ground. "Can one bullet do much to that [a missile]?" McCone responded, "Well, if a fella went across there with bullet punctures, it could. It invariably wreaks hell with it." The president replied, "Would it blow or is it just...?" Arthur Lundahl answered, "It would be fuming red nitric acid, sir," which, he claimed, would be very hard to contain. Stern, *Averting the "Final Failure"*, 283. No such attack on any site was authorized or conducted. (U)

do with him. Helms—acting in McCone's absence-[redacted] McCone disapproved but did not rescind the assignment.[redacted]

Climax (U)

The longest, and perhaps the most nerve-wracking, day of the crisis for McCone and his colleagues came on the 27th. Four days into the blockade, with all 24 MRBM launchers considered operational and construction on the IRBM sites proceeding rapidly, a series of wrenching events occurred to bring the United States and the Soviet Union closer to war than ever. For the first time, Cuban antiaircraft gunners fired on a low-level US reconnaissance mission, hitting one plane; Soviet MiGs scrambled to intercept a U-2 that had strayed into Soviet airspace near Alaska; an Air Force pilot was killed when his U-2 was shot down near a SAM site in eastern Cuba; and Radio Moscow broadcast a second, much less conciliatory, message from Khrushchev to Kennedy demanding that the United States remove its missiles from Turkey in exchange for the withdrawal of Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba.[55] (U)

Told of the U-2 shootdown, McCone became almost livid. He urged "a more stark, *violent* protest" against this "new order of defiance of...public statements [Khrushchev] made.... If there's any continuation of this, we've got to take those SAM sites out of there." Several other ExComm members—among them McNamara, Taylor, and Dillon—agreed. After the discussion digressed into the effect trading the missiles in Turkey might have on NATO, McCone brought the members back to the attack on the U-2 and insisted that it be dealt with on its own.

> I think that we ought to take this occasion to send directly to Khrushchev, by *fast wire*, the most *violent* protest, and demand that he...stop this business and stop it right away, or we're gonna take those SAM sites out *immediately*.... Tell him we're gonna conduct surveillance as announced by the President, and *one shot* and in we come.... I wouldn't try to negotiate a deal. I'd send him a *threatening* letter. I'd say: "You made public an offer; we'll accept that offer. But you shot down planes today before we even had a chance to send you a letter, despite the fact that *you* knew that we were sending *unarmed* planes on a publicly announced surveillance. Now, we're telling you, Mr. Khrushchev...that we are sending unarmed planes over Cuba. If one of them is shot up, we're going to take your installations out, and you can expect it. And therefore, you issue an order immediately."

When McNamara said the threat should be disassociated from the missiles in Turkey, McCone disagreed: "No, I wouldn't, because when the pressure lets up, you'll get another proposal. You'll have Berlin thrown in. That's the point I want to make, Bob. You'll get something else thrown in tomorrow. You'll get Berlin." Later in the meeting, the DCI put on the table a bluntly worded draft response demanding that the Soviets immediately stop work on the offensive missile bases while the two governments discussed Khrushchev's proposals. He was not inclined to give the Soviet leader a face-saving way out of the crisis. The letter that President Kennedy sent to Khrushchev later that evening—drafted at the same time elsewhere by Robert Kennedy and Ted Sorensen—left out the threat to attack SAM sites.[56] (U)

---

[54] Martin, *Wilderness of Mirrors*, 144–46; Harvey memorandum to McCone, "Chronology of the Matahambre Mine Sabotage Operation," 14 November 1962, ER Files, Job 91S00741R, box 1, folder 3; Harvey memorandum to McCone, "Havana Reports About the Arrest of Two CIA Agents," 14 November 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 19, folder 2; Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets*, 137, 141; Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 28. After the fact, Helms supported Harvey on sending the pathfinders during the middle of the crisis. "I don't remember anything about it, but...if these were purely intelligence missions, he didn't have to get approval, because NSCID 5 gave the Agency the right to run intelligence operations without going around [checking with] the Government." Helms/McAuliffe OH, 6. Kent later wrote that the erroneous estimate made the next year of his life "really hideous. McCone never let me forget...." The DCI did not fire Kent, however, perhaps because he "had to admit in his heart of hearts that his argument...was not based on concrete facts, but was more an intuitive hunch...and that, considering the available information, the paper had come out just about the way that it ought to have been written, even though it was incorrect." "Reminiscences of a Varied Life," 262–63.[redacted]

[55] The ExComm did not know about another incident—revealed in 2002—that, in combination with the other events of 27 October, might have precipitated superpower hostilities. A US Navy destroyer enforcing the quarantine dropped depth charges on a Soviet submarine, unaware that the vessel was armed with a nuclear torpedo. The Soviet officers on the submarine thought they were under attack and almost retaliated by firing the torpedo at the destroyer. ABC News "Nightline" broadcast, 12 October 2002, Nexis doc. no. ON30331353; "Recollections of Vadim Orlov (USSR Submarine B-59)...," in National Security Archive, "The Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962: A Political Perspective after 40 Years," accessed at the National Security Archive Web site at www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/nsa/cuba_mis_cri/press3.html; "Soviet Submariner 'Saved the World' in Cuban Crisis," *Times (London)*, 14 October 2002, Nexis doc. no. ON29768871. Two other incidents on the 27th, not discussed by the ExComm, also could have led to a Soviet miscalculation and an American overreaction: the US Air Force test launched an unarmed ICBM from a site alongside armed ICBMs; and the US military received a false early warning radar report, supposedly of a missile launched from Cuba toward the US mainland. Stern, *Averting the "Final Failure"*, 308 n. 275. (U)

[56] Stern, *Averting the "Final Failure"*, 345, 357–58, 362; ExComm meeting on 27 October 1962, *Presidential Recordings: JFK, III*, 461–63, 472–74. McCone speculated that the second Soviet communication included the demand about the missiles in Turkey because the US ambassador's earlier talks with Ankara about them had been divulged to the Kremlin, possibly through espionage. Ibid., 445. (U)

McCone and several other ExComm members were not aware that the president and the attorney general were doing exactly what the DCI had just advised them not to: trading away the Jupiters. After the 1600 ExComm meeting broke up over three hours later, President Kennedy gathered eight of its 17 members in the Oval Office to discuss briefly what Robert Kennedy should say about the Jupiters in a private conversation with Soviet Ambassador Anatoliy Dobrynin that evening. McCone—with his adamant opposition to an overt swap on the record—was not included, even though he had attended both previous sessions of the full ExComm that day. Only Bundy, Rusk, McNamara, Sorensen, Ball, Thompson, Gilpatric, and the attorney general were present when, according to Bundy, they agreed that "while there could be no deal over the missiles in Turkey, the president was determined to get them out and would do so once the Cuban crisis was resolved." The group "agreed without hesitation that no one not in the room was to be informed of this additional message." While the president responded to Khrushchev's first missive and ignored the second—agreeing, upon verification that the missiles had been withdrawn, to "remove promptly the quarantine measures...and give assurances against an invasion of Cuba"—Robert Kennedy told Dobrynin that the Jupiters would be taken out within several months but not explicitly as part of an agreement about the missiles in Cuba.[57] (U)

Together the two moves worked to end the crisis. In a letter to the president the next morning, Khrushchev agreed to "dismantle the arms which you described as offensive, and to crate and return them to the Soviet Union." McCone was on his way to Sunday Mass when he heard on his car radio that the Soviets were going to make an important announcement within the hour. He later said it was the longest Mass he ever attended. When he learned of Moscow's standdown after leaving church, "I could hardly believe my ears." He then went to an 1100 ExComm meeting with the president. The members recommended that Kennedy respond favorably and publicly to the announcement, even though the official text had not arrived. "Decision made to release a brief statement welcoming the K message," McCone wrote. The US government's formal response was sent to Khrushchev later that afternoon. The most perilous phase of the missile crisis had passed peaceably.[58] (U)

Verify, Then Trust (U)

Senior DI officer R. Jack Smith recalled that after the missile crisis, the CIA "went back to the standard flow of international events, an Iraqi coup here, a Soviet provocation there, a governmental collapse there."[59] In the weeks and months after the "Thirteen Days," however, there was still much crisis-related business for McCone, the Agency, and the administration. As Dean Rusk had cautioned on 28 October, "it is not yet the time to say this is over." Although the threat of imminent war had passed, and the pace and urgency of activity diminished, the crisis would not really end until late November. By then, most of the modalities for implementing the Kennedy-Khrushchev agreement—in particular, defining "offensive weapons"—were in place. The Soviets were dismantling and removing their offensive missiles from Cuba, US Navy vessels were checking the Russian ships carrying them, the Air Force was flying reconnaissance missions over the island, and the United Nations would inspect the missile sites. After three weeks of talks and fulminations, a Kremlin envoy persuaded an embittered Castro to release the Soviet IL-28 medium bombers, after which the blockade was lifted. (U)

In the meantime, the US government was making arrangements with Turkey and Italy for phasing out the Jupiter missiles in their territory. Lastly, American and Soviet negotiators agreed on most issues, such as withdrawals of troops and other weapons. However, Washington dropped its no-invasion pledge from the final settlement that President Kennedy had announced on 20 November

[57] Kai Bird, *The Color of Truth: McGeorge Bundy and William Bundy*, 238; Bundy, 432–33; Nash, *The Other Missiles of October*, 141–43; Department of State telegram to US Embassy in Moscow, DEPTEL 1015, 27 October 1962, and Robert Kennedy untitled memorandum to Rusk, 30 October 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 268–71; Kennedy, *Thirteen Days*, 108–9; Allyn et al., "Essence of Revision," 164. The missile trade meeting remained secret for over a quarter-century until McGeorge Bundy revealed it in his memoir. Besides McCone, Dillon, Lyndon Johnson, U. Alexis Johnson, Lyman Lemnitzer, Nitze, Walt Rostow, Taylor, and Donald Wilson had attended the 1600 meeting but were not invited to the small gathering afterward. McCone and Taylor returned for another ExComm meeting at 0900. When the DCI brought up his still unacted upon letter from earlier in the day—not knowing that the RFK-Dobrynin meeting had rendered it moot—the president brushed him off with the comment, "We've got enough messages right now, John." Stern, *Averting the "Final Failure"*, 380. (U)

[58] Khrushchev message to the president, 28 October 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 279–83; McCone's notes, "National Security Council Meeting—Executive Committee, October 28—11:00 a.m.," *CMC Documents*, 345. In appreciation of the ExComm's work, President Kennedy gave each member a commemorative silver calendar of the month of October, with highlighted engraving of the 13 days from the 16th to the 28th. Each calendar, prepared by Tiffany's, was inscribed with the initials of the president and the individual recipient. Stern, *Averting the "Final Failure"*, 403. (U)

[59] Smith, *The Unknown CIA*, 188. (U)

because Castro had negated part of the 27–28 October deal by refusing to allow on-site inspections. Afterward, the Intelligence Community monitored Moscow's compliance through all-source collection against a wide range of Soviet and Cuban targets, and the ExComm continued to meet for several months. By early February, the community concluded that the Soviets had withdrawn all strategic weapons and 5,000 of what were thought to be about 22,500 military personnel from Cuba and dismantled the offensive missile sites.[60] (U)

During this period, McCone became ensnared in several policy and bureaucratic controversies over verification of Soviet adherence to the agreement and interpretation of Soviet activities involving Cuba. In addition to giving regular intelligence briefings to the ExComm, he also served as a one-man warning committee, presenting pessimistic forecasts—some based on CIA analyses, some derived from his own interpretations—about Khrushchev's and Castro's intentions in the Western Hemisphere. He conveyed judgments that the missile crisis had left Cuba stronger militarily; that Soviet support for Castro would remain the same or increase as Khrushchev tried to demonstrate that he had not betrayed a revolutionary ally; and that the Soviets would still use Cuba as an outpost from which to threaten US interests in the region. Because they had put the SAMs in Cuba to protect the offensive missiles, their retention of the SAMs meant that they intended to redeploy offensive missiles. As the weeks passed, he described the situation as "ominous." Moscow might even "replace Castro and his regime with their own people, thus producing a true satellite from where the Soviets could effectively operate against established governments in Latin America." Except for Vice President Lyndon Johnson, McCone noted at one point, ExComm members "did not seem disposed to go as far" in their assessments as he did.[61] (U)

McCone made sure that whenever he was away from Headquarters, his concerns about Soviet designs in Cuba were transmitted to senior policymakers instead of being held at Langley as they had been during his honeymoon the previous summer. While on a trip [redacted] n February 1963, for example, McCone warned Carter of several signs that the Soviets might be reintroducing offensive missiles into Cuba—unexplained construction activity and cargo shipments, and unacceptable disarmament proposals, among others—that, in his view, could not be rationalized away by lack of corroborating evidence. He told the DDCI to forward his message to Bundy, McNamara, Rusk, and all USIB members. There was to be no repeat of the disconnect that occurred with the "honeymoon cables."[62] (U)

As it had before, the White House employed McCone as its emissary to the Republican Party to short circuit GOP criticism and as a back-channel intermediary with the press to give intelligence "spin" to stories. After briefing Eisenhower in early November, the DCI dismissed Ike's criticisms of the agreement between Kennedy and Khrushchev as "reflect[ing]...the views of fault-finding politicians," although he himself did not fully support the administration's approach. With the president's assent, McCone released aerial photography of Cuba to the press to substantiate administration claims about the Soviet withdrawal. In response to numerous press reports about Cuba sourced to refugees, President Kennedy directed McCone to encourage media outlets to verify such reports and not just print them as received. McCone passed on the assignment to Carter, Helms, and CIA's public affairs officer. The DDCI and the DDP both responded that this was not an appropriate task

[60] The immediate postcrisis period is well covered in Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, chaps. 22–24; Fursenko and Naftali, chap. 15; and Beschloss, *The Crisis Years*, chap. 19. President Kennedy's 20 November announcement is in *American Foreign Policy: Current Documents, 1962*, 461–63. McCone was one of several NSC members who argued for dropping the no-invasion pledge. Without the quarantine, they reasoned, the United States had no other leverage against the Soviet Union. Stern, *Averting the "Final Failure"*, 410. The Soviet presence in Cuba as of early 1963 is outlined in "Senators Report Soviet Build-up in Cuba Continues," *New York Times*, 26 January 1963, Western Hemisphere—Cuba clipping file, box 2, HIC; McCone's notes for a congressional leadership briefing in January, and his public statement on the military situation in Cuba in February, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI/XII/XII, American Republics; Cuba 1961–1962; Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath: Microfiche Supplement*, docs. 592 and 613. A snapshot of the situation a few months later is provided in OCI Memorandum 1544/63, "Soviet Forces in Cuba," 7 May 1963, National Security Files, Country Series, Cuba-Subject, Intelligence Material, Vol. IV, JFK Library. Khrushchev pledged to Castro that one Soviet brigade would remain in Cuba. The administration realized that those troops, along with delivery systems for short-range nuclear weapons, would stay as long as it withheld a no-invasion pledge. The US government's "discovery" of the Soviet ground unit in 1979 caused a temporary crisis in relations with Moscow. David Coleman, "After the Cuban Missile Crisis: Why Short-Range Nuclear Weapons Delivery Systems Stayed in Cuba," *Miller Center Report* 18, no. 4 (Fall 2002): 36–39. (U)

[61] McCone, "Problems We Face in the Future in Cuba," 5 November 1962, "Long Term Outlook for Cuba," 13 November 1962, message to Bundy, 25 November 1962, untitled memorandum to the president, 3 December 1962, untitled memorandum to Bundy, 5 December 1962, memorandum of meeting with Rusk, McNamara, and Ball on 5 February 1963, and untitled memorandum to Rusk, 13 February 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 377, 445–46, 530, 574, 694, 698–99; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Secretary Rusk...November 10, 1962...," and "Memorandum of Executive Committee Meeting, November 12, 1962," *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI/XII/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, docs. 513 and 519. (U)

[62] McCone message to Rusk, 13 February 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 698–99; McCone untitled memorandum to Carter, 13 February 1963, HS Files, Job 03-01724R, box 2, folder 1. (U)

for the Agency, but the DCI told them to do it anyway. In another of many illustrations of White House sensitivity to press coverage of Cuba, McCone complained to publisher Henry Luce about a single word in a *Time* story that supposedly exaggerated an event that could be interpreted as making the administration look bad.[63] ~~(S)~~

McCone and CIA armed US negotiator John J. McCloy with thorough and timely intelligence on Cuba for use in his talks with Vasiliy Kuznetsov, the Soviet first deputy minister of foreign affairs, on the details of the Kennedy-Khrushchev agreement.[64] The DCI, in turn, was kept informed of progress in the discussions by McCloy, Bundy, and the Department of State. He thought the United States should extract as many concessions as it could from the Soviets because it was negotiating from a position of preponderant strength, and he feared that the administration might be too accommodating. He certainly would have approved of the decision to have McCloy—the archetypical Eastern establishment figure, with a lengthy record of prominent service in government and business, and a reputation as a tough bargainer—lead the US negotiators instead of the "soft" Adlai Stevenson. (McCone may have recommended McCloy to the president for this assignment.) ~~(S)~~

The DCI did not want the administration, which had already surrendered some of its diplomatic initiative to the United Nations, to find itself forced into acceding to new conditions to enable Khrushchev to save face after "betraying" Castro. He did not believe the United States would have to go as far as allowing Soviet inspection of American facilities in return for US inspections of Soviet offensive missile sites in Cuba, nor did he regard a categorical "no invasion" pledge as wise or necessary. In addition, McCone was concerned that the White House would not insist that the Soviets deactivate their SAM sites in Cuba. He regarded the Soviets' insistence that the SAMs be left operational—and later indications that they were improving their air defense systems in Cuba—as signs that they intended to prevent US reconnaissance aircraft from detecting any redeployment of offensive missiles on the island. He advised the administration to "devise diplomatic moves" to prevent a U-2 shootdown that might lead to a US military operation against Soviet forces in Cuba. ~~(S)~~

The DCI disapproved of UN-controlled inspections of the missile sites—he wanted American officials to have the main role—and he would not allow US intelligence capabilities to be compromised in the process of verifying the Soviet withdrawal. To begin with, he refused to give the United Nations aerial photographs of the missile sites unless a US official accompanied the UN inspectors to Cuba. The head of the UN delegation, Acting Secretary General U Thant, insisted that only representatives of neutral countries participate in the inspections. As a compromise, the US mission to the UN proposed that a notebook containing aerial photographs be prepared for a briefing of U Thant's military adviser by a US military expert. McCone agreed, but he would not let the UN official take the photographs to Cuba. (Instead, the official clipped pictures of them from the *New York Times* and other newspapers.)[66] (U)

A related but larger issue was the UN's lack of high-level photoreconnaissance aircraft or photointerpretation ability. Of the countries participating in the proposed verification procedures, only the United Kingdom had pilots and analysts trained to work with other than low- or medium-level photography. McCone argued against making the U-2 available to the UN and proposed instead that it be assigned older or obsolete US Air Force reconnaissance aircraft and

[63] McCone, "Memorandum of Conversation Between President Kennedy and Former President Eisenhower," 17 November 1962, Smith, "Summary Record of the 31st Meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Security Council," 29 November 1962, McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Executive Committee of NSC Meeting...29 November [1962,]" and Smith, "Summary Record of the 509th National Security Council Meeting," 13 March 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 478–79, 541, 543, 717; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Briefing of General Eisenhower, 7 November 1962—Gettysburg," and Bundy, "NSC Executive Committee Record of Action, November 12, 1962...," *FRUS, 1961–1963, XIXII/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, docs. 502 and 516; "Summary Record of NSC Executive Committee Meeting No. 39," 31 January 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XIII, West Europe and Canada*, 163; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...News Report in the *Evening Star* as of 6 November [1962,]" ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 4. McCone's call to Luce was prompted by the White House's annoyance that the word "flood" overstated the number of persons returning to Cuba from the United States, and implied that the victims of Castro's tyranny thought something was wrong with US policy toward the Cuban regime. ~~(S)~~

[64] Sources for this paragraph and the next are: McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Mr. Bundy...," 5 November 1962, untitled memorandum to the president, 3 December 1962, and untitled memorandum to Bundy, 5 December 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 375–76, 574, 582–83; McCone, "Memorandum of Meeting of Executive Committee of the NSC, November 5, 1962," "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Secretary Rusk on...November 10, 1962...," and letter to Bundy, 22 November 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XIXII/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, docs. 492, 513, and 552; Bundy message to McCone with attachment, 24 November 1962, ER Files, Job 80R01284A, box 17, folder 5; Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 319–20, 492. ~~(S)~~

[66] Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 502. (U)

aerial cameras. After some debate over who in the US government really was in charge of air assets, the Joint Chiefs reluctantly accepted McCone's suggestion.[67] (U)

Although aerial reconnaissance was vital to monitoring the Soviet withdrawal, McCone was bothered that the administration appeared to be relying on it too heavily and might be willing to negotiate away the politically more sensitive process of on-site inspection. "We seem to be drifting into a frame of mind that high-level photography is all we need, that it will show everything that must be seen, that it is preferable to on-site inspection, that really on-site inspection is undesirable because it would be impartially conducted and...would automatically end over-flights...." Overflights could not, for example, confirm or dispel persistent reports that the Soviets had hidden missiles in caves; only on-site inspections and on-the-ground clandestine reporting could. Accordingly, McCone told Helms that he wanted an all-out HUMINT attack against the Cuban target, to include "all incoming and outgoing shipping, commerce, aircraft, personnel and material...all military activities on the island, all security activities, as well as governmental affairs," and using the "highest possible level" of third country cooperation achievable to obtain that coverage. In keeping with a presidential directive, any refugee reporting about offensive missiles was to be sourced as carefully as possible and acted upon quickly if deemed reliable and useful. Soon after the new year, Bundy chided McCone by observing that an English journalist had scooped CIA on the missile story and suggested the Agency needed to collect intelligence on Cuba more aggressively. The DCI promptly directed Carter and Helms to develop "an imaginative program" that developed assets other than Task Force W's.

The overflight question proved to be persistent. McCone grew increasingly dissatisfied with the way policy considerations influenced decisions on intelligence collection against Cuba. At almost every ExComm meeting in early 1963, he argued—usually without success—for more low-level overflights. "I took the position," he wrote later, "that the Intelligence Community felt that they [redacted] that we knew all there was to know about what was going on in Cuba." He wanted regular low-level missions as a standard collection method, but the administration preferred to use them only when [redacted] indicated they were needed against a specific target. He regarded this as self-defeating. The administration wanted to avoid two situations: provoking a diplomatic incident while the Soviet withdrawal and the Bay of Pigs prisoner negotiations were underway, and giving the Soviets an opportunity to create a "controlled crisis" and regain the diplomatic initiative. Yet, ill-informed decisions and rash actions were far more likely without adequate intelligence to appraise reports of nefarious Soviet activity. The DCI believed CIA could best dodge the trap by sidestepping policy considerations and adopting a posture of pure objectivity. "We should not let our recommendations concerning...intelligence collection be controlled by our own unilateral judgment or opinion of the policy implications for which others have both responsibility and authority," he told the DDCI.[69]

McCone did not endorse the procedure for planning Cuban overflights that was in place as of January 1963 because he believed CIA's role was too limited. After USIB's Committee on Reconnaissance (COMOR) chose the targets, SAC programmed all the flights and informed NPIC and DIA of the planned routes. The only Agency input in this process came from CIA's member on the COMOR;

[67] Ibid., 509–10. Low-flying aerial reconnaissance of Cuba afforded McCone a humorous opportunity to explain to President Kennedy the difference between an "occupied" and "unoccupied" missile site. He elicited a booming laugh when, to illustrate the former, he showed the president a photograph of an open-roofed, three-hole latrine with a Soviet soldier sitting inside. Ibid., 522–23. (U)

[68] McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Executive Committee of NSC Meeting...29 November [1962,]" and "Memorandum for the Record...Executive Committee Meeting—10 Dec 1962...," *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 543, 610; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Executive Meeting of the NSC...3 Nov '62," and Bundy, "NSC Executive Committee Record of Action, November 12, 1962...," *FRUS, 1961–1963, X/XI/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, docs. 485 and 516; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...News Report in the *Evening Star* as of 6 November [1962,]" ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 4; Carter untitled memorandum to Helms, Action Memorandum No. A-112, 21 November 1962, DDO Files, Job 78-02888R, box 1, folder 15; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting between DCI and Mr. Bundy...," 11 January 1963, and [redacted] Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 560–61; Carbon-ell, 227–34. The Intelligence Community did not conclude until mid-April 1963 that the Soviets had not concealed nuclear missiles in Cuba. "No IRBMs Remain in Cuba, US Says," *New York Times*, 15 April 1965, Western Hemisphere—Cuba clipping file, box 3, HIC.

[69] McCone, "Meeting with the President, Rusk, McCone, McNamara, and Bundy, 25 April [1963], to discuss low-level overflights," *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 785–86; ONE memorandum to McCone, "Probable Soviet Reaction to US Retaliation After Shoot-down of a U-2 Reconnaissance Aircraft over Cuba," 26 April 1963, HS Files, Job 03-01724R, box 2, folder 3; McCone untitled memorandum to Carter, 9 February 1963, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 5.

there was no Seventh Floor review of the resulting decisions. Moreover, the JCS chairman ordered an overflight suspension during Christmas 1962 without telling his civilian superiors or the DCI. McCone, noting that he and USIB would bear the responsibility for a future intelligence failure, indicated for the record that he wanted to control the overflight process through the new National Reconnaissance Office, which would plan the missions, with the Joint Chiefs and SAC carrying them out.[70] ~~(S)~~

McCone also thought mission plans should emphasize quality of coverage over quantity. In keeping with the administration's emphasis on avoiding a shootdown, many flights were being aborted as soon as Soviet radar "painted" them. McCone believed the Soviets would interpret this practice as a sign of weakness, so he thought it would be better to fly fewer missions that covered more territory and completed their routes instead of withdrawing as soon as radar tracked them. Reducing the number of missions also would enable NPIC interpreters to scrutinize the growing volume of images more carefully. At the same time, McCone (joined by the Joint Chiefs and USIB) recommended against suspending low-level reconnaissance flights because they were needed for intelligence collection and psychological warfare. He believed the situation in Cuba was threatening because the Soviets' moves were more provocative and costly than necessary if they intended only to control Castro and keep Cuba as a base for subverting Latin America. In early February, McCone and the JCS agreed to recommend to the president that control of each overflight rest with the secretary of defense and the DCI (or in their absence, their respective senior deputies). The president turned them down. ~~(S)~~

The case of the Soviet cargo ship *Zelenskiy* typified the bureaucratic maze McCone had to run to obtain the intelligence he thought the administration needed to assess Soviet intentions in Cuba.[71] The episode also highlighted the limits on his authority to direct Intelligence Community activity. In early February 1963, CIA analysts reported that the Cuba-bound *Zelenskiy* appeared to be carrying military hardware. McCone wanted low-level photography of the ship after it docked in Mariel on the seventh or eighth. He was especially insistent after two U-2 flights on the eighth did not reveal enough about the ship's mission and the take from a third flight would not be read out until the ninth. He contacted Gen. Taylor, who questioned whether there was enough evidence to justify low-level missions. But he said he would agree to low-level flights if they were part of a battery of flights he had recommended but which the president and secretary of defense had just rejected. McCone then called McNamara, who disagreed with the Agency's assessment of the ship's cargo, was not concerned about military hardware shipments, would not recommend low-level flights, and concluded that the decision, being "political," was the president's. Next, Bundy told McCone that the president more or less had left the decision to the two of them; Bundy was inclined to run a low-level mission. ~~(S)~~

Early on the ninth, Arthur Lundahl reported from NPIC that imagery from the last U-2 mission of the day before revealed that unidentified crates, including some 35 feet long and seven feet wide, had been unloaded from the *Zelenskiy*. Over McNamara's and Taylor's objections but with Rusk's and Bundy's concurrence, McCone recommended an immediate low-level mission over Mariel. At this point, the subject disappears from McCone's records, suggesting that the mission was not conducted or that US suspicions were not proven or that other matters took precedence.[72] ~~(S)~~

---

[70] Sources for this paragraph and the next are: McCone, "Memorandum for the Files—Various Activities," 3 January 1963, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Secretary McNamara...," 8 January 1963, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting in Mr. Bundy's office—12 January 1963...", and "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting with the Joint Chiefs...," 1 February 1963, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 4; McCone untitled memorandum about meeting with Rusk, McNamara, and Ball on 5 February 1963, and NSAM No. 208, "Guidelines for the Planning of Cuban Overflights," 4 December 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 590–91, 694; McCone untitled memorandum to Taylor, 1 February 1963, and memorandum about ExComm meeting on 5 February 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XIXIIXII: Microfiche Supplement*, docs. 609 and 614; Committee on Reconnaissance, "Memorandum for the United States Intelligence Board...Requirements for Low-Level Reconnaissance of Cuba," 21 February 1963, doc. 621 in ibid. ~~(S)~~

[71] McCone, "Memorandum...The Ship, Kimik Zelenskiy," 9 February 1963, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 4. ~~(S)~~

[72] In January and February 1963, another Soviet ship headed for Cuba, the *Simferopol*, attracted the administration's attention when it was suspected of carrying military equipment. McCone and the COMOR recommended that the ship be subjected to round-the-clock photography at four-hour intervals, but the cautious president authorized only high-level surveillance. Smith, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting with the President—Cuba Aerial Reconnaissance," 12 January 1963, and "Summary Record of the 40th Meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Security Council," 5 February 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 663–64, 691; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion during a meeting with the President of Cuban aerial reconnaissance," 12 January 1963, and untitled memorandum to Bundy, 15 January 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XIXIIXII: Microfiche Supplement*, docs. 595 and 596; McCone memorandum about ExComm meeting on 5 February 1963, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 3; "Report on Cuba Notes Significant Arms Cargo," Washington *Sunday Star*, and "Arms Cargo to Cuba Reported," *Washington Post*, both 27 January 1963, Western Hemisphere—Cuba clipping file, box 2, HIC. ~~(S)~~

After Castro released a group of American detainees in April 1963 (see Chapter 6), McCone saw no reason to continue restricting low-level overflights. Over McNamara's opposition, he persuaded the president to authorize a limited schedule of missions. To preempt the charge that he was just trying to expand the intelligence inventory, McCone directed DDCI Carter to develop a target list based on specific and immediate collection needs—for example, areas that had gone unsurveyed for up to two weeks at a time. The president halted low-level missions while Castro was visiting Moscow in late May, but the overflights resumed in early June. McCone noted that McNamara and Gilpatric "disassociated themselves from any recommendations for low-level photography"—presumably so the DCI would be blamed if an American spy aircraft were shot down.[73] (S)

McCone eventually lost the fight for Cuban overflights. In September 1963, U-2 missions over Cuba were cut back from weekly to biweekly, full coverage of the island was to be achieved every 14 days rather than every seven, and daily low-level flights were no longer required. The restrictions may seem hard to reconcile with the fact that the United States was conducting a sizable covert war against Castro at the same time; presumably aerial reconnaissance would have helped track its progress. The administration's judgment may have been that the coverage was adequate to monitor the effects of sporadic operations and that running risks with high-profile aerial activity was hard to square with the need to maintain deniability for covert actions.[74] (S)

The Intelligence Failure Flap (U)

Many scholars and officials have long regarded the Cuban missile crisis as the high point of the Kennedy administration's foreign policy and of CIA's history and McCone's directorship.[75] As crisis coordinator for the Intelligence Community, McCone had enabled the Agency to demonstrate its expertise at collecting and analyzing all-source reporting and at producing timely updates and assessments. The new and improved analytic apparatus he had initiated "got the critical evidence [U-2 photos and Penkovskiy's reports] in time for the president to digest it in private," according to Ray Cline, and enabled CIA to regain some of the stature it had lost because of the Bay of Pigs. The intelligence triumph McCone and the Agency claimed to have scored soon turned into political and bureaucratic tribulation, however. In the words of a CIA officer at the time, "the wolves had...begun to howl about intelligence shortcomings [even] during the period prior to the crisis."[76] (U)

The postmortem of CIA's handling of the missiles in Cuba confronted McCone with one of the most difficult political and managerial problems of his directorship. He had to answer legitimate and opportunistic complaints from the White House, antagonists in the community, the increasingly intrusive PFIAB, overseers in Congress, and second-guessers in the media. While giving due credit for the Agency's essential contributions in resolving the crisis (especially NPIC, which he formally commended), he had to acknowledge its lapses. The problem was amorphous, "a failure...of imagination," as Roger Hilsman later put it, "a failure to probe and speculate, to ask perceptive questions of the data, rather than of explaining away the obvious." McCone had to propose changes in procedures and organization that would prevent a recurrence without appearing to have succumbed to political pressure, engaged in a superficial public relations exercise, or adopted a series of quick fixes. At the same time, McCone was not about to let himself be tied to the failings of other officials and departments,

[73] McCone, "Memorandum of Discussion of Low-Level Flight Over Cuba...," 21 May 1963, and "Discussions at Special Meeting of the Special Group (5412), 28 May 1963," McCone Papers, box 6, folder 4; McCone, "Meeting with the President, Rusk, McCone, McNamara, and Bundy, 25 April [1963], to discuss low-level overflights," *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 785–86; McCone memorandum to Special Group, "Low-Level Reconnaissance of Cuba," 25 April 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X/XI/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 669. The administration's caution regarding Cuba also inhibited intelligence collection against other targets such as Indonesia, and McCone made the same case against limiting overflights for diplomatic reasons. He was the only member of the Special Group to support overflights of Indonesia; the others did not want to aggravate the administration's sensitive relations with President Sukarno. As with Cuba, McCone noted that USIB—including the Department of State's representative—requested the reconnaissance flights, and he reserved the right to appeal an adverse Special Group decision directly to the president. McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Special Group 5412—31 January 1963," McCone Papers, box 1, folder 5. (S)

[74] McCone memorandum to USIB Executive Secretary on Cuban overflight program, 25 September 1963, McCone Papers, box 5, folder 18; McCone memorandum to chairman of COMOR, 25 September 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X/XI/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 710. (S)

[75] From the broader perspectives of strategic theory and the management of national security policy, however, political scientist Eliot A. Cohen asked in 1986 "whether the uniqueness of the crisis does not destroy its value as an archetype, or worse, make it a profoundly misleading subject for reflection.... The Cuban Missile Crisis is and will remain singularly unrepresentative of postwar crises, and it offers precious little historical guidance for American statesmen today." Cohen, "Why We Should Stop Studying the Cuban Missile Crisis," *National Interest*, Winter 1986: 3–13 (quotes on 5, 6). (U)

[76] Cline, *Secrets, Spies, and Scholars*, 197; "Memorandum for the Record...Daily White House Staff Meeting—31 October 1962," *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 319. An early critical assessment from an informed outsider was Hanson W. Baldwin, "An Intelligence Gap: Experts Ask if Reports on Cuba Were Poor or Adapted to Policy," *New York Times*, 31 October 1962, Cuban Missile Crisis clipping file, HIC. (U)

especially because his own prediction about Soviet plans had proven to be true. His reproaches of CIA subordinates and community officers and his combative responses to outside criticisms made it appear at times that he was more interested in protecting himself and finding scapegoats than in trying to rectify problems in the intelligence process. In the most illustrative example of this tendency, several Agency officers have vividly recounted—in words and phrases such as "browbeaten," "flailing away," "tonguelashed," and "cut to ribbons"—a USIB meeting at the East Building in which McCone went around the table berating the members for their departments' errors during the crisis but saving his worst invective for Marshall Carter.[77] ~~(S)~~

McCone's accurate assessment of the Soviet missiles did not enhance his standing with administration officials, who came to resent him. Some of their antipathy was explainable by the "voice in the wilderness" quality of McCone's conclusion and the intrepid insightfulness that outside observers and CIA apologists attributed to him after the fact. Bundy reportedly remarked to an Agency official, "I'm so tired of listening to McCone say he was right, I never want to hear it again." After the president told McCone, "You were right all along," McNamara—with a nod of agreement from Rusk—said, "But for the wrong reasons." Years later, McCone recalled that "there was a good deal of tension in high levels of the government and for that reason I didn't ask McNamara what he meant by that. I wish I had." (When Walter Elder did pose the question, McNamara replied, "I don't know. I had to say something.") Lyman Kirkpatrick suspected that Pentagon officials—particularly McNamara—privately criticized McCone for not predicting the crisis "hard enough" in order to divert attention from their own analytical lapses. In defending the administration, Robert Kennedy claimed in 1965 that McCone trumpeted his analytical acumen in government circles to divert questions about why CIA did not know about the missiles sooner. McCone's sometimes self-congratulatory performance raised doubts about his political loyalties, especially when congressional Republicans used his postcrisis testimony before a Senate committee to support assertions that the administration had blundered. The attorney general later said that the DCI "is very careful of his own position.... I think he liked the President very much. But he liked one person more—and that was John McCone.... We all knew that John McCone was moving among senators and congressmen peddling this idea [that he had warned the president] because it got him off the hook."[78] (U)

During the few months following the crisis, McCone fought several skirmishes with administration officials over CIA collection and analysis before and during the crisis. The curtailment of overflights in September became a special point of contention. The DCI took issue with several ExComm members who insisted that no CIA request for a reconnaissance mission in September had been denied. While that was literally true, McCone noted that administration qualms about causing a diplomatic incident had forced CIA to program flights away from the SAM sites that were shown later to be protecting the offensive missiles. The erroneous 19 September SNIE also came up repeatedly, as ExComm members questioned whether Agency analysts had overlooked or discounted HUMINT reporting on the missile deployment. McCone had to concede the point, saying that the judgment "prompted evaluators to downgrade the fragmentary reports" from refugees and liaison contacts in Cuba received in late September and early October 1962. Privately to the president, McCone admitted these lapses but offered assurances that they were neither serious nor "necessarily applicable to other danger spots throughout the world."[79] ~~(S)~~

---

[77] Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*, 187; Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 524; Carter-Knoche OH, 3–5; Halpern/McAuliffe OH, 20, 41–42, 44–45; Knoche, 470. After the meeting, according to Carter's adjutant "Hank" Knoche, the DDCI told McCone privately that "he risked CIA's demoralization and ruination by disowning his Agency associates" and offered to resign. "McCone listened and made no response." Ibid. A more diplomatic debate between collectors and analysts took place in the pages of CIA's in-house journal in late 1964; see J.J. Rumpelmayer, "The Missiles in Cuba," and Harlow T. Munson and W.P. Southard, "Two Witnesses for the Defense," *Studies* 8, no. 4 (Fall 1964): 87–98. ~~(S)~~

[78] Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets*, 162; Krock, *Memoirs*, 380; Schecter and Deriabin, 335, citing interviews with McCone and Elder on 29 August and 6 October 1988, respectively; Kirkpatrick/McAuliffe OH, 11–12; *Congressional Record—Senate*, 9 May 1963, 7731 ff.; *Robert Kennedy In His Own Words*, 14–16. Bundy's annoyance with McCone in part may be attributed to his own embarrassment at missing the missile call. In a television interview held the same day that the MRBMs were discovered, he said: "I know there is no present evidence, and I think there is no present likelihood, that the Cubans and the Cuban Government and the Soviet Government would, in combination, attempt to install a major offensive capability." Abel, 11. During the postmortems on the administration's handling of the crisis, some White House officials claimed that Robert Kennedy predicted the Soviet missile deployment long before McCone did. In a 19 April 1961 memorandum to the president, Kennedy wrote: "The time has come for a showdown [with Castro] for in a year or two years the situation will be vastly worse. If we don't want Russia to set up missile bases in Cuba, we had better decide now what we are willing to do to stop it." *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 304. (U)

[79] McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Executive Committee of NSC Meeting...29 November 1962," and "Memorandum of Discussion with President Kennedy," 16 November 1962, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 2; "Summary Record of the 14th Meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Security Council...October 31, 1962...," *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 320–21; "Memorandum for the Director...Your Briefings of the NSC Executive Committee," 3 November 1962, *CMC Documents*, 355. ~~(S)~~

President Kennedy's panel of outside intelligence consultants—PFIAB—was dissatisfied with the judgment that although CIA had erred in not anticipating the offensive missile deployment, overall it had performed well before and during the crisis. The board notified McCone in mid-November that it wanted an all-source, community-wide review of collection and analysis of the Soviet buildup in Cuba. The DCI—who already had given such an accounting in early November—was touchy about PFIAB's monitoring role, and he became further annoyed when he learned that its executive secretary, J. Patrick Coyne, was in Miami talking about the crisis to Americans and Cubans involved in the Bay of Pigs operation (and who therefore might be biased against the Agency). McCone complained to the board that Coyne had no authority to interview CIA officers and assets and objected to Coyne's "general attitude of interfering with and criticizing destructively rather than helping the community." Clark Clifford and other PFIAB members strongly defended Coyne in principle, telling the DCI that the board's secretary or any other designee "could do anything they wished, or were directed [to] in pursuing the Board's basic responsibility." They admitted, however, that Coyne had exceeded his brief in Miami. This mutual prickliness would characterize McCone's and PFIAB's dealings throughout the missile crisis postmortem.[80] (C)

McCone wanted the community-wide review to permit the board to look ahead, not back—to address "not whether we could have done differently," an easy but not very useful critique, "but whether there were deficiencies which we could do something about"—that is, to identify practical improvements that could be made. He anticipated, however, that PFIAB would pay more attention to oversights and slip-ups than to systemic problems: analysts supposedly did not pay enough attention to clandestine reports about developments in Cuba; the DCI's admonition to corroborate agent reporting with other sources might have been construed so strictly as to have constituted suppression; USIB's management of satellite overflights during September was unimaginative; CIA Headquarters did not distribute the "honeymoon cables" adequately; SAC's takeover of U-2 overflights was untimely and dubious.[81] (S)

McCone previewed some preliminary findings at a meeting with the board in early December. His briefing and replies to questions emphasized the scope of HUMINT reporting the Agency had acquired on Cuba during the months before the crisis. The DCI also addressed some problems with aerial reconnaissance that arose during September and October.[82] (S)

The massive report that McCone carefully reviewed and presented to PFIAB on 26 December—a 48-page synopsis and evaluation of intelligence activities between 14 April and 22 October 1962, plus four volumes of documentary annexes, together measuring four inches thick—addressed those points and more. After identifying the now-familiar errors, the DCI's report gave the community a generally good grade. The impression the sheer bulk of material left was that, for the most part, the agencies collected the right kinds of information on the proper targets and prepared and disseminated reports, bulletins, and analyses to policymakers in a timely fashion. The report even went so far as to posit that the *Soviets* committed the key intelligence errors: They had grossly underestimated US ability to detect offensive weapons in Cuba and seriously misjudged its resolve to get them withdrawn.[83] (C)

The after-action review did not accomplish what McCone wanted. He came away from a meeting with PFIAB on 27 December believing that the board thought the report was "more or less of a white-wash," and that CIA's lack of response to early information of Soviet military deployments in Cuba was "an intelligence failure which brought us close

[80] James R. Killian letter to McCone, 14 November 1962, McCone Papers, box 4, folder 11; Killian OH, 37; Kirkpatrick memoranda, "DCI's Briefing of President's Board...9 November 1962," and "Meeting with the President's Board...7 December 1962, CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 8, folder 140; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion at DCI Residence...attended by DCI and members of the President's Advisory Board...," 28 December 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 3. (S)

[81] McCone memorandum to USIB principals, 14 November 1962, McCone Papers, box 4, folder 11. (S)

[82] Elder untitled memorandum, 7 December 1962, McCone Papers, box 1, folder 1; McCone, "Notes for Mr. Earman," 17 December 1962, ibid., box 4, folder 11; McCone, "Notes re Report to PFIAB re Cuba," 20 December 1962, ibid., box 2, folder 3; chart titled "Clandestine Services Agents and Related Assets," attached to Kirkpatrick, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting with the PFIAB...7 December 1962," CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 8, folder 140. (S)

[83] "Interim Report to the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board on Intelligence Community Activities Relating to the Cuban Arms Build-Up...," 26 December 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 20. The community report was drafted by an interagency working group chaired by CIA's Inspector General, John Earman, and comprising senior analytical officers or managers from the Agency, the Department of State, DIA, and NSA. (C)

to disaster." Clifford wrote that McCone's praise for CIA's performance was a "snow job" and that "*estimators had limited themselves to preconceived notions*" about Soviet intent (emphasis in original). PFIAB was decidedly dissatisfied with the DCI's explanation of the reason the Agency did not pass on the instructions and opinions in his "honeymoon cables" to USIB and the White House. McCone—ironically, using Carter's self-defenses—said his views were personal judgments that the DI and BNE had rejected already and that Agency officers then in charge had access to "hard intelligence" not available to him when he wrote the cables. The board did not accept this "no official standing" rationale, which contradicted McCone's attempts elsewhere to portray himself as the only one in the administration to have made the right call from the first.[84] ~~(S)~~

The DCI and the DDCI faced more pointed questioning from board members on 28 December. Addressing the inadequacies of HUMINT, McCone explained that MONGOOSE teams collected intelligence on sabotage targets and possible resistance assets, not on Soviet military activities. Carter said the "honeymoon cables" were not deemed significant at the time they were received and that, in retrospect, he still would not have disseminated them to any policymaker who did not already know McCone's views on the subject.[85] ~~(S)~~

Probably to take some of the sting out of PFIAB's forthcoming final report, McCone privately gave President Kennedy his own assessment of the Intelligence Community's performance during the crisis. The DCI met with the president during the latter's long Christmas vacation in Palm Beach, Florida, in early January 1963. He said the PFIAB report "called the glass of water half full, not half empty," and that although he believed the community had done a creditable job overall, it had made some notable collection oversights and analytical errors. "Failure to press aggressively [for an] overflight program between August 29th and October 14th...due to timidity throughout the government...for fear of a 'U-2 incident'...foreclosed earlier detection of the existence of offensive missiles." In addition, because

> of [a] conviction on the part of government officials and intelligence estimators that the Soviets would not accept the responsibility of a confrontation which would result from placing of offensive missiles in Cuba...the estimators and others in Government failed to fully evaluate many indicators which, if carefully analyzed, would lead to the conclusion that something more than defensive armament was going into Cuba. (U)

President Kennedy was less critical, noting that it was reasonable for community estimators to assume that the Soviets would not place themselves in a militarily indefensible position. "In general the president agreed with Sherman Kent's position that the Soviets made a bad guess as to our response" to the placement of the SAM sites. McCone might reasonably have concluded from these guardedly favorable comments that the White House would support him and the community in the upcoming conflict with PFIAB.[86] (U)

In its final report, issued on 4 February 1963, PFIAB clearly distinguished between the community's performance before and after 14 October 1962, when offensive missiles in Cuba were discovered. After that date, observed PFIAB, the community performed exceptionally well, especially in the areas of photographic surveillance and analysis, communications and electronics intelligence, and the application of earlier reporting on Soviet strategic missile and air defense installations to the Cuban situation. Before 14 October, however, PFIAB found the community's performance to have been seriously wanting. "In view of the fact that the Soviet move came dangerously close to success in an area less than ninety miles from our shores, the absence of useful early warning of the enemy's intention must be stressed." "The focused sense of urgency or alarm which might well have stimulated a greater effort" was lacking. "[T]he manner in which intelligence indicators were handled...may well be the most serious flaw in our intelligence system, and...if uncorrected, could lead to the gravest consequences."

---

[84] McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion at DCI Residence...attended by DCI and members of the President's Advisory Board...," 28 December 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 3; Clifford, 358. ~~(S)~~

[85] Kirkpatrick memoranda, "Meeting of the DCI with the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board...," "Meeting of Lieutenant General Marshall S. Carter...with the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board...," both 28 December 1962, and "The DCI's Report on His Dinner with the President's Board," 31 December 1962, CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 8, folder 140. ~~(S)~~

[86] McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting with the President...5 January 1963," *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 651–53. (U)

PFIAB did reach one positive conclusion of note: it found no evidence to support allegations that the administration had manipulated intelligence on the Soviet buildup for partisan political purposes. The White House benefited most from that finding, however; the blame for intelligence failures lay squarely with the community—and, by extension, the DCI.[87]

The PFIAB report raised McCone's ire. Diplomatically offering that he and USIB had "no basic disagreement" with "the general worth of the [board's] recommendations," he nevertheless stopped conceding and conciliating and took on the criticisms squarely. His most pointed rebuttal came in a memorandum to the president in late February. In it, he asserted that the community had "operated extensively and well" during the crisis. He reminded the president that "every major weapons system introduced into Cuba by the Soviets was detected, identified, and reported...before any one of these systems attained an operational capability." Even more impressively, this accomplishment occurred despite the extremely short time between the introduction of strategic weapons and their detection. Nonetheless, the intelligence cycle moved "with extraordinary rapidity through the stages of collection, analysis, targeting for verification, and positive identification." The gap in U-2 overflights "was not critical"; no photography taken before mid-October would have shown anything dire enough to warrant action that needed backing from NATO or the OAS. The lack of weight given to HUMINT on offensive missiles was understandable given that "for two years the Intelligence Community had been surfeited with reports of 'missiles in Cuba,' all of which proved to be incorrect prior to those which we received on or about September 20th." Only eight agent or refugee reports out of 3,500 reviewed were judged in retrospect to have been "reasonably valid indicators" of the offensive missile deployment.[88]

At the same time he was tilting with PFIAB, McCone had to placate congressional inquisitors looking into charges that the administration had played politics with intelligence during the crisis and that CIA's missteps had helped create an intelligence gap. Some Republicans, disappointed over the results of midterm congressional elections in November, contended that the White House had delayed releasing evidence of the missiles until just before the elections in order to concoct a crisis so that voters would rally around the president and choose Democrats. The chairman of the Republican National Committee claimed that this purported manipulation of secrets had cost his party as many as 20 seats in the House of Representatives. To refute the allegations of chicanery, McCone shared the findings of the USIB after-action report with the CIA oversight committees and said that intelligence on Cuba "could not have been handled in any way which would have altered the final timing of the policy decisions."[89] (U)

From the House side of Capitol Hill, a member of the Armed Services Committee, Frank Osmers (R-NJ), claimed that rivalry between CIA and the Air Force over control of U-2 flights had impaired reconnaissance operations. This bureaucratic bickering, combined with the Agency's refusal to give credence to early HUMINT reports of offensive missiles, helped bring about the confrontation, Osmers contended. McCone's two-hour briefing to the committee in late March deflected the congressman's charges. The DCI explained that weather was always a factor in scheduling overflights; that the amount of reliable and actionable HUMINT from Cuba was only a tiny fraction of the entire intelligence picture; and (again using an argument he did not agree with) that U-2 incidents in East Asia during the summer prompted prudent cutbacks in operations. (McCone decided that, before this audience, it would be impolitic to go into the Air Force takeover of U-2 missions.)

After the briefing, Osmers declared himself convinced and retracted his allegations. Meanwhile, the Senate Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee, chaired by CIA friend John C. Stennis (D-MS), released a favorable report

[87] PFIAB, "Memorandum for the President," 4 February 1963, McCone Papers, box 4, folder 11 (a sanitized version appears in *CMC Documents*, 361–71).

[88] McCone untitled memorandum to the president, 28 February 1963, *CMC Documents*, 373–76. In late January, Carter and USIB deputies had given McCone their responses to PFIAB's anticipated findings. McCone subsequently drew on many of those points. Carter memorandum to McCone, "Interim Report to the President by the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board...," 21 January 1963, and McCone memorandum to Bundy, "Interim Report to the President by the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board...," 22 January 1963, McCone Papers, box 4, folder 11; McCone, "Notes on Killian Board Recommendations," 25 March 1962, ibid., box 2, folder 5. As intelligence scholar Gil Merom has keenly observed, "[b]y emphasizing the achievement of discovering the Soviet deployment before the ballistic missiles became fully operational, supporters of the Intelligence Community [such as McCone] turned anything short of massive intelligence disaster into a success." "The 1962 Cuban Intelligence Estimate," 50–51.

[89] Wise and Ross, *The Invisible Government*, 297; Haines and [redacted] 101–2. The midterm elections went strongly in the Democrats' favor. They won 25 of 39 Senate seats (a net gain of four) and lost only four House races. Of course, McCone's proposition that an earlier warning of the missile deployment would *not* have affected the outcome of the crisis cannot be tested. (U)

39. *CIA Information Report, 27 September 1962*

INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

00-K-

This material contains information affecting the National Defense of the United States within the meaning of the Espionage Laws, Title 18, U.S.C. Secs. 793 and 794, the transmission or revelation of which in any manner to an unauthorized person is prohibited by law.

~~S-E-C-R-E-T-/T-A-L-E-N-T-K-E-Y-H-O-L-E-/T-A-L-K-L~~

COUNTRY	Cuba	REPORT NO.	[redacted]
SUBJECT	Possible Missile Site in Havana	DATE DISTR.	27 Sep 62
		NO. PAGES	2
		REFERENCES	[redacted]
DATE OF INFO.	To 12 Sep 62		HED ~~SECRET~~ 7 PM
PLACE & DATE ACQ.	Havana/12 Sep 62		

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

SOURCE: Cuban national, [redacted]

1. After dark on 12 Sep 62, I was driving east on Avenida 23, Marianao, Havana, when I observed and counted 20 Soviet trucks towing 20 long trailers going west on Avenida 23. The truck convoy was preceded by a jeep containing militiamen. The trucks were driven by Soviets in civilian clothes -- short-sleeved shirts in various colors.

2. As the truck convoy neared its destination at Campo Libertad, the militia jeep was waved off, and the Soviet trucks and trailers proceeded into Campo Libertad.

3. The trucks appeared to be the 6x6, ZIL-157, canvas-covered. [Source] described these and later identified them from photographs [redacted] In the backs of the trucks could be seen sealed black boxes or cases of various sizes. I do not know what these boxes contained.

4. The trailers, the longest I have ever seen in Cuba, were two-axle, four-wheeled. They were about 65 to 70 feet in length and about eight feet in width.

5. I believe the transport trailers were carrying large missiles, so long that the tail end extended over the end of the trailer. I would guess that the missiles were a few feet longer than the trailers. The missiles were covered with wood and canvas. From the tail end of the missile it looked as if the bottom and two sides of the missile had a wooden frame, and the entire missile was canvas-covered. It looked as if the tail end of the canvas silhouetted the two top fins of the four fins of the missile. The top of the canvas-covered missile was taller than the top of the truck towing it. I am not positive that the trailer was carrying

~~S-E-C-R-E-T-/T-A-L-E-N-T-K-E-Y-H-O-L-E-/T-A-L-K-L~~

EXEMPT Exempt from automatic downgrading and declassification

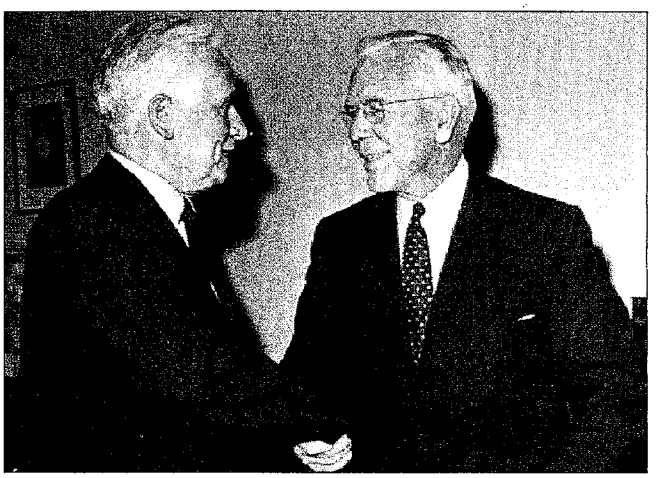
STATE | ARMY | NAVY | AIR | FBI | AEC

INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

One of several agent reports from Cuba that PFIAB criticized CIA for discounting (U)

concluding that mistakes were inevitable in a crisis of such magnitude and that there had been no intelligence gap during September and October 1962. McCone had met with Stennis's subcommittee several times in the months after the crisis.[90]

With few exceptions, congressional complaints about the Intelligence Community subsided. The most captious lawmaker was Sen. Keating, who assailed the administration for concealing evidence of Soviet moves in Cuba and other provocative military actions. McCone met with Keating three times during February 1963 to try to restrain the voluble senator. Over the president's objection that seeing the senator would "demean" the DCI, and that DIA Director Joseph Carroll should go instead, McCone insisted that he deal with Keating personally. When they met soon after, McCone rebutted, clarified, or caveated each of Keating's reports about Soviet military movements, facilities, and weapons deliveries but otherwise did not dissuade him from continuing his criticisms. The senator claimed that his new information did not come from Cuban refugees but resisted the DCI's prodding to reveal his sources. McCone cautioned Keating that some of the policies he was recommending to the White House, such as a quarantine on Soviet shipments of military supplies and petroleum, constituted acts of war. The senator replied that the administration should not minimize the Soviet threat and that the American public needed to be alerted to the danger.[91]



McCone and Kenneth Keating (U)

On the other side of the political spectrum, liberal Democrats in Congress closed ranks behind the administration, although a few expressed greater disquietude with McCone, perceiving in him a "wholly different orientation" toward the Cold War than the White House had. Some of these legislators had voted against his confirmation, and his close ties to the White House had not reconciled them to him. After Republicans like Keating praised McCone for being the only administration figure to predict what Moscow would do in Cuba, these Democrats (quoted in news stories without attribution) underscored what they saw as basic philosophical differences toward the Soviet threat between the DCI and the administration. One unidentified Democratic

[90] Merom, "The 1962 Cuban Intelligence Estimate," 103; US Senate, Committee on Armed Services, Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee, *Investigations of the Preparedness Program; Interim Report on Cuban Military Build-up*, 88th Cong., 1st sess., 1963; "Summary Record of the 509th National Security Council Meeting," 13 March 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 715–16; McCone, "Memorandum of discussion with the President...," 13 March 1963, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 3.

[91] Transcript of McCone-JFK telephone conversation, 6 February 1963, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 3; John S. Warner (Legislative Counsel), "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting with Senator Kenneth B. Keating...," 8 February 1963, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 16, folder 331; McCone letter to Rusk, 9 February 1963, with undated attachment, "Position Paper on Cuba," DDO Files, Job 78-02958R, box 1, folder 16; "Summary Record of NSC Executive Committee Meeting No. 39," 31 January 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XIII, Western Europe and Canada*, 163. Several newspaper articles on the McCone-Keating meetings can be found in HS Files, Job 84-00473R, box 1, folder 6, and Cuban Missile Crisis clipping file, HIC. The contretemps with McCone and Keating was lampooned that March at the Gridiron Club roast, where capital politicos throw barbs at each other in an annual ritual of cathartic humor. An unidentified McCone impersonator, with a Kennedyesque inflection, sang this ditty about CIA and the "KIA" ("Keating Intelligence Agency"):

> Before the revolution they used to sing and toil,
> But now they're drinking Red Castro oil,
> And the ruble talks, not the Yankee dollah,
> Since the Bay of Pigs made us Yankees hollah!
> We were all in the dark when the missiles came,
> But election day and a U-2 plane
> Tip us Yankees off to what it's all about,
> So we hollah with vigah and he pulls them out.
> But the situation is under control.
> We got a secret plan to keep the cold war cold,
> And the KIA of the GOP
> Won't find out how this whole mess got to be.

"Ole Miss, CIA, JFK In-Laws All Roast in Gridiron Pan," *Washington Post*, 10 March 1963, Cuban Missile Crisis clipping file, HIC.

legislator reportedly said that, while McCone "is absolutely sincere and honorable," he

> [is] a crusader, a zealot who sees the Soviet problem in black and white, with no shadings in between. The administration has a different opinion of the Soviet problem. When Mr. McCone is urged in closed-door committee hearings to tell what he really thinks, subtle differences appear between his approach and the President's.

Some Democrats accordingly were concerned that the Republicans might use those perceived differences to criticize the administration's Cuba policy and hinted that McCone's political leanings might cause him to place his party's interests first.[92] (U)

The administration's effort to dispel the charge of intelligence failure further strained McCone's relations with McNamara, whom he privately accused of disclosing secrets without permission and of encroaching on his authority. In early 1963, President Kennedy—eager to quell rumors that the Soviets had not withdrawn their nuclear missiles from Cuba—decided to release recent aerial reconnaissance photos of the missile sites. Originally intending to show the pictures on background only to the small group of reporters who covered Keating, the president decided at the last minute to have McNamara go on national television and present them to the American people. For two hours on the evening of 6 February, the secretary of defense and a DIA analyst displayed and explained dozens of blown-up aerial photos of the missile sites before and after the crisis. Although the briefing gave an unprecedented detailed look into the United States' "black" capabilities, it turned into an embarrassment. No pictures were shown for the period 5 September–14 October, raising again the question of whether the US government had blinded itself at the very time the nuclear weapons were arriving in Cuba. Furthermore, because no exact count of the missiles could be made even with the photographs, the administration could not assure the public that all the nuclear weapons on the island had been or were being removed.[93] (U)

McCone was furious. Nobody in the administration had consulted him about the presentation, and he contended that the disclosure trespassed on his statutory obligation to protect sources and methods. He believed McNamara's statements undercut his own credibility with Congress by leaving a different impression about Soviet activities in Cuba than he had given that very afternoon in testimony before two CIA subcommittees. Furthermore, McCone thought that the televised briefing disclosed so many specifics that the community's collection capabilities may have been compromised. The release of so much information, he feared, would fuel speculation that the United States deployed the same intelligence assets against the Soviet Union and thus increase American vulnerability to denial and deception. To examine that possibility, he had an internal study prepared on the security aspects of intelligence briefings about the missiles in Cuba.[94] ~~(S)~~

The White House played down the dispute. McGeorge Bundy implied that it was a teapot tempest that boiled down to word parsing and interpretive differences. He noted that McCone "was something between concerned and angry because some of Secretary McNamara's statements did not agree with some of his already on record," and he worried that the disagreement could result in "the first big, internal, high-level personality clash of this administration." About two weeks later, McCone, McNamara, Bundy, and Rusk met for two hours to establish basic talking points on US policy toward Cuba (using the rubrics "It was agreed that..." or "We agreed that...") and to decide who in the administration would say what to whom about the missile crisis. The Pentagon kept the controversy going, however, by claiming in late February that CIA was responsible for the five-week "picture gap" and then almost immediately withdrawing the comment. Some weeks later, one of Bundy's deputies decided that the McCone-commissioned study on briefings and security would not be shown to the

---

[92] "Kennedy Backers Open Counterattack on Cuba," Washington *Evening Star*, 12 February 1963, Cuban Missile Crisis clipping file, HIC; Rowland Evans, "CIA Chief McCone Worries Congressional Democrats," *New York Herald Tribune*, 7 March 1963, "Keating Defends CIA For Cuba Crisis Role," *Baltimore Sun*, 5 March, and "CIA Used as 'Scapegoat' On Cuba, Keating Says," *Washington Post*, 5 March 1963, McCone clipping file, HIC. (U)

[93] Tom Wicker, "McNamara Insists Offensive Arms Are Out of Cuba," *New York Times*, 7 February 1963, Cuban Missile Crisis clipping file, HIC; Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 547, 562–63; Wise and Ross, *The Invisible Government*, 298–99; Alsop and Braden, 256–57; John T. Hughes and A. Denis Clift, "The San Cristobal Trapezoid," *Studies* 36, no. 4 (Winter 1992): 54–55; excerpts from McNamara's press conference in *American Foreign Policy: Current Documents, 1962*, 251–52. (U)

[94] "Statement on Cuba by Director of Central Intelligence," 6 February 1963, and "McCone's Statement on Cuba," *Washington Post*, 7 February 1963, Cuban Missile Crisis clipping file, HIC; McCone untitled memorandum, 7 February 1963, ER Files, Job 65B00383R, box 2, folder 26; Carter untitled memorandum, 2 April 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 8. The internal study included a quote-by-quote comparison of statements on Cuba by McCone, McNamara, and the president during early February 1963; ER Files, Job 80R01284A, box 17, folder 5 ~~(S)~~

president lest he "get the feeling that Mr. McCone was taking off after Mr. McNamara."[95]

This feuding troubled the president enough that he asked McCone to help mend relations within the community. The president felt "an attempt was being made to drive a division within the administration," particularly between CIA on one side and the Departments of Defense and State on the other, by encouraging an "interdepartmental row" over their performance during the crisis. He even thought that good news—the Stennis subcommittee's exoneration of the community—might be distorted into indirect criticism of the administration: Everyone knew mistakes were made, and if the community did not make them, then the White House, the Pentagon, and the Department of State must have. McCone assured the president that he would not allow CIA to get into an unproductive and ultimately self-defeating conflict with other community offices, but he was defensive about criticism of him and CIA and blamed PFIAB for a good deal of the controversy. As an example, he noted that the community had been acting on subjects covered in 13 of the board's 14 recommendations even before its investigation began and that the board knew that before it released its report. Kennedy advised McCone not to get into an altercation with PFIAB, saying he had decided not to circulate the report and had dismissed the entire matter. The DCI reluctantly agreed to do the same—though not until he aired his grievances with the board's chairman, Clark Clifford. After that, he left most PFIAB business to Marshall Carter.[96]

A Still Tarnished Image (U)

In contrast to how he portrayed his and CIA's accomplishments during the missile crisis inside the administration, McCone told Carter that for public consumption, "I would like both my personal role and the role of intelligence played down." Presumably he wanted to allay any suspicion that he was using the media to benefit himself, the Agency, and, Washington rumor had it, the Republican Party. Favorable press commentary on his judgment appeared nonetheless, and the impression it left—reinforced by McCone's own maladroit self-justification, such as reading excerpts from the "honeymoon cables" to the president—was pithily expressed by McGeorge Bundy: "[McCone] has a way of saving *his* skin."[97]

Controversy over McCone's and CIA's role in the missile crisis resulted in perhaps the most serious impediment to accomplishing his mission that a DCI can face: reduced access to the president. Thomas Powers has written that "McCone's contact with the president dwindled. It was understood around town that McCone saw Kennedy once a week, but this apparently ceased to be true after the missile crisis. He continued to work closely with the president's brother, but he lost his access to the president." McCone's calendars indicate that the frequency of his contact with President Kennedy did not diminish as much as Powers claims, but the quality of their relationship became less personal and more businesslike. As a consequence, according to Richard Helms, McCone dealt more frequently with Robert Kennedy. The two men had been friends before the crisis, but afterward the DCI cultivated the attorney general more assiduously as his entrée to the administration's inner circle. Despite those efforts, McCone still faced limits to his authority that the missile crisis only underscored. The dispute with the Air Force about U-2 flights over Cuba, the spat with McNamara, and the impact of the PFIAB report showed that, at least into early 1963, the assurances in the president's letter of January 1962 that McCone would be head of the Intelligence Community still represented intentions rather than realities. As one historian has noted, "[w]ith the CIA discredited for being wrong [in the September 1962 SNIE] and its director resented for being right, there was little prospect for a major advance in the Agency's standing."[98] (U)

---

[95] *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 694 n. 1; Bundy untitled memorandum to Rusk, 19 February 1963, ibid., 702–5; Jules Witcover, "CIA Conceals 'Picture Gap,' Pentagon Says," Washington *Evening Star*, 27 February 1963, and John A. Goldsmith, "AF Intelligence Chief Denies Rift with CIA," *Washington Post*, 28 February 1963, Cuban Missile Crisis clipping file, HIC; Carter untitled memorandum, 2 April 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 8.

[96] McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting with the President...4 March 1963," *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 713–15; McCone, "Memorandum of discussion with the President...," 13 March 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X/XI/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 631; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with the President,...March 25th[, 1963,]" McCone Papers, box 6, folder 3; McCone, "Memorandum for the File...Meeting with the President...15 Apr 1963...," ibid., folder 4; idem, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Clark Clifford—14 May 1963," and attachments, ibid., box 2, folder 6.

[97] McCone memorandum to Carter, "Press Contacts in Connection with the Cuban Crisis," 26 October 1962, McCone Papers, box 1, folder 14; Marquis Childs, "Blank Spot in Cuban Picture," syndicated column in *Washington Post*, 4 March 1963, Cuban Missile Crisis clipping file, HIC; Stanley Grogan (OPA) untitled memorandum to McCone with attached *Chicago Tribune* clipping, 15 March 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 19, folder 3; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting with the President...4 March 1963," *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 715; Michael R. Beschloss, ed., *Taking Charge: The Johnson White House Tapes, 1963–1964*, 267.

[98] Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets*, 162; McCone calendars; author's conversation with Helms, 23 April 1998; Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones, *The CIA and American Democracy*, 137. (U)

CHAPTER 6

Postlude to Crisis: Freedom Fighters and Silent Warfare (U)

During the year after the missile crisis, John McCone participated in formulating US policy and CIA operations in two major areas of American-Cuban relations: securing the release of the Cuban Brigade and developing a covert action and espionage program to replace MONGOOSE. Other areas of international conflict and bureaucratic controversy—notably Vietnam and overhead reconnaissance—drew his attention away from Cuba somewhat. The Kennedy administration remained as committed as ever to removing Fidel Castro from power, however. "Our ultimate objective with respect to Cuba," McGeorge Bundy wrote in a policy memorandum in early December 1962, "remains the overthrow of the Castro regime and its replacement by one sharing the aims of the Free World."[1] As a member of the NSC committee overseeing covert actions against Cuba, McCone necessarily had a large and influential part in devising the clandestine means to accomplish that goal. Although the US government had not formally pledged not to invade Cuba, overt military action was politically unfeasible after the missile crisis ended. The administration would have to rely even more on covert action than before the crisis. Meanwhile, to satisfy its moral obligations to the imprisoned fighters of the Bay of Pigs operation and to retain the support of Cuban expatriates in the United States—a vital part of its covert plans against Castro—the administration also continued efforts to win the release of the members of *La Brigada*. Drawing on his congressional and business contacts, McCone helped overcome political and financial obstacles that arose during those sensitive negotiations. (U)

Freeing *La Brigada*: Phase Two (U)

As the US-Soviet talks over the missiles proceeded, movement toward winning freedom for the Cuban Brigade prisoners resumed. They had been potential victims of the crisis, but the administration secured their release largely because, having just stood up to the Soviet Union, it now did not have to fear charges of "appeasement" if it struck a deal with Castro. Moreover, informal lines of communication about the prisoners remained open between Washington and Havana during the "Thirteen Days." Afterward, James Donovan and the Cuban Families Committee were ready to pick up where they had left off. Donovan thought the missile episode had given the United States the upper hand in renewed bargaining for the prisoners. He reportedly told Castro, "If you want to get rid of them, if you're going to sell them, you've got to sell them to me. There's no world market for prisoners." Robert Kennedy remarked that the situation now was much more relaxed with Congress out of session, and "it is probable that if more money is needed[,] it could be obtained."[2] ~~(S)~~

The White House did not let McCone know that the drugs-for-prisoners deal was back on track. He learned secondhand that a representative of the Cuban Families Committee had recently talked with the attorney general and that Donovan had resumed contact with American pharmaceutical executives. After meeting with one of them, McCone "expressed grave concern over the situation" to Robert Kennedy. [redacted] the DCI warned that publicity emanating from either Donovan or the drug industry would implicate the administration and the Agency in an ostensibly private humanitarian venture. Given current bad relations with Castro, the American public "and a great many others" would be "confused and disenchanted" to learn that the US government condoned back-channel dealings to ransom the

[1] "Future Policy toward Cuba," 6 December 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 587. (U)

[2] Johnson, *The Bay of Pigs*, 319; Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy*, 535; Walter Elder untitled memorandum to McCone, 8 November 1962, McCone Papers, box 1, folder 1. On 20 October 1962—five days after the discovery of the Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba, and two days before President Kennedy's quarantine speech—Castro sent a list of medicine and supplies that he wanted in exchange for the prisoners. McCone, reporting to the NSC ExComm on the 25th, noted that baby food comprised over one fourth of the total amount, and that the volume of blood plasma called for was three times Cuba's annual consumption. The list from which the final deal was struck included some 10,000 items and was 225 pages long. The Department of Commerce had to screen it for embargoed goods, and substitutes for unobtainable items had to be located. ExComm meeting on 25 October 1962, *Presidential Recordings: JFK, III*, 236; "US Officials Had Key Role in Talks," *New York Herald Tribune (European Edition)*, 25 December 1962, Western Hemisphere—Cuba clipping file, box 2, HIC. At some point in Donovan's negotiations with Castro—whether before or after the missile crisis is unclear—some officers in the DDP devised a plan to have Donovan be the unwitting purveyor of a diving suit and breathing apparatus, respectively contaminated with Madura foot fungus and tuberculosis bacteria, as a gift for Castro, a scuba diving enthusiast. The scheme was dropped because Donovan had already presented a diving suit as a personal gift to the Cuban leader. CIA Inspector General, "Report on Plots to Assassinate Fidel Castro," 75–76. ~~(S)~~

prisoners. McCone pleaded his case effectively; Robert Kennedy, McGeorge Bundy, and the president agreed that the United States should temporarily disengage from the negotiations.[3]

By late November 1962, however, the Cuban Families Committee had heard about the miserable conditions the prisoners were being held under and persuaded the attorney general to take up negotiations again. Kennedy declared that "We put them there, and we're going to get them out—by Christmas!" The deal's planners—the attorney general's office, the Department of the Treasury, the Internal Revenue Service, and CIA—developed a proposal whereby companies would donate the supplies Castro demanded and deduct their actual costs from the products' value and claim the difference as a business expense. With a tax rebate of 52 percent on that amount, the firms would come out ahead. Although McCone opposed the overall idea of treating with Castro for the prisoners in the wake of the missile crisis, this scheme had the virtue of assuring that no CIA money would have to be used directly. The estimated final cost of the exchange, based on the retail cost of the products in Havana, was

To counter congressional opposition as the negotiations progressed, McCone and Legislative Counsel John Warner briefed senior lawmakers. McCone was especially careful to clear up questions about the agreement's possible need for CIA funds. He told the legislators that the Agency might have to pay promised to Castro for releasing 60 wounded and sick prisoners in April 1962, but that he would advise Congress before drawing on CIA money. The executives were not enthusiastic about the terms of the deal, either. complained that many of the items Castro wanted had a high cost-to-market ratio and that the companies could not meet his demands merely by dumping surplus inventory. McCone suggested that the firms contribute their profit on the agreement to charity and increase their tax break. Administration officials assured the executives that they could work together without fear of prosecution for violating antitrust laws and that they would not have to disclose proprietary cost and markup data to obtain their tax deductions. Thus mollified, the companies agreed to the plan. Transportation firms could not receive any tax break for participating in the deal, but around 70 airlines, railroads, and trucking and shipping companies donated their services anyway.[5]

Other logistical and financial problems and last-minute reservations were overcome as Christmas neared. On 21 December, formally issued the financial instrument (a letter of credit) that underwrote the barter, and the government of Cuba and the Cuban Families Committee signed the release agreement the next day. The remaining 1,113 prisoners—much better treated in recent days—were released on the 23rd, and half were flown to Miami. Castro then said no more would be let out of the country unless he received the previously promised. At Robert Kennedy's request, Richard Cardinal Cushing of Boston, a longtime family intimate and a sponsor of the Cuban Families Committee, raised $1 million in a few hours. Gen. Lucius Clay, another committee sponsor, provided the rest—secured on his personal note, which sev-

[3] McCone, "Memorandum of Conversation with the Attorney General Concerning the Negotiations for the Release of the Cuban Prisoners," 14 November 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 3; Lawrence Houston (General Counsel) memorandum to Chief, Task Force W, "Cuban Prisoner Exchange," 15 November 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 19, folder 2.

[4] Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy*, 535–36; Johnson, *Bay of Pigs*, 321–23; Thomas, *Robert Kennedy*, 236; Elder untitled memorandum to McCone, 1 December 1962, McCone Papers, box 1, folder 1. Besides McCone's involvemen a number of CIA officers spent considerable time providing intelligence, communications, security, and logistical support to the negotiations and release. When details of the exchange appeared in the press later, the Departments of Justice, Treasury, State, and Commerce were mentioned, but not CIA. Houston memoranda to McCone, both titled "Cuban Prisoner Release Negotiations," both 9 January 1963, DDO Files, Job 78-02958R, box 1, folder 16; "US Officials Had Key Role in Talks," *New York Herald Tribune (European Edition)*, 25 December 1962, 1, Western Hemisphere—Cuba clipping file, box 2, HIC.

[5] [James Donovan,] "Chronology...," undated but c. December 1962, *Bay of Pigs: 40 Years After*, tab 8, doc. 5 (part 2); "Special Addendum, Journal, Office of Legislative Counsel," 17 December 1962, "Journal, Office of Legislative Counsel, 15–16 December 1962," and John S. Warner memorandum, "Meeting with Representative Carl Vinson, 7 January 1963," OCA Files, Job 65-00384, box 2, Carl Vinson folder; Elder untitled memorandum, 7 December 1962, McCone Papers, box 1, folder 1; Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy*, 536; "US Officials Had Key Role in Talks," *New York Herald Tribune (European Edition)*, 25 December 1962, Western Hemisphere—Cuba clipping file, box 2, HIC.

Castro's representatives objected to the expansive definition of "pharmaceuticals," which included patent medicine, mouthwash, laxatives, antacids, and menstrual supplies, but they were persuaded that the Cuban people needed those items as well. The deal also included surgical equipment and baby food. When Lansdale heard that toilet paper was one of the non-pharmaceutical items in the package, he proposed to DDCI Carter what he termed an "earthy idea" for propaganda exploitation: printing Castro's picture on the inside sheets of the rolls of paper. "The earthy appeal of this is in tune with the Cuban sense of humor, and they'd really get to laughing at Fidel." A doubting Carter passed the scheme on to McCone with this observation: "As each day passes in this pickle factory, I shudder at the depths plumbed by some of our more subtle advisors, mendicants, etc. Mongooses are notoriously diarrhetic." Thomas, *Robert Kennedy*, 237; Lawrence Leamer, *The Kennedy Men, 1901–1963*, 673; [Donovan,] "Chronology...," in *Bay of Pigs: 40 Years After*, tab 8, doc. 5 (part 2); Lansdale memorandum to Carter, "Barter Item for Cuban Prisoners," 20 December 1962, with attached routing slip bearing Carter's comment dated 26 December 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 19, folder 2.

eral major US corporations in turn covered. (McCone wrongly suspected that the president's father, Joseph P. Kennedy, put up the last-minute money). All but a few of the remaining prisoners arrived in Miami on Christmas Eve.[6]

Members of *La Brigada* arrive in Miami after their release. (U)
Photo: Wide World

President Kennedy's meeting with the leaders of *La Brigada* at his Palm Beach villa on 27 December, and his speech to all the freed prisoners and 40,000 of their friends, relatives, and supporters at the Orange Bowl two days later, lent the full moral authority of the US government to the Cuban exiles' crusade against Castro. In a dramatic and emotional scene, the president accepted the brigade's yellow-and-blue flag from its leader and pledged that its colors "will be returned to this brigade in a free Havana." The crowd roared and then chanted *"Guerra! Guerra!"* and *"Libertad! Libertad!"* President Kennedy exhorted them to keep hope alive; "although Castro and his fellow dictators may rule nations, they do not rule people…they may destroy the exercise of liberty, but they cannot eliminate the determination to be free." The president was one of the few present who knew that all during the second phase of negotiations leading to the prisoners' release, the White House and CIA had been preparing to embark on a war—a secret one—to win back the Cuban people's liberty.[7] (U)

McCone participated in one other prisoner release involving Castro.[8] The following spring, with the DCI again playing a liaison role, Donovan negotiated the repatriation of 23 Americans jailed in Cuba. The fate of the group [redacted] had come up earlier in the negotiations for the Bay of Pigs prisoners. The Americans were traded for four pro-Castro Cubans in US jails; one of them was serving a 20-years-to-life sentence for killing a child bystander in a brawl with Cuban expatriates at a New York restaurant when Castro visited the United Nations in September 1960. McCone discussed with the president, the secretary of state, and the governor of New York, Nelson Rockefeller, the legal and political ramifications of commuting the Cuban's sentence. Around the time Rockefeller

---

[6] Johnson, *Bay of Pigs*, 324–29, 332–41; Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy*, 537; Thomas, *Robert Kennedy*, 237; Triay, 136–37; Dean Rusk, "Circular Telegram to All Latin American Posts," 22 December 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 635–36; [Donovan,] "Chronology…," in *Bay of Pigs: 40 Years After*, tab 8, doc. 5 (part 2); "Memorandum of Agreement," 22 December 1962, ibid., doc. 4; "First Cuban PWs Reach US in Exchange for Drugs, Food," *New York Herald Tribune (European Edition)*, 24 December 1962, 1, Western Hemisphere—Cuba clipping file, box 2, HIC; [redacted] Castro held back a few prisoners for crimes they allegedly committed in Cuba before the Bay of Pigs invasion. One of them died in prison, and others were released from time to time, but the last two were not let go until 1986. Samuel Halpern, "Revisiting the Cuban Missile Crisis," 24. After the first drug shipments arrived in the spring of 1963, the Cuban government complained that the medicines were "not entirely satisfactory." McCone, regarding the complaints as legitimate, asked Robert Kennedy to contact pharmaceutical industry representatives to make sure that the drugs still to be delivered complied with the terms of the agreement. After all the drugs had been shipped, Castro said through a private intermediary that he believed the United States had "swindled" him because the medicines were out of date. The extended incarcerations of some Brigade members may be related to Castro's displeasure. Carter untitled memorandum to Robert Kennedy, 2 April 1963, with attached transcript of McCone-Carter conversation on 1 April 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 8; [redacted] "Memorandum for the Record…Porter Call to Donovan," 7 October 1963, ibid., box 26, folder 5.

[7] Johnson, *Bay of Pigs*, 342–45; Carbonell, 190–91; Triay, *Bay of Pigs*, 137; *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy, 1962*, 911–13. The brigade's flag was not returned to the Bay of Pigs veterans until 1976 after negotiations between the JFK Library, where it was in storage, the General Services Administration, which legally "owned" it, and the veterans' attorney. Wyden, 303n. The US government paid the expatriates $100 upon their return. In February 1963, it decided to halt monthly benefit payments to them and their families, which by then totaled over $4 million. Survivors of deceased brigade members received a lump sum payment of $3,000. "Cuban POWs' Families Got 20-Month US Aid," *Washington Post*, 1 January 1963, Western Hemisphere—Cuba clipping file, box 2, HIC; [redacted] memorandum for [redacted] DDCI executive assistant), "Payments to the Brigade," 20 February 1963, HS Files, HS/HC-528, Job 84B00389R, box 1, folder 28. (U)

[8] Sources for this paragraph and the next are: Elder, "McCone as DCI (1987)," 360a; Carter memorandum to McCone, "Negotiations for Release of Cuban Prisoners," 4 December 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 4; memorandum about McCone meeting with Donovan, 7 January 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XXI/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 591; McCone memorandum, "Discussion with Mr. Rusk," 30 January 1963, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 4; McCone, "Memorandum of Meeting with the President," 20 February 1963, ibid., box 6, folder 3; McCone memorandum to the president, "Donovan Negotiations with Castro," 10 April 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 755–56; Gordon Chase (NSC) memorandum, "Cuba—American Prisoners," 21 January 1963, and Chase memorandum to Bundy, "American Prisoner Deal," 21 February 1963, National Security Files: Countries, Box 56, Cuba Subjects, Prisoner Exchange, 1/63–5/63, JFK Library; Carter and Elder memoranda, "Possible Public Announcement of CIA Interest in Cuban Prisoners Designed for Political Motives," both 23 April 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 8; Nathan Nielsen, "Our Men in Havana," *Studies* 32, no. 1 (Spring 1988): 18; [redacted] oral history interview by [redacted] 29 June 1999; Wise and Ross, *The Invisible Government*, 256–58; James B. Donovan, *Challenges: Reflections of a Lawyer-at-Large*, 92; "3 of Americans Freed by Cuba Were CIA Men," *Washington Post*, 25 April 1963: A16, and "Refugee Bargain with Cuba Ends," *New York Times*, 4 July 1963: C2, Western Hemisphere—Cuba clipping file, box 2, HIC.

released the prisoner, Robert Kennedy announced that federal charges would be dropped against three other Cubans arrested for conspiracy to sabotage US defense facilities around New York.

The four Cubans were flown to Havana at the same time that Donovan returned to the United States with the 23 Americans. By July 1963, when the final goods-for-refugees swap occurred, more than 9,700 people had left Cuba as a result of the two prisoner negotiations. They included the survivors of the Bay of Pigs invasion (except for the few withheld, as mentioned above), some 5,000 members of their families, all Americans jailed in Cuba and their families, a large number of Americans wishing to return to the United States, and many Cuban political prisoners.

A Renewed Secret Offensive Against Castro (U)

The SGA called off Operation MONGOOSE on 30 October, two days after Khrushchev agreed to halt construction on the offensive nuclear missile sites and to dismantle the weapons and return them to the Soviet Union. President Kennedy told McCone that CIA was to "do everything possible to insure no refugee or émigré provocative actions against Cuba are undertaken with or without our knowledge during the next several days" while American and Soviet negotiators fashioned the details of the withdrawal agreement. By that time, MONGOOSE had been largely converted into an intelligence collection project responsive to requirements from the JCS. MONGOOSE's covert action phase came to a dismal end in early November the two exiles sent to sabotage the copper mine at Matahambre and missing since 21 October might have been captured. Ten days later, Havana publicly announced their arrest.[9] (S)

After learning more about how the failed mission had been miscoordinated between MONGOOSE project director Edward Lansdale and Task Force W chief William Harvey, McCone wrote that "DCI and CIA should always avoid any assignment under which CIA would be obliged to accept a subordinate or supporting position to Lansdale management." Despite its fondness for Lansdale, the White House realized that interdepartmental implementation of covert action, at least as attempted under MONGOOSE, was unworkable. "MONGOOSE was poorly conceived and wretchedly executed," Arthur Schlesinger Jr. has written. "It deserved greatly to fail. It was Robert Kennedy's most conspicuous folly." Lansdale later agreed that the project was counterproductive. Instead of creating a political movement against the regime, it stiffened the Cuban people's resolve to support Castro. "There is well nigh universal agreement that MONGOOSE is at a dead end," Bundy reported to the president in early January 1963.[10]

Organizational Changes (U)

The administration was not about to forswear its goal of removing Castro from power, however, and the president's Orange Bowl speech to *La Brigada* had committed him to a diplomatic, economic, and clandestine offensive against the Cuban regime. A host of overt initiatives in conjunction with the OAS, regional governments, and NATO would be combined with extensive clandestine operations led by CIA. At first, the former took precedence. "The covert aspects of our Cuban enterprise are not the most important ones at present," Bundy wrote to the president in early January. Overall US policy toward Cuba was formulated by the NSC's Plans and Operations Committee, also known as the Standing Group. That entity had existed since January 1962 but was now revitalized. Its members were Chairman U. Alexis Johnson, the deputy under secretary of state for polit-

[9] McCone untitled memorandum to Carter (marked "URGENT"), 30 October 1962, McCone Papers, box 1, folder 14; Carter untitled memorandum, 30 October 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 4; McCone untitled memorandum to the attorney general et al., 30 October 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI/XII/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 462; Harvey memorandum to McCone, "Chronology of the Matahambre Sabotage Operation," 21 November 1962, with attachments, ER Files, Job 91S00741R, box 1, folder 5; Harvey memorandum to McCone, "Havana Reports About the Arrest of Two CIA Agents," 14 November 1962, ibid., Job 80B01676R, box 19, folder 2; Corn, 89–90; "CIA Plot Smashed, Castro Regime Says," *Washington Post*, 14 November 1962: A12, and "Cuba Arrests Authentic CIA Saboteur," Havana CMQ Television Network, 14 November 1962 (FBIS translation), Western Hemisphere—Cuba clipping file, box 2, HIC.

[10] McCone handwritten note on cover sheet to Harvey memorandum to McCone, "Chronology of the Matahambre Sabotage Operation," 21 November 1962, with attachments, ER Files, Job 91S00741R, box 1, folder 5; Bundy memorandum to the president, "Further organization of the Government for dealing with Cuba," 4 January 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 648. Carter wrote on the cover sheet of Harvey's memorandum: "Lansdale, obviously running for cover, has apparently come a cropper—I for one could not accept him as Chief of Operations for anything involving Agency participation from here on out." Some scholars have erroneously stated that the Matahambre team violated its orders by going ahead with the attempt to attack the mine. The saboteurs had not been in touch with their CIA handlers since the operation had been approved three weeks earlier, so they did not know that their mission had been suspended early in the missile crisis. James A. Nathan, "The Heyday of the New Strategy: The Cuban Missile Crisis and the Confirmation of Coercive Diplomacy," in Nathan, *The Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited*, 18, 36 n. 127; Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy*, 534.

ical affairs; Roswell Gilpatric, the deputy secretary of defense; and Bundy and McCone. Although intended as a high-level, long-range planning entity for problem areas worldwide, the Standing Group focused on Cuba during the first months of 1963.[11]

In addition, Kennedy jettisoned the unwieldy arrangement for developing and authorizing anti-Castro clandestine operations. The SGA was disbanded, and the regular Special Group resumed responsibility for those secret activities—even to the extent of approving individual collection missions. An Interdepartmental Coordinating Committee on Cuban Affairs, housed within the Department of State and headed by a coordinator of Cuban affairs, handled the political matter of developing a post-Castro government and overseeing clandestine operations day to day. Its members were Sterling Cottrell, the coordinator; Cyrus Vance, the secretary of the army; and Richard Helms from CIA. Other officers from the Departments of State, Defense, Justice, Treasury, and Health, Education, and Welfare, and from CIA and USIA were detailed to the committee as needed. Lansdale returned to the Pentagon in early 1963 and was assigned to other duties in Latin America.[12] (U)

McCone directed that changes be made at CIA to better enable it to carry out its responsibilities for clandestine operations against Cuba. Based on his recent experience with MONGOOSE, and following advice from the DDP, he wanted "prompt action" on a new covert action program "to include internal CIA reorganization." The Special Affairs Staff (SAS) under Desmond FitzGerald, an experienced covert action officer and friend of the Kennedys, superseded Task Force W. Although not directly involved in the selection, McCone no doubt approved of Helms's choice of the debonair and professional FitzGerald as adroit bureaucratic politics. The new SAS chief described his mission as "convinc[ing] the administration that anyone from my firm dealing with the Cuban situation is not necessarily a Yahoo bent on disaster...to make the Agency's operations acceptable as respectable...[and] to get everyone hitched to a consistent policy...." Robert Kennedy, especially, approved of FitzGerald's penchant for "action." Unlike Harvey—"We'd been working with him for a year and no accomplishments"—FitzGerald "came up with some ideas. At least we got some projects going."[13]

Desmond FitzGerald (U)

An Array of Operations (U)

McCone shared White House resolve not to let up on Cuba even though US-Soviet relations remained tense. During the next year, he held to the views he had expressed as the missile crisis wound down. "[T]he removal of the missiles should not end by giving Castro a sanctuary and thus sustain his subversive threat to other Latin American nations," he told the NSC. "[A] Castro-Soviet Communist Cuba, whose stated intentions and past actions are to support and spread subversion throughout Latin America, is unacceptable to the United States.... Our policy should anticipate [further Cuban attempts to subvert neighboring countries] and should be designed to take action[,] regardless of how extreme[,] to remove this threat if [Castro] supports regional insurgents militarily." In discussions about US policy and intelligence operations targeting Cuba during 1963, McCone argued for a comprehensive secret war against the Castro regime. He exhibited the same skepticism about erratic half-measures as he had during MONGOOSE: they would not accomplish what they were intended to, and CIA (and he) would be blamed. McCone and the Agency found themselves in a quandary: how to

[11] Sources on these changes in the management of the Kennedy administration's foreign policy are: Bundy untitled memorandum to George Ball, 6 December 1962, Bundy memorandum to the president, "Further organization of the Government for dealing with Cuba," 4 January 1963, NSAM No. 213, "Interdepartmental Organization for Cuban Affairs," 8 January 1963, Bromley Smith (NSC), "Summary Record of the 38th Meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Security Council," 25 January 1963, and "First Report of the Coordinator of Cuban Affairs," 21 March 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 586–90, 646–51, 656–57, 687, 725; "Standing Group Meeting, January 5, 1962, Record of Actions," and "Initial Meeting of the Standing Group of the National Security Council...16 April 1963," ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 24, folder 5; Prados, *Keepers of the Keys*, 122–23; Bromley K. Smith, *Organizational History of the National Security Council during the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations*, 51–53; Currey, 250–51; Richard Helms, "Memorandum for the Record...Talk with General Lansdale," 3 December 1962, ER Files, Job 91S00741R, box 1, folder 2; "Coordinator Named for Cuba Policy," *Washington Post*, 9 January 1963, Western Hemisphere—Cuba clipping file, box 2, HIC.

[12] Cottrell was a veteran Foreign Service officer who had headed a task force on Vietnam. His title as coordinator of Cuban policy was Senior Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs. (U)

[13] Church Committee, *Alleged Assassination Plots*, 170; George McManus (DDP) untitled memorandum to Helms about MONGOOSE, 5 November 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI/XII/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 493; Harvey draft memorandum to McCone, "Operational Plan for Continuing Operations Against Cuba," 27 November 1962, CIA JFK Assassination Records, box JFK34, folder 9; Elder untitled memorandum, 28 December 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 4; Thomas, *The Very Best Men*, 291–92; *Robert Kennedy In His Own Words*, 378–79.

pursue the administration's objective of destabilizing Castro's regime when political and diplomatic considerations precluded US military intervention, either to support an uprising covert actions might incite, or under the pretext of a contrived provocation. The administration would continue to pressure CIA to undertake some sort of covert "dynamic action," but Havana's heightened security meant that many operations would be interdicted and the American hand behind them revealed. Maintaining plausible deniability was even more imperative after the missile crisis than before, but also much more difficult.[14] (U)

The main building at JMWAVE's base in Miami (U)
Photo: *Harper's Magazine*

McCone's CIA undertook four varieties of clandestine activity against Castro from late 1962 through late 1963: propaganda, espionage, support for and cooperation with exile groups, and contacts with potential coup plotters and assassins.[15] The outsized CIA station in Miami, JMWAVE, ran the SAS operations, providing money, materiel, training, and other assistance to expatriate organizations and individual exiles. There often was considerable overlap between the various activities. Among numerous examples: some collection assets on the island were tasked to identify disgruntled personnel in the Cuban military who might be recruited to lead a coup against Castro; propaganda messages, in radio broadcasts or leaflets dropped from balloons, were intended to incite Cubans to active and passive resistance, ranging from burning sugar cane fields and damaging machinery to leaving lights on and opening water faucets; and US-backed exiles were infiltrated into Cuba to set up espionage nets and to conduct sabotage. In addition, under SAS guidance, CIA stations in the WE Division area ran two large espionage and covert action programs [redacted] against Cuban targets. Propaganda and espionage received priority during late 1962 and early 1963, while sabotage and other covert actions were conducted more intensively from mid-1963 on.[16] ~~(S)~~

Given the uneasy state of US-Soviet relations, the administration wanted to ensure that anti-Castro operations were deniable, so it exercised tight control over the exile groups to prevent them from launching independent operations with serious "flap" potential. As one high-level planning document put it, "once you let them go, you can never really be sure what they will do." In addition, any weapons the Agency provided exiles had to be obtainable commercially from international arms dealers. At the same time, however, the White House decided to use former members of the Cuban Brigade in covert missions, even though their ties to CIA had been divulged. Despite the security risk, McCone supported the idea, denying that the brigade had been discredited and urging that the "brave group of Cuban patriots" be used as an asset. *La Brigada* veterans subsequently received training, much of it publicly acknowledged, from military, civilian, and covert Agency personnel. ~~(S)~~

In the propaganda area, McCone in November 1962 instructed the DDP to undertake operations that would

[14] Elder, "Memorandum of Executive Committee of NSC Meeting on...28 October 1962," *CMC Documents*, 347; McCone memorandum, "Long Term Outlook for Cuba," 13 November 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 445–46. (U)

[15] Sources for this paragraph and the next are: FitzGerald memorandum to McCone, "Outline of a Program to Exacerbate and Stimulate Disaffection in the Cuban Armed Forces," 19 March 1963, and Coordinator of Cuban Affairs memorandum to the Special Group, "Additional Covert Programs—Cuba," 25 March 1963, ER Files, Job 91S00741R, box 1, folder 5; Smith, "Summary Record of the 38th Meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Security Council," 25 January 1963, McNamara memorandum, "Armed Forces Training Program for Members of the 2506 Cuban Brigade," 8 February 1963, and Chase memorandum to Bundy, "Cuba Coordinating Committee—Covert Operations in Cuba," 3 April 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 686, 695–96, 749; Department of Defense press release no. 221-63, "Special Military Training Program Made Available to Members of Cuban Brigade," 16 February 1963, and FitzGerald memorandum to McCone, "US Government Programs for the Utilization of the Cuban Brigade," 12 March 1963, ER Files, Job 80R01284A, box 17, folder 5; CIA memorandum to the House of Representatives Select Committee on Assassinations, "CIA Operations Against Cuba Prior to the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy...," [1978], MORI doc. no. 292538; FitzGerald memorandum to Chief/Special Operations Division, SAS No. 63-797, "AMWORLD—Defensive Weapons for Operational Ships," 3 December 1963, HS Files, Job 85-00664R, box 8, folder 1; DDP/WE Division, "Western Europe Operations Directed at Cuba, 1962–1964," 43–70. ~~(S)~~

[16] An example of a multipurpose operation was AMGLOSSY: a series of infiltrations and exfiltrations during May–October 1963 intended to collect order-of-battle intelligence, organize espionage and resistance networks, and select targets for sabotage. The operation was blown when a landing party ran into a Cuban ambush and several members were killed or captured. FitzGerald memorandum to Helms, "Analysis of AMGLOSSY Operation" with attachment, 14 November 1963, DDO Files, Job 78-02958R, box 1, folder 15. ~~(S)~~

portray Cuba and the Soviet Union in a bad light just after Khrushchev's standdown during the missile crisis. One tactic suggested was planting stories in foreign newspapers that would raise doubts about Moscow's reliability. In compliance with McCone's directions,

In December 1962, McCone and USIA Director Murrow agreed to resume nonattributable radio broadcasts by Cuban exiles. Murrow had suggested to the DCI that the messages urge Cubans to commit low-level economic sabotage and passive resistance to disrupt the Cuban economy and make Soviet support as costly as possible. The broadcasts would caution against open rebellion and instead encourage "work slowdowns, purposeful inefficiency, purposeful waste, and relatively safe forms of sabotage…[such as] putting glass and nails on the highways, leaving water running in public buildings, putting sand in machinery, wasting electricity, taking sick leave from work, [and] damaging sugar stalks during the harvest." This approach, according to Murrow, would supplement official US economic sanctions, "provide the Cuban exile community, now straining at the bit in inactivity, an outlet for their energies…[and] give the opposition inside Cuba a purposeful line of action not tied to open revolt." McCone concurred with this approach and said that CIA would resume the broadcasts around mid-month.[17] ~~(S)~~

CIA's extensive espionage operations against Cuba had several purposes: to verify that the Soviet Union had not hidden any missiles in Cuba in violation of the withdrawal agreement; to collect intelligence on the Castro regime's vulnerabilities and efforts to export its revolution to neighboring countries; and to identify potential assets inside the Cuban leadership who might assist a destabilization plot. As of November 1962, the DDP had accomplished much toward carrying out the White House's and McCone's directives. It had recruited numerous agents in Cuba and Cuban diplomats stationed in other countries, as well as officers and crewmen on six Cuban merchant vessels; infiltrated clandestine teams into Cuba;

McCone thought these intelligence-gathering efforts, and not regime-change operations, were the most important and most useful of CIA's activities.[18] ~~(S)~~

The administration in particular wanted to demonstrate that Castro was subverting other Latin American governments. It believed that highlighting the international communist threat would garner diplomatic support for US policy in the region.[19] McCone's CIA took the lead in acquiring the necessary evidence. At the White House's request, OCI in January 1963 prepared a report on Cuban training of Latin American guerrillas and insurgents. At around the same time, McCone told Helms and DDI Cline to compile "a complete dossier of proven actions by the Communists using Cuba as a base to subvert or overthrow Latin American governments." CIA analysts concluded that the limited evidence available indicated the existence of only a relatively minor program of propaganda and training and funding of prospective insurgents. The sense of the Intelligence Community, expressed two months earlier in a special estimate, was equally as guarded. President Kennedy, apparently not convinced, asked McCone to develop "hard information" about direct Cuban ties to communists in Venezuela that could be publicized. (Venezuela's president, Romulo Betancourt, was the administration's model Latin leader.) In testimony to the House Foreign Affairs Committee on 19 February 1963, McCone made an anecdotal case that "Castro is spurring and supporting the efforts of Communists and other revolutionary elements to overthrow and seize control of the governments in Latin America."

---

[17] Helms memorandum to McCone, "Cuban Crisis; Sensitive Covert Propaganda Operations," 15 November 1962, and McCone untitled memorandum to Murrow, 11 December 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 19, folder 2; Murrow untitled memorandum to McCone, 10 December 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 605. ~~(S)~~

[18] Harvey memorandum to McCone, "Operational Plan for Continuing Operations Against Cuba," 27 November 1962, CIA JFK Assassination Records, box JFK34, folder 9; Kirkpatrick, "Memorandum for the Record…Meeting of the DCI with the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board…," 28 December 1962, CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 8, folder 140. ~~(S)~~

[19] The administration's diplomatic undertakings to persuade Latin American leaders of the security risk Castro posed are outlined in *FRUS, 1961–1963, XII, American Republics*, 334–55, 359. (U)

Venezuela appeared to be marked as "No. 1 on the priority list for revolution," he declared.[20]

To act on the White House's objectives toward Castro, Coordinator of Cuban Affairs Cottrell established a subcommittee on Cuban subversion in the Western Hemisphere. The group had members from CIA, the Departments of Defense and Justice, the Agency for International Development, and USIA. Its chairman was Maj. Gen. Victor Krulak of the Marine Corps; the Agency's representative was [redacted] from the DDP's WH Division. The subcommittee studied and recommended actions on controls of travel, money, weapons, and information among Cuba and Latin countries; intelligence exchanges and countersubversion training programs with OAS nations; and military contingency planning. President Kennedy endorsed a number of the recommendations. Those affecting CIA included increasing propaganda, intelligence collection, and liaison efforts; improving and expanding communications links in the region; and utilizing agents of influence and other covert assets to persuade governments to adopt stricter measures against Cuba. The administration's fears about Castro-inspired subversion were proven convincingly when a Cuban arms cache was found in Venezuela in November 1963 (see below).[21]

Insufficient Progress (U)

Much of this early effort must have seemed like MONGOOSE *redux* to McCone—lots of "operational activity" (collecting, planning, targeting, training), scrutinized by Robert Kennedy, that did not appear to take the administration much closer to its goal of removing Castro.[22] Indeed, McCone—detecting the same kind of trepidation downtown that had hobbled MONGOOSE—soon began to wonder what that goal was. He grew frustrated at what he regarded as a "serious gap" in US policy toward Cuba: the lack of "an agreed, understood course of action to bring about corrections in a situation we had declared to be unacceptable." "[W]e were dead in [the] water," he told Bundy, and he was finding it hard to persuade Congress that the administration had a plan to oust, or at least contain, the Castro regime. The Cuba Coordinating Committee and Desmond FitzGerald were busily developing and carrying out covert action plans, but at this stage—late spring 1963—McCone was skeptical about them. He did not want merely what FitzGerald termed "a probing operation" that included "subtle sabotage," but rather "a reliable blue print for [the] overthrow of the Castro regime." He thus opposed going ahead with even a stepped-up sabotage program until the administration made clear what its overall policy was to assure the removal of the remaining Soviet troops in Cuba and deal with the Castro threat.[23]

[redacted] National Security Files, Countries Series, Cuba—Subjects, Intelligence Material, January–September 1962, JFK Library; DDP memorandum, "Cuban Aggression and Subversion Activities in Latin America," March 1962, HS Files, HS/CSG-515, Job 83-00036R, box 4, folder 1; Kirkpatrick memorandum, "Record of Communist-directed Subversion from Cuba," Action Memorandum No. 152, 10 January 1963, and [redacted] SNIE 85-4-62, "Castro's Subversive Capabilities in Latin America," 9 November 1962, HS Files, Job 03-01724R, box 1, folder 8; President Kennedy untitled memorandum to McCone, 9 February 1963, Edward B. Claflin, ed., *JFK Wants to Know: Memos from the President's Office, 1961–1963*, 238; "Statement by the Honorable John A. McCone…to the House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs…19 February 1963," HS Files, Job 03-01724R, box 2, folder 1. McCone's testimony garnered a collection of eye-catching headlines in several newspapers on 2 March after the House committee released a sanitized version of his statement: "Cuba Trains Latin Reds, M'Cone Says" (*Chicago Tribune*), "Describes Castro's School for Sabotage" (*Chicago Daily News*), "Cuba Trains 1500 As Latin Saboteurs" (*Washington Post*), "Guerrillas Awaiting Return Home to Lead Revolts, McCone Says" (*Baltimore Sun*), and "1500 Trained by Cuba As Latin Terrorists, CIA Director Reveals" (*Philadelphia Inquirer*); articles in HS Files, Job 84-00473R, box 1, folder 6, and Western Hemisphere—Cuba clipping file, box 2, HIC [redacted]

[21] Cottrell memorandum, "Establishment of Sub-Committee on Cuban Subversion," 25 February 196[redacted] memorandum to Thomas Karamessines (ADDP), "Sub-Committee on Cuban Subversion," 11 March 1963, Helms memorandum to McCone, "Work of the Sub-Committee on Cuban Subversion," 28 March 1963, Krulak, "Memorandum for the Interdepartmental Coordinating Committee on Cuban Affairs…Second Progress Report, Sub-Committee on Cuban Subversion," 9 May 1963, DDO Files, Job 78-02958R, box 1, folder 17; Helms, "Memorandum for the Record…Cuban Arms Cache in Venezuela," 19 November 1963, McCone Papers, box 13, folder 2; McLean, vol. 2, 254–55.

[22] Alexander Haig, at the time the secretary of the army's detailee to the Cuba Coordinating Committee, recently recalled "the impatient prodding of Robert Kennedy and the frequent invocation of the President's name" during his assignment. "Bobby Kennedy was running it—hour by hour….[H]e had a very tight hand on the operation…Bobby was the President." Russo, *Live By the Sword*, 163, quoting interview with Haig. The record does not show whether McCone knew about the attorney general's private contacts with exile leaders—including visits by them to Hickory Hill. Thomas, *Robert Kennedy*, 177, 235, 238. (U)

[23] McCone, "Memorandum of Discussion with Mr. Bundy, 28 February [1963]," FitzGerald memorandum to McCone, "Outline of a Program to Exacerbate and Stimulate Disaffection in the Cuban Armed Forces," 19 March 1963, Cottrell memorandum to the Special Group, "Propaganda Inciting Cubans Within Cuba to Attack Soviet Troops," 2 April 1963, and FitzGerald memorandum to the Special Group, "Prospects for and Limitations of a Maximum Covert Action Program Against the Castro Communist Regime," 17 April 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X/XI/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, docs. 265, 634, 644, and 655; Chase untitled memoranda to Bundy, 3 and 11 April 1963, Joseph Califano memorandum to Cyrus Vance (both Department of the Army), "Presidential Action on Special Group Items Concerning Cuba," 9 April 1963, Thomas Parrott (NSC), "Minutes of Meeting of the Special Group, 11 April 1963," and Cottrell memorandum to Special Group, "Proposed New Covert Policy and Program Towards Cuba," 18 April 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 748–51, 754–55, 757–58, 761–62, 769–72; Kirkpatrick memorandum about McCone meeting with PFIAB, 23 April 1963, ER Files, Job 91S00741R, box 1, folder 3; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record…Special Group (5412) Meeting, 11 April 1963," McCone Papers, box 1, folder 5.

Throughout the intensified campaign against Castro, McCone repeatedly found himself in awkward positions at Langley because he had departed from Allen Dulles's policy of compartmenting operations from analysis. Whereas Dulles had kept the DI ignorant of the Bay of Pigs operation during its planning phase, McCone had senior Agency estimators assess the prospects for success and the international implications of covert actions in Cuba, including the ambitious sabotage plan that FitzGerald submitted in April 1963. The plan escalated the secret war, proposing that Cuban exile operatives strike higher profile targets such as freighters, refineries, and power plants. Sherman Kent, R. Jack Smith, and other senior analysts agreed with the DDP's judgment that such attacks would prompt Castro to tighten security even further and the Soviet Union to increase aid to Cuba and intensify its anti-US propaganda. Taking a longer, less tactical view than the DDP, however, the estimators concluded that more sabotage could cause a new crisis in US-Soviet relations by reviving fears of a US invasion, leading Moscow to raise the issue with the UN or take a risky action like shooting down a U-2 over Cuba. In addition, CIA assessments of the Castro regime's stability and economic health indicated that the Cuban revolution was increasingly durable and, with added Soviet Bloc assistance, could survive the US-inspired sanctions regime and sabotage. McCone agreed with an April 1963 estimate that "[t]here is a good chance that Castro's position in Cuba a year from now will be stronger than it presently is, and that in Latin America the Communists will have recovered some of the ground lost in the missile crisis."[24] (S)

In this way, McCone repeatedly received assessments from the Agency's senior analysts that underscored the dilemma he was in. He had to oversee a presidentially mandated clandestine program that his own estimators did not believe would work—and in which he personally had less than full confidence—unless the operations were mounted on a scale, and with a higher level of risk and "noise," than the administration would permit. McCone believed two approaches to the Cuban problem were practicable: persuading Castro to break relations with the Soviet Union and disavow spreading revolution in Latin America; and pressuring Khrushchev to withdraw the Soviet military presence from Cuba, leaving Castro vulnerable to an American-engineered ouster. The DCI told both the president and the Special Group that the Agency's covert action plan against Castro would be pointless unless it was intensified, conducted continually, and combined with a more concerted international diplomatic and economic offensive against Cuba. He did not favor extreme forms of sabotage, such as total destruction of crops or contamination of water supplies. He questioned whether Cuban agents were competent to carry out any operations, and whether the tandem covert action/economic sanctions approach could prompt an uprising or get rid of Castro. McCone thought that regardless of what plan the administration adopted, the Cuban people would suffer more than the regime. As an alternative, he proposed that covert action be directed at the military leadership, on which Castro depended to stay in power.[25] (S)

As the first half of 1963 passed without more than what were derogated as "pin prick" achievements, McCone's and CIA's pessimistic forecasts became more widely shared in the administration. Policymakers concluded that there were few politically acceptable measures they could take to bring about Castro's overthrow and that intensified covert action would neither cripple the economy nor remove *el jefe maximo* from power. "The sum and substance of it is that useful organized sabotage is still very hard to get," Bundy wrote to the attorney general. "Proposals which do more good than harm are rare." The available policy options seemed to range, in Bundy's words, from "forc[ing] a non-Communist solution in Cuba by all necessary means"; to "insist[ing] on major but limited ends" (such as Castro's verifiable abandonment of regional subversion, or the opening of the island to onsite inspections); to "gradual development of

[24] BNE memorandum to McCone, "Comments on Proposed New Covert Policy and Program towards Cuba," 19 April 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X/XI/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 656; Smith, "Summary Record of the 2nd Meeting of the Standing Group of the National Security Council," 23 April 1963, and ONE memorandum, "Developments in Cuba and Possible US Actions in the Event of Castro's Death," 13 May 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 780, 813–14; Kent memorandum to McCone, "Comments on Proposed New Covert Policy and Program towards Cuba," 19 April 1963, and Coordinator of Cuban Affairs memorandum to Special Group, "Proposed New Covert Policy and Program Towards Cuba," 18 April 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 19, folder 4. (S)

[25] McCone, "Memorandum on Cuban Policy," 25 April 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X/XI/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 670; BNE memorandum to McCone, "Cuba a Year Hence," 22 April 1963, McCone, "Memorandum for the File...Meeting with the President...," 15 April 1963, and Smith, "Summary Record of 7th Meeting of the Standing Group of the National Security Council," 28 May 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 762–64, 778–79, 822–23; Parrott, minutes of Special Group meetings on 11 and 25 April 1963, ibid., 757–58, 782–84; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Special Group (5412) Meeting, 11 April 1963," McCone Papers, box 1, folder 5. McCone briefly showed interest in trying to orchestrate the "defection" of Castro from the Soviet camp as Tito of Yugoslavia had done, but the idea was not pursued further. Smith, "Summary Record of the 3rd Meeting of the Standing Group of the National Security Council," 30 April 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 796–97. (S)

some form of accommodation with Castro." Even in the case of Castro's death, the Standing Group regarded US options as "singularly unpromising," including the one on which the administration would soon place most of its hopes—support for exiles.[26] (U)

Heightened Concerns, Inadequate Means (U)

Castro's four-week trip to the Soviet Union during April–May 1963 imparted renewed urgency to the administration's secret war against Cuba. During his visit, the Cuban leader spoke to huge crowds across the country, received the Order of Lenin, repaired relations with the Kremlin, and won promises of increased foreign aid. According to BNE, "Soviet and Cuban fortunes have been bound more closely together" as Khrushchev had "strengthened the commitment of Soviet prestige to the Cuban revolution" and "gained an important trump card for defending Soviet policy against the attacks of Communist China."[27] (U)

Khrushchev greets Castro in Moscow in 1963. (U)

In line with that reasoning, McCone in late May urged the Special Group to approve a program of sabotage to "create a situation in Cuba in which it would be possible to subvert military leaders to the point of their acting to overthrow Castro." The DCI interpreted Castro's most recent statements as indicating that he was more firmly tied to Moscow than ever. Any reconciliation with Washington—in which Cuban leaders purportedly had shown an interest, according to [redacted] interviews with an American journalist—would be on Soviet and Cuban terms only. Although, as ONE said in early June 1963, the Castro-Khrushchev accord did not presage "imminent, horrendous developments" in Latin America, it did indicate that the Kremlin endorsed a gradual intensification of Cuban subversive activities in the region. There was thus little chance of moving Castro toward becoming a "Caribbean Tito"—communist yet independent of Moscow. Moreover, economic sanctions were ineffective because US allies would not act in concert with it. An impatient Robert Kennedy endorsed a broader, more aggressive covert action plan, insisting that "the US must do something against Castro, even though we do not believe our actions would bring him down."[28] (U)

On 8 June, with McCone's endorsement, CIA submitted an "Integrated Program of Action towards Cuba," and President Kennedy approved it 11 days later in order to, in the words of the plan, "nourish a spirit of resistance and disaffection which could lead to significant defections and other byproducts of unrest." The program, which presumed that American military intervention had been ruled out, was designed to "encourage dissident elements in the military and other power centers of the regime to bring about the eventual liquidation of the Castro/Communist entourage and the elimination of the Soviet presence from Cuba." The new effort required an unprecedented coordination of collection, propaganda, economic sanctions, sabotage, and support for autonomous exiles. "Unless all the components of this program are executed in tandem," the Agency proposal stated, "the individual courses of action are almost certain to be of marginal value.... This is clearly a cause where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts." The last two activities, sabotage and support for exiles, had the greatest potential for showing the American hand behind a supposedly Cuban-instigated liberation

[26] Bundy memorandum to Robert Kennedy, 16 May 1963, quoted in Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy*, 541; Cottrell memorandum to the Special Group, "Proposed New Covert Policy and Program Towards Cuba," with attachment, "A Covert Harassment/Sabotage Program against Cuba," 18 April 1963, Bundy memorandum to the Standing Group, "The Cuban Problem," 21 April 1963, and Smith, "Summary Record of 7th Meeting of the Standing Group of the National Security Council," 28 May 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 772, 777, 821. The Standing Group had reached its gloomy conclusion after reading and discussing ONE's memorandum "Developments in Cuba and Possible US Actions in the Event of Castro's Death," 13 May 1963, ibid., 813–14. ONE judged that a power struggle between pro-Moscow communists and Cuban nationalists probably would break out, but even with that instability, anti-Soviet elements would require extensive American help—including probably military intervention—to prevail. ONE also concluded that exile groups would have little say in events after Castro's death and that Cubans still on the island would not cooperate with a government-in-exile. (U)

[27] BNE memorandum to McCone, "Implications of Castro's Visit," 29 May 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI/XII/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 671. (U)

[28] Helms memoranda to McCone, "Interview of US Newswoman with Fidel Castro Indicating Possible Interest in Rapprochement with the United States," 1 May 1963, and "Reported Desire of the Cuban Government for Rapprochement with the United States," 5 June 1963, and McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Secretary Rusk, 14 May [1963,]" *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI/XII/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, docs. 678, 684, and 685; Krulak memorandum to Maxwell Taylor, "Conversation with Mr. John A. McCone," 6 June 1963, record no. 202-10002-10034, NARA/JFK Assassination Records; ONE memorandum to Assistant to DDI for Policy Support, "Khrushchev, Castro, and Latin America," 4 June 1963, HS Files, Job 03-01724R, box 2, folder 5; Smith, "Summary Record of 7th Meeting of the Standing Group of the National Security Council," 28 May 1963, FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath, 822–23. McCone earlier had thought Castro would leave Moscow disappointed and that CIA should develop "a strong psych campaign" to "exacerbate tensions or disagreements" between him and Khrushchev. Karamessines memorandum to Chief, DDP/Soviet Russia Division, 9 May 1963, DDO Files, Job 78-02958R, box 1, folder 8.

movement. Sabotage attacks—ranging from petty harassment to hit-and-run raids against ships, power plants, factories, and petroleum and transport facilities—would be conducted by Agency-trained and -controlled Cuban assets on and off the island, and by selected exile groups. To maintain deniability, all so-called "autonomous operations" would be launched from outside US territory; American participation in them would be limited to a CIA liaison officer who dispensed advice, funds, and materiel.[29] (U)

McCone emphasized to the president that the operations "would create quite a high noise level" that "must be absorbed and not create a change in policy." He also cautioned against impatience; "no single event would be conclusive." At around the same time, however, he approved another estimate that seemed to call the whole enterprise into question: "[W]ithout leadership and without goals...no opposition force is likely to develop the power to challenge Castro, however much equipment or support it might get from the outside."[30]

The chief operative element of the new plan, the Cuban exiles, had presented two continuing difficulties for McCone and US policymakers ever since MONGOOSE: maintaining unity among fractious anti-Castro groups, and preventing them from mounting attacks without US approval. By early 1962, over 200 exile organizations had formed, principally in the United States. According to an Agency analysis in mid-1962, "the exile community, divided and quarrelsome, forms into groups and organizations, breaks up, disappears, and reforms in a kaleidoscopic picture which varies from week to week." This unstable factionalism made it hard for CIA to rely on the exiles to advance the administration's covert action agenda against Castro. Until April 1963, Washington simultaneously supported the Cuban Revolutionary Council (CRC) as a umbrella political organization comprising 10 generally centrist groups, and several militant factions for specific activities. CIA also recruited individual exiles for espionage and sabotage missions and for contacting resistance cells on the island.[31]

During the months after the missile crisis, unauthorized raids by independent exile groups—such as Alpha 66, its offshoot Lambda 66 (also known as Commandos L), and the Second Front of the Escambrey—threatened to upset the Kennedy-Khrushchev settlement and prompted the administration to toughen its approach toward them. The US government did not control the groups but was aware of their activities, news of which circulated freely in the porous Cuban refugee communities of Florida and Puerto Rico that funded them. (This poor security meant that Castro also knew about the exiles' plans—sometimes before the administration did.)[32] The exiles' hit-and-run attacks had multiple purposes—building their stature within the anti-Castro community, impressing CIA with their competence, demonstrating their independence from the United States, and provoking confrontation between Washington and Moscow. Instead, they created diplomatic difficulties for the administration because Cuba, the Soviet Union, and many other countries presumed the United States used all exiles as proxies. The freelancers' operational dramatics—lone fishing boats, with machine guns mounted to the

[29] CIA, "Proposed Covert Policy and Integrated Program of Action towards Cuba," 8 June 1963, FitzGerald, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting at the White House concerning Proposed Covert Policy and Integrated Program of Action towards Cuba," 19 June 1963, and FitzGerald, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting in the Office of the Secretary of State re Discussion of Proposed Covert Policy and Integrated Program of Action towards Cuba," 22 June 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 828–34, 842–44. (U)

[30] FitzGerald, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting at the White House concerning Proposed Covert Policy and Integrated Program of Action towards Cuba," with addendum by McCone, 19 June 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 837–38, NIE 85–63, "Situation and Prospects in Cuba," 14 June 1963, ibid., 834–36 and *FRUS, 1961–1963, X/XI/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 687; [Kirkpatrick,] "Memorandum for the Record...DCI's Presentation to the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board...26 June 1963," DDO Files, Job 78-03805R, box 3, folder 12a.

[31] Principal sources on the exile groups are: J.C. King (Chief, DDP/WH Division) memorandum to Allen Dulles, "Transmittal of Information on Anti-Castro Groups and Organizations," 2 August 1961, and King memorandum to Helms, "Agency Relationship with Anti-Castro Elements," 25 September 1961, DDO Files, Job 78-01450R, box 5, folder 4; McCone memorandum to Taylor, "Principal Organizations and Personalities Within the Cuban Exile Movement," 23 May 1962, National Security Files, Country Series, Cuba—Subjects, Exiles, January–October 1962, JFK Library; Seymour R. Bolten (SAS) memorandum to FitzGerald, "Cuban Revolutionary Council (CRC)," 21 February 1963, MORI doc. no. 349135; House of Representatives Select Committee on Assassinations, *Investigation of the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy: Hearings*, 12 vols. (hereafter *HSCA Hearings*), vol. 10, parts IV, VI–XI, XIV; CIA memorandum, "CIA Involvement with Cubans and Cuban Groups Now or Potentially Involved in the Garrison Investigation," 8 May 1967, CIA JFK Assassination Records, box JFK1, folder 7; Bundy, "Memorandum for the National Security Council Standing Group, Annex 7, Exile Problems," 21 April 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X/XI/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 661. A good sense of the on-the-ground rigors and vagaries of the covert war against Castro is provided by a US Army officer seconded to CIA as a training adviser to the exiles: Bradley Earl Ayers, *The War That Never Was*.

[32] Lyman Kirkpatrick later wrote that "the loose talk was most unfortunate for those freelance exiles who were running their own operations.... Many of these died needless deaths as their plans quickly reached the ears of Castro's agents in the United States, who then sent advance warning to the island." *The Real CIA*, 188–89. The US government's "covert" dealings with the exiles received regular press coverage, especially in Miami but also in Washington; see, e.g., Dan Kurzman, "US Builds Up Underground's Support in Cuba," *Washington Post*, 13 August 1963, Western Hemisphere—Cuba clipping file, box 2, HIC. McCone noted during his directorship that the exiles boasted about their dealings with US officials, and he suggested that contacts with them be conducted through cutouts. FitzGerald memorandum, "Notes on the Meeting of the Standing Group of the National Security Council[,] 16 July 1963," ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 24, folder 5.

prows, dashing across the Florida Straits to "liberate" Cuba by strafing civilian targets along the coast—inadvertently served the Agency's interest by enabling it to pass off raids by its own teams as the work of uncontrollable exiles.[33] (S)

CIA officials feared, however, that if the groups became too aggressive or attacked a third country's property or citizens, Havana would have justification for imposing a crackdown, and Moscow might delay its military withdrawal from the island or start escorting its merchant ships with naval vessels. Just after the Khrushchev standdown, President Kennedy had ordered CIA to do what it could to interdict the more daring groups, such as Alpha 66. Nonetheless, the expatriates' unauthorized raids continued and put the administration in a political bind. It either appeared ineffective by its inability to rein in the exiles, or it bore at least indirect responsibility for their actions by appearing to condone them.[34] (U)

After two raids in March 1963—probably by Alpha 66 and Lambda 66—that damaged Soviet commercial ships and installations, the administration decided to clamp down on the exiles and disengage from efforts to unify the anti-Castro groups.[35] The Department of State issued a statement that it "strongly opposed...hit-and-run attacks by splinter refugee groups," and at a press conference on 21 March, the president said the US government did not support the group responsible for the assaults. At month's end, McCone briefed the Standing Group on the exile organizations and offered the assessment that although the raids added strain to US-Soviet relations, they contributed to the immediate goal of subverting Castro. Moreover, if the Cuban leader could not deal effectively with the attacks and his domestic position weakened, Moscow might reevaluate its support for him. Lastly, expressing a personal opinion, McCone believed that trying to force the exiles to stop their operations would bring more domestic criticism on the administration than would officially disassociating itself from the attacks while allowing them to continue. The other Standing Group members went back and forth over whether the United States could restrict the attacks and decided to develop contingency plans for doing so. (S)

The unresolved problem of unauthorized raids jeopardized the US-Soviet accord that ended the missile crisis. The Kremlin charged that by "offering...its territories and material needs to CIA bandits hiding behind the skirts of Cuban malcontents who had deserted their country to embrace capitalism," the US government was causing a "dangerous aggravation" of the situation. Maintaining the façade of plausible denial, President Kennedy stated at a press conference on 3 April that the United States had no official connections with the exiles and that their attacks made freeing Cuba harder. "We don't think a rather hastily organized raid which maybe shoots up a merchant ship or kills some crewmen...represents a serious blow to Castro, and, in fact, may assist him in maintaining his control." Subsequently, the Coast Guard, the FBI, the Customs Service, and the Immigration and Naturalization Service worked harder to stop the autonomous groups. After the administration spurned a demand from the leader of the CRC, José Miro Cardona, that the US government support an exile military alliance, he resigned. The administration promptly ended its subsidy to the CRC, which it suspected of underwriting some of the "pin-prick" raids.[36] (S)

With some restraints on the freelancers now in place, the administration concentrated its support on two exile groups: the Movement to Recover the Revolution (MRR) and the Cuban Revolutionary Junta (JURE). CIA regarded

---

[redacted] CIA memoranda, "Antonio Veciana and Alpha 66," 26 July 1962, and "Alpha 66/Organization and Plans," 7 September 1962, MORI doc. nos. 427443 and 284371; Hinckle and Turner, 154–57; Carbonell, 240–42; Freedman, *Kennedy's Wars*, 230–31; Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy*, 540; Andrew St. George, "Hit and Run to Cuba with Alpha 66," *Life Magazine*, 16 November 1962, 55ff., Western Hemisphere—Cuba clipping file, box 2, HIC. (S)

[34] President Kennedy felt little but contempt for the militant Cuban expatriates. He sardonically noted that, in contrast to "real" guerrillas inside Cuba, "these in-and-out raids were probably exciting and rather pleasant for those who engage in them. They were in danger for less than an hour." Smith, "Summary Report of 42nd Meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Security Council," 29 March 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 741. McCone was scarcely more impressed with the freelancers, figuring they "would undoubtedly talk if captured." Parrott, "Memorandum for the Record...Minutes of Meeting of the Special Group, 11 April 1963," ibid., 758. The expatriate umbrella organization in Puerto Rico, UNIDAD, was more successful at restraining exile activities that would embarrass the US government. CIA Information Report, "Organization and Identity of Leaders of Anti-Castro Groups in Puerto Rico," 15 April 1963, MORI doc. no. 27024. (U)

[35] Sources for this paragraph and the next are: docs. and notes in *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 728, 732–34, 739–46, 752, 775, 786–88, 823–27, 842–44; *FRUS, 1961–1963, X/XI/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, docs. 635–39, 642, 645, 652, 654, 661, 664, and 683; memoranda and documents in McCone Papers, box 6, folder 3; DCI morning meeting minutes, 20 March 1963, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 17, folder 344; *HSCA Hearings*, vol. 10, 13, 58; *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy, 1963*, 278; Theodore Shackley testimony to Church Committee, 16 May 1976, Church Committee, *Investigation of the Assassination of President Kennedy*, 11; Corn, 97ff.; Hinckle and Turner, 156ff.; Carbonell, 242–49; William B. Breuer, *Vendetta! Fidel Castro and the Kennedy Brothers*, 211; "US Strengthens Checks on Raiders," *New York Times*, 6 April 1963, and "Cuban Refugees Restive Under US Restrictions," ibid., 7 April 1963, Western Hemisphere—Cuba clipping file, box 2, HIC. (S)

MRR as the most potentially capable exile organization and gave it more aid than any other anti-Castro group

Formed in 1959 by defectors from Castro's revolutionary cadre, MRR's leader was Manuel Artime Buesa, a Bay of Pigs veteran and frequent contact of the attorney general. Headquartered in Miami, the 300-man MRR by October 1963 had set up four bases in Central America for staging sabotage and harassment raids against Cuba—although Agency officers later would say the group wasted most of the CIA money it received. JURE was MRR's main competitor for the Agency's attention and resources. It was established in April 1962 by Manolo Ray Rivero, another disenchanted former lieutenant of Castro's. JMWAVE officers initially worried about Ray's leftist politics, but by mid-1963 the Agency fully supported JURE's activities. Robert Kennedy's meeting with Ray in September gave the group a special cachet among the exiles.[37] ~~(S)~~

With the particulars of CIA's integrated covert action program (AMWORLD) agreed to, McCone moved to fend off micromanagement and obstruction of the operations by agencies represented on the Special Group—especially the Department of State. Dean Rusk, in particular, was "not enthusiastically behind the CIA program," as the DCI put it, because he believed some *modus vivendi* could be reached with Castro. In June 1963, McCone advised the Special Group that "the program should be considered as an integrated and continuing thing which could not be put on a stop and go basis"; it needed "to flow forward...without requiring each operation to be justified in political and economic terms without regard to the total plan." Sensing Rusk's reservations that the hit-and-run raids—which averaged two a month—would create too much "noise," McCone tried to persuade him that no rapprochement with Castro was achievable on politically acceptable terms. Rusk, who agreed with the strategic thrust of the covert offensive, apparently decided to let it go without further resistance. McCone and Rusk had an almost identical exchange of views several months later, although by then—as described below—the DCI could cite an operational track record to buttress his conclusions.[38] (U)

Security and deniability became major issues for the Special Group practically from the start of the AMWORLD program after media reports in July linked the United States to exiles who were planning raids against Cuba from Central America. One account even described Robert Kennedy's conversations with anti-Castro commandos. McCone agreed with the attorney general's suggestion to have the US government "float other rumors so that in the welter of press reports no one would know the true facts." Freelance raids—such as three aerial attacks during August and September—continued to trouble the Special Group members as well, although US controls on the splinter groups generally were effective.[39] ~~(S)~~

With policy matters settled, McCone largely drew back from the integrated program as his operations subordinates carried it out. During all of 1963 (no breakdown before and after the approval of the program is available), 88 infiltration and exfiltration operations, for espionage and sabotage purposes primarily, were planned, and 73 were carried out. Secret intelligence collection through singleton agents and agent networks increased, although these operations had a high casualty rate—25 assets were captured or killed during 1963. (Some of the compromises were related to a double agent program that the Cuban intelligence service had begun recently.) By late 1963, a former Cuban politician the

[36] Substantial disillusionment with Miro, the first prime minister of Castro's revolutionary regime, existed within the administration well before then. He had pressed the administration for a guarantee of military support for many months. See Bundy memorandum about conversation with CRC members, 29 March 1962, and Robert A. Hurwitch (Cuban affairs officer, Department of State) memorandum to Edwin M. Martin (Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs), "The Cuban Exile Community, the Cuban Revolutionary Council, and Dr. Miro Cardona," 19 April 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 777–78, 797–98. (U)

[37] [FitzGerald,] "Chronology of Concept of Autonomous Operations...," c. July 1964, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 9; Orville Bathe (WH Division) memorandum, "Manuel Artime," 25 July 1973, CIA JFK Assassination Records, box JFK38, folder 2; Project AMWORLD files, HS Files, HS/CSG-2676 and 2677, Job 85-00664R, box 8, folders 1 and 2; CIA biographic profile of Artime, 26 February 1963, and CIA Information Report CSDB-3/660,494, "Political Philosophy of Manuel Artime Buesa," 9 April 1964, HS Files, Job 03-01724R, box 2, folder 1 and box 3, folder 5; Felix Rodriguez and John Weisman, *Shadow Warrior*, chap. 8; *HSCA Hearings*, vol. 10, 65–69, 77–79, 137–40; Hinckle and Turner, 148–50; Russo, *Live By the Sword*, 171–75; Thomas, *Robert Kennedy*, 238; "Cuban Exiles: Splinter Groups Imperil Unity," Washington *Evening Star*, 17 April 1963, A8, Western Hemisphere—Cuba clipping file, box 2, HIC. ~~(S)~~

[38] FitzGerald, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting in the Office of the Secretary of State re Discussion of Proposed Covert Policy and Integrated Program of Action towards Cuba," 22 June 1963, McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting with Secretary Rusk—21 June 1963—re Cuba," and McCone, "Meeting on Policy Relating to Cuba...," 12 November 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 842–45, 883–85. (U)

[39] Smith, "Summary Record of the 10th Meeting of the Standing Group of the National Security Council," 16 July 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 852–53; Chase memorandum to Bundy, "Exile Raids From Outside Areas—Pros, Cons, and Public Position," 12 September 1963, ibid., 864–65; [FitzGerald,] "Chronology of Concept of Autonomous Operations...," c. July 1964, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 9 ~~(S)~~

Agency had recruited the year before had established a productive intelligence network of 150 subagents and informants. CIA also claimed some success in targeting military dissidents. By year's end, the DDP had identified nearly four dozen prospects in the leadership ranks and had contacted three "heroes of the revolution." Four of the 73 abovementioned missions involved sabotage by commando teams that inflicted damage and received publicity. Most significantly, in August a petroleum-oil-lubricants depot was attacked, and in September a sawmill that produced many of Cuba's railroad ties was destroyed.[40] (U)

The US-backed groups were less successful at staging operations, however, than were teams of unaffiliated commandos. MRR completed only one of four missions, and JURE did not launch any. All these Agency and exile operations, along with between 30,000 and 40,000 propaganda leaflets and an average of 32 hours daily of broadcasts from seven radio stations, may have inspired over 100 indigenous acts of sabotage—derailing trains, short-circuiting electric systems, burning vehicles, and even bizarre tactics such as tying gas-soaked rags to the tails of cats, igniting them, and setting the terrified felines loose in sugar cane fields. The covert offensive, Robert Kennedy said, "was better organized than it had been before and it was having quite an effect.... There were ten or twenty tons of sugar cane that were being burned every week through internal uprisings."[41] (U)

In October and November 1963, McCone and the other Special Group members approved more than 20 added sabotage operations for the next three months. The administration's generally favorable consensus was that "CIA's sabotage operation is in the main low cost and...does worry the Castro regime, denies him some essential commodities, stimulates some sabotage inside Cuba and tends to improve the morale of the Cubans who would like to see Castro removed." In Special Group meetings, McCone advocated economic sabotage more forcefully than before, but he continued to caution against expecting any regime change, whether through a coup or an uprising, to occur anytime soon. (CIA analysts credited Castro's antiguerrilla program with squelching most internal resistance.) Robert Kennedy described the administration's bottom line as of November 1963, however: "[T]he program had produced a worthwhile impact on Cuba during the past five months and...it was useful in the United States as an indication that something was being done" about Castro. [redacted]

Other Castro-Related Business (U)

While the Agency's secret efforts to destabilize Castro's regime were underway, McCone participated in Special Group discussions about the administration's diplomatic feelers to the Cuban leader in October and November 1963.[43] The previous June, the Special Group had agreed that it would be a "useful endeavor" to explore "various possibilities of establishing channels of communication to Castro." This so-called "sweet approach" eventually was made

[40] CIA memorandum to the HSCA, "CIA Operations Against Cuba Prior to the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy...," passim. Besides AMWORLD, CIA had another, more narrowly focused, regime change operation underway—AMTRUNK, intended to "overthrow the existing Cuban government by means of a conspiracy among high-level military and civilian leaders...culminating in a coup d'etat which will oust both Castro and the Communists from power," according to a program review. Through AMTRUNK, CIA recruited some of Castro's cadre and established infiltration and exfiltration capabilities, but the program suffered from serious security vulnerabilities—some related to the double agent program—and was terminated in 1965. Chief/JMWAVE memorandum to Chief/SAS, "Project AMTRUNK Operational Review," 5 April 1963, CIA JFK Assassination Records, Job 80T01357A, box JFK36, folder 16; Scott D. Breckinridge (Deputy IG) memorandum to Acting DDCI, "Comments on Book V, SSC Final Report, *The Investigation of the Assassination of President Kennedy...*," 30 August 1977, ibid., folder 11, tab C. (U)

[41] McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting on Policy Relating to Cuba...," 12 November 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 884; Andrew, 304; Robert F. Kennedy oral history interview by John Martin, 1 March 1964, quoted in Russo, *Live By the Sword*, 237. (U)

[42] Church Committee, *Alleged Assassination Plots*, 173; Paul Eckel (NSC), "Memorandum for the Record...Cuban Operations," 12 November 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 885–88; Bruce B. Cheever (SAS), "Minutes of the Meeting to Review the Cuban Program," 14 November 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X/XII/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 718; [redacted] memorandum to Elder, "Briefing Notes on the Status of the Cuban Program," 6 December 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 31, folder 7; Helms memorandum to Robert Kennedy, "After Action Report on Recently Conducted Sabotage Operations," 4 September 1963, DDO Files, Job 78-02958R, box 1, folder 16; OCI Special Report, "Guerrilla and Antiguerrilla Operations in Cuba," 22 November 1963, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 19, folder 375; [FitzGerald,] "Chronology of Concept of Autonomous Operations...," c. July 1964, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 9; Corn, 106. [redacted]

[43] Sources for this paragraph and the next are: Donald E. Schulz, "Kennedy and the Cuban Connection," *Foreign Policy* 27, Spring 1977: 62–64, 121–22; Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy*, 551–55; Freedman, *Kennedy's Wars*, 240–44; docs. 332, 367, 372–74, 377–79, 382, 384, and 387 in *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 798–99, 868–70, 877–83, 888–93, 897–900, 902–4; Helms memorandum to McCone, "Reported Desire of the Cuban Government for Rapprochement with the United States," 5 June 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X/XII/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 685; Helms memorandum to Bundy, "Castro's Alleged Desire for Rapprochement with the United States," 27 April 1963, DDO Files, Job 78-02958R, box 3, folder 15; [redacted] (Coordinator of Cuban Affairs) untitled memorandum to Bundy, McCone, et al., with attachment, 24 June 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 19, folder 5; William Attwood, *The Reds and the Blacks: A Personal Adventure*, 142–44; idem, *The Twilight Struggle: Tales of the Cold War*, 257–63; Peter Kornbluh, "JFK and Castro: The Secret Quest for Accommodation," *Cigar Aficionado*, September–October 1999; and *Kennedy and Castro: the Secret History*, broadcast on the Discovery Channel, 25 November 2003. [redacted]

through an American television reporter (Lisa Howard of ABC News), a well-known French journalist (Jean Daniel), and a member of the staff of the US Mission to the United Nations (William Attwood). ~~(S)~~

Earlier in the year Castro purportedly had indicated through various intermediaries—the American journalist, the wife of a former Dutch diplomat, and an Israeli businessman—an interest in a rapprochement with the United States. Castro's first feeler came in May 1963 in a long interview with Lisa Howard. [redacted] McCone immediately worried that news of the interview [redacted] would leak, creating pressure on the administration to respond to Castro. Marshall Carter wrote to Bundy that

> Mr. McCone cabled me this morning stating that he cannot overemphasize the importance of secrecy in this matter and requested that I take all appropriate steps along this line to reflect his personal views on its sensitivity. Mr. McCone feels that gossip and inevitable leaks with consequent publicity would be most damaging. He suggests that no active steps be taken on the rapprochement matter at this time and urges most limited Washington discussions, any discussions on the fact that the rapprochement track is being explored as a remote possibility and one of several alternatives involving various levels of dynamic and positive action. In view of the foregoing, it is requested that the Lisa Howard report be handled in the most limited and sensitive manner.[44]

McCone never thought the Cuban leader was sincerely interested in settling his differences with the United States but was engaged only in a cynical exercise to buy time and divert the administration's attention from Havana's subversive activities in the hemisphere. The back-channel talks about talks continued inconclusively through the rest of Kennedy's term and ended a short while into the Johnson administration. ~~(S)~~

McCone was privy to the last major event in the Kennedy administration's campaign against Castro: CIA's discovery in November of a three-ton cache of Cuban-origin weapons and explosives in Venezuela, along with plans for mounting a coup against the government of Romulo Betancourt. (One of Washington's staunchest allies in the region, Betancourt had called for Castro's overthrow and discussed his assassination with US officials.) McCone heard about this incontrovertible evidence of Cuba's strategy to destabilize Latin America earlier in the month and authorized Helms to inform Robert Kennedy. On the 19th, the DDP and an Agency expert on South America met with the attorney general, who immediately sent them to the White House with a rifle from the cache. The Kennedys, Helms wrote at the time, "were intensely interested in this concrete example of Castro's export of arms for subversion." The president, preparing to leave to give a speech in Miami on Western Hemisphere affairs, congratulated his visitors. "Be sure to have complete information for me when I get back," he told them. "I think maybe we've got him now." On the 23rd, however, the day after Kennedy was assassinated, CIA's station in Miami received a cable from Headquarters directing it to "postpone [anti-Cuban] ops indefinitely. Rescheduling will depend upon consultation with appropriate officials"—the new president, Lyndon Johnson, and his advisers. After a brief interruption during the mourning period, the Agency resumed its anti-Castro activities. McCone and his operations deputies had no expectation that the new administration would significantly change the clandestine offensive against Cuba—an incorrect presumption, as will be seen.[45] ~~(S)~~

[44] Carter letter to Bundy, 2 May 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 798–99. (U)

[45] Helms, "Memorandum for the Record...Cuban Arms Cache in Venezuela," 19 November 1963, McCone Papers, box 13, folder 2; [redacted] vol. 2, 254–55; Stephen Rabe, "After the Missiles of October: John F. Kennedy and Cuba, November 1962 to November 1963," *PSQ* 30, no. 4 (December 2000): 723; Beschloss, *The Crisis Years*, 666–67, citing interview with Helms. According to Helms, the cache contained Belgian-made submachineguns that had small round marks braised on their stocks. Suspecting that the marks were obliterated emblems, CIA technicians used a process to briefly restore the images—the national seal of Cuba. Helms, "Remarks at Donovan Award Dinner," 24 May 1983, HS Files, Job 03-01724R, box 4, folder 11. Critics of CIA—such as former officers Joseph B. Smith and Philip Agee—have claimed that the Agency planted the arms, and a CIA operational proposal submitted to the NSC in May 1963 suggested a "deception operation involving the laying down of Soviet, Czech, and Chicom arms in selected areas of Latin America, ostensibly proving the arms were smuggled from Cuba." However, McCone assured President Johnson in late November that the cache was genuine. CIA paper on possible covert actions against Cuba, May 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XIXII/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 675; McCone memorandum of 30 November 1963 meeting with President Johnson (dated 2 December), *FRUS 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 896. ~~(S)~~

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

CHAPTER 7

Waging Camelot's Counterinsurgencies (I): Laos (U)

President John F. Kennedy sympathized with the aspirations of nationalists in the Third World and was determined not to let the Soviet Union and Communist China exploit them.[1] "The desire to be free of all foreign tutelage—the desire for self-determination—is the most powerful force in the modern world," he had told an interviewer in 1960. "America must be on the side of the right of man to govern himself," for in doing so it gained a formidable ideological ally. "[N]ationalism is the force which disposes of sufficient power and determination to threaten the integrity of the communist empire itself." (U)

Kennedy's vision, however, clashed with that of the Soviet Union's adventurous and unpredictable leader, Nikita Khrushchev. In early January 1961, Khrushchev declared his intention to assert the superiority of Marxism-Leninism in the most vulnerable areas of the globe—the former colonies of Western Europe—by supporting "wars of national liberation." President Kennedy believed the United States was sorely unprepared to face this challenge, which he told Congress was "the most active and constant threat to Free World security." The Eisenhower administration's buildup of the US nuclear arsenal may have produced a stalemate in the strategic arena, but it eroded US ability to fight conventional wars and left it unready to deal with the small-scale conflicts that seemed an inevitable legacy of decolonization. Kennedy and his brother Robert were lastingly affected by memories of their visit to Southeast Asia in 1951, were familiar with the writings on guerrilla warfare of Mao Zedong and Ché Guevara, and had been influenced by Edward Lansdale's criticism of the US military's strategy in Vietnam. They and the energetic circle of "action intellectuals" in the New Frontier, steeped in the insights and optimism of the new social sciences, chose to meet communism on its own ground with an array of overt and covert policies intended to demonstrate the determination of the United States, uphold its credibility, and banish the image of the "Ugly American." Although the US armed services had the predominant role in carrying out this policy, CIA and John McCone were major players in formulating and implementing its covert action aspects. (U)

A New Paradigm (U)

In military and intelligence terms, the Kennedy administration became enamored of the concept of "flexible response" and its adjunct in developing countries, counterinsurgency doctrine (often designated in military documents as COIN).[2] An interagency planning study in 1962 described counterinsurgency as the "combined use of political, economic, psychological, military, and paramilitary efforts to maintain security and government control and support where they still largely exist...and to restore them in areas where they have broken down...." Western victories over communist insurgencies in Greece, Malaysia, Burma, and the Philippines showed that this new unconventional approach could bring success in "people's wars." Counterinsurgency would be the military element in the Kennedy administration's geopolitical vision for the Third World, complementing modernization and nation building in the social, economic, and political realms. (U)

[1] Sources for this introductory section are: Douglas S. Blaufarb, *The Counterinsurgency Era: U.S. Doctrine and Performance*, chap. 3; Freedman, *Kennedy's Wars*, 27–33, 287–92; Johnson, *The Right Hand of Power*, 329; Andrew F. Krepinevich Jr., *The Army and Vietnam*, 27–33; Miroff, 38–39; Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy*, 460ff.; idem, *A Thousand Days*, 310–11, 340–42; D. Michael Shafer, *Deadly Paradigms*, 17–24, 104–15; and Sorensen, *Kennedy*, 631–33. (U)

[2] John Kennedy expressed his views on this subject while in the Senate in 1959: "...in practice our nuclear retaliatory power is not enough. It cannot deter Communist aggression which is too limited to justify atomic war. It cannot protect uncommitted nations against a Communist takeover using local or guerrilla forces. It cannot be used in so-called brush-fire wars.... In short, it cannot prevent the Communists from nibbling away at the fringe of the free world's territory or strength." John F. Kennedy, *The Strategy of Peace*, 184. (U)

In 1960, retired Gen. Maxwell Taylor, the Army Chief of Staff during 1955–59, caught Kennedy's attention when he wrote a critique of the Eisenhower administration's military strategy—aptly entitled *The Uncertain Trumpet*—that advocated less reliance on the nuclear deterrent and emphasized the importance of conventional forces and counterinsurgency tactics. "The strategic doctrine which I propose to replace Massive Retaliation is called...the strategy of Flexible Response. The name suggests the need for a capability to react across the entire spectrum of possible challenge, for coping with anything from general atomic war to infiltrations and aggressions such as threaten Laos and Berlin...." Taylor, *The Uncertain Trumpet*, 6. Then-senator Kennedy wrote in a review that Taylor's book "leaves no room for doubt that we have not brought our conventional war capabilities into line with the necessities. We have allowed important aspects of our national military strength to erode over the past years." The senator wrote to Taylor that the book's "central arguments are most persuasive...and it has certainly helped to shape my own thinking." John M. Taylor, *General Maxwell Taylor*, 8. On Kennedy's interest in flexible response before his election, and on how his administration developed the policy, see Bose, 42, 48–61. The shortcomings in how the Kennedy and Johnson administrations tried to practice flexible response in Southeast Asia are incisively analyzed in John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, chap. 7. (U)

Southeast Asia, and especially Vietnam, would be the main testing ground for this new paradigm of warfare by social science. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara said the United States had "to prove in the Vietnamese test case that the free world can cope with Communist 'wars of liberation' as we have coped successfully with Communist aggression at other levels." After visiting South Vietnam in October 1961, Gen. Maxwell Taylor, as the president's military adviser, recommended that the United States embark on an aggressive counterinsurgency campaign in Vietnam, with a heavy admixture of covert action and espionage. Castro's revolution in Cuba showed how powerful an unchecked guerrilla movement could become, and the president's rough initiation into geopolitics during 1961—the Bay of Pigs, the Berlin Wall, and the Vienna summit—made it imperative that the administration act resolutely in Southeast Asia. Politically at home and abroad, Kennedy could not afford to "lose" the region to, as he said in April 1961, "a monolithic and ruthless conspiracy that relies primarily on covert means for expanding its sphere of influence..."[3] (U)

The president quickly gave life to the doctrine of COIN by establishing special policies, mechanisms, and personnel.[4] At the first NSC meeting of his administration, Kennedy ordered the secretary of defense, "in consultation with other interested agencies...[to] examine means for placing more emphasis on the development of counter-guerrilla forces." He approved a sizable counterinsurgency plan for Vietnam, developed in late 1960 during the transition, which proposed extensive military and social reforms. Acting on his fascination with unconventional warfare, the president personally endorsed the Army's Special Forces, and the Air Force and Navy set up their own commando units. Inside the Pentagon, a new office—the Special Assistant for Counterinsurgency and Special Activities—was created to report to the secretary of defense on "special warfare" matters, including joint operations with CIA; and budgets for military "civic action" programs and research and development on anti-guerrilla weapons swelled. In mid-1962, an interagency committee on police assistance programs—comprising representatives from the Departments of State, Defense, and Justice, the Agency for International Development (AID), the Bureau of the Budget, and CIA—recommended large increases in funding for "preventive medicine" against "urban and rural dissidence."[redacted]

By July 1962, over 500,000 military personnel and students at war colleges and service academies had attended courses in counterinsurgency. Thousands of civilian federal employees—including [redacted] CIA officers—also took such classes, often as a prerequisite to assignment in countries where insurgencies were occurring or anticipated. Senior diplomats and national security managers heard Robert Kennedy, Walt Rostow, Lansdale, and others expound upon counterinsurgency in the ongoing "National Interdepartmental Seminar on Problems of Development and Internal Defense" taught through the Foreign Service Institute.[5] In August 1962, the administration proclaimed its COIN doctrine, with implementing programs, in a long paper entitled "US Overseas Internal Defense Policy"—a document its principal author (Charles Maechling of the Department of State) in 1999 would call "to this day...the

[3] *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy, 1961*, 336. (U)

[4] Sources for this paragraph and the next are: Blaufarb, *Counterinsurgency Era*, 57, 70–79, 83–85; Sorensen, *Kennedy*, 631–33; Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 340–42, 541; idem, *Robert Kennedy*, 465; John Prados, *Presidents' Secret Wars*, 220–28; Richard K. Betts, *Soldiers, Statesmen, and Cold War Crises*, 128–31; Michael E. Latham, *Modernization as Ideology*, 166–70; Jefferson P. Marquis, "The Other Warriors: American Social Science and Nation Building in Vietnam," *DH* 24, no. 1 (Winter 2000): 79–105; Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*, 415; Johnson, *Right Hand of Power*, 331–32; Robert D. Dean, "Masculinity as Ideology: John F. Kennedy and the Domestic Politics of Foreign Policy," *DH* 22, no. 1 (Winter 1998): 49–52; J. Justin Gustainis, "John F. Kennedy and the Green Berets," *Communication Studies* 40, no. 1 (Spring 1989): 41–53; "Record of Actions Taken at the 475th Meeting of the National Security Council," 1 February 1961, NSAM No. 56, "Evaluation of Paramilitary Requirements," 28 June 1961, President Kennedy untitled memorandum to McNamara, 11 January 1962, Bundy memorandum to Taylor, "Police Programs," 14 February 1962, NSAM No. 132, "Support of Local Police Forces for Internal Security and Counter-Insurgency Purposes," 19 February 1962, Parrott untitled memorandum to the president, 22 March 1962, NSAM no. 146, 20 April 1962, "Report of Committee on Policy Assistance Programs," 20 July 1962, NSAM No. 182, "Counterinsurgency Doctrine," 24 August 1962, "Editorial Note," U. Alexis Johnson memorandum to the president, "Progress in the Counter-Insurgency Program," 14 March 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, VIII, National Security Policy*, 22, 111, 235–36, 248–50, 256, 345–48, 381–83, 464–66; JCS memorandum to McNamara, "Joint Counterinsurgency Concept and Doctrinal Guidance," JCSM-252–62, 5 April 1962, CMS Files, Job 80B01083A, box 1, folder 12; NSAM No. 131, "Training Objectives for Counter-Insurgency," 13 March 1962, McCone Papers, box 1, folder 3; Lemnitzer memorandum to Bundy, "Summary Report, Military Counterinsurgency Accomplishments Since January, 1961," 21 July 1962, quoted in Blaufarb, *Counterinsurgency Era*, 70–71; NSAM No. 163, "Training Objectives for Counterinsurgency," 14 June 1962, ER Files, Job 84B00513R, box 9, folder 2; Krepinevich, 103–12; Shafer, 112–15; CIA Office of Training Bulletin, May 1962, 24–25, HS Files, HS/HC-377, Job 84T00286R, box 2, folder 11; "United States Overseas Internal Defense Policy," September 1962, 25, *FRUS, 1961–1963, VII/VIII/IX: Arms Control; National Security Policy; Foreign Economic Policy: Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 279.[redacted]

[5] The Johnson administration reaffirmed this training mandate in NSAM No. 283, "US Overseas Internal Defense Training Policy and Objectives," 13 February 1964, *FRUS, 1964–1968, XXXIII, Organization and Management of U.S. Foreign Policy...*, 422–25. McCone did not participate in the Interdepartmental Seminar but was well "indoctrinated" in counterinsurgency through White House discussions and CIA papers and briefings. (U)

most interventionist statement of American [foreign] policy ever promulgated."[6]

McCone, CIA, and COIN in Southeast Asia (U)

Maechling's document described John McCone and CIA as "active participant[s] in the US Internal Defense effort at both the national and the country team levels."[7] The Agency was no stranger to counterinsurgency in theory or practice when McCone took charge. In CIA's early days, paramilitary elements in the Office of Policy Coordination and the DDP conducted, and collaborated with liaison services in, "unconventional warfare"—guerrilla-style methods that later would be termed "counterinsurgency." CIA officers participated in examinations of the concept during the Eisenhower administration, and in 1955, the Agency commissioned its own study (Project Brushfire) of the factors that led to "peripheral wars." Richard Bissell, the DDP, was assigned in March 1961 to lead an interagency group to study how best to organize the US government to fulfill the counterinsurgency mission.

In Washington, the NSC's subcommittee, the Special Group Counterinsurgency, became the venue in which McCone joined in senior-level operational and policy reviews of CIA's counterinsurgency projects. The SGC was the embodiment within the policymaking bureaucracy of the Kennedy administration's fascination with counterinsurgency. The president established it in January 1962 to oversee large-scale paramilitary operations in Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand. The SGC's officially stated purpose was "[t]o assure unity of effort and the use of all available resources with maximum effectiveness in preventing and resisting subversive insurgency and related forms of indirect aggression in friendly countries." Highest on the list of SGC functions was "[t]o insure proper recognition throughout the US government that subversive insurgency ('wars of liberation') is a major form of politico-military conflict equal in importance to conventional warfare." The SGC also was responsible for overseeing counterinsurgency training throughout the federal government. Its first chairman was Gen. Taylor, who described the group as "a sort of Joint Chiefs of Staff…for all agencies involved in counterinsurgency." Other members were the attorney general, Robert Kennedy; the president's national security adviser, McGeorge Bundy; the chairman of

[6] Charles Maechling Jr., "Camelot, Robert Kennedy, and Counter-Insurgency—A Memoir," *Virginia Quarterly Review* 75, no. 3 (Summer 1999): 445. "Internal defense" was a contemporary synonym for counterinsurgency. (U)

[7] Sources for this paragraph and the next are: Prados, *Presidents' Secret Wars*, 219–20; "Elements of US Strategy to Deal with Wars of National Liberation," *FRUS, 1961–1963, VII/VIII/IX: Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 249; Bissell, 149;

"Editorial Note," *FRUS, 1961–1963, VIII, National Security Policy*, 229; DDP/FE Division memorandum, "History of CIA in Vietnam," 26 June 1964, EA Division Files, Job 78-00597R, box 1, folder 13; William Colby with James McCargar, *Lost Victory*, 83–84. CIA's early excursions into counterinsurgency in Southeast Asia are detailed in Thomas L. Ahern Jr., *CIA and the House of Ngo: Covert Action in South Vietnam, 1954–63*, chaps. 2–8; idem, *The CIA and Rural Pacification in South Vietnam*, chaps. 1–2; Currey, chaps. 7–8; memorandum, "Concept of Guerrilla Warfare," 14 June 1955, HS Files, HS/CSG-1850, Job 83-00759R, box 3, folder 6; "US Concept of Guerrilla Warfare," [n.d.] 1956,] HS Files, HS/CSG-1742, Job 83-00036R, box 11, folder 18; memorandum for DDCI Charles P. Cabell, "Report on Department of State-JCS Counter Guerrilla Study Group," 1 September 1960, and Richard Helms (DDP/Chief of Operations) memorandum to DCI Allen Dulles, "The Current Status of Counter Guerrilla Warfare Doctrine and Training," 27 January 1961, HS Files, HS/CSG-1746 and 1747, Job 83-00036R, box 11, folder 18.

the JCS, Gen. Lyman Lemnitzer; the deputy secretary of defense, Roswell Gilpatric; the deputy under secretary of state for political affairs, U. Alexis Johnson; the director of AID, Fowler Hamilton (later, William Gaud); after mid-1962, the director of USIA, Edward R. Murrow (later, Donald Wilson and Carl Rowan); and the DCI.[8]

McCone and his SGC colleagues usually met in Room 303 of the Executive Office Building every week for two hours in the mid-afternoon.[9] Meetings could not be rescheduled and subordinates could not attend without appropriate authority to assure that decisions were made in a timely manner and by officials with the power to commit their agencies to the decisions. (Meetings were suspended during the height of the Cuban missile crisis.) McCone came most of the time; when he did not, he sent Marshall Carter or Richard Helms. The meetings normally opened with an intelligence briefing from the DCI or his representative. SGC members then discussed the panoply of programs dealing with counterinsurgency—among them training of American officials, police assistance, civic action, and paramilitary operations—and their implementation in a lengthening list of target countries.[10] The group spent as much time on Latin America as on Southeast Asia during the first months, but the latter eventually took precedence, particularly after the SGC began reviewing interdepartmental programs recommended by the lower-level Southeast Asia Task Force.[11] Early on, SGC members agreed to forego specialized committees and to enlist any needed staff support from participating agencies. McCone at first did not believe CIA officers were giving him the same level of assistance for SGC business as his counterparts received at the Departments of State and Defense and the White House, and he admonished subordinates to take "corrective action" so he could be adequately prepared.

The Special Group Counterinsurgency in October 1962. Attending this meeting were (from the left) Donald Wilson, Lyman Lemnitzer, U. Alexis Johnson, Robert Kennedy, Maxwell Taylor, Roswell Gilpatric, McCone, and Sterling Cottrell. (U)
Photo: JFK Library

In spite of all the attention the SGC had given to counterinsurgency issues by early 1963, President Kennedy was still dissatisfied with his administration's overall progress in that area. In part, he blamed the SGC for interpreting its

[8] "Editorial Note," NSAM No. 124, 18 January 1962, and Parrott untitled memorandum to the president, 22 March 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, VIII, National Security Policy*, 229–30, 236–38, 253–57; Blaufarb, *Counterinsurgency Era*, 67–69; "Minutes of the Meeting of the Special Group (CI)...13 September 1962," McCone Papers, box 1, folder 4; Maxwell D. Taylor, *Swords and Plowshares*, 197.

Senior CIA managers opposed the formation of a separate NSC committee on counterinsurgency, believing that the current Special Group structure could handle the issue. Bissell memorandum to McCone, "General Taylor's Proposal on Use of Special Group to Guide U.S. Strategy on Counter-Insurgency," 3 January 1962, John Bross memorandum to McCone, "Establishment of the Special Group (Counter Insurgency)," 5 January 1962, and Bross memorandum to Parrott, "Establishment of the Special Group (Counter Insurgency)," 9 January 1962, DDO Files, Job 78-02888R, box 3, folder 12; Lemnitzer memorandum to McNamara, "National Cold War Procedures," 30 November 1961, CIA Counter-Guerrilla Warfare Task Force, "Elements of US Strategy to Deal with 'Wars of National Liberation,'" 8 December 1961, and Bissell memorandum to McCone, "Relationship Between Counter-Guerrilla Warfare Task Force Report and the JCS Paper 'National Cold War Procedures,'" 20 December 1961, DDO Files, Job 78-01450R, box 5, folder 2.

In August 1962, McCone successfully argued against Robert Kennedy serving as chairman of the SGC, contending that his work as attorney general and the image of the administration would suffer if his involvement with international activities outside the Department of Justice—especially covert operations—became known publicly. McCone's position made Taylor and Bundy "very upset"; the latter told Kennedy that the DCI "was completely wrong" in his view, but the attorney general sided with McCone. McCone, "Memorandum of Discussions Concerning the Appointment of Chairman of Special Group (C-I), August 16, 1962," McCone Papers, box 2, folder 2; "Meeting on Intelligence Matters," 20 August 1962, *Presidential Recordings: JFK, I*, 488. After Taylor was appointed chairman of the Joint Chiefs in November 1962, the under secretary of state for political affairs began heading the SGC—while McCone was DCI, first U. Alexis Johnson, then W. Averell Harriman. NSAM No. 204, 7 November 1962, ER Files, Job 84B00513R, box 9, folder 3.

[9] Sources for this paragraph and the next are: Johnson, *Right Hand of Power*, 330; Maechling, 447; minutes of SGC meetings for 1962–63 in McCone Papers, box 1, folders 3 and 4; documents of SGC activities in *FRUS, 1961–1963, VIII, National Security Policy*, 253–57, 352–55, 454–55, 464–67; McCone notes on SGC meeting on 21 February 1962, McCone Papers, box 1, folder 3; "Minutes of the Special Group (CI) Meeting...12 July 1962," ibid., folder 4.

[10] By mid-1962, eight more countries—Burma, Cambodia, Cameroon, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Iran, and Venezuela—were considered sufficiently threatened by communist-inspired insurgency to warrant the specific interest of the SGC. Burma was dropped a few months later. (U)

[11] In keeping with the Kennedy administration's tendency to proliferate working groups, in June 1962 the Southeast Asia Task Force supplanted the Vietnam Task Force, which became the Vietnam Working Group. CIA's representative on the Task Force during 1962–63 was the chief of the DDP's FE Division—first Desmond FitzGerald, then William Colby. "Editorial Note," *FRUS, 1961–1963, II, Vietnam 1962*, 466. (U)

responsibilities too narrowly and for having a doctrinaire approach. The group's membership disagreed and succeeded in resisting White House attempts to expand its brief. (S)

CIA took part in the Kennedy administration's counterinsurgency campaign in ways other than those approved in the SGC during McCone's first year in office. At Headquarters, new components were created and existing ones expanded to better develop, manage, and support counterinsurgency initiatives. Especially important was the Counterinsurgency Group of the DDP's CA Staff, which was established in July 1962. Agency officers with pertinent experience were designated to join other departmental representatives in developing training doctrine and courses and in advising foreign paramilitary, security, and police services on creating or improving counterinsurgency programs in their own countries. CIA's involvement in paramilitary activities depended on their nature. According to an NSC directive in late June 1961, operations that were to be "wholly covert or disavowable" could be assigned to CIA, while the military had responsibility for large operations that required more resources than the Agency could provide. CIA personnel also participated on research and development committees to ensure that US technical capabilities could cope with the special demands of larger-scale counterinsurgency operations. Lastly, DI offices expanded coverage of counterinsurgency-related matters in their regular publications and produced more special products on low-intensity conflict and political and social instability in the Third World.[12] (S)

In general, McCone—who had no experience with or knowledge of counterinsurgency before his appointment—looked at the subject from a relatively narrow, departmental perspective, and on the SGC he represented the Agency more as a program administrator than as a policy formulator. He wanted to make sure CIA carried out the counterinsurgency duties the White House gave it without its participation in them becoming divulged and without the Agency becoming entangled in activities not historically associated with an intelligence service. Although he perceived the Soviet and Chinese hand behind various "people's wars," he did not have the president's broader geopolitical view of counterinsurgency as a novel aspect of superpower conflict. Likewise, he lacked Robert Kennedy's at times romantic engagement with the ethos of revolution. Given McCone's untheoretical intellect and overall skepticism about covert action, the sentiments behind the attorney general's later high-toned observation that "[i]nsurgency aims not at the conquest of territory but at the allegiance of man…[c]ounterinsurgency might best be described as social reform under pressure" would have left him wondering what an intelligence agency could realistically hope to accomplish under such a vague rationale. His dilemma was figuring out how to be responsive, protective, and not obstructionist, all at the same time.[13] (U)

McCone's bureaucratic perspective showed from the start. For example, he did not want the SGC to let the Department of State and AID use CIA funds for programs ostensibly labeled counterinsurgency that actually were economic development activities. His concern for protecting CIA monies grew when the president stated in August 1962 that counterinsurgency programs would not be limited to military measures but also would incorporate other approaches such as economic development, police assistance and training, and civic action. McGeorge Bundy defined civic action as "using military forces on projects useful to the populace at all levels in such fields as training, public works, agriculture, transportation, communication, health, sanitation, and others helpful to economic development." From the DCI's vantage point, many of these programs might be useful in combating insurgents, but most were not activities in which he thought an intelligence service should engage. "Unless such projects can be absolutely and positively defended as essential to CIA's mission[,]" he wrote, "we should resist such use." At another time, McCone worked against the Department of State receiving full administrative control of interdepartmental field visits to countries under SGC purview. He did not think US diplomats should determine whether a particular agency had an interest in a country sufficient to warrant sending its own representative on a trip there, and he did not want CIA activities disclosed to travelers from other departments. He retained his authority

[12] NSAM No. 57, 28 June 1961, and NSAM No. 162, 19 June 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, VIII, National Security Policy*, 112–13, 305–7; CIA, "Memorandum for the President: Counterinsurgency Activities since 1 January 1961," [July 1962,] HS Files, HS/HC-527, Job 84B00389R, box 1, folder 27; Helms memorandum to Director of Training, "Training Objectives for Counter-Insurgency," 28 March 1962, McCone Papers, box 1, folder 3; Cline memorandum, "DD/I Activities in Connection with Overseas Internal Defense," 14 July 1962, and BNE, "Counterinsurgency Critical List," OCI Memorandum No. 2693/62, 25 July 1962, CMS Files, Job 80B01083A, box 1, folder 10. (S)

[13] Thomas, *Robert Kennedy*, 463; Blaufarb, *Counterinsurgency Era*, 87; NSAM No. 182, 24 August 1962, and "Editorial Note" on policy paper titled "U.S. Overseas Internal Defense Policy," *FRUS, 1961–1963, VIII, National Security Policy*, 381–83. (U)

over this part of Agency business and sent emissaries to South Vietnam whenever he thought it necessary.[14] (U)

The administration's counterinsurgency campaign was intrepid and energetic but also superficial and prone to gimmickry. "There was," Kennedy administration chronicler Arthur Schlesinger Jr. noted, "a faddish aspect to this enthusiasm. Some of its advocates acted as if...blacking one's face and catching sentries by the throat in the night could by themselves eliminate the guerrilla threat." Under Secretary of State George Ball concluded later that "the amount of effort and theology with which that whole business was invested was totally incommensurate with anything we ever got out of it."[15] (U)

As happened with many ideas that seized the New Frontiersmen in their early days, interest in counterinsurgency diminished over time. Senior policymakers could spend only a small fraction of their workdays on it. The approach had its sterling success in Venezuela, where a progressive democratic government, with firm US (including CIA) support, repelled Cuban-backed subversion. In Southeast Asia, however, feckless or repressive local leaders could not or would not carry out the reforms needed to win their people's allegiance. Moreover, as the US military presence steadily increased in the region, counterinsurgency was overshadowed by more conventional approaches and lost the characteristics that made it, as President Kennedy told a West Point graduating class in 1962, "a whole new kind of strategy, a wholly different kind of force..." The signal evidence that the original intent of COIN would not be realized was the appointment of Gen. Paul Harkins—a protégé of Gen. George S. Patton, and a thoroughly orthodox commander—to head the new Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) in 1962. For McCone's CIA, this trend meant that the Agency's paramilitary covert action programs and other clandestine activities in Laos and South Vietnam would be inexorably transformed into operations in support of a broader conventional land and air war.[16] (U)

"The End of Nowhere": The "Secret" War in Laos (U)

Although in foreign policy terms the 1960s comprised the Vietnam decade, the Kennedy administration's attention to Southeast Asia initially was directed at Laos.[17] The adversaries in the Cold War viewed that landlocked country, strategically located between China, Vietnam, Thailand, and Burma, as a bellwether for the region. To Laos's neighbors, as a March 1961 NIE stated, the Laotian crisis was "a symbolic test of intentions, wills, and strengths between the major powers of the West and the Communist bloc." Internal disunity and lack of a strong central authority made the exotic "Land of a Million Elephants and the White Parasol" vulnerable to the machinations of outsiders. Laos was the dominant foreign policy issue in the final months of the Eisenhower administration, and when Dwight Eisenhower met with John Kennedy the day before the latter's inauguration, they talked more about it than anything else. The outgoing president warned his successor that "[i]f Laos is lost to the Free World, in the long run we will lose all of Southeast Asia."[18] (U)

President Kennedy took the message to heart. Three days after taking office, he set up a task force on Laos consisting of national security policymakers at the deputies level. At a news conference on 23 March 1961, standing before three maps of Laos that depicted an expanding area of red, the president declared: "[A]ll we want in Laos is peace, not war; a truly neutral government, not a cold war pawn; a

[14] NSAM No. 119, "Civic Action," 18 December 1961, *FRUS, 1961–1963, VIII, National Security Policy*, 231; "Minutes of Special Group (CI) Meeting, 1 February 1962," and McCone untitled memorandum, 22 February 1962, McCone Papers, box 1, folder 3; NSAM No. 173, "Interdepartmental Field Visits," 18 July 1962, "Minutes for Meeting of Special Group (CI)...9 August 1962," and McCone, "Memorandum of Meeting of Special Group (C-I) on August 9, 1962," McCone Papers, box 1, folder 4. AID's role in counterinsurgency in South Vietnam is discussed by several former members of the agency's US Operations Mission in Harvey Neese and John O'Donnell, eds., *Prelude to Tragedy: Vietnam, 1960–1965*. For the connection between counterinsurgency and civic action in another region, Latin America, dear to the Kennedy administration, see Willard F. Barber and C. Neale Ronning, *Internal Security and Military Power*, chap. 6; and Stephen G. Rabe, *The Most Dangerous Area in the World*, chap. 6. (U)

[15] Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 342; idem, *Robert Kennedy*, 466. (U)

[16] *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy, 1962*, 454. (U)

[17] The quoted words in the subhead come from an unidentified American official in Laos, who reportedly said in November 1960 that the country "is the end of nowhere. We can do anything we want here because Washington doesn't seem to know it exists." Charles A. Stevenson, *The End of Nowhere*, vii. A pro pos most Americans' ignorance of Laos, George Ball sardonically observed that when a general named Phoumi seized power from a politician named Phoui in 1957, "[it] could have been either a significant event or a typographical error." Ball, 362. (U)

[18] NIE 50-61, "Outlook in Mainland Southeast Asia," 28 March 1961, 14; "Memorandum from Secretary of Defense McNamara to President Kennedy," 24 January 1961, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XXIV, Laos Crisis*, 42. See also ibid., docs. 7–10; Clifford, 342–44; and Fred I. Greenstein and Richard H. Immerman, "What Did Eisenhower Tell Kennedy about Indochina? The Politics of Misperception," *JAH* 79, no. 2 (September 1992): 568–97, for other accounts of the Eisenhower-Kennedy meeting on 19 January 1961. (U)

settlement concluded at the conference table and not on the battlefield." But if "armed attacks by externally supported Communists...do not stop, those who support a truly neutral Laos will have to consider their response." "Laos is far away from America," he reminded listeners, many of whom probably could not have found that obscure country on a globe, "but the world is small." "The security of all Southeast Asia will be endangered if Laos loses its neutral independence. Its own safety runs with the safety of us all."[19] (U)

At that time, Laos was in the throes of political instability,

who received aid from North Vietnam. According to Robert Kennedy, the president would have sent troops into Laos if the Bay of Pigs disaster had not precluded another controversial intervention for a while.[20] Thus, a covert action failure in the Caribbean energized another secret enterprise on the other side of the world—ultimately the longest, largest, and, until the Afghan program of the 1980s, the costliest paramilitary venture in CIA history. (U)

The Confused Context (U)

When McCone arrived at Langley in November 1961 he inherited a complicated and unsettled situation in Laos.[21] Laos had been designated a neutral country under the 1954 Geneva agreements ending French colonial rule in Indochina. The International Control Commission established to enforce the Geneva accords and preserve Laos's neutrality proved ineffectual, as three political camps—communist, neutralist, and rightist—vied for control. The communist Pathet Lao had the support of South Vietnamese communists, who had entered Laos in 1953, and North Vietnam, which aimed to use Laos as a pathway into South Vietnam. The Pathet Lao controlled Laos's two northeastern provinces and staged their efforts to control Laos from there. The Laotian communists' political leader throughout this period was Prince Souphanouvong. (U)

Fearful that a neutral Laos would eventually fall to the communists, the Eisenhower administration tried unsuccessfully to establish a pro-Western government in Vientiane, and when, in 1957, neutralist leader Prince Souvanna Phouma joined a coalition with the Pathet Lao,

[19] The full text of Kennedy's news conference is in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy, 1961*, 212–20. Roswell Gilpatric, the deputy secretary of defense, headed the Laos task force. (U)

[20] "Thank God the Bay of Pigs happened when it did," the president told Theodore Sorensen in September 1961. "Otherwise we would be in Laos by now—that would be a hundred times worse." Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy*, 702; Sorensen, *Kennedy*, 644. (U)

[21] In addition to the specific materials cited herein, publications used for background information are listed in the Appendix on Sources. (U)

and numerous policymakers in the Eisenhower administration resisted it.[23] The Department of State, including AID and the US ambassador to Laos, were satisfied with the neutralist regime of Souvanna Phouma

US views on Kong Le varied. CIA predicted (correctly) that under pressure he would ally himself with the Pathet Lao but otherwise regarded him as independent-minded; Pentagon officials who had worked with Gen. Phoumi, as well as some senior Department of State representatives, thought Kong Le was too leftist. (U)

A rightist government gained power in 1958 after a parliamentary crisis and it purged leftists from the bureaucracy and ordered the Pathet Lao to join the army. By mid-1959, however, the communists, led by Souvanna Phouma's half-brother Souphanouvong, had started a new military offensive

Phoumi led a coup in December 1959, but a corrupt election in 1960, intended to install him as a democratic leader, instead triggered a coup by Kong Le, a neutral military officer. Kong Le then designated the neutralist Souvanna Phouma as head of government. (U)

Alarmed by this apparent leftward shift in Vientiane, Washington—

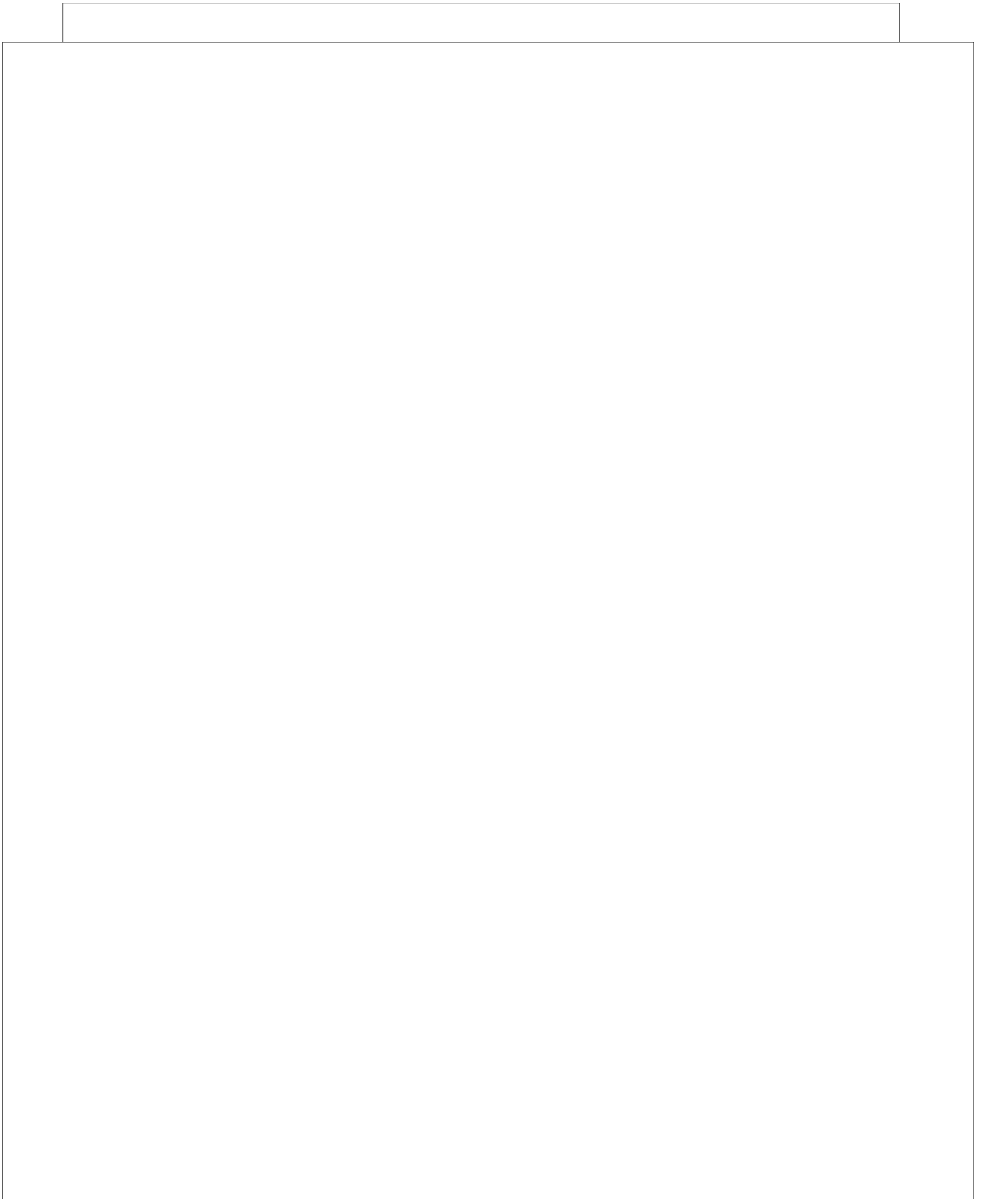
-encouraged Phoumi to regroup and force Kong Le and Souvanna Phouma out in December 1960. Kong Le then formed an alliance with the Pathet Lao. Aided by a Soviet airlift of military supplies, they drove Phoumi's troops out of a key area north of the capital, the Plain of Jars, and threatened to seize the capital.

The Hmong, some of whom had helped the French in the early 1950s, became the most important of several US-backed tribal groups. According to Kennedy aide Walt Rostow, the Hmong performance was "the one bright spot in our operation." A few weeks after taking office, President Kennedy—determined to resist a communist takeover of Laos, but sharing his predecessor's reluctance to intervene militarily—authorized the Pentagon to expand the Hmong program by recruiting, training, and equipping a 3,000–4,000-man tribal counterforce that would be Washington's chief weapon against the communists. The force grew steadily and numbered around 9,000 by late 1961

it was effectively harassing the Pathet Lao and forcing them to divert resources from their campaign against the government.

[23] Sources for this paragraph and the next two are: Prados, *Presidents' Secret Wars*, 263; Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*, 116; Stevenson, 85, 93–94, 102–3; Robert H. Johnson (NSC) memorandum to Walt W. Rostow (White House), "Strengthening a Souvanna Phouma Government in Laos," 28 November 1961, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XXIV, Laos Crisis*, 528; SNIE 68-60, "The Situation and Short-Term Outlook in Laos," 6 December 1960, 4. Also in December 1960, in response to reports that North Vietnam and possibly the People's Republic of China were about to invade Laos, the Eisenhower administration ordered U-2 flights over potential entry routes into the country. The photography did not substantiate the Laotian government's claims, which were soon retracted. Agency-run U-2 missions over Laos continued until 1964, when the Air Force assumed responsibility for them. Pedlow and Welzenbach, 221, 231, 233. (U)

[24] Sources for this paragraph and the next two are: FE Division memorandum, "Counterinsurgency Operations in Laos," undated but c. 1963, EA Division Files, Job 78-01421R, box 4, folder 1; Rostow memorandum to President Kennedy, "Laos Task Force Meeting...," 28 February 1961, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XXIV, Laos Crisis*, 62; Church Committee, "Report on Laos Paramilitary Program (1955–1974)," December 1975, 19, ER Files, Job 96S01068R, box 1, folder 64; Blaufarb, *Counterinsurgency Era*, 140; Lansdale memorandum to Taylor, "Resources for Unconventional Warfare, S.E. Asia," c. July 1961, in *The Pentagon Papers* 2, 646–47; SNIE 58-3-61, "The Situation and Short-Run Outlook in Laos," 28 September 1961, 2–3; CIA, "Memorandum for the President: Counterinsurgency Activities since 1 January 1961," 19 July 1962, HS Files, HS/HC-527, Job 84B00389R, box 1, folder 27, 12–15; FitzGerald memorandum to McCone, "Briefing on Laos," c. late May 1962, McCone Papers, box 5, folder 1; 221; Lansdale memorandum to McNamara and Gilpatric, "Meos," 28 June 1961 HS Files, Job 03-01724R, box 1, folder 2.
Green Berets.



President Kennedy, beset with challenges in Berlin, Cuba, and the Congo, rejected the counsel of bellicose advisers on Laos and decided to follow a parallel political track that he hoped would lead to a neutral coalition government in Vientiane.[25] Through diplomatic channels, the president detected no Kremlin interest in escalating tension over Laos; he knew he would not get the backing of Congress or the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) for large-scale military action; and he did not believe Gen. Phoumi could win on the battlefield because the Pathet Lao had the upper hand militarily by May. So the president opted for a diplomatic solution while Souvanna Phouma ran the country with increased military aid. (U)

In May 1961, the opposing sides in Laos agreed to a ceasefire and negotiations in Geneva.[26] While the diplomats talked, the Pathet Lao and the Hmong fought, though less intensely than before; leaders of political factions in Vientiane kept jousting for influence; US money continued to flow to the Laotian army; some American land and naval forces deployed in the region; and administration officials, anticipating the worst but hoping for better, debated whether to press for a unified, neutral Laos or to accept a partition of the country into communist and noncommunist areas.

Intelligence Policy and CIA Operations (U)

Into this situation, McCone brought with him no expertise on Southeast Asia other than his knowledge of shipping in the Pacific region. His strong anticommunism, however, gave him definite ideas about how to "settle" the complexities of Laos. He believed the United States should lend full support to the rightists and royalists and be willing to extend its defense of Laos into neighboring countries, if necessary. "[N]eutralism," McCone wrote to his journalist friend Arthur Krock earlier in the year, "seems to spell ultimate communist domination by one means or another." A few weeks after taking over as DCI, he read a special estimate whose judgment could only have bolstered his position. The Laotian army's combat effectiveness had improved recently, according to the SNIE, but unless it received outside reinforcements, the estimate concluded, the communists could overrun key government positions and, working with North Vietnamese regulars, quickly take over the entire country. When Secretary of State Rusk in early January 1962 promoted a plan for a coalition government—with Souvanna Phouma as prime minister and defense minister and one of his supporters as interior minister—the DCI dissented vigorously. That arrangement would be unstable, and relying so much on Souvanna Phouma would turn Laos into "an open roadstead from North Vietnam to South Vietnam."

The SGC approved a proposal in which Phoumi would receive a prominent domestic portfolio in a neutralist government but the US Country Team in Vientiane doubted that those inducements would suffice.

The Pathet Lao's rout of 4,500 Laotian regulars from the northern provincial capital of Nam Tha in early May 1962 created a new crisis in Laos. It now seemed likely that Souvanna Phouma would not have time to prevent a communist takeover. According to a community assessment after the battle, [e]vents of the past year have almost certainly convinced the communist side that the risk of US intervention has lessened significantly and that they can increase the level of military operations in seeking to achieve their immediate objectives—a negotiated "neutralist" coalition government in Laos which they could soon dominate, or the

[25] Sources for this paragraph and the next are: Bundy untitled memorandum, 28 July 1961, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XXIV, Laos Crisis*, 325; *Robert Kennedy In His Own Words*, 247; Roger Warner, *Shooting at the Moon*, 49. Robert Amory, the DDI when Kennedy took office, has said that he told the president that the communists could match any US buildup, and that logistical and communication problems would make supporting a large American deployment very difficult. On the other hand, according to Amory, Richard Bissell and Desmond FitzGerald of the DDP backed putting US troops into Laos. Peter S. Usowski, "Intelligence Estimates and US Policy Toward Laos, 1960–63," *I&NS* 6, no. 2 (April 1991): 377–78. (U)

[26] Averell Harriman, the assistant secretary of state for far eastern affairs, led the US delegation at Geneva after the first round of talks. CIA provided him with a personal intelligence liaison to keep him informed of developments in Laos. Usowski, "Intelligence Estimates and US Policy Toward Laos," 379. (U)

disintegration of the Royal Laotian Government and Army.[28] (U)

McCone thought this unfavorable trend could be reversed only if the administration indicated its intention to move US troops into Laos. He cautioned President Kennedy not to engage in idle saber rattling. If the United States raised the prospect of committing forces to Laos, it must be willing to follow through and even take the fight into North Vietnam and deny the communists a sanctuary there by bombing airfields, supply depots, and transportation and communications facilities. Echoing recent estimates, he told the president that the communists would match any increase in US effort in Laos, whether in the form of military assistance or the deployment of combat units. He disagreed with the Pentagon's view that logistics constrained the communists' escalation and said they would keep up the pressure regardless of how long they took to accomplish their objectives. In short, McCone advised, if the United States was going to draw the line against communist expansion in Southeast Asia at the Laotian border, it must be willing to endure the costs of a lengthy and sizable conventional conflict. For the time being, however, President Kennedy settled for what he considered a firm yet unprovocative response: sending the Seventh Fleet to the Gulf of Siam, increasing the US troop presence in Thailand by several thousand, and moving some forces already there to the border with Laos. He also decided to resume aid to Vientiane and to recognize the government of Souvanna Phouma. As on many other occasions, the White House sent McCone to brief Eisenhower, hoping to forestall Republican criticism of administration policy.[29] (U)

McCone's views put him at odds with White House pursuit of a neutral Laos.

speculation arose in official circles that the Agency was working against the administration and supporting rightists. For example, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs W. Averell Harriman believed the Agency had contravened instructions and persuaded Phoumi to reinforce Nam Tha, thereby provoking the communists' assault.

In addition, according to press reports, CIA officers advised Phoumi against joining a coalition government and circumvented a suspension in aid to Phoumi's forces. By this time, Harriman believed that Phoumi was "definitely provocative and unresponsive" and that the administration should "encourage ferment" in Laos and "do everything we could to downgrade Phoumi"—

McCone's reaction to that suggestion is not recorded, but he commented privately to Rusk and Bundy that he was disturbed at persistent stories, possibly emanating from the

[27] McCone letter to Krock, 26 April 1961, quoted in Parmet, 147; SNIE 58-1-62, "Relative Military Capabilities of Opposing Forces in Laos," 11 January 1962; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting on Laotian Situation," 6 January 1962, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 1; Bundy, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting in the Cabinet Room on January 6, 1962, on the subject of Laos," and "Instructions Approved by President Kennedy," 28 February 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XXIV, Laos Crisis*, 572, 640–41; President Kennedy's statement at a press conference on 29 March 1962, *Public Papers of the Presidents: John F. Kennedy, 1962*, 273–74; Colby memorandum to McCone, "Nature of United States Government Commitments and FitzGerald memorandum to McCone, "Support to the Coalition Government in Laos," 16 July 1962, DDO Files, Job 78-02888R, box 1, folder 9.

The rational for supporting Phoumi Nousavan was ideological; as Adm. Harry D. Felt, the US Navy's CINCPAC, observed: "Phoumi is no George Washington. However, he is anti-Communist, which is what counts most in the sad Laos situation." Quoted in William M. Leary, "Foreword" to James E. Parker, *Covert Ops: The CIA's Secret War in Laos*, xi.

The US government's choice to back Souvanna Phouma seemed sensible at the time, as over the next few months Phoumi proved to be politically obstinate and militarily incompetent. The administration cut off aid to the Laotian army to show its displeasure with Phoumi's resistance to its proneutralist policy, and to press him to join a coalition government under Souvanna Phouma. Richard Helms complained, howeve

[28] SNIE 58-3-62, "Implications of the Fall of Nam Tha," 9 May 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XXIV, Laos Crisis*, 726–29. President Kennedy derided the Royal Laotian Army as "clearly inferior to a battalion of conscientious objectors from World War I." William J. Rust, *Kennedy in Vietnam*, 55. (U)

[29] Michael Forrestal (NSC) memorandum, "Presidential Conferences on Laos," 10 May 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XXIV, Laos Crisis*, 734–35; McCone memorandum of meeting with the president, 10 May 1962, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 1; McCone, "Addendum to Memorandum for the Record of May 10, 1962...Discussion with General Eisenhower...," and "Memorandum of Meeting at the White House...May 13, 1962...," *FRUS, 1961–1963, XXII/XXIV, Northeast Asia, Laos: Microfiche Supplement*, docs. 277 and 278; Forrestal, "Memorandum for the Record...Presidential Conferences on Laos," 10 May 1962, and "Memorandum of Conversation," 13 May 1962, "Memorandum of Telephone Conversation Between President Kennedy and Acting Secretary of State Ball," 11 May 1962, "Memorandum of Discussion with Former President Eisenhower," 13 May 1962, McCone, "Memorandum of Discussion...The President and McCone Alone," 26 May 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XXIV, Laos Crisis*, 735, 741, 758–61, 795–96; Chester L. Cooper, *The Lost Crusade: America in Vietnam*, 172 n; Usha Mahajani, "President Kennedy and United States Policy in Laos, 1961–1963," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 2, no. 1 (September 1971): 91; Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 110, 115; Parmet, 142. Secretary of Defense McNamara and JCS Chairman Lemnitzer joined McCone in briefing Eisenhower, who wanted the administration to take strong military action. The former president had stated publicly that trying to establish a coalition in Laos was harmful to US interests; it was "the way we lost China." Stephen E. Pelz, "'When Do I Have Time to Think?'" *DH* 3, no. 2 (Spring 1979): 223 n. 16. (U)

Department of State, that CIA was undercutting US policy in Laos. Harriman, the chief US negotiator at Geneva, was committed to the talks' success—not for the sake of Laos, but for the larger geopolitical purpose of avoiding a US-Soviet clash—and did not want CIA's Hmong program to cause difficulties. The DCI could not say whether the derogatory rumors about the Agency originated in Vientiane or on the Georgetown cocktail party circuit, but he assured Rusk that he "could handle it without difficulty because Harriman was...an old friend of his." This would not be the only time when affairs in Southeast Asia complicated McCone's relations with Harriman, as will be seen in the next chapter.[30] (S)

In early June 1962, the leaders of the three Laotian factions—the neutralist Souvanna Phouma, the royalist Phoumi Nousavan, and the communist Souphanouvong—agreed on a cabinet, enabling the Geneva talks to resolve outstanding issues quickly. At the time, McCone was on an official trip to Taiwan, Vietnam, and Thailand; a stop in Laos was canceled, lest it be interpreted in Vientiane as a sign that the US government thought Souvanna Phouma was *primus inter pares*. In Bangkok, the DCI discussed Laotian developments with Thai Prime Minister Sarit Dhanarajata, a reliable US ally who was alarmed at the prospect of a coalition government in Vientiane. The neutralists would not be able to contain communist attempts to expand their influence, he believed. McCone, speaking as a representative of the US government and its proneutralist policy, was somewhat more hopeful, suggesting that a power-sharing arrangement in Laos would help stabilize the region. Privately, however, he would have agreed with his Thai host.[31] (S)

On 23 July 1962, the 15 nations participating in the Geneva discussions signed the "Declaration on the Neutrality of Laos." Harriman called it "a good bad deal." Laos was declared neutral and was not to be used for infiltration into or subversion of adjacent countries. Souvanna Phouma became prime minister, Phoumi Nousavan and Souphanouvong were named deputy premiers, and all three factions received seats in a coalition cabinet. All foreign military personnel were to leave in 75 days, but unarmed civilians working on development and refugee assistance programs could stay. The Agency's Hmong fighters under Vang Pao were put on a defensive status, directed to stop harassment operations and to restrict themselves to intelligence collection and training. Compliance with the agreement was decidedly mixed. Between 23 July and 7 October, the date the agreement went into effect, all of nearly 700 US military personnel and all Soviet military advisers and aviators were pulled out. Moscow ended its airlift to the Pathet Lao in December. The North Vietnamese, however, withdrew only 40 soldiers past the border checkpoints, left upwards of 10,000 troops inside Laos, and continued using the border area to move men and supplies into South Vietnam. The Pathet Lao, moreover, refused to let the coalition government function in areas under communist control, and the International Control Commission could not enforce the accords.[32] (S)

[redacted]

[30] Stevenson, 170; Carter, "Memorandum for Record on White House Meeting...12 May [1962]...," McCone Papers, box 5, folder 14; McCone, "Memorandum of Discussion...The President and McCone Alone," 26 May 1962," *FRUS, 1961–1963, XXIV, Laos Crisis*, 796; McCone, "Memorandum of Discussion with Secretary Rusk, 29 May 1962," McCone Papers, box 5, folder 1; "Editorial Note," *FRUS, 1961–1963, XXIII, Southeast Asia*, 946–48. (S)

[31] "Memorandum of Conversation...Meeting between Prime Minister Sarit and Mr. McCone," and Embassy Bangkok telegram to Washington, EMBTEL 228, both 11 June 1962, McCone Papers, box 5, folder 1. (S)

[32] Department of State, *American Foreign Policy: Current Documents, 1962*, 1075–83; Warner, *Shooting at the Moon*, 74; Colby, *Honorable Men*, 191–92; Schoenbaum, 391; [redacted] "CIA-Meo Activities," 51–55; Kenneth Conboy with James Morrison, *Shadow War: The CIA's Secret War in Laos*, 96; Arthur J. Dommen, *Conflict in Laos: The Politics of Neutralization*, chap. 11; idem, *Laos: Keystone of Indochina*, 83ff.; Jane Hamilton-Merritt, *Tragic Mountains*, chap. 7; NSAM No. 189, "Presidential Meeting on Laos, September 28, 1962," ER Files, Job 84B00513R, box 9, folder 3; "Meeting on Laos," 28 September 1962, *Presidential Recordings: JFK, I*, 179–80. (S)

President Kennedy became all the more determined to stop the communists in Vietnam after receiving criticism for the Geneva agreement—a representative example of which appeared in *Time*:

> The cease-fire in Laos came as a cold war defeat for the U.S.... Laos—with a Communist sympathizer at the head of the government, with Communists in posts of government power, and with Communist troops already holding half the nation—will quickly go behind the Iron Curtain.... Kennedy had declared he would "pay any price" to "assure the survival and success of liberty." But the price in Laos seemed too high.... If the U.S. is to save South Viet Nam, it must be willing to get far more deeply involved—to the point of fighting, if necessary.

Quoted in Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 116. (U)

Hmong tribesmen unload an Air America plane. (U)

After the Geneva agreement went into effect, CIA assumed full responsibility for training and supporting the 17,000 Hmong fighters. (At the time, Kong Le's neutralist forces numbered 10,000; the Pathet Lao's army had 20,000 fighters; and the Laotian army could field 48,000.) The Hmong's prominence grew because the White House had decided not to use military action under the SEATO pact to challenge communist violations of the Geneva agreement. Instead, it had to channel paramilitary support for Souvanna Phouma's government covertly through CIA rather than overtly through the Department of Defense.

has written that "to preserve the essence of an independent and neutral Laos, certain limited and carefully controlled departures from the implementing protocols had to be undertaken." Operational direction of the Hmong program came from Agency officers

McCone kept his hand on the issue through the SGC and discussions with Helms, FitzGerald, and William Colby. Policy-level direction of Agency activities came from the Department of State—in particular, Harriman, who even scrutinized individual supply flights, especially those carrying "hard rice" (arms and ammunition). After early 1963, CIA had a more sympathetic ear at Foggy Bottom. Harriman was promoted to under secretary of state for political affairs; his replacement was Roger Hilsman, a former commando in Burma during World War II, who thought himself an expert in guerrilla fighting and was much taken with the Agency's Hmong program.[34]

As the Hmong project expanded, the political situation in Vientiane deteriorated. According to a CIA assessment, "Pathet Lao intransigence and persistent intrigues, coupled with Premier Souvanna Phouma's indecisive leadership, have prevented any real progress toward a viable neutralist solution in Laos." Relations between Souvanna Phouma and Gen. Phoumi worsened, and neutralist forces on the Plain of Jars weakened under sustained Pathet Lao attacks. In April 1963, the White House decided to place Hmong guerrillas on the Plain in a battlefield role. This heavier reliance on local forces for conventional fighting relieved McCone, even if it violated the tenets of counterinsurgency and risked compromising whatever was still covert about the Agency's program. Although earlier he had not questioned the wisdom of deploying conventional US forces, McCone now thought that, at a minimum, doing so would further strain US-Soviet relations and cause political problems for the administration. He told Robert Kennedy and McGeorge Bundy that "dynamic military actions in Laos at a time when we were inactive against the festering situation in Cuba might save Khrushchev's position in Moscow[,] and it would have most serious effects on Kennedy in the United States." The DCI did not believe the American people would accept the commitment of military forces in faraway Laos when the administration was unwilling to take similar steps against a much closer and more serious threat in Cuba. "[L]et's not save Khrushchev at the expense of Kennedy," he counseled the White House. Both the attorney general and

[33] McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Results and Highlights of Meeting held 28 July 1962 between Prince Souvanna Phouma, Mr. John A. McCone, [et al.]...," *FRUS, 1961–1963, XXIV, Laos Crisis*, 879–81; Colby memorandum to McCone, "Nature of United States Government Commitments for Covert Assistance to General Phoumi," 22 August 1962, DDO Files, Job 78-02888R, box 1, folder 9.

[34] Douglas S. Blaufarb, "Organizing and Managing Unconventional War in Laos, 1962–1970," Report R-919-ARPA, prepared for Department of Defense, Advanced Research Projects Agency, 10, 19; Church Committee, "Report on Laos Paramilitary Program," 23; Ahern, *Undercover Armies*, 177–83; Conboy, *Shadow War*, 98.

Bundy indicated that the president "understood this [McCone's argument] fully."[35] ~~(S)~~

In addition, after witnessing the White House's indecision over worsening conditions in Vietnam (see next chapter), McCone may also have concluded that the time was not right for the United States to get further involved in Laos. If the president and his advisers could not make up their minds about what to do in the strategically more important country of Vietnam, they should not make a deeper military commitment in Laos—by then a secondary theater. In the meantime, he concluded, a not-so-secret proxy force would have to do the job. (U)

In June 1963, with the North Vietnamese and the Pathet Lao expanding their areas of control and attacking both neutralist and Hmong positions throughout Laos, the NSC authorized an escalation in the fighting, an increase in the Hmong force to 23,000, and expanded use of US Army and Air Force personnel [redacted] The objective now, according to Rusk, was "if not a truly neutral Laos under an effective government of National Union, [then] at least the façade of a neutralist government presiding over a stabilized de facto partition." [redacted]

The communists relaxed their offensive after mid-1963, partly owing to the rainy season, but also because they apparently judged that the risk of US military intervention was too high to jeopardize their secure hold on the eastern border region—a direct benefit to their North Vietnamese allies. The Hmong had some operational successes, notably their disruption of Route 7, the main highway between North Vietnam and the Plain of Jars.[36] ~~(S)~~

By the end of 1963, the CIA-trained Hmong force numbered nearly 20,000 and was busy with a full range of guerrilla activities: sabotaging supply depots, mining roads, ambushing convoys, and generally harassing the stronger North Vietnamese enemy. Hanoi had to divert four battalions of regulars to counter the Hmong. The Agency also had deployed armed intelligence collection teams totaling approximately 3,300 Lao, Kha, and Yao tribesmen. Besides spying on the Pathet Lao and the Viet Minh in east-central Laos, these teams after mid-1963 also conducted small-scale guerrilla attacks. [redacted]

These activities, along with large amounts of overt bilateral aid and various diplomatic initiatives, were slow to work and never seemed sufficient. As of November 1963, according to a CIA analysis, "[r]eunification of Laos...appears more remote than ever"—especially with the communists controlling over 40 percent of the country. Increasingly, however, reunification was not the objective of the Laotian covert action program. A steady three-year infusion of American money and personnel and continual growth of the Hmong fighting force had turned CIA's Laotian program from a small, localized covert action effort into an officially unacknowledged adjunct to the intensifying conventional war in Vietnam. In 1961, departing President Eisenhower had warned John Kennedy that Laos was "the cork in the bottle," but after 1963, Dean Rusk observed, it was "only the wart on the hog of Vietnam."[38] (U)

---

[35] OCI Memorandum No. OCI 0516/63, "Situation in Laos," 29 March 1963, Bromley Smith (NSC), "Summary Record of the 511th National Security Council Meeting," 10 April 1963, Colby memorandum to McCone, "National Security Council Meeting on Laos, 20 April 1963," *FRUS, 1961–1963, XXIV, Laos Crisis*, 948, 964–65, 987–88; [redacted] CIA-Meo Activities," 68–70. ~~(S)~~

[36] Forrestal untitled memoranda to the president, 14 and 18 June 1963, Forrestal memorandum, "Laos Planning," 19 June 1963 (parts of which were incorporated into NSAM No. 249, 25 June 1963, authorizing expanded covert actions in Laos), and Colby memorandum to McCone, "Operational Planning on Laos—19 June 1963," *FRUS, 1961–1963, XXIV, Laos Crisis*, 1019–34; NSAM No. 256, "Laos Planning," 31 July 1963, ER Files, Job 84B00513R, box 9, folder 4; Church Committee, "Report on Laos Paramilitary Program," 27; [Colby] memorandum to Special Group, "Review of Total CIA Program in Laos," 28 October 1963, HS Files, Job 03-01724R, box 2, folder 8; [redacted] Ahern, *Undercover Armies*, 211–13; Conboy, *Shadow War*, 100–102; Warner, *Shooting at the Moon*, 93–94; Blaufarb "Organizing and Managing Unconventional War in Laos," 34. [redacted] Stevenson, 212; Christopher Robbins, *Air America*, 122; *Shooting at the Moon*, 92–93. ~~(S)~~

[37] Ahern, *Undercover Armies*, 227ff.; FE Division untitled memorandum on Laotian projects, 12 November 1963, DDO Files, Job 78-01389R, box 1, folder 8; [redacted] summary histories of CIA covert paramilitary operations, December 1963, HS Files, HS/CSG-458, Job 83-00036R, box 3, folder 8; Department of State, Bureau of Intelligence and Research memorandum, "Report of Subcommittee on US Support of Foreign Paramilitary Forces," 17 January 1964, *FRUS, 1964–1968, XXVIII, Laos*, 3. ~~(S)~~

[38] OCI, "The Situation in Laos," 1 November 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XXIV, Laos Crisis*, 1054; Stevenson, 180. (U)

CHAPTER

8

Waging Camelot's Counterinsurgencies (II): Vietnam (U)

What began as an intervention to bolster the American position in the Cold War," diplomatic historian Robert Schulzinger has written, "became by 1968 a major contributor to American dissatisfaction with the aims of post-World War II foreign policy. Involvement in Vietnam also undermined the global political and economic standing of the United States." The initial phase of that transformation occurred just before and during John McCone's service as DCI. Early in his presidency, John F. Kennedy decided that the best place in Southeast Asia to stand up to the communists was in Vietnam, not Laos.[1] He noted that of the two countries, Vietnam was more unified, had a larger and better-trained military, was more accessible to American air and naval power, and offered a wider geographic area for action without seeming to threaten the communist Chinese. In addition to these military and diplomatic considerations, Kennedy, having accepted the neutralization of Laos, believed that he had to make Vietnam the test case for US support for a pro-Western government in the region. Politically, the president resolved not to let the Democrats be blamed for "losing" another Asian country to communism, as they had been accused of "losing" China throughout the 1950s. The situation demanded immediate attention; opposition to the Saigon government was growing, the Viet Cong had kidnapped or assassinated 2,600 civilians (mostly officials and regime sympathizers) in 1960, and the guerrillas retained the initiative in the field in early 1961.[2] (~~S~~)

Ruling out withdrawal and a diplomatic agreement that might not last, President Kennedy had several other policy options. He could fight the communists, either in a large-scale conventional war by putting as many US forces into combat as were needed to win (between 40,000 and 200,000 it was thought then, depending on how North Vietnam and the PRC reacted) or send in a smaller number of American troops (up to 25,000) to energize the South Vietnamese. The president could increase US economic and military aid (including advisers) and use the aid to coax President Ngo Dinh Diem into political reform. Or he could give the South Vietnamese government all the money and weapons it needed to fight the war itself and keep the US presence to a minimum. Kennedy basically adopted the third option, with an increased number of US advisers insinuated into the military and civilian hierarchy in the capital and the countryside. That policy—informed by the recommendations that presidential advisers Maxwell Taylor and Walt Rostow made after a trip to South Vietnam in October 1961—was promulgated in National Security Action Memorandum No. 111 in late November. An American journalist gave the policy the enduring catchphrase "sink or swim with Ngo Dinh Diem."[3] (U)

The US government, however, did not—and perhaps could not—exert enough pressure to get the obdurate and insular Diem to end nepotism in his ruling cadre, halt suppression of Buddhist and other dissidents, and improve the quality of his military commanders' leadership. According to a critical study of Kennedy's foreign policy, "[b]y giving Diem money and men, Kennedy backed a system of landlord rule in the countryside, which was deeply unpopular with the peasants, and by aiding the South Vietnamese security forces in their attempts to impose Diem's will on the villages, he identified the Americans with a repressive *ancien regime*." Over time, a paradoxical situation developed: increased US aid, which the administration saw as a possible lever of influence, only made Diem believe all the more that he was indispensable to Washington and dissuaded him from making the changes Kennedy and his advisers sought. Because of that stalemate, by mid-1963 an influential faction in the administration—including Michael Forrestal on the NSC, Roger Hilsman at the Department of State, and Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge in Saigon—advocated abandoning the South Vietnamese leader and encouraging a military coup. Diem,

[1] Robert D. Schulzinger, *A Time for War*, 273. For the president's rejection of establishing a neutral South Vietnam, see "Draft Memorandum of a Conversation, White House...May 1, 1962...," *FRUS, 1961–1963, II, Vietnam 1962*, 367. (U)

[2] NIE 50-61, "Outlook in Mainland Southeast Asia," 28 March 1961, 7 (~~S~~)

[3] Maxwell Taylor letter to President Kennedy, with attached report, 29 October 1961, and NSAM No. 111, "First Phase of Viet-Nam Program," 22 November 1961, *FRUS, 1961–1963, I, Vietnam 1961*, 477–532, 656–57; Michael W. Cannon, "Raising the Stakes: The Taylor-Rostow Mission," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 12, no. 2 (June 1989): 125–65; William Prochnau, *Once Upon a Distant War*, 48–49. "Diem is Diem and the best we've got," the president told his friend Benjamin Bradlee of the *Washington Post*. Benjamin C. Bradlee, *Conversations with Kennedy*, 58. Kennedy's decision built on a substantial legacy of assistance that had made South Vietnam the United States' fifth-ranking recipient of foreign aid. Between the time of the French withdrawal in 1954 and Kennedy's inauguration, Washington had channeled over $1 billion there, and more than 1,500 Americans worked in-country as program administrators or military advisers. (U)

they concluded, was the main impediment to defeating the communists and had to be forced out. By late 1963, the president agreed, albeit reluctantly, and the new shorthand for American policy became "the Ngos must go." In November, Diem was killed in a coup endorsed, though not engineered, by the US government.[4] (U)

CIA Operations in Vietnam in the Early 1960s (U)

CIA's clandestine role in Vietnam grew after May 1961, when the White House authorized an expanded program of "intelligence, unconventional warfare, and political-psychological activities" on both sides of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) separating the two Vietnams. In January 1962, an interagency task force noted that support to irregular formations fell under the jurisdiction of neither the Pentagon's Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) nor the civilian aid mission of AID and recommended that CIA be made responsible. In May, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara went further, promising the head of the DDP's FE Division, Desmond FitzGerald, a "blank check...in terms of men, money and materiel." By midyear, McCone's CIA had become heavily engaged in Vietnam. In FY 1963, its paramilitary expenditures alone exceeded [redacted] In FY 1964, even after CIA turned over paramilitary operations to the Department of Defense, its operational budget in Vietnam still approached [redacted]

McCone and his senior operations deputies oversaw the transformation of the Agency's secret activities in Vietnam from a heavy orientation toward espionage to one overwhelmingly weighted toward covert action.[6] William Colby recalled that when he arrived as deputy chief of station in Saigon in 1959,

> the object of the CIA officers was the collection of intelligence in the strictest professional sense of the word. None was involved in covert action, political, paramilitary, propaganda or otherwise, at the time, except to the extent that training South Vietnamese intelligence personnel in CIA's techniques strengthened them to face their Communist (and sometimes non-Communist) adversaries.[7]

Three years later, Saigon station's responsibilities had shifted predominantly toward counterinsurgency—or, as it came to be called in the Vietnam context by the mid-1960s, "pacification." Acting independently and in conjunction with US Army Special Forces and South Vietnamese personnel, Agency officers administered a range of programs whose overarching purposes were to train regime forces in combating communist subversion and to prepare rural inhabitants to resist the Viet Cong. By the summer of 1962, CIA activities included paramilitary, psychological warfare, civic action, intelligence collection, and trail-watching operations against the Viet Cong and support to the South Vietnamese government's Strategic Hamlet Program. [redacted]

[4] Lawrence J. Bassett and Stephen E. Pelz, "The Failed Search for Victory: Vietnam and the Politics of War," in Paterson, ed., *Kennedy's Quest for Power*, 224. See the Appendix on Sources for other published materials on Vietnam used in this work. (U)

[5] NSAM No. 52 (untitled), 11 May 1961, with attachment on covert actions from Vietnam Task Force report, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 16, folder 342; [redacted] unsigned memorandum, "CPE [Chief/FE Division] Discussion of His Conversation with Secretary of Defense McNamara," 24 May 1962, ibid., Job 72-00233R, box 1, folder 4; FE Division, "Covert Action Briefing Data: Vietnam Budget Summary," December 1963, and "Covert Action Briefing Data: Vietnam—Paramilitary Operations," November 1963. [redacted] The interagency task force was established in April 1961 under the chairmanship of Deputy Secretary of Defense Roswell Gilpatric. Its members included representatives from the White House (Rostow), CIA (FitzGerald), the Department of State (U. Alexis Johnson), the Office of the Secretary of Defense (Lansdale), the JCS, and USIA. "Editorial Note," *FRUS, 1961–1963, I, Vietnam 1961*, 74. [redacted]

[6] Details in this summary of CIA operations come from the above sources and the following: McCone memorandum to Special Group, "CIA Activities in Vietnam," [June 1962,] McCone Papers, box 1, folder 3; Thomas Parrott (NSC), summary histories of CIA clandestine and paramilitary operations, December 1963, HS Files, HS/CSG-458, Job 83-00036R, box 3, folder 8; FE Division, "North Vietnam Operations Plan," 29 December 1962, and "History of CIA in Vietnam," 26 June 1964, EA Division Files, Job 78-00597R, box 1, folders 7 and 13; [redacted] Ahern, *CIA and Rural Pacification in South Vietnam*, chaps. 3–4; idem, *CIA and the House of Ngo*, chap. 11; CIA memorandum, "Chronology of CIA Involvement in Vietnam Paramilitary Programs," 2 July 1975, EA Division Files, Job 81-00336R, box 6; FE Division, "Covert Action Briefing Data: Vietnam—Air/Maritime Operations into North Vietnam, 1961–1963," November 1963; Hilsman memorandum to Harriman, "Progress Report on South Vietnam," 18 June 1962, *DOD, US-Vietnam Relations, 1945–1967*, 13 vols. (hereafter *Pentagon Papers/Defense ed.*), vol. 12, 469–80; Colby, *Honorable Men*, 142–79, 219–20; Colby, *Lost Victory*, chaps. 6–10; John Prados, *The Hidden History of the Vietnam War*, chaps. 5, 8; CIA, "Memorandum for the President: Counterinsurgency Activities Since January 1961," [July 1962,] HS Files, HS/HC-527, Job 84B00389R, box 1, folder 27; William Colby (FE Division) memorandum to McCone, "Saigon Station Activities," October 1963, McCone Papers, box 3, folder 3; Sedgwick Tourison, *Secret Army, Secret War*, chaps. 2–3; Richard H. Shultz Jr., *The Secret War Against Hanoi*, 29–30, 62–63, 81–82; Kenneth J. Conboy and Dale Andradé, *Spies and Commandos*, chaps. 2–8. The last three works draw heavily on interviews with American and Vietnamese participants in the operations and on recently declassified reports prepared for the JCS in 1970. [redacted]

[7] Colby, *Honorable Men*, 149. (U)

dozen paramilitary, reconnaissance, and civic action teams and planned to extend those operations to the border area with Laos. CIA also had some minor ancillary involvement in the Strategic Hamlet Program, the core of the Diem regime's counterinsurgency effort. While working with US Special Forces and AID in training and dispensing assistance to peasants who had been uprooted and moved into the protected enclaves, CIA officers collected intelligence on Viet Cong activities and personnel.[8] ~~(S)~~

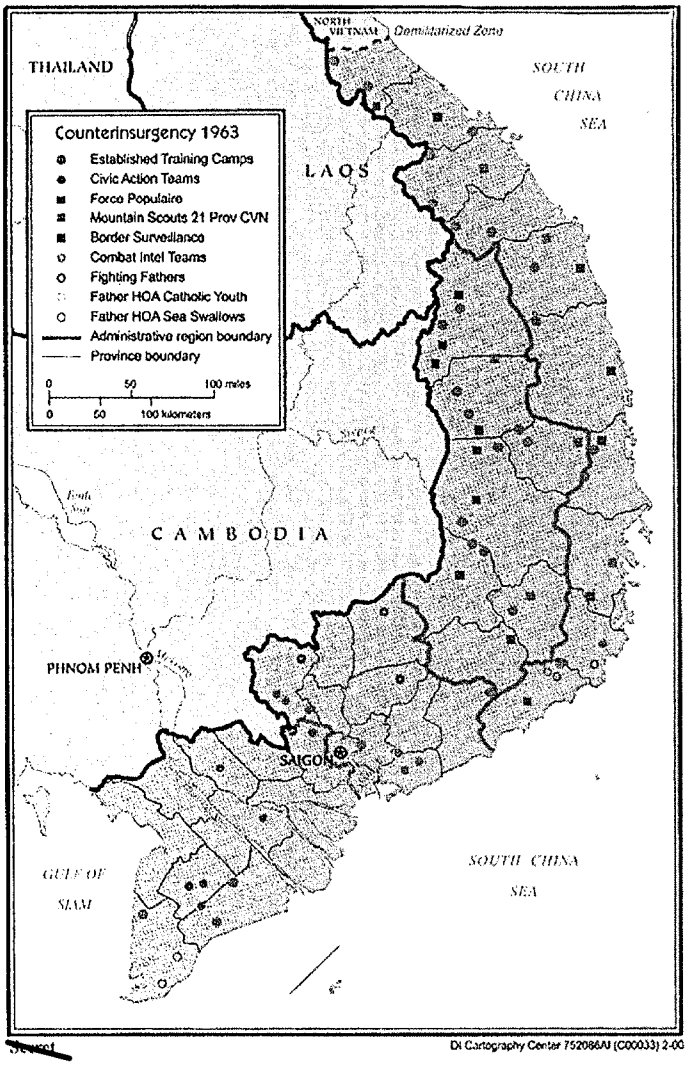
The CIDGs were the most important of these elements. They were local militia units that engaged villagers in their own defense, for the purpose of taking the strategic offensive by expanding the territory under Saigon's control. An important element of the CIDG program was the strike forces, composed of ethnic and religious minorities, that patrolled territory between villages in the central and southern regions, set up ambushes, and reinforced communities under Viet Cong attack. Nearly 10,000 Vietnamese, including Montagnard tribesmen in the Central Highlands, had been trained and armed by mid-1962 for use in interdicting Viet Cong infiltration routes and providing intelligence on enemy activities. By early 1963, the CIDGs had some 38,500 men under arms, almost 11,000 of these in full-time strike force units. Also in the highlands, Agency officers were running three

CIA "psyops" included leaflet drops and black radio broadcasts designed to raise questions about North Vietnam's campaign against the South and about the communist leadership

[8] On the CIDGs and the Strategic Hamlet Program, see especially *CIA and Rural Pacification in South Vietnam*, 44–62, 78–87, and Latham, 107–207. (U)

[9] Sources for this paragraph and the next are: Tourison, chaps. 2–3; Prados, *Hidden History of the Vietnam War*, 37–40; Shultz, 29–30, 84–87, 135–36, 162–68, 175–77; Conboy and Andradé, viii, 50, 80, 101, 273; 230; Knoche untitled memorandum to Helms, Action Memorandum No. B-34 (about U-2 flights along the North Vietnamese coast), 28 September 1962, DDO Files, Job 78-02888R, box 3, folder 16. President Kennedy approved an expanded operational plan against North Vietnam in January 1963. Some unidentified members of the Special Group doubted that the program would reduce communist pressure in the South, and saw its value mainly as a bargaining point in future negotiations with Hanoi. Unsigned memorandum to Colby, "Minutes of 10 January 1963 Special Group Meeting," 11 January 1963, EA Division Files, Job 78-00597R, box 1, folder 7. Technical surveillance revealed that one reason so many of the airdrops were off-target was that the pilots were flying too high and too fast. Kenneth Conboy and James Morrison, "Plausible Deniability: US-Taiwanese Covert Insertions into North Vietnam," *AIR Enthusiast* 84 (November–December 1999), online version at Web site www.airenthusiast.com; 183. ~~(S)~~

and to show the existence of a fictitious resistance movement in the North. As with any psychological warfare activity, their effect was hard to gauge. The Agency officer in charge of the project called it "a small-budget operation," and feedback on the impact was hard to acquire in the police-state environment of North Vietnam. Lastly, during 1962, CIA began sending U-2s over the North; in the next two years, 36 missions were flown over both sides of the DMZ. (S)



CIA's pilot counterinsurgency programs in Vietnam as of early 1963 (S)

McCone on Vietnam: An Overview (U)

During his 23 months as Kennedy's DCI, McCone assumed several roles in informing, formulating, and implementing US policy in Vietnam. As the president's national intelligence officer, he presented increasingly pessimistic forecasts about South Vietnam's prospects and, at one point, compromised the objectivity of Agency analysis by intervening in the preparation of an important estimate. As a policy adviser, he emerged as a critic of the administration's cautious and sometimes contradictory approach to the conflict, and he strongly opposed Diem's removal. Finally, as director of CIA and the Intelligence Community, he oversaw the execution of covert actions, about which he was very skeptical, while balancing the Agency's interests against those of an ambitious and controlling ambassador in Saigon and of the US military, which was steadily taking over the intelligence war in Vietnam. (U)

In the case of Vietnam, McCone generally worked at the policy level and was not as deeply involved in the formulation and evaluation of CIA operations as he was with clandestine enterprises in other parts of the world.[11] He made few recorded comments about operations in Vietnam, although occasionally he offered suggestions. For example, in 1963 he wanted news of increased defections from the Viet Cong publicized more widely in the

[10] The success rate of [redacted] did not improve after the US Army's Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) took over the paramilitary program under Operation SWITCHBACK (see below) and attempted many more insertions at the same time that Hanoi was finding out about them ahead of time more easily. In 1963 alone, 15 of 17 teams were caught on landing. By the time the Johnson administration was carrying out the combined military [redacted] program known as Operations Plan 34A-64 (OPLAN 34A) in 1964, all the previously inserted teams were under communist control. Through 1967, the US Army's Studies and Observations Group (SOG) was running only four of the nearly 30 teams it had sent into the North. In 1968, a joint CIA-DIA counterintelligence assessment concluded that Hanoi had doubled all the teams that CIA and SOG had presumed were legitimate. In sum, between 1961 and 1967, almost 500 men on 54 infiltration teams were captured or killed. Tourison, xviii, 315–16; Shultz, 83, 91–92, 317; Conboy and Andradé, 100, 274. (U)

[11] Sources for this paragraph and the next are: McCone untitled memorandum to Carter, 5 April 1963, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 16, folder 342; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 570–71, 576–77; Parrott, "Minutes of Meeting of the Special Group, 19 September 1963," McCone Papers, box 1, folder 6; McCone, "Memorandum of Meeting...Subject: Increased Activities [redacted]," 21 August 1962, ibid., box 2, folder 2; McCone, "Memorandum of the Meeting with the President...August 22, 1962," ibid., box 6, folder 2; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting of Special Group (5412)—January 3rd, 1963," and Colby, "Memorandum for the Record...Special Group Meeting...10 January 1963," ibid., box 1, folder 5; Colby memorandum to McCone, "Increased Viet Cong Defections in South Vietnam," 19 April 1963, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 16, folder 342. (S)

South and called for maritime sabotage strikes against Haiphong harbor [redacted] He also advised the Special Group—consistent with his view on similar undertakings in Cuba—that infiltration and sabotage missions could not be turned on and off according to the vagaries of policy and that operators needed to be given more leeway in selecting targets. (S)

As he did with US government military action later, however, McCone had doubts about the efficacy of covert action against the Vietnamese communists. Although he believed small-scale sabotage operations were useful tools in tactical counterinsurgency, he questioned whether the same activities on a large scale would accomplish much unless they were part of a full-bore offensive against North Vietnam. [redacted] in response to tasking from the president and the secretary of defense. Once the Agency had received its orders, however—even if he disagreed with them—McCone would not countenance any bureaucratic resistance to their implementation. In that regard, he found the policy whims of subcabinet officials at the Department of State to be recurrent sources of frustration. In November 1962, he complained to Secretary of State Dean Rusk when Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs W. Averell Harriman scotched an [redacted] He said that if a covert action plan developed in accordance with the wishes of the president and the secretary of defense was "dependent upon the mood" of an assistant secretary, then "the whole policy [should] be reviewed and perhaps the idea of an active program [redacted] cancelled."[12] (S)

McCone was consistently skeptical about the quality of the intelligence being sent to Washington, particularly from the military. He knew—and his own analysts continually reminded him—of the lengthy record of slanted reporting from field commanders and of how the Pentagon's J-3 (operations) bureaucracy sanitized negative facts from its frontline accounts. The sanguine assessments he heard through official military channels or from personal contacts with serving or retired generals did not sway him. For example, he played golf at the elite Chevy Chase Club regularly with Marine Maj. Gen. Victor "Brute" Krulak, McNamara's special assistant for counterinsurgency and special activities and an inveterate optimist about US progress in Vietnam. McCone might have valued this time on the links with Krulak as a way of getting input for his own formulations about the situation. (At the same time, Krulak, an accomplished "schmoozer," may have pushed the relationship with the DCI—like him, a friend of Robert Kennedy's—in a futile attempt to win a sympathetic ear at Langley.) The DCI remained in touch with former President Eisenhower and heard from that devotee of the domino theory dire forecasts about the fate of Southeast Asia if the United States did not make a stand. The extent to which McCone assimilated the views of Krulak, who aspired to become Marine Corps Commandant, and the GOP's senior statesman cannot be determined, but it is safe to say their influence on him was far from decisive.[13] (U)

Intelligence matters aside, McCone disagreed with many of the diplomatic and military tactics the administration was using in Vietnam and questioned whether the United States could achieve its objectives. He became frustrated over the discrepancy between President Kennedy's rhetoric and US actions. The president followed a cautious course, variously hesitant and improvisational, that belied his bold declarations about pushing back the communist tide. His limited commitment of aid and personnel, followed by their gradual expansion without clear guidance, exasperated McCone, who thought the administration should state its objectives unambiguously and use whatever means necessary to attain them expeditiously. Impatience, a search for clarity, and a penchant for efficiency characterized McCone's approach to the Vietnam question. Instead, he had to deal with drift and day-to-day reaction, a lack of strategic direction, and a failure of presidential leadership that encouraged factional infighting and forestalled substantial accomplishments. (U)

[12] McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Secretary Rusk...November 10, 1962...," McCone Papers, box 2, folder 3. (S)

[13] Harold P. Ford, *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers: Three Episodes, 1962–1968*, 8–11; Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest*, 276; Rust, 134–36; Hilty, 464–65; Neil Sheehan, *A Bright Shining Lie*, 298; Thomas, *Robert Kennedy*, 269. According to Krulak, it was during one of their golf dates that McCone said he did not have much confidence in Krulak's predecessor, Edward Lansdale. Shultz, 288. (U)

On the larger policy questions, however, McCone is not on record as differing fundamentally with the administration's approach or even with recognizing its inadequacies. He did not doubt that the United States, free of the burden of colonialism and possessing unlimited resources, could succeed in Vietnam where France had failed. At no time did he argue for the neutralization of Vietnam through an international settlement—as was being attempted in Laos—or for leaving South Vietnam to its own devices. That said, neither did any other notable officials in the Kennedy administration other than Under Secretary of State Chester Bowles and Ambassador John Kenneth Galbraith. Dean Rusk, George Ball, and Averell Harriman opposed sending ground troops into Vietnam and staking the US government to President Diem, but they still believed the United States should be involved through civilian and military assistance programs and covert action. A strategy of pure diplomacy and salutary neglect was off the table early on. (U)

Like other senior US officials, McCone thought conventionally in an unconventional setting. He had neither special knowledge of, or intuition about, communist revolutionary warfare, nor, despite the sophisticated analyses available to him, did he grasp the complex political and cultural nuances of the Vietnam conflict. If he appreciated the usefulness of CIA's pacification programs, he did not have much opportunity to act on that sense because of the transfer of CIA paramilitary operations to the Pentagon under Operation SWITCHBACK and the introduction of US ground forces. He saw the need to change tactics, but the most that can be said about his prescription—much-intensified clandestine operations against North Vietnam and nearly unrestricted bombing across the DMZ—is that it was not tried. (U)

In any event, McCone's voice in the administration had diminished after the Cuban missile crisis, and over time his persistent doubts about Vietnam further strained his relations with policymakers. In addition, the Departments of Defense and State dominated the Vietnam issue. Owing to the Country Team concept, the assertiveness of Ambassador Lodge, and SWITCHBACK, McCone had much less room to maneuver after mid-1963. As the political stakes on Vietnam rose, McCone grew wary of approaching administration leaders with gloomy prognoses. It was this caution that would cause him in 1963 to intrude into the estimative process. It was an experience that proved embarrassing and counterproductive, and he would not repeat the error. For the rest of his tenure he upheld his analysts' assessments regardless of how they might discomfit US officials. (U)

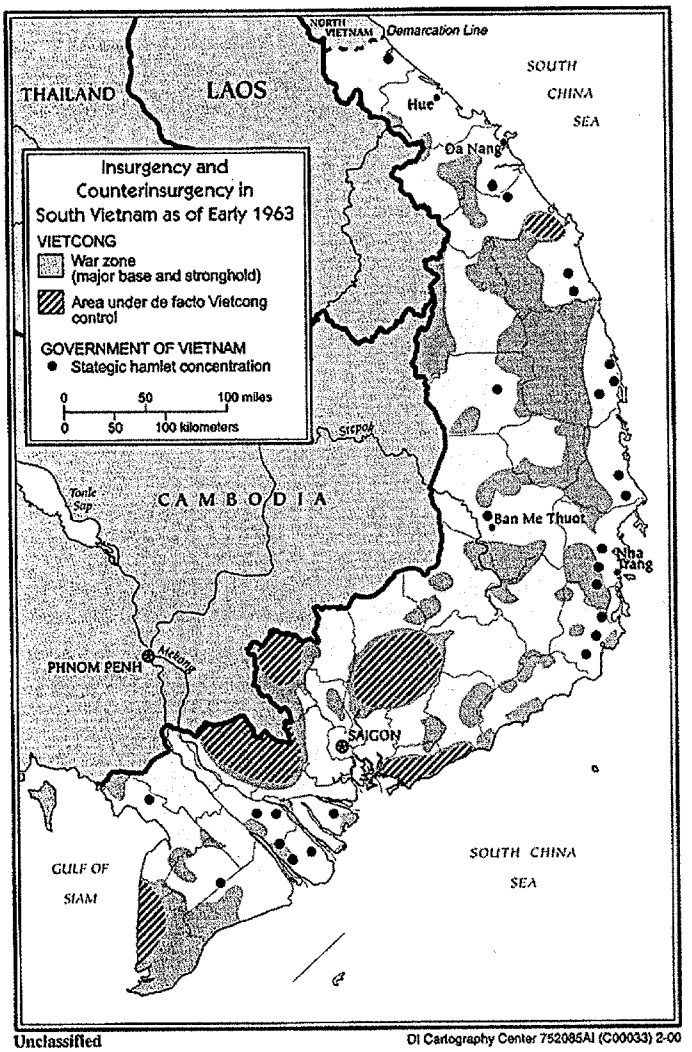
McCone's Early Dissension (U)

Initially, McCone was not reluctant to contradict conventional wisdom. His training as an engineer and his background as an industrialist and businessman might have predisposed him to emphasize the same hard-and-fast, bottom-line criteria that so impressed Robert McNamara. After only 48 hours in Vietnam, McNamara—the numbers-crunching former systems analyst from the Ford Motor Company, whom Sen. Barry Goldwater (R-AZ) described as "an IBM machine with legs"—declared that "[e]very quantitative measure we have shows we're winning this war." McCone, however, better appreciated the difficulty that low-level, incrementally escalating conventional tactics would have in offsetting the political and military ineptitude of the Diem regime and countering the ideological and psychological appeal of the communists. He was far less inclined than other so-called "hawks" to conclude that the United States and South Vietnam would prevail without a massive American military involvement (soon known as "going big"). McCone travelled to Southeast Asia in June 1962 to see the situation firsthand; he returned with a starkly more pessimistic account than McNamara, who a month earlier had declared that "victory is clearly attainable through the mechanisms that are now in motion." The DCI's three-day orientation took him to Saigon for meetings with President Diem and his influential brother Nhu, the South Vietnamese defense minister, and the chief of MACV, Gen. Paul Harkins; to the large American base at Da Nang and nearby CIA and Special Forces training sites; and to a strategic hamlet and a redoubt where a South Vietnamese priest and Chinese refugees were holding out against Viet Cong insurgents.[14] (S)

McCone's overall forecast was depressing. "The massive US contribution of arms, manpower, training and financial assistance already made or planned to counter the Communist threat to the area can at best arrest the trend," he warned. A substantial increase in military and other aid would merely purchase "a measure of time." Although he did not ignore the role of the Soviet Union and North Viet-

[14] Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 549; Department of Defense, "Visit to Southeast Asia by the Secretary of Defense, 8–11 May 1962," *FRUS, 1961–1963, II, Vietnam 1962*, 387; Shapley, 146–52; Robert Mann, *A Grand Delusion*, 248; materials on McCone's trip in McCone Papers, box 5, folder 1. (S)

nam, McCone viewed the PRC as the real enemy in Southeast Asia. Reversal and rollback of the communist threat to the region would not be possible, he predicted, unless the Communist Chinese were destabilized or at least distracted. To advance that strategic objective, he proposed introducing Nationalist China into the equation, with the possibility of large-scale airdrops and even seaborne landings of Nationalist troops on the mainland. Later, he concluded that such operations would accomplish little of value either inside the PRC or in the Vietnam theater, and instead advocated a massive escalation of US bombing attacks and covert operations against the North.[15] ~~(S)~~



Inside South Vietnam, McCone warned, a North Vietnamese push could be expected in the thinly defended Central Highlands, and Viet Cong efforts to counter the Strategic Hamlet Program should be anticipated, especially against "selected targets calculated to inflict the maximum psychological damage." The Viet Cong were developing new tactics, such as striking with larger units armed with heavy weapons, that might overwhelm the hamlets before South Vietnamese troops could respond. In the face of such determined opposition, according to McCone, it was essential that South Vietnam's government be strong and stable. Although dissatisfaction with the government persisted, McCone reported, Diem's removal would accomplish little. A coup—successful or not—would only make dealing with the Viet Cong that much harder. After returning from his trip, the DCI told the secretary of defense that he was not encouraged that American policy in Vietnam would succeed. He regarded the administration's moves so far only as "holding actions" and said the United States was "merely chipping away at the toe of a glacier from the North."[16] ~~(S)~~

McCone's assessment of the situation in Vietnam represented a distinctly minority view in Washington. At least at that time, some degree of optimism about Western prospects in Vietnam seemed justified. The morale and effectiveness of South Vietnamese troops had risen after the influx of US advisers and equipment. Fearsome helicopter-supported infantry attacks hurt the Viet Cong on the ground, and the array of overt and covert programs impeded communist inroads into the villages. Statistically, a corner appeared to have been turned: South Vietnamese Army (ARVN) units were initiating more actions and killing and capturing more Viet Cong than ever, and were losing fewer men through casualties and desertions.[17] ~~(S)~~

These gains were merely temporary, however, according to reports from VIP visitors and journalists. They only

---

[15] [McCone,] "General Conclusions," [19 June 1962,] McCone Papers, box 1, folder 3. Recent research in Chinese, Vietnamese, and Russian records demonstrates that Beijing was Hanoi's most generous supporter at this time; see Zhai Qiang, *China and the Vietnam Wars, 1950–1975*, chap. 4. ~~(S)~~

[16] Helms, "Memorandum for the Record…Director's Meeting with the Secretary of Defense," 18 June 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 2; "Memorandum for the Record…Minutes of Meeting of Special Group (CI), 19 June 1962," EA Division Files, Job 72-00233R, box 1, folder 6. McCone told Saigon station to watch developments in the Strategic Hamlet Program closely and to submit reports on its status at least once a month. Elder untitled memorandum to Helms and Colby, 16 July 1962, DDO Files, Job 78-02888R, box 1, folder 9. ~~(S)~~

jolted Hanoi into increasing its level of materiel and personnel support to the southern insurgency. The Viet Cong soon learned how to fight American helicopters. The US Army's traditional strategy of attacking the enemy's ground forces was not working in a "people's war"—especially when American military intelligence officers defined the enemy only as regular troops and did not include village militias, political committees, and other vital elements of the insurgency. The communists were holding their own in the countryside and increasing their influence in urban areas. Pacification programs such as the strategic hamlets and the *Force Populaire* were so closely linked to the Ngos that they suffered as opposition to the Diem regime grew. "The fact was," then-CIA analyst Chester Cooper later wrote, "that the war was *not* going well, the Vietnamese Army was *not* taking kindly to American advice, and Diem was *not* following through on his promises to liberalize his regime or increase its effectiveness." In early November 1962, even the usually bullish Krulak could not say "yes" when the attorney general asked him if "we" were winning. In January 1963, the Viet Cong recaptured the military initiative by humiliating a superior ARVN force at Ap Bac in the Mekong Delta. Even with US air and artillery support, South Vietnamese units surrounded a Viet Cong battalion at most one-fourth as large but would not close, letting enemy fighters escape after they shot down five helicopters and killed several dozen ARVN soldiers and three American advisers.[18] ~~(S)~~

Some official assessments reflected the changing fortunes on the battlefield. Soon after the Ap Bac debacle, Roger Hilsman and Michael Forrestal returned from South Vietnam and observed that "we are probably winning, but certainly more slowly than we had hoped. At the rate it is now going, the war will last longer than we would like, cost more in terms of both lives and money than we had anticipated, and prolong the period in which a sudden and dramatic event could upset the gains already made." "The most serious lack [in US policy]," they concluded, was "an overall plan keyed to the strategic concept." In other words, the administration may have known where it wanted to go, but it still did not know how to get there. A CIA analysis around the same time concurred with Hilsman and Forrestal. "[T]he war remains a slowly escalating stalemate," it stated, cautioning that statistical measures (for example, weapons captures, enemy casualties, and the number of small-unit attacks) were not reliable indices of the military situation or trends. Improvements in counterinsurgency programs (such as the strategic hamlets, the CIDGs, and "clear and hold" operations) were more than offset by the Saigon government's political mismanagement. The US military hierarchy remained optimistic, however. According to an investigative team reporting to the JCS, "The situation in South Vietnam has been reoriented, in the space of a year and a half, from a circumstance of near desperation to a condition where victory is now a hopeful prospect.... [U]nless the Viet Cong chooses to escalate the conflict, the principal ingredients for eventual success have been assembled." Most senior administration figures likewise persisted in making rosy pronouncements of the "light at the end of the tunnel" variety and planned for a phased withdrawal of American troops. This disjunction between working-level analysts' judgments and policymakers' prognostications contributed to the most serious distortion of intelligence during McCone's directorship—one for which he was largely to blame.[19] (U)

The Intelligence Muddle (U)

"This is impossible," President Kennedy said angrily in September 1963 after yet another unproductive debate with his advisers over Vietnam. "[W]e can't run a policy when there are such divergent views on the same set of facts." That late in the administration, policymakers and intelligence officers still argued over not only what the "ground

[17] Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*, 444–45; Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 982; R.B. Smith, *An International History of the Vietnam War*, 167; minutes of SGC meetings on 9 August and 13 September 1962, McCone Papers, box 1, folder 4; Southeast Asia Task Force, "Status Report on Southeast Asia," 27 July 1962, Forrestal memorandum to the president, "Situation in South Vietnam," 18 September 1962, Taylor trip report, "Impressions of South Vietnam," 20 September 1962, and Department of State, "Developments in Viet-Nam Between General Taylor's Visits...," [October 1962,] *FRUS, 1961–1963, II, Vietnam 1962*, 478, 649–50, 660, 679–80; Hilsman memorandum to Harriman, "Progress Report on South Vietnam," 18 June 1962, *Pentagon Papers/Defense ed.*, vol. 12, 469–80; Carter untitled memorandum to McNamara, 11 July 1962, *The Pentagon Papers* 1, 684–89. ~~(S)~~

[18] Bassett and Pelz, "The Failed Search for Victory," 241–42; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...CI Special Group Meeting...5 November 1962," McCone Papers, box 1, folder 4; Ahern, *CIA and Rural Pacification in South Vietnam*, 113; Cooper, 196 (emphasis in original); Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam: A History*, 259–62; Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*, 448–49; Sheehan, 201–67; "Editorial Note," *FRUS, 1961–1963, III, Vietnam, January–August 1963*, 1–3. ~~(S)~~

[19] Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*, 464–65; OCI Memorandum No. OCI 02142/63, "Current Status of the War in South Vietnam," 11 January 1963, Hilsman and Forrestal memorandum to the president, "A Report on South Vietnam," 25 January 1963, "JCS Team Report on South Vietnam," January 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, III, Vietnam, January–August 1963*, 19–22, 49–62, 73–94 (quotes at 22, 52, 53, 91, 94). Chester Cooper, at the time a senior analyst in ONE, later wrote that the use of various statistical indices—kill ratios, body counts, battlefield incidents, weapons losses and captures, and the like—was "all very quantitative, very scientific, and very misleading." *Lost Crusade*, 202. (U)

truth" in Vietnam *meant*, but, more fundamentally, what it *was*. The president could not get his advisers to agree on either, no matter how many fact-finding missions he sent out or how much information the Intelligence Community acquired. After listening to starkly contrasting reports from a senior diplomat and a high-ranking military commander who had just been to Vietnam together, Kennedy asked, with evident exasperation, "You two did visit the same country, didn't you?"[20] (U)

CIA—principally the DI—added to this confusion with its long record of pessimistic assessments about the war in Vietnam and its own internal disputes over US policy and its prospects.[21] Officers who produced finished intelligence—specifically, analysts in ONE, ORR, and the South Vietnam Branch of OCI—exhibited the most skepticism of official pronouncements and consistently doubted the likelihood of victory over the Vietnamese communists. These analysts had experience, in some cases dating back to the late 1940s, with diplomats and military officers mishandling and distorting information and reaching unwarranted positive conclusions. (They judged the reporting from CIA's Saigon station as more reliable, however, because the chiefs of station imposed stricter requirements on sourcing and accuracy.) There was not an institutional "groupthink" at the Agency, however. Analysts in the North Vietnam Branch of OCI were more hopeful that their counterparts in the South Vietnam Branch, and some DDP officers at Langley and overseas enthusiastically shared the administration's optimism. Other operators, including some in Saigon station, had serious qualms about the Diem regime. Adding to the confusion was an Intelligence Community coordination process that muted differences in the pursuit of interagency consensus. As a result, relatively few in the administration heard the sharper-toned judgments of the DI's pessimists, who often were dismissed, undeservedly, for expressing narrow, departmental opinions.[22] (S)

McCone, who generally had great faith in the CIA's intellectual capabilities, believed that one important way to clarify the confusion was to put the Agency's own "best and brightest" on the Vietnam account. He was confident that they would report events from the field fairly and comprehensively, and analyze them objectively. McCone acted on this belief after William Colby returned from Vietnam in mid-1962 and replaced FitzGerald as chief of FE Division. He arranged a rotation system for officers in Vietnam, contending that other geographic divisions in the directorate should share the dangers and rigors of duty there. McCone revoked the plan. Colby recalls that the DCI

> looked at me with his steely eyes and said coldly, "Mr. Colby, the President believes that Vietnam is the most important task this nation faces, and wants our very best men assigned there. You will assign the best and most qualified men we have and keep them there, and I do not want to hear any more talk of sharing the duty with less qualified ones."

Colby credits McCone's openness and candor with maintaining morale inside CIA and upholding the Agency's reputation for analytical honesty:

> His careful insistence on hearing out every side before taking a position himself and his meticulous forwarding of the raw evidence to the other departments and agencies, whether or not it supported his conclusions, produced an atmosphere in which the sincerity and integrity of all were respected, and all knew that their case had been made, whether finally accepted or not.[23] (U)

Colby's evaluation of his director was too generous, however. In one of the most puzzling events in McCone's tenure, he insisted in early 1963 that the community produce an optimistic estimate of Vietnam's future—by inference validating the Kennedy administration's approach to Vietnam. At a meeting of USIB on 27 February 1963, before dozens of community principals and their staffers, McCone reproved the director of ONE, Sherman Kent and his

---

[20] Bromley Smith (NSC) memorandum of conference with the president, 10 September 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, IV, Vietnam, August–December 1963*, 162. (U)

[21] Between 1950 and late 1964, ONE published more assessments on Vietnam than any other country except the Soviet Union—48 estimates and 51 memoranda to the DCI. Through the first two years of McCone's tenure, the figures were five and seven, respectively.

[22] Ford, *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers*, 8–14; idem, "Why CIA Analysts Were So Doubtful About Vietnam," *Studies* 40, no. 2 (1996): 43; Colby, *Honorable Men*, 207–8.

[23] Colby, *Honorable Men*, 208, 229. At this stage in the war, McCone did not ask USIB to direct its component agencies to undertake special collection efforts against the Vietnam target. Presumably, he found the existing programs of CIA and the military intelligence services to be sufficient. The multivolume history of USIB drafted by its executive secretary for many years, James B. Lay, does not discuss Vietnam as a priority collection issue until the Johnson administration. See "The United States Intelligence Board, 1958–1965," vol. 4, 269–73, vol. 5, 78–142.

analysts for preparing an alarmist estimate that diverged from the judgments of, in the DCI's words, "the people who know Vietnam best." In his capacity as chairman of USIB, McCone remanded the estimate and ordered ONE to solicit and incorporate in a revised NIE the views of a number of senior policymakers. Among them were five "bulls"—the Army's chief of staff, Gen. Earle Wheeler; the commander of US military forces in the Pacific, Adm. Harry Felt; the commander of MACV, Gen. Harkins; the Pentagon's counterinsurgency chief, Maj. Gen. Krulak; and the US ambassador to South Vietnam, Frederick Nolting—who supported keeping Diem in power, sending in more American troops, and expanding conventional military operations. Providing partial balance were two "bears"—Roger Hilsman and Michael Forrestal—who also wanted the United States to intervene more forcefully but doubted that Diem could salvage the situation and probably should be replaced. Colby and the chief of station in Saigon, John Richardson—both pro-Diem—provided input for CIA. All of those "people who knew Vietnam best" criticized the draft estimate for concluding that the Viet Cong had not been badly hurt, for overstating the Diem government's military and political shortcomings, and for underemphasizing progress with the strategic hamlets and in relations between American military advisers and South Vietnamese officers. The policymakers took special issue with the NIE's criticisms of the South Vietnamese army. The CINCPAC, Adm. Felt, went so far as to imply that ONE was peddling Hanoi's propaganda.[24] (S)

On 17 April 1963, BNE produced a revised, final version, NIE 53-63, that conveyed a more upbeat view. Some basic judgments were altered, and a more encouraging tone adopted. The first sentence signaled the change resulting from McCone's remand of the estimate: "We believe that Communist progress has been blunted and that the situation is improving." Other encouraging judgments included:

> Assuming no great increase in external support to the Viet Cong, changes and improvements which have occurred during the past year now indicate that the Viet Cong can be contained militarily and that further progress can be made in expanding the area of government control and in creating greater security in the countryside....
>
> Developments during the last year or two also show some promise of resolving the political weaknesses, particularly that of insecurity in the countryside upon which the insurgency has fed.

The estimate was not unrelentingly reassuring, however:

> [T]here are as yet no persuasive indications that the Communists have been grievously hurt....
>
> [T]he [South Vietnamese] government's capacity to embark upon the broader measures required to translate military success into lasting political stability is questionable....
>
> Despite South Vietnamese progress, the situation remains fragile....
>
> [N]o quick and easy end to the war is in sight.

Nevertheless, the estimate's essential point, the DCI later told President Kennedy, was that the community had "indicated we could win" in Vietnam.[25] (S)

Why did McCone leave himself vulnerable to charges that he skewed analysis to support administration policy? ONE's substantive experience and generally accurate forecasts would seem to suggest that McCone could trust its earlier, unencouraging conclusions. Moreover, he surely was aware that the strategic implications of unwarranted optimism could be grave; distorted reporting during France's war in Indochina had bred overconfidence that contributed to its defeat. But several more compelling considerations predisposed the DCI to question his senior estimators. (U)

Foremost was McCone's low regard for ONE at the time. He was still under fire from the White House and PFIAB for ONE's erroneous USSR-Cuba missile SNIE from the

[24] Ford, *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers*, 12–17; Cooper, 202–4; Matthias, *America's Strategic Blunders*, 185–90; Colby, *Honorable Men*, 206–7; John Prados, *Lost Crusader*, 105–7. (S)

[25] Ford, *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers*, 17; NIE 53-63, "Prospects in South Vietnam," 17 April 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, III, Vietnam, January–August 1963*, 232–34 (condensed version; the full-text version is on file in the History Staff); Willard C. Matthias, "How Three Estimates Went Wrong," *Studies* 12, no. 1 (Winter 1968): 31–35; Colby memorandum of meeting with President Kennedy, 10 September 1963, excerpted in John S. Earman (OIG) memorandum to McCone, "Record on Vietnam," 12 November 1964 (hereafter "CIA IG Report on Vietnam"), 15, OIG Files, Job 74B00779R, box 1, folder 2. The draft NIE is compared to the final version in

previous year, and so was hardly likely to take at face value his analysts' judgments on such a divisive and unclear matter as Vietnam. He could not hope to repair the damage the Agency's analytical reputation had suffered during the missile crisis if he approved an estimate so at odds with many senior policymakers without explicitly taking their views into account. McCone also was still irritated personally with Sherman Kent and no doubt remembered that just before the flawed missile SNIE, the ONE chief had flatly disagreed with him over the basic dynamics of the Indochina conflict. The DCI believed communist China was aiding and abetting a Marxist-Leninist insurgency, while Kent and his staff contended that popular disaffection with a ruling class of mandarins was the root cause of South Vietnam's travail. If CIA's best minds had been so wrong about Cuban missiles, why should he defer to them on the more complex question of Vietnam?[26] (U)

McCone also had reason to question the substance and reliability of ONE's latest assessment on Vietnam. His analysts had not been consistent during the months before. In memoranda in May and October 1962 they had vacillated from despair to hope. The former stated that the best the United States could get out of Vietnam was "an uneasy and costly colony"; the latter concluded that the joint American-South Vietnamese counterinsurgency program was working. Now the draft NIE, under consideration for six months, painted a markedly more dismal picture. McCone was not convinced developments in Vietnam since October justified another shift in judgment. Moreover, many knowledgeable and experienced CIA officers disagreed with ONE's line—notably the senior headquarters and field officers on the account, Colby and Richardson—and gave the DCI reason to believe he had a solid basis for not accepting the estimate as written. ~~(S)~~

Beyond the ONE product itself, a larger factor in McCone's thinking was the growing attention President Kennedy was giving Vietnam in early 1963. Kennedy had focused on other international issues and flash points and did not spend much time on Vietnam until the spring of 1963. In response to heightened White House interest, McCone stopped being mainly an occasionally carping policy executor and put himself in a better position to influence policy. Not having overcome the resentment that administration principals felt toward him for being right about Soviet missiles in Cuba, he did not want to antagonize them further by again being a contrarian. In addition, McCone would have had trouble in the White House defending an assessment that did not clearly take into account recent presidential fact finding missions. (U)

McCone had to consider interdepartmental relations as well—particularly those with the Department of Defense. Already engaged in high-stakes battles with Secretary McNamara and the Pentagon, he must have been leery about approving an estimate that implied that American military advisers were not doing their jobs well enough. ONE's draft stated that among South Vietnam's "very great weaknesses" were

> [a] lack of aggressiveness and firm leadership at all levels of command, poor morale among the troops, lack of trust between peasant and soldier, poor tactical use of available forces, a very inadequate intelligence system, and obvious Communist penetration of the South Vietnamese military organization.

US military (and civilian) personnel had been trying to correct these deficiencies for years. A senior official at the Pentagon or the White House might reasonably infer from the quoted language that hundreds of Americans had spent thousands of hours and millions of dollars for naught. That implication was too troubling for McCone to let by under his signature. (U)

The DCI's intervention quickly proved to be a blunder. Soon after the revised estimate was distributed in Washington, events in Saigon, Hue, and elsewhere in the South invalidated its key judgments. In May, antigovernment rioting and demonstrations broke out, and in June, the first of several Buddhist monks set himself on fire. Repression of activist monks and their supporters in the cities claimed much of the Diem government's attention, distracting it from expanding the Strategic Hamlet Program. By the summer of 1963, the counter-insurgency campaign was paralyzed. As communist insurgents and domestic dissidents besieged the regime, it became clear that McCone's ONE had produced another authoritative but inaccurate estimate. Supposedly above the political fray, CIA and other

[26] Kent memorandum to McCone, "The Communist Threat in Southeast Asia," 24 May 1962, National Foreign Assessment Center (NFAC) Files, Job 79R00904A, box 8, folder 2. Journalist A.J. Langguth, in *Our Vietnam: The War, 1954–1975*, states, without citing evidence, that Krulak persuaded McCone to revise the estimate (240). The documentary record contains nothing to support that contention. (U)

community analysts had confirmed the unfounded expectations of progress that many senior policymakers had long entertained. As *The Pentagon Papers* would later note, the estimate was "not only wrong, but more importantly...[it was] influential." When ill-advised hopes were dashed, the standing of McCone and CIA was diminished.[27] (U)

BNE defended the estimate for some weeks, but, in July, McCone approved an update predicting that unrest would grow and that the odds of a coup or assassination attempt against President Diem would rise to better than even. Although McCone opposed a coup, he did not interfere with the production of this special estimate—the key judgments of which could have left readers guardedly optimistic about the beneficial effects of a sudden change in regime: "given continued support from the US, [a successor military-civilian elite] could provide reasonably effective leadership for the government and the war effort." Also around that time, BNE issued another special estimate that flatly contradicted one of McCone's basic beliefs about the war—"Communist policy and action in South Vietnam appears to be almost wholly dictated by Hanoi," it said. There is no evidence the DCI tried to steer its conclusions toward blaming Beijing.[28] (S)

In the weeks that followed, worsening conditions in Vietnam forced McCone to retreat further from the bottom line of NIE 53-63 when he discussed the issue with administration officials. He tried to put the best face possible on the changed view between April and June–July by ignoring the estimate and referring to the Agency's long record of pessimism. "A review of our reporting over 18 months and resulting estimates bears out that the Agency consistently warned of the deteriorating situation and the possible consequences," he told the White House in September. "[V]ictory is doubtful if not impossible." If the Saigon government mishandled the Buddhist problem, it would put its survival and the safety of US troops at serious risk. According to PFIAB Chairman Clark Clifford, the "normally cautious and conservative" McCone told board members around then that the situation had gotten so bad in Vietnam, "we might have to pull out altogether." In an "EYES ONLY" letter to Ambassador Lodge, the DCI wrote, "I am more disturbed over the situation which has developed in South Vietnam than any recent crisis which has confronted this government."[29] (S)

McCone later apologized to Kent, admitted he had been wrong for intruding into the estimative process, and promised he would not do it again. He was true to his word. The NIE episode had another benefit for CIA that somewhat offset the discomfort and embarrassment McCone had caused it. His contrition and support for subsequent Agency assessments, no matter how dissonant they sounded to policymakers, helped steel analysts against the strong pressures they felt during the Johnson administration to "get on the team." Knowing the DCI would not undercut them, DI analysts warned repeatedly that US military escalation by itself would not save South Vietnam, and in 1964 they were emboldened enough to directly contradict the domino theory. Likewise, McCone did not change his gloomy outlook for the rest of his tenure, despite the damage it did to his relationships with two presidents.[30] (S)

Operation SWITCHBACK (U)

While McCone was clashing with the Department of Defense over control of military and technical intelligence assets and differing with its assessments of the "ground truth" in Vietnam, he had to deal with another large-scale bureaucratic issue involving the military: the transfer of CIA paramilitary activities in Vietnam to the Pentagon. This transfer, which significantly reduced the Agency's role in influencing events in the field and in policymaking circles, came about for several reasons. The failed Bay of Pigs

[27] Ford, *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers*, 20. (U)

[28] Kent memorandum to McCone, "NIE 53-63, Prospects in South Vietnam in Light of the Current Buddhist Crisis," NFAC Files, Job 79R00904A, box 9, folder 3; SNIE 53-2-63, "The Situation in South Vietnam," 10 July 1963, 6, SNIE 14.3-63, "The Impact of the Sino-Soviet Dispute on North Vietnam and Its Policies," 26 June 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, III, Vietnam, January–August 1963*, 421. George Carver of ONE went so far as to assert to McCone in late August that "the best hope for the preservation of US interests and the attainment of US objectives in South Vietnam lies in the possibility of an early coup d'etat by anti-Communist nationalists with sufficient military strength to obviate prolonged civil war." Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 621. (S)

[29] McCone memorandum reviewing CIA's intelligence performance regarding Vietnam, 21 September 1963, cited in Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 680–81; Colby memorandum of meeting with President Kennedy on 10 September 1963, excerpted in "CIA IG Report on Vietnam," 15; Clark Clifford and Richard Holbrooke, "Annals of Government, The Vietnam Years," Part I, *New Yorker*, 6 May 1991, 45; McCone letter to Lodge, 19 September 1963, quoted in Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 672. (S)

[30] Ford, *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers*, 17–18; ONE memorandum to McCone, "Would the Loss of South Vietnam and Laos Precipitate a 'Domino Effect' in the Far East?," ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 16, folder 342. (S)

operation in April 1961 raised serious doubts inside the White House about the Agency's ability to run large paramilitary operations. The DDP lacked the manpower and resources to manage undertakings as extensive and vital as the CIDGs indefinitely without degrading its ability to conduct espionage and covert action worldwide. Lastly, Washington viewed Vietnam principally as a military problem, with the Pentagon as the lead executor, and CIA's operations inevitably would be subordinated to military concerns.[31] ~~(S)~~

In June 1961, the White House decreed a division of responsibility for paramilitary activities. The Department of Defense would "normally receive responsibility for overt paramilitary operations" and "[a]ny large paramilitary operation wholly or partly covert." "[W]holly covert or disavowable" paramilitary projects "may be assigned to CIA, provided that it is within the normal capabilities of the [A]gency." By mid-1963, CIA was to turn over to the Department of Defense its paramilitary responsibilities and assets in Vietnam—involving a total of over [redacted] trained and armed indigenous personnel—and concentrate on espionage, political operations, and propaganda. The transition program was named SWITCHBACK, a revealing misnomer implying the Pentagon had directed the Agency's paramilitary enterprises in the past. The military's newly acquired projects would be run by MACV, which had superseded MAAG—in a reflection of the shift in US focus from assistance to operations. (MACV, however, was not that anxious to take on these CIA projects; SWITCHBACK was Washington-driven.) (U)

The transition started erratically but ground along without major delays despite its size and sensitivity. The interdepartmental agreement was reached in July 1962; the turnover of all paramilitary projects, scheduled for 1 July 1963, was completed the following November. The largest undertaking that CIA gave up was the CIDGs, by then numbering over [redacted] local fighters in several forces. The Agency also relinquished control of [redacted] Mountain Scouts, who operated in the Central Highlands; the [redacted] member Combat Intelligence Teams, which targeted the Viet Cong infrastructure; and border surveillance and cross-border units with more than [redacted] personnel. [redacted]

McCone and most CIA officers, at Headquarters and in the field, viewed SWITCHBACK as ill-conceived and harmful to US interests. From the Agency perspective, US Special Forces—"gung ho" to prove they could do a better job than the civilian "spooks"—spurned the advice of more experienced Agency paramilitary officers. The shift from political and psychological to more purely military activities disrupted the operational environment, severed many long-cultivated relationships with local officials, disrupted effective "psywar" and civic action initiatives, and reduced the effectiveness of the pacification programs, notably the CIDGs and the Mountain Scouts. The military's more formal command structure replaced CIA's relatively flexible arrangements. By mid-1964, several months after the changeover had been finished, FE Division Chief Colby concluded that "it is probably fair to say that the SWITCHBACKed paramilitary and irregular forces were critically impaired by the more rigid mold into which they were forced by conventional US military requirements."[33] ~~(S)~~

Even as problems with SWITCHBACK arose, and notwithstanding his own reservations, McCone did not try to impede the program. With a losing record in contests with the Pentagon, the White House behind the changeover, and the American military presence in Vietnam increasing steadily—from about 3,100 at the end of 1961 to more than 16,000 two years later—he saw little point in fighting it. The "militarization" of covert operations seemed inevitable. Possibly, too, he judged that the difficulties encountered in SWITCHBACK to that point were not egregious enough to raise with the White House or the SGC. Moreover, the transfer had the virtue of lifting a large financial burden

[31] NSAM No. 57, "Responsibility for Paramilitary Operations," 28 June 1961, *FRUS, 1961–1963, VIII, National Security Policy*, 113; NSAM No. 162, "Development of US and Indigenous Police, Paramilitary and Military Resources," 19 June 1962, ER Files, Job 84B00513R, box 9, folder 2; Ahern, *CIA and Rural Pacification in Vietnam*, 117. ~~(S)~~

[32] *Annual Report of the Central Intelligence Agency (for Fiscal Year 1964)*, ER Files, Job 86B00269R, box 7, 137; Colby memoranda to McCone, "Status Report—Operation SWITCHBACK...," 29 November 1962, and "OPERATION SWITCHBACK," 13 June 1964, ibid., Job 80R01284A, box 7, folder 7; Colby memorandum, "Operation SWITCHBACK," 27 May 1964, McCone Papers, box 3, folder 10; Research Analysis Corporation, "US Army Special Forces Operations under the Civilian Irregular Defense Groups Program in Vietnam, 1961–1964," Technical Memorandum RAC-T-477, prepared for Department of the Army, April 1966, 40–53; [redacted] "Operation SWITCHBACK, May 1961–June 1964," EA Division Files, Job 72-00233R, box 1, folder 6; Shelby L. Stanton, *Green Berets at War*, chap. 4; Krepinevich, 71–75; Conboy and Andradé, chap. 9. MACV [redacted] had scant success against a more vigilant enemy; 13 of 16 teams sent into North Vietnam during 1963 were captured soon after landing. Tourison, 315–16. ~~(S)~~

from the Agency and placing it on the Department of Defense.[34]

From the first, McCone appreciated the political and operational difficulties SWITCHBACK would cause in US dealings with the Agency's South Vietnamese contacts. He had inserted into the July 1962 memorandum of understanding with the Pentagon a passage calling for the military to respect "well-established liaison relationships with GVN officials both in Saigon and at the provincial level." Saigon station was to broker MACV's takeover of these contacts. In Hawaii, CINCPAC Adm. Felt adamantly disagreed with that proviso, however, and told MACV chief Harkins to establish his own liaison arrangements, independent of CIA. The administration never explicitly endorsed Felt's approach, but it prevailed in practice and was never set right according to McCone's intentions.[35]

McCone was persuaded that imprecise language in the NSC directives about SWITCHBACK might harm CIA to the military's gain, and so needed correction. DDP Richard Helms warned him that Pentagon officials were interpreting the phrase "wholly or partly covert" in NSAM No. 57 to mean that the military had the authority to engage in all types of covert actions, not just paramilitary operations. McCone attempted to introduce a revision, giving CIA responsibility for all covert actions, paramilitary or not. The Department of Defense would not concur, and McCone acceded to supporting the Pentagon's overt paramilitary operations and referring "gray areas" to the Special Group for resolution.[36]

One of those gray areas was funding. CIA had to administer Department of Defense funds for SWITCHBACK-related projects until FY 1963 ended on 30 June 1963. McCone wanted to be sure that when the Agency surrendered those programs to the Pentagon, it got back the allocated for them that fiscal year. Where the generals got the money to pay for their new responsibilities "was a DoD problem," he said. The Pentagon agreed to repay but balked at the rest, arguing that a special authorization from Congress was needed. Bureaucratic bargaining was required to settle accounts. In a memorandum of understanding signed in June 1964, the Department of Defense agreed to assume funding for SWITCHBACK programs in FY 1965 (beginning 1 July 1964).

[33] Ahern, *CIA and Rural Pacification in Vietnam*, 113–14, 130–33; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion at Special Group Meeting—16 May 1963," McCone Papers, box 1, folder 5; Saigon station cable 7326, 10 May 1963, EA Division Files, Job 66-00436R, box 1, folder 10; Colby memorandum to McCone, "OPERATION SWITCHBACK," 13 June 1964, ER Files, Job 80R01284A, box 7, folder 7; Francis J. Kelly, *U.S. Army Special Forces, 1961–1971*, 35–74.

The CIDG program—probably the most successful of the Agency's pacification initiatives—was SWITCHBACK's most serious casualty. Although MACV made improvements in logistics and succeeded in mobilizing personnel for CIDG service, it had trouble retaining permanent assets. Its use of the village-based defense units for counterguerrilla patrols, sometimes far from the locals' homes, caused morale to plummet, desertions to rise, and enrollments to diminish. Ahern, *CIA and Rural Pacification in Vietnam*, 135; "US Army Special Forces Operations under the Civilian Irregular Defense Groups Program in Vietnam, 1961–1964," 220–24; Colby, *Lost Victory*, 165–67.

McCone's concerns about the US military's management of former CIA programs did not just reflect his departmental view. Averell Harriman and U. Alexis Johnson at the Department of State made similar criticisms. Colby untitled memorandum of meeting with Harriman, 6 February 1963, and "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting of the Special Group (Counterinsurgency)...," 7 February 1963, EA Division Files, Job 66-00436R, box 1, folder 8.

[34] Guenter Lewy, *America in Vietnam*, 24; McCone, "Memorandum on Special Group Meeting—11 March 1963," McCone Papers, box 1, folder 5; draft blind memorandum, "Resolution of Funding Problems Relative to CIA and DOD," c. early to mid-1963, EA Division Files, Job 66-00436R, box 1, folder 8.

[35] Ahern, *CIA and Rural Pacification in Vietnam*, 117; Colby memorandum to DCI William Raborn, "Decline in Numbers and Effectiveness of the Civilian Irregular Defense Groups (CIDG) Program from 1963 to 1965," 17 December 1965, EA Division Files, Job 78-00597R, box 1, folder 12.

[36] Helms memorandum to McCone, "Proposed Revision of NSAM No. 57," 22 January 1963, ER Files, Job 86B00269B, box 8, folder 43; Carter memorandum to McCone, "Funding for Counterinsurgency and Paramilitary Operations," 22 February 1963, ibid., Job 80B01676R, box 12, folder 2; Cord Meyer (CA Staff) memorandum to Carter, "Paramilitary Action Responsibilities of CIA and the Department of Defense," 20 August 1963, ibid., box 19, folder 1; John Bross (NIPE) memorandum to McCone, "Paramilitary Operations," 13 December 1963, CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 7, folder 128. In early 1964, Helms again raised with McCone the issue of revising NSAM No. 57, but the DCI did not press the point with the White House.

[37] John Bross (Comptroller) memorandum to Carter, "Operation SWITCHBACK," 16 January 1963, with attached letter from McCone to Gilpatric, EA Division Files, Job 66-00436R, box 1, folder 8; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Special Group 5412—31 January 1963," McCone Papers, box 1, folder 5; McCone, "Memorandum for the Files—Various Activities," 3 January 1963, ibid., box 2, folder 4; Ahern, *CIA and Rural Pacification in Vietnam*, 133–34; "Operation SWITCHBACK," 14–38; "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Department of Army Representatives concerning Financial Aspects of Operation SWITCHBACK," 17 September 1963, EA Division Files, Job 66-00436R, box 1, folder 10; "Memorandum of Understanding...Budget Responsibility for Counterinsurgency Activities in Vietnam," 5 June 1964, DCI Files, Job 95G00278R, box 1, folder 38.

After SWITCHBACK was nearly complete, McCone sought and received Special Group approval to realign the activities of Saigon station away from supporting the US military and more toward the Agency's own responsibilities in espionage, counterintelligence, [redacted]. One of the drawbacks of SWITCHBACK, he told the Special Group, was that as much as one-third of the station's intelligence output came from the paramilitary activities CIA had relinquished. The DCI believed it was more important than ever to have an aggressive collection effort in the South, but SWITCHBACK had closed one of the Agency's most productive avenues. If US military officials wanted CIA to increase tactical field reporting, McCone argued, then the Pentagon ought to pay the Agency to conduct the paramilitary operations that made much of that collection possible.[38] ~~(S)~~

McCone had little confidence that MACV could handle the CIA projects it inherited nearly as well as the Agency had. He wrote to McNamara in May 1964 that MACV seemed unable to do "a few very essential things on a 'quick-and-dirty' basis"—training and equipping a few border crossing teams on short notice, for example. "[A] very professional, well-run operation developed by CIA over a period of several years…had been completely liquidated and lost as a result of Operation SWITCHBACK," he told McGeorge Bundy in June 1964. "CIA had predicted this, [and] they regretted it." Still, largely because he believed the war was going badly and being badly run, McCone did not try to recover the Agency's lost paramilitary roles. When Bundy asked him in mid-1964 to consider reengaging the Agency operationally in Vietnam at a pre-SWITCHBACK level, he declined. Unless the process was "enthusiastically endorsed" by the White House and the Pentagon, a "frightening interdepartmental quarrel" would erupt, and by then he had no stomach for another of those.[39] ~~(S)~~

The *Coup Manqué* Against Diem (U)

NIE 53-63 may have reinforced the optimism of some administration officials, but the deterioration and disarray in Saigon and elsewhere in the South shook the confidence of other policymakers in President Diem. The intensity of the revivified non-communist resistance to Ngo rule—especially the self-immolations of Buddhist monks—startled the administration. "How could this have happened?" the president asked. "Who are these people? Why didn't we know about them before?"[40] Compounding the political problem, in recent months the situations on the battlefields of Vietnam had either stopped improving or turned worse. Convinced the Ngo regime must be replaced if South Vietnam was to survive, a coterie of US government decisionmakers encouraged a junta of ARVN military coup plotters. Their support of a coup embroiled McCone in the most contentious Vietnam-related controversy of his directorship. (U)

Ngo Dinh Diem and US military adviser (U)

McCone consistently held to the "better the devil we know" viewpoint regarding Diem and was slow to join administration efforts to press him to reform. The DCI opposed Diem's replacement, arguing that no plausible alternatives existed and that a protracted period of chaos would likely follow his ouster and open the way to a takeover by proxies of Moscow and Beijing. During McCone's trip to Vietnam in mid-1962, he met Diem, was impressed by his leadership qualities, and resolved that the United States should stand behind him. The DCI recognized the inadequacies of the Ngo government, but those shortcomings were not touchstones in his thinking. He is not on record expressing personal opinions about the regime's more extreme measures, such as the massive raids on Buddhist pagodas in Hue and Saigon on 21 August 1963. Possibly, he held Diem's brother Nhu responsible for the regime's more reprehensible actions and feared that its opponents would construe concessions as a sign of weakness and only intensify their demonstrations. Undercutting Diem for his harsh and clumsy handling of internal affairs, the DCI believed, would distract Saigon and Washington from the main prob-

[38] "Memorandum for the Record…Minutes of Special Group Meeting, 17 October 1963," McCone Papers, box 1, folder 6; Kirkpatrick Diary, vol. 5, entry for 2 October 1963. ~~(S)~~

[39] McCone letter to McNamara, 7 May 1964, ER Files, Job 80R01284A, box 7, folder 7; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record…Meeting of the Executive Committee with the President…," 6 June 1964, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 11 ~~(S)~~

[40] Rust, 102. (U)

lem, the communist insurgency. McCone also would have noted that his senior operations officers on Vietnam, William Colby and John Richardson, supported Diem's staying in power, while the main American critics of the Saigon government were upstart journalists and high-ranking Department of State officials whose opinions McCone had not valued highly.[41] (U)

McCone regularly made his case for Diem in SGC meetings. His references to the "oriental mind" irritated Hilsman and Harriman—the purported experts on such matters—who rejoined that McCone was asking the wrong question. To them, the issue was not who could replace Diem, but whether the United States could win with him. Even that query missed the point, however. Its salient flaw—also present in McCone's thinking—was that it did not consider the possibility that Vietnam could not be stabilized with or without Diem, regardless of what the United States did. The stepped-up CIA covert actions and heavy US airstrikes that McCone argued for the following year would have made little difference in saving the Ngos. (U)

McCone was out of town during the weekend of 23–24 August 1963—the peak of the capital's vacation season—when Hilsman, Harriman, and Forrestal, with George Ball's concurrence, tried to circumvent the SGC and engineer Diem's downfall through back-channel contacts with the ARVN conspirators. On Saturday, Hilsman drafted a cable to Lodge in Saigon that in effect authorized a coup. The Country Team "should urgently examine all possible alternative leadership and make detailed plans as to how we might bring about Diem's replacement if this should become necessary." Lodge was instructed to tell the dissident commanders that the administration would "give them direct support in any interim period of breakdown in [the] central government mechanism." Hilsman and his associates cleared the text by telephone with the president (in Hyannis Port) and then informed other officials of "Higher Authority's" concurrence. Neither McCone—vacationing in California—nor DDCI Carter could be reached; the first senior CIA executive to be contacted (by Harriman) was Richard Helms, the duty officer that day. Helms then discussed the telegram with Colby and Carter. They decided to take no immediate action but to await a response from Lodge. Helms later said the cable was not coordinated with CIA in any meaningful way. "This was just sort of tipping their hat to the Agency, that they'd called everybody."[42]

McCone first heard about the communication in detail on Sunday, when, at his request, Colby flew out to brief him. "[H]e was furious," Colby recalled; "as always, outwardly calm, but his calm was now exceptionally icy." Nonetheless, McCone acted with uncharacteristic passivity throughout the episode. Despite the obvious miscues in Washington, he did not cut short his trip. He kept informed through daily telephone briefings from Headquarters, and he apparently only contacted Bundy to argue against US support for a coup. Perhaps he thought it best to remain uninvolved, to distance himself and the Agency from a likely fiasco—a questionable calculation, considering that two CIA officers in Saigon were dealing closely with the ARVN dissidents. Acting DCI Carter, who attended NSC meetings with Helms and Colby in McCone's place during the last week of August, later said the DCI's absence was unhelpful. He recalled urging McCone to return to Washington promptly because Lodge was interpreting the cable as a directive, not merely as an advisory (as Bundy termed it). According to Carter, McCone listened only to Bundy and

---

[41] Illustrative of the Agency's Vietnam "knowledge base" on which McCone drew are two memoranda to him from Colby: "Vietnam" and "Leadership in Vietnam—Ngo Dinh Nhu," both dated 31 August 1963, DDO Files, Job 78-02958R, box 1, folder 10. Colby characterized the perception that Diem was a "Mandarin dictator" as "superficial," and, after toting up Nhu's assets and liabilities, assessed him as "a strong, reasonably well oriented and efficient potential successor...a desirable rather than a catastrophic candidate in the search for dynamic leadership in Vietnam. Few others offer as favorable a list of some of the critical assets necessary to Vietnam's situation."

McNamara, Taylor, Harkins, and Vice President Johnson shared McCone's doubts about replacing Diem. The Agency's most vocal exponents of a change in leadership were junior operations officers in Vietnam—mainly those in contact with opposition elements and liaison representatives frustrated by the influence Nhu had over the local services. Karnow, 287–89; Colby, *Honorable Men*, 207–8; McCone OH, 15. (U)

[42] DEPTEL 243 to Embassy Saigon, 24 August 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, III, Vietnam, January–August 1963*, 628–29; Helms, "Memorandum for the Record... 'Phone Conversation with Governor Averell Harriman,'" 26 August 1963, McCone Papers, box 13, folder 2; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1987)," 253–55

Accounts differ on the extent to which CIA "coordinated" on the controversial telegram. According to Thomas Powers (*The Man Who Kept the Secrets*, 163–64) Helms concurred with the import of the cable, rather than merely acknowledging that he had been informed of it, by saying, "It's about time we bit this bullet." The DDP's supposed statement does not appear in any official record. Roger Hilsman (*To Move a Nation*, 488) has claimed that "the Acting Director of CIA [Carter] also went over the draft, and he too decided to approve without disturbing his chief's vacation—adding the comment that the time had clearly come to take a stand." Agency records indicate that no one tried to reach Carter on the 24th, and that he was not involved until after the cable had been sent. Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 590; Carter memorandum to Helms, "False Allegation in the Book, *To Move a Nation*...," 1 December 1967, and OIG) memorandum, "General Carter's Memorandum to the DCI...Concerning the 24 August 1963 Cable to Ambassador Lodge," OIG Files, Job 79B00779R, box 1, folder 2; "CIA OIG Report on Vietnam," 4, 5; Helms/McAuliffe OH, 8; transcript of McCone interview with Marguerite Higgins (*New York Herald Tribune*), 9 September 1964, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 11.

by his disengagement missed an opportunity to prevent the involvement of the Agency in the coup plotting. McCone later had to deflect attempts to link CIA with the so-called "green light" message. When Harriman asked why responsible Agency officers had not conveyed their views when the cable was sent, McCone replied that Helms had merely been "informed" of its general content and that no administration official had tried to coordinate it with the Agency.[43] ~~(S)~~

The question of who knew what and when soon became moot. After another week of fumbling and indecision in Washington and Saigon—"[a]uthorities are now having second thoughts," Maxwell Taylor wrote—the commanders' conspiracy ended. "Generals did not feel ready and did not have sufficient balance of forces," the station reported on 31 August. "This particular coup is finished.... We did our best and got licked." McCone was left with another image-perception problem to manage when he returned to Washington on 2 September. In Saigon and in the regional and American press, CIA was being blamed for trying to subvert the Diem regime. The DCI faced a critical audience when he discussed the coup plotting with PFIAB later in the month. Chairman Clifford later claimed that McCone was guilty either of mismanagement or deception when he told the members that CIA had been in touch with senior ARVN officers but had not encouraged them. Clifford recalled that he did not know if McCone was misleading the board or was inadequately informed about CIA activities in Saigon—neither explanation reflecting well on McCone and the Agency.[44] ~~(S)~~

During September and October, McCone attended more than three dozen meetings on Vietnam at Headquarters and downtown—more than on any other issue at the time. He found the extended White House discussions on Vietnam after the *coup manqué* to be confusing and disorganized. The president's indecision was hard to interpret: Was he pro- or anti-Diem by default? Was he pursuing, however haphazardly, a consensus by letting subordinates resolve their quarrels themselves or by waiting until one faction prevailed? Or was he truly uncertain about what to do? A 10 September meeting of the NSC, at which Gen. Krulak and Department of State official John Mendenhall gave diametrically opposed evaluations of the state of play in the South, signaled to McCone that, after all the talk and debate, fundamental questions were still unaddressed: Will Diem remain in power whether he reforms or not? Does a feasible alternative leadership group exist? Can a refurbished Diem regime still win the war? Will Diem and Nhu make a deal with Ho Chi Minh? To help him better evaluate the rising volume of information about Vietnam, sort out the various operational and policy options, and advise the president more cogently, McCone established a Vietnam Working Group inside CIA. Its principal members were Chester Cooper of ONE, the chairman; R. Jack Smith, the director of OCI; and Sherman Kent and William Colby. The DCI got the group busy on several assessments and said he did not want to attend another NSC meeting on Vietnam until he had studied those papers and discussed them with his deputies. McCone also dispatched Huntington Sheldon, the ADDI, to Saigon to provide a first-hand field assessment and had him answer questions from the NSC after he returned.[45] ~~(S)~~

Chastened by the NIE 53-63 affair, McCone from here on out generally accepted the judgments of his "best minds" on Vietnam. He agreed that disaffection toward the Ngos in Vietnam was making victory over the Viet Cong "doubtful

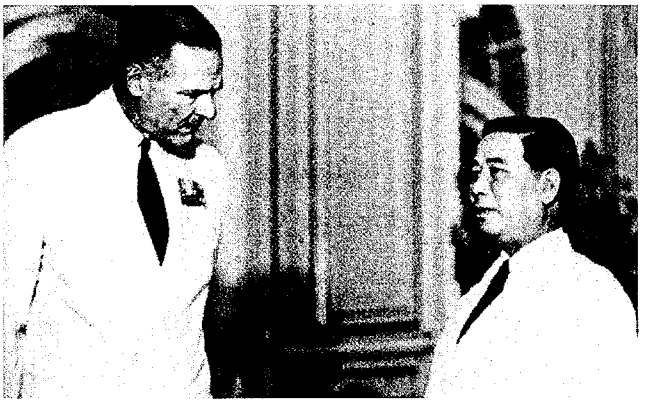
---

[43] Bromley Smith (NSC), "Memorandum of a Conference with the President...August 29, 1963...," *FRUS, 1961–1963, IV, Vietnam, August–December 1963*, 31; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1987)," 263, and "McCone as DCI (1973)," 626; Colby, *Honorable Men*, 210, and *Lost Victory*, 138; Colby memorandum to Elder, "Vietnam," 31 August 1963, McCone Papers, box 3, folder 1; Carter/McAuliffe OH, 12–13; "Memorandum for the Record of a Meeting at the White House...August 26, 1963...," *FRUS, 1961–1963, III, Vietnam, January–August 1963*, 638–41; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Governor Averell Harriman...," 31 October 1963, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 8. Headquarters sent a cable to Saigon station on 25 August that conveyed McCone's reservations about replacing Diem (it is not known if the DCI had a hand in drafting its language): "In circumstance believe CIA must fully accept directives of policy makers and seek ways accomplish objectives they seek," although the Department of State's action "appears [to] be throwing away bird in hand before we have adequately identified birds in bush, or songs they may sing." Quoted in Ford, *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers*, 32. Contrary to most secondary accounts, McCone did not attend the NSC meeting on Monday the 26th at which the president asked those present to endorse the coup idea or propose an alternative. ~~(S)~~

[44] [redacted] "The Demise of the House of Ngo," in *Central Intelligence: Fifty Years of the CIA*, 182–89; Ahern, *CIA and the House of Ngo*, chap. 12; "CIA IG Report on Vietnam," 3–13; Taylor telegram to Harkins, JCS 3368-63, 28 August 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, III, Vietnam, January–August 1963*, 675; Saigon station telegrams to Headquarters, 31 August and 2 September 1963, ibid., *IV, Vietnam, August–December 1963*, 64, 92; Clifford, 405. Much of the anti-CIA press coverage originated in the *Times of Vietnam*, run by Ngo Dinh Nhu. John Mecklin, *Mission in Torment*, 201–3. ~~(S)~~

[45] McCone calendars, entries for September and October 1963; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1987)," 271; McCone untitled memorandum, 13 September 1963, attached to Harold P. Ford memorandum to McCone, "Basic Questions Concerning South Vietnam," same date, McCone Papers, box 3, folder 2; Krulak's and Mendenhall's reports and NSC discussion of them in *FRUS, 1961–1963, IV, Vietnam, August–December 1963*, 153–67, 243–49; McCone memorandum summarizing Sheldon's reporting cable, 13 September 1963, ibid., 206–7; Krulak memorandum of NSC meeting at Department of State, 16 September 1963, ibid., 218–19. President Kennedy at this time reactivated the NSC Executive Committee to deal with Vietnam in the same way that it functioned during the Cuban missile crisis. USIB memorandum USIB-M-287, 11 September 1963, ICS Files, Job 82S00096R, box 2, folder 2. As he often did, McCone briefed Gen. Eisenhower in Gettysburg in mid-September, at the president's request. Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 663–67. ~~(S)~~

if not impossible" and that the preferred solution was to pressure Diem to institute reforms and change personnel. The United States should not go as far as cutting off military and economic aid—doing so would only encourage Diem and Nhu to make a bargain with Ho and hasten a communist takeover—nor should it encourage any more coup plots. McCone concurred with the assessment of the previous US ambassador to South Vietnam, Frederick Nolting, that Diem was "the only guy that has got the guts and the vision and the respect of sufficient people to hold this country together." If the United States would surely lose without Diem, it must try harder not to lose with him. One approach, McCone suggested at a White House meeting in mid-September, might be to persuade Diem's much-despised brother to step down—particularly after various sources reported that Nhu might be making a secret, separate arrangement with Hanoi. The DCI also raised numerous intermediate steps the administration might try to get Diem to take, such as shuffling the cabinet, ending martial law, taking the infamous Vietnam Special Forces away from Nhu, and reaching a settlement with the Buddhists. The disputes inside the administration continued, but agreement gradually emerged on taking a harder line against Diem—a policy referred to as "selective pressure."[46] ~~(S)~~



Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge with President Diem (U)

The DCI Versus the Ambassador (U)

While the policymakers wrangled, the analysts assessed, and the generals conspired, McCone fought the efforts of the new ambassador, Henry Cabot Lodge, to control CIA activities in Vietnam and to use the Agency to help push Diem out. The assertive and arrogant Lodge arrived in Saigon at a time of maximum confusion in the Kennedy administration and of severe peril to the Diem government. With Nolting's tour in Saigon due to end in mid-August, the administration had looked to replace him with, in Hilsman's words, "a civilian public figure whose character and reputation would permit him to dominate the representatives of all other departments and agencies."[47] Lodge came to mind. He fit the mold of many Kennedy appointments from senior GOP ranks. A Massachusetts brahmin, he had a lengthy Eastern establishment résumé that included three terms in the Senate and seven years as the Eisenhower administration's ambassador to the United Nations. He spoke fluent French and had a dignified demeanor and a strong, often overbearing, personality that commanded deference. Lodge got to Saigon two days before the Hilsman-Harriman-Forrestal cable went out and eagerly set about implementing the prescription of the moment—barring drastic change, the Ngos must go, the sooner the better. He would brook no resistance from McCone and CIA. (U)

Lodge largely blamed Saigon station for the failure of the August 1963 coup plot and believed the Agency had obstructed it because it feared upsetting a long and close relationship with Diem and Nhu. He claimed Agency officers were too visible and had too much autonomy, had been ineffective in penetrating the government and the opposition, and were reluctant to cooperate with the US military. Accordingly, he moved to exert full sway over all station operations. From Langley's perspective, the ambassador was going to run what Colby later called "very much a vest-pocket operation and not a country team or total American

[46] Transcript of McCone-Nolting meeting, 4 September 1963, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 5; McCone memorandum, "Situation in South Vietnam," 10 September 1963, ibid., box 3, folder 2; Lawrence R. Houston (General Counsel), "Memorandum for the Record...DCI and John Richardson Appearance before Far East and the Pacific Subcommittee, House Foreign Affairs [Committee], 23 October 1963," ibid., folder 3; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion, Secretary Rusk's Conference Room...16 September 1963," ibid., box 6, folder 5; Colby memorandum, "Presidential Meeting on Vietnam, 11 September 1963," and McCone untitled memorandum, 13 September 1963, ibid., box 3, folder 2; memoranda of White House meetings on 11 and 12 September 1963, "Editorial Note," memorandum of McCone-Harriman telephone conversation on 13 September 1963, and CIA memorandum for McCone, "Possible Rapprochement Between North and South Vietnam," 26 September 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, IV, Vietnam, August–December 1963*, 190–93, 200–202, 204, 295–98; George McT. Kahin, *Intervention: How America Became Involved in Vietnam*, 168–69. Nolting's perspective—that "our failure in Vietnam was the result of political, not military, mistakes" that began during the Kennedy administration—can be found in his memoir, *From Trust to Tragedy*. ~~(S)~~

[47] Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*, 478. Lodge's own brief and unenlightening version of these events appears in his memoir, *The Storm Has Many Eyes*, 205–12. (U)

effort," and would tolerate only officials who could "operate on a tactical level rather than as coworkers in the strategic vineyard."[48]

One of Lodge's first moves in that direction was to replace COS John Richardson. He did not get along with Richardson and believed Richardson's removal would send a signal to the disgruntled ARVN generals that the US government would not stand in the way of a coup. Lodge also wanted Richardson out because he thought the [redacted] impaired his ability to negotiate with Diem. Lodge later told McCone that he had lost confidence in Richardson because the COS "had led him up the hill and then back down" during the August plot by providing contradictory forecasts of its prospects. The ambassador believed that Edward Lansdale, who had helped Diem consolidate his leadership in the mid-1950s, could better handle the changes taking place in South Vietnam. Lansdale, then a major general serving as an assistant to the secretary of defense, would, in Lodge's words, "be a sort of 'Lawrence of Arabia' to take charge under my supervision of all US relationships with the change of government here."[49]

John Richardson (U)

Lodge connived to have Richardson withdrawn by belittling his performance and reputation in unattributed comments to the press. In September 1963, McCone heard from Helms that Lodge's military assistant, Lt. Col. Michael Dunn, had let station officers know that Lodge "was going 'to get rid of Richardson.'" McNamara told McCone in October that Lodge's aides "were doing their utmost to destroy Richardson and...would leave no stone unturned" in their effort. The press reports at issue accused Saigon station of incompetence, arrogance, and disobedience. In the words of one story, it had committed "incredible and garish blunders" that produced a "wretched muddle" in Vietnam, demonstrating "the folly and the danger of allowing the CIA to be a primary force in the development of American policy."[50]

When McCone heard about the ambassador's actions—especially the embassy's derogatory leaks about the Agency to American journalists in Saigon—he became, as he put it, "possessed of a cold anger." His reaction shows how he could be a gloves-off bureaucratic infighter when he thought it necessary to protect CIA, his subordinates, and himself. In this instance, he feared that Lodge would ensnare the Agency in a failed covert action as harmful to its reputation as was the Bay of Pigs operation. The ambassador, McCone believed, was one of the "advocates of action to move precipitously without coordination and without intelligence support"—that is, he wanted a coup—and, frustrated at CIA reports that conditions did not exist for securing stability after a regime change, he was "now carrying on a campaign" against Saigon station. The DCI suspected that a substantial portion of the "obviously planted" press attacks came from Harriman, "who is both emotional and talkative," and that others originated with Lodge and his staff. They would, McCone suggested, hold background briefings and drop enough leads for "smart correspondents like [David] Halberstam [of the *New York Times*] to find no difficulty in full development of a specific story." To the DCI, it was no coincidence that before Lodge's arrival, CIA's presence in Vietnam received little attention in the press, but that afterward critical coverage of the Agency appeared frequently (by CIA's count, 125 articles from 23 August to 17 September). In early October, McCone asked Frank Wisner, the retired former DDP, then serving as an Agency consultant, to track down the source of the leaks. Wisner's investigation indicated that Lodge, Hilsman, and Harriman were "among the upper echelon of detractors and suppliers of hostile and misleading informa-

[48] Kirkpatrick memorandum to McCone, "Discussion with Kenneth Hansen of the Bureau of the Budget on the Situation in Saigon at the Time of His Visit," 24 October 1963, McCone Papers, box 3, folder 3; Colby cable from Saigon station to Headquarters, 16 November 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, IV, Vietnam, August–December 1963*, 602.

[49] Lodge letter to Rusk, 13 September 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, IV, Vietnam, August–December 1963*, 205; Rust, 149; Helms, "Memorandum for the Record...Conversation with [redacted] Saigon," 17 September 1963, McCone Papers, box 3, folder 2; Knoche, "Notes on DCI Description of Honolulu Sessions (as covered in the Morning Meeting, 21 November 1963)," ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 16, folder 342; Anne Blair, *Lodge in Vietnam: A Patriot Abroad*, 87–88; Ahern, *CIA and the House of Ngo*, 282–85, 294–97; Mecklin, 225–26. When Lansdale heard of Lodge's appointment, he arranged to brief the ambassador-designate on Vietnam affairs. Currey, 253.

[50] Karamessines untitled memorandum to Helms, 4 October 1963, DDO Records, Job 78-07173A, box 1, folder 2; transcript of McCone telephone conversation with Walker Stone (journalist), 16 December 1963, McCone Papers, box 10, folder 4; Helms, "Memorandum for the Record...Conversation with [redacted] Saigon," 17 September 1963, McCone Papers, box 13, folder 2; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1987)," 281; Elder memorandum, "Press Reporting on Vietnam and CIA," 23 September 1963, McCone Papers, box 3, folder 2.

tion to the press"—including material about CIA operations and personnel.[51]

Privately, to the president, McCone criticized Lodge's performance in the same harsh terms the embassy was using against Richardson. The DCI noted that while at the United Nations, Lodge "was inclined to make policy rather than follow instructions…to be reckless in his criticism of Washington in his discussions with representatives of other foreign countries…[and had] an amazing desire for nearness and closeness to the press." The ambassador's "complete lack of consciousness of security" made it unwise to inform him of covert operations. Until this dispute was resolved, to protect CIA equities, McCone ordered Agency officers not to discuss sensitive matters with the ambassador. "Lodge has no concept of security and has long used the press as an instrument of power," he cautioned his deputies. Moreover, from an operational standpoint, McCone argued that giving the embassy authority over CIA's clandestine contacts would impair its ability to collect the intelligence Lodge and administration policymakers needed. With press reports circulating that the Agency had backed the August coup plot, McCone did not want the station swept up in Lodge's maneuvering, which might scare away sources. Finally, McCone told Lodge and the NSC that Lansdale "could not fit into Saigon Station" because, owing to Operation MONGOOSE, Agency officers had no confidence in him.[53]

[51] McCone memorandum, "CIA activities in South Viet Nam," 26 September 1963, McCone Papers, box 3, folder 2; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record…Discussion…16 September 1963," and untitled memorandum dated 17 September 1963, ibid., box 6, folder 5; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record…Luncheon Meeting with 26 September 1963, ibid., box 2, folder 8; Knoche, "Notes on DCI Description of Honolulu Sessions (as covered in the Morning Meeting, 21 November 1963)," and memorandum to Carter, "Report of Origins and Underlying Motivation of Anti-CIA Campaign in re Vietnamese Situation," 1 October 1963, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 16, folder 342; Richardson memorandum to McCone, "Saigon Station Relationships with the Press," c. early October 1963, and Cooper memorandum to McCone, "Press Criticism of the CIA Role in Vietnam," McCone Papers, box 3, folder 3; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 676.

Soon after the coup against Diem in November, President Kennedy confidentially recorded his thoughts about the McCone-Lodge relationship. The DCI opposed a coup "partly because of an old hostility to Lodge which causes him to lack confidence and mars his judgment, [and] partly as a result of a new hostility because Lodge shifted his station chief…" John F. Kennedy dictabelt recordings, Belt 17, 4 November 1963, 55 of transcript, HS Files, Job 03-01724R, box 2, folder 9. (U)

In a private letter to McCone, Lodge minimized the importance of the negative press coverage about CIA: "These things come and go and are soon forgotten. They are an unavoidable part of democratic government." He also denied knowing who had leaked information to journalists: "[T]his kind of talk is very common here.... [T]here are thousands of Americans in Saigon, many of whom are highly loquacious, and it is no more possible to track down a newspaperman's source here, assuming that he has a source, than it is in the US." Lodge letter to McCone, 3 October 1963, McCone Papers, box 3, folder 3.

[53] Colby, "Memorandum for the Record…NSC Executive Committee Meeting on Vietnam, 16 September 1963," and Helms, "Memorandum for the Record…Conversation with Saigon," 17 September 1963, McCone Papers, box 3, folder 2; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record…Private Meeting with the President…," 5 October 1963, "Memorandum for the Record…Discussion with the President…8 October [1963]" with attachments, and untitled memorandum dated 17 September 1963, ibid., box 6, folder 5; Knoche, "Memorandum for the Record: Meeting in DCI's Office…7 October 1963," ibid., box 3, folder 3; Helms, "Memorandum for the Record…Conversation with Saigon," 17 September 1963, and McCone letter to Lodge, 19 September 1963, ibid., box 8, folder 1; Lodge letter to McCone, 30 September 1963, ibid., box 3, folder 3; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1987)," 277; Ahern, *CIA and the House of Ngo*, 294–97; memorandum of McCone-Rusk telephone conversation, 17 September 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, IV, Vietnam, August–December 1963*, 240–41.

McCone could not prevent Richardson's removal, but he succeeded in scotching Lansdale's nomination. The NSC principals agreed that dispatching a new COS with known sympathies for Diem at the same time Washington was pushing the South Vietnamese government to reform would be counterproductive. The DCI, however, lost the larger bureaucratic skirmish with Lodge. McGeorge Bundy agreed with McCone that, in general, ambassadors should not have the power to restrict CIA's operational contacts. He was well aware, though, that McCone really was insisting on the Agency's right to maintain its ties to which Lodge would not countenance. Noting that the Saigon situation was especially delicate, Bundy remarked that the station should limit itself to contacts the ambassador approved. As Colby later observed, "the Kennedy team could not gainsay him [Lodge]—and did not particularly want to. The CIA was a tool easily used to pass a message; it would follow orders." At the same time, Secretary Rusk cautioned Lodge "not to open this next stage [of policy implementation] in the press."[54] ~~(S)~~

McCone then tried a time-tested bureaucratic tactic: administrative reorganization. First, he floated the idea of pulling out the entire station and putting in a few select officers to conduct espionage and counterintelligence operations, and, under new covers, to reestablish contact with the Ngo brothers. Colby and Helms's deputy, Thomas Karamessines, told him that such an action would be "senseless" and "smack of petulance," but McCone went ahead. He told Bundy that because the Agency's activities in Saigon were too well known to too many people, he planned to make some fundamental changes in the station and turn over to other agencies all overt activities not specifically related to CIA's clandestine mission.

McCone passed his restructuring plans along to McNamara before the latter left for a trip to Saigon.

Colby accompanied McNamara on this fact finding tour, but Lodge prohibited the FE Division chief from having any dealings with the Presidential Palace.

McCone agreed, but when he proposed sending Colby to Saigon as acting COS to reorganize the station, he met with strong opposition from Bundy,

McCone recorded that he told Bundy and the rest of the Special Group:

> The policy we had been following for the last 60 days was characterized by a complete lack of substantive intelligence on the regime. This[,] I said[,] worried me very much and I felt it spelled absolute disaster for the United States. I said that to me this was both incredible and exceedingly dangerous for us to go forward with military and other commitments of the proportions of our South Viet Nam effort without knowing everything we could possibly find out as to the thinking of the regime we were dealing with. The hiatus created by Lodge's policy foreclosed all of this[,] and I thought it was absolutely wrong and would spell disaster.

Bundy retorted that McCone actually was describing not an intelligence problem but a matter of policy, and that he was exceeding his authority as DCI. Although that might appear so, McCone said, it was not true because Lodge had "foreclosed intelligence sources" needed to support the American effort in Vietnam.[56] ~~(S)~~

[54] Elder, "McCone as DCI (1987)," 276–77; Colby, *Lost Victory*, 149; DEPTEL 533 to Embassy Saigon, 5 October 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, IV, Vietnam, August–December 1963*, 371. When Lodge was reposted to Saigon as ambassador in 1965, he took Lansdale with him to run the pacification programs. Currey, 292ff. ~~(S)~~

[55] Karamessines untitled memorandum to Helms, 4 October 1963, DDO Records, Job 78-07173A, box 1, folder 2; McCone memorandum, "CIA activities in South Viet Nam," 26 September 1963, McCone Papers, box 3, folder 2; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1987)," 277. ~~(S)~~

After that confrontation, McCone met privately with Bundy and once again emphasized his concern over the administration's course in South Vietnam. If Bundy replied, it went unrecorded. In the meantime, McCone recalled Richardson for consultations instead of formally withdrawing him, although few officials thought the COS would ever return. Until the administration decided to work for Diem's ouster, the DCI believed, it should stand by Richardson—"the one man who has been level-headed and whose feet are on the ground.... Rather than replacing him...we need him now more than ever."[57]

McCone took his apprehensions about Saigon station affairs to the president on 21 October. After reviewing a discussion with Rep. Clement J. Zablocki (D-WI), who had invited both the DCI and Richardson to appear before the House Foreign Affairs Committee's Far East subcommittee, McCone told the president that he was very worried over the loss of useful intelligence from South Vietnam during the past two months. Because Lodge had banned either covert or overt contact with Diem and Nhu and other top South Vietnamese officials, the quality and importance of Agency reporting had declined so far that, McCone said, he was very worried about the possibility of a significant intelligence failure. Agreeing that the situation was serious if true, President Kennedy nevertheless seemed more concerned that McCone was meeting with Zablocki—like the DCI, a Diem supporter. The president encouraged McCone to do what he could to keep the report that Zablocki's subcommittee would soon release from sounding like a congressional endorsement of the Saigon government. McCone said he would try. On the 23rd, however, he and Richardson told the subcommittee that on balance a coup would harm US interests.[58]

Two days later, at a meeting with McCone, McNamara, Bundy, and Robert Kennedy, the president said he wanted unanimity within his administration on South Vietnam and remarked that he felt the DCI was out of step with policy. What, he asked, were McCone's views? In response, McCone recounted at length the position he had already taken with the president in private, highlighting his concern over a policy that prevented all contact with Diem and Nhu and thus shut off any intelligence from that area. Observing that the US government was at a crossroads in Vietnam, McCone said that affairs there were being handled unprofessionally and recommended working with the Ngos rather than trying to remove them—an event whose only certain outcome would be political confusion that would benefit the communists. He still believed that, in spite of all its problems, the Diem government could prevail with US help. The DCI could not foresee that he and the administration would have to concern himself with the Ngo brothers for only another week.[59]

The Death of Diem (U)

The denouement of the Diem government began during the first week of October 1963.[60] On the second, Robert McNamara and Maxwell Taylor reported on their inspection tour of South Vietnam the month before. While defending US policy overall, they recommended using "selective pressures" on Diem to get him to remove Nhu, end repression of the Buddhists, and energize the counterinsurgency against the communists. To show the South Vietnamese president that the administration meant business, the report recommended withdrawing 1,000 American troops by year's end and withholding some economic aid.

---

[56] Elder, "McCone as DCI (1987)," 277–78; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Special Group 5412 Meeting—17 October 1963," McCone Papers, box 1, folder 5; "Reorganization and Reduction of CIA's Station in Saigon," 6 October 1963, ibid., box 3, folder 3.

After the 17 October meeting of the SGC, Roger Hilsman's special assistant accurately described the DCI's thinking at that time:

> McCone expressed at some length and reportedly with considerable vigor...the view that we are going to have "an explosion" in Vietnam in the very near future. I am not sure precisely what McCone had in mind, but I imagine that he was asserting for the record one of his familiar "visceral" feelings. These, as we know, are sometimes right (Soviet missiles in Cuba) and sometimes wrong (ChiCom major attack on India).... McCone may be arguing that the cumulative effect of political-economic unease will bring things to a head in much shorter order.... [H]e may think that the development of an explosive situation is unlikely to redound to our benefit, that an alternative government acceptable and useful to us is unlikely to arise, and that the communist Viet Cong is in the best position to exploit the chaos that could ensue.

"Memorandum from the Special Assistant in the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs (Neubert) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Hilsman)," 18 October 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, IV, Vietnam, August–December 1963*, 406–7. (U)

[57] McCone, "DCI Talking Paper," 2 October 1963, and "Memorandum for the Record...Special Group 5412 Meeting—17 October 1963," and Knoche, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting in DCI's Office," 7 October 1963, McCone Papers, box 3, folder 3.

[58] McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with the President—October 21," McCone Papers, box 6, folder 5; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 718–20. Zablocki had just returned from a two-week tour of Southeast Asia—about one-fourth of it spent in South Vietnam—with a delegation from the House Foreign Affairs Committee. The group's conclusions, published in early November, largely paralleled McCone's views. *FRUS, 1961–1963, IV, Vietnam, August–December 1963*, 378 n. 8, 446–47.

[59] McCone, "Meeting with the President," 25 October 1963, McCone Papers, folder 5, box 6; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 720–25.

McNamara and Taylor further noted that despite serious political tensions inside the leadership in Saigon, there was no indication that a coup would succeed.[61] (U)

CIA did not agree with the report's prognosis. McCone told the NSC ExComm that although the report corroborated Agency information and analyses that progress was being made in the war, achievements were not as great and the outlook was not as favorable as McNamara and Taylor believed. Moreover, the report understated how much the political situation in the South would affect the war effort. Finally, the DCI advised that cutting back on commodity shipments to exert pressure on the Saigon government would more likely cause an economic crisis than force Diem and Nhu to institute reforms.[62] ~~(S)~~

President Kennedy nonetheless approved the recommendation to suspend some US economic and military aid—notably, in the latter category, assistance to Nhu's Special Forces. As a cable of instructions to Lodge stated, "Actions are designed to indicate to Diem government our displeasure at its political policies and activities and to create significant uncertainty in that government and in key Vietnamese groups as to future intentions of United States." The tone of Washington-Saigon relations was to continue to be one of "cool correctness." McCone's CIA working group judged that those instructions had some good features but "reflect[ed] a continuing Washington inability to face up to certain key decisions."[63] (U)

On the covert side, directives from Washington were ambiguous and produced confusion and regrettable consequences. President Kennedy cautioned Lodge against actively encouraging coup initiatives, but he told the ambassador to identify and develop contacts with alternative leaders in Saigon in a "totally secure and fully deniable" fashion. As conveyed to the station, this guidance meant that, if approached, CIA officers could elicit information from dissident ARVN generals about their plots and assure them that the US government would not stand in the way of a change in leadership, but that the Agency would not advise on or participate in any coup attempts or pre-endorse any specific leader. As of late October, when a putsch seemed imminent, Lodge reported to Washington that "[w]e are not engineering the coup. The sum total of our relationship thus far is: that we will not thwart a coup; that we will monitor and report." Given the events of the preceding August, however, the generals found it hard not to interpret CIA's dealings with them, which intensified throughout the month, as implicit approval of their schemes.[64] (U)

Station contacts with the ARVN conspirators reached a new level of sensitivity when reports circulated that they planned to assassinate some of the Ngos. McCone—personally averse to the idea of lethal "executive action," and having learned just recently of the Agency's collaboration with the Mafia in trying to kill Fidel Castro—immediately squelched the idea, at least insofar as CIA could be linked to such activity. He ordered Colby to tell Saigon station to

---

[60] Details about Diem's last weeks in power are best recounted in Ahern, *CIA and the House of Ngo*, chaps. 13–14; [redacted] Howard Jones, *Death of a Generation*, chaps. 16–17; Francis X. Winters, *The Year of the Hare*, chaps. 6–8; Ellen J. Hammer, *A Death in November*, chaps. 9–10; Robert Shaplen, *The Lost Revolution*, 201–12; Karnow, 295–311; Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*, chap. 33; Kahin, 170–81; David Halberstam, *The Making of a Quagmire*, chap. 12; Geoffrey Warner, "The United States and the Fall of Diem, Part II: The Death of Diem," *Australian Outlook* 28, no. 4 (April 1975): 3–17; B. Hugh Tovar, "Vietnam Revisited," *IJIC* 5, no. 3 (Fall 1991): 291–312; and Marguerite Higgins, *Our Vietnam Nightmare*. ~~(S)~~

[61] "Report of McNamara-Taylor Mission to South Vietnam," 2 October 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, IV, Vietnam, August–December 1963*, 336–46; Shapley, 259–62; Robert S. McNamara with Brian Van de Mark, *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam*, 73–81; Freedman, *Kennedy's Wars*, 386–90. (U)

[62] McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting this morning—NSC," 5 October 1963, CIA South Vietnam Working Group memorandum, "Comment on...the McNamara-Taylor Report," 4 October 1963, and "Report to the Executive Committee," 3 October 1963, McCone Papers, box 3, folder 3; Forrestal memorandum, "Presidential Conference on South Vietnam," 5 October 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, IV, Vietnam, August–December 1963*, 368. ~~(S)~~

[63] "Summary Record of the 519th Meeting of the National Security Council...October 2, 1963...," "Memorandum of a Meeting, White House Situation Room...October 3, 1963...," Krulak memorandum on "Meeting of the Executive Committee...October 4, 1963..." with annex, Forrestal memorandum on "Presidential Conference on South Vietnam," 5 October 1963, DEPTEL 534 to Embassy Saigon, 5 October 1963, and NSAM No. 263, "South Vietnam," 11 October 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, IV, Vietnam, August–December 1963*, 350–52, 356–64, 368–79, 395–96. (U)

[64] Bundy telegram to Lodge, CAP 63550, 5 October 1963, Bundy telegram to Embassy Saigon, DIR 74228, 9 October 1963, and Lodge telegram to Department of State, 29 October 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, IV, Vietnam, August–December 1963*, 379, 393, 454; Smith, *An International History of the Vietnam War*, 186. Bundy's words to Lodge were:

> While we do not wish to stimulate coup, we also do not wish to leave impression that U.S. would thwart a change of government or deny economic and military assistance to a new regime if it appeared capable of increasing effectiveness of military effort, ensuring popular support to win war and improving working relations with U.S. We would like to be informed on what is being contemplated but we should avoid being drawn into reviewing or advising on operational plans or any other act which might tend to identify U.S. too closely with change in government. We would, however, welcome information which would help us assess character of any alternate leadership.

"Editorial Note," *FRUS, 1961–1963, IV, Vietnam, August–December 1963*, 427. (U)

withdraw from Lodge its recommendation of three alternative coup plans the dissident generals had devised, one of which called for assassinating Diem's brothers. At McCone's direction, Colby told the station that "[w]e cannot be in the position of stimulating, approving, or supporting assassination"; "we cannot be in [a] position [of] actively condoning such [a] course of action and thereby engaging our responsibility therefor." He added, however, that "we are in no way responsible for stopping every threat of which we might receive even partial knowledge." McCone rejected a station suggestion that acting COS [redacted] be part of a troika (along with Gen. Harkins and embassy official William Trueheart) that would direct a coup operation. That was a policymaking function inappropriate for an Agency officer, he averred. [redacted]

contact that McCone did not approve of but could do little about because Lodge was in charge—the DCI could truthfully say that American decisions about the coup were made in the White House, not at Langley, and that the embassy, not the station, directed all of the Agency's peripheral involvement in Diem's ouster.[65]

In trying to distance CIA from the generals' plotting, McCone did not seem to appreciate the ironic situation in which the Agency and the US government would soon find themselves. Just because the administration expressed its disapproval of assassination did not mean that the generals would not attempt one; and by trying to maintain plausible deniability of involvement in events in Saigon, Washington relinquished much of its ability to influence what happened there—including, as it turned out, the murders of Diem and Nhu. As the DCI told Harriman on the eve of Diem's overthrow, the administration had to decide finally whether to back Diem or "put our shoulder behind the coup." Unless it took sides, the United States risked losing any credit if the situation in Vietnam improved and taking much of the blame if it did not. The administration, however, had boxed itself in, according to McCone; "the failure of a coup would be a disaster, and a successful coup would have a harmful effect on the war effort." Moreover, the United States had involved itself deeply enough with the plotters that it would be held at least partly responsible for whatever happened, yet it could not assure that the outcome would be an improvement. McCone's own view remained clear: back Diem. Testifying to the Church Committee in 1975, he said: "My precise words to the President, and I remember them very clearly, was [sic] that, 'Mr. President, if I was manager of a baseball team, [and] I had one pitcher, I'd keep him in the box whether he was a good pitcher or not.'" Even if the United States could trust the dissident generals—and McCone raised the possibility, with which McNamara agreed, that one of them might be under Nhu's control—their seizure of power would usher in an extended period of political unrest.[66]

The coup—like "a stone rolling downhill," as Lodge put it—took place on 1 November, just after midnight Washington time. At a meeting with the president and his principal Vietnam advisers that morning, McCone suggested the administration tell the coup leaders that recognition of their new government would follow more quickly if they installed the South Vietnamese vice president as Diem's successor, thereby establishing a semblance of constitutional legitimacy. Diem and Nhu were murdered the next day by soldiers who tracked them down to their hiding place in the Chinese section of Saigon. McCone was at a meeting in the Cabinet Room when President Kennedy heard about the killings. "Kennedy leaped to his feet and rushed from the room with a look of shock and dismay on his face which I had never seen before," recalled Maxwell Taylor, who also was present. No one there believed the early reports that Diem and Nhu had committed suicide, and McCone advised the administration to keep away from the affair for now. He reported that Conein had refused the coup leaders' offer to show him the Ngos' bodies. "Conein is pretty conscious that it was assassination, and he didn't want to get involved with it. I would suggest that we not get into...this story. Knowing it doesn't do us any good...I don't think we gain anything by it." After a few days of public disengagement, the United

[65] Church Committee, *Alleged Assassination Plots*, 221; Colby, *Honorable Men*, 214; Helms and Colby, "Memorandum for the Record...White House Meeting on Vietnam...29 October 1963," DDO Files, lob 78-02958R, box 3, folder 15; Paul Eckel (NSC), "Minutes of Meeting of the Special Group, 24 October 1963," McCone Papers, box 1, folder 6. [redacted] had recommended to Lodge that "we not set ourselves irrevocably against the assassination plot, since the other two alternatives mean either a bloodbath in Saigon or a protracted struggle which could rip the Army and the country asunder." McCone immediately told [redacted] to retract his recommendation, asserting that the United States could not condone assassination without "engaging our responsibility" for it. [redacted] "The Demise of the House of Ngo," 194.

[66] McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Governor Averell Harriman...," 31 October 1963, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 8; Church Committee, *Alleged Assassination Plots*, 221; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting with the President, McNamara, Attorney General, Bundy, myself concerning South Viet Nam," 25 October 1963, and "Notes on Meeting...re South Viet Nam," 29 October 1963, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 5; [redacted] "Memorandum of a Conference with the President...October 29, 1963...," *FRUS, 1961–1963, IV, Vietnam, August–December 1963*, 470–71.

A contemporary political cartoon suggested CIA complicity in Diem's ouster and murder. (U)

States officially recognized the new military government in Saigon on 8 November. Lodge was authorized to announce the resumption of full economic and military aid at an optimum time (he did so the next day).[67] ~~(S)~~

Meanwhile, McCone briefed some of the Agency's congressional overseers about Diem's demise and sent Colby to Saigon to assess the situation and to consolidate CIA's relationship with the ruling generals. The Agency's role in the immediate postcoup period was limited mainly for two reasons: Ambassador Lodge continued to restrict official contacts with the Saigon government; and Operation SWITCHBACK was nearly complete, and the US Army took the lead in paramilitary counterinsurgency efforts. Colby, who spent over two weeks in South Vietnam, found the ARVN junta friendly and receptive but doubted that "it would stir itself sufficiently to lead a dynamic program in the countryside"—a particularly worrisome prospect as the Strategic Hamlet Program had failed during the summer and autumn of political turmoil. The generals were too busy struggling with their new responsibilities to engage the station fully in planning joint intelligence activities.[68] ~~(S)~~

McCone and nearly all the top US officials involved with Vietnam—including Bundy, McNamara, Rusk, Lodge, Taylor, Felt, Harkins, and Krulak—met in Honolulu in mid-November to discuss postcoup developments and policy options. On matters affecting CIA, they decided to concentrate on the construction of strategic hamlets and on counterinsurgency operations in the Mekong Delta region, where the military situation was the worst. The policymakers also decided to consider expanding clandestine operations against North Vietnam after agreeing that the current program was ineffective. [redacted] in drafting a study of scenarios of stepped-up activities against the North. (The program, which would later be known as Operations Plan 34A-64, was implemented during the Johnson administration and will be discussed in Chapter 15.)[69] ~~(S)~~

Before the conference began, McCone had a strained private dinner with Lodge in Honolulu on the 19th, at which they discussed—and, at times, fenced over—assorted Agency

[67] Mann, 296; Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 997; DEPTEL 700 to Embassy Saigon, 2 November 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, IV, Vietnam, August–December 1963*, 540–41; Cooper, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting on the Situation in SVN in Cabinet Room," 1 November 1963, and [redacted]; Taylor, *Swords and Plowshares*, 301; transcript of tape-recorded NSC Executive Committee meeting on 2 November 1963, tape A55, JFK Library, quoted in Jones, *Death of a Generation*, 427. ~~(S)~~

Presumably anticipating some finger pointing from Congress, PFIAB, or even the White House late in his tenure or afterward, McCone wanted to ensure before he left the Agency that the record showed that CIA was not responsible for Diem's ouster. In September 1964, he directed the Inspector General, with the assistance of his executive assistant, Walter Elder, to compile a record of his and CIA's positions and actions on Vietnam before and after the coup. It was an exercise in bureaucratic cover; "he did not want to have another Bay of Pigs hung around his neck," a senior Agency officer wrote a few years later. [redacted] "Memorandum for the Record...Record on Vietnam," 1 June 1967, OIG Files, Job 74B00779R, box 1, folder 2. After investigating CIA's role in various assassination plots against foreign leaders, the Church Committee concluded in 1975 that "[t]here is no available evidence to give any indication of direct or indirect involvement of the United States" in the deaths of Diem and Nhu. *Alleged Assassination Plots*, 223. ~~(S)~~

[68] "CIA IG Report on Vietnam," 37; Colby, *Honorable Men*, 217–18; Colby telegrams from Saigon station to Headquarters (SAIG 2499 and 2540), 16 and 19 November 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, IV, Vietnam, August–December 1963*, 602–3, 607–8; Thomas J. Ahern Jr., *CIA and the Generals: Covert Support to Military Government in South Vietnam*, 9–12. McCone wanted Colby to go to South Vietnam under presidential authority so Lodge could not obstruct him, but even Kennedy's imprimatur to the visit did not convince the ambassador to relax his control over Agency activities. Colby, *Lost Victory*, 157–58. ~~(S)~~

[69] "Memorandum of Discussion at the Special Meeting on Vietnam, Honolulu, November 20, 1963," *FRUS, 1961–1963, IV, Vietnam, August–December 1963*, 608–24; Knoche, "Notes on DCI Description of Honolulu Sessions (as covered in the Morning Meeting, 21 November 1963)," McCone Papers, box 3, folder 4. The Pentagon was determined to intensify paramilitary and clandestine activity across the DMZ. Colby has written that McNamara "listened to me with a cold look" when he advised ending infiltrations into the North. *Honorable Men*, 220. The administration's reviews of the Strategic Hamlet Program around this time focused on the South Vietnamese's political and managerial mistakes and did not address whether there were basic flaws in the concept. Latham, 197–203. ~~(S)~~

issues. Lodge explained why his relationship with John Richardson had gone bad and said he was "extremely high" on acting COS and wanted him to remain in Saigon. The DCI made no commitments. He challenged the ambassador's frequent assertions that the Diem regime's iniquitous reputation was attributable in part to its use of forced labor to build the strategic hamlets. After Lodge said the hamlets would be built by the same workers who would now receive adequate pay, McCone responded that doing so only meant higher costs to the American taxpayer. The DCI told the ambassador that he would emerge from Vietnam "either as a political giant 14 feet tall" or "thoroughly washed-up"; Lodge "didn't care for this frank view." McCone returned to Washington on 21 November and told his deputies that he was "more discouraged about South Vietnam than ever" and "sensed that McNamara and Bundy have the same impression." Like the DCI, most of the other officials at the Honolulu meeting either were settling into their after-trip routines or were en route home when they heard that their own president had been assassinated.[70] ~~(S)~~

The End of the Tunnel? (U)

The question of what John F. Kennedy would have done about Vietnam had he lived has fueled heated debate among scholars and administration defenders and detractors.[71] Some officials and associates of the Kennedys, such as Michael Forrestal, Arthur Schlesinger Jr., and Kenneth O'Donnell, have contended that Kennedy planned to extricate the United States from Vietnam after his reelection. Others, among them Dean Rusk, insist they never heard the president discuss withdrawing US troops. Nothing in McCone's records indicates that he ever heard Kennedy say anything directly or indirectly about pulling out of Vietnam, and the DCI never proffered such advice himself. In late 1963, the president remained ambivalent about what to do, and the unclear intelligence picture from CIA and the military did not help him make up his mind. He assumed that a communist takeover of South Vietnam would be a disastrous development for the United States. The speech he was to give in Dallas the day he was killed stated that, in reference to Southeast Asia, "[o]ur security and strength...directly depend on the security and strength of others." At the same time, Kennedy had profound reservations about committing American forces there. A phased withdrawal of 1,000 advisers by the end of 1963 was planned, and in September he told an interviewer that the South Vietnamese "are the ones who have to win it or lose it." (U)

Throughout his presidency, Kennedy believed that with the proper mix of men and means, the United States and South Vietnam eventually could defeat the communists. He and McCone differed greatly, however, on what that mix should be. Neither the president nor his advisers showed any interest in a negotiated settlement. Given his fascination with counterinsurgency and covert action, Kennedy undoubtedly would have approved and the planned pullout of advisers was regarded inside the administration as a short-term political maneuver, not a strategic first step. Certainly the pessimistic forecasts he heard from McCone did not convince him that he should go back on his public statements that "[w]e are not there to see a war lost," and that "I think we should stay"—at least for the time being. Asked a few years later if the United States would have sent in more troops to prevent defeat, Robert Kennedy, who knew his brother's thinking better than anyone, said "[w]e'd face that when we came to it." What is certain is that suddenly after 22 November 1963, McCone had to work under a new president with a very different personality and leadership style, a much more politicized conception of intelligence, and—for as long as he was DCI—far more determination to prevail in Vietnam. (U)

[70] Knoche, "Notes on DCI Description of Honolulu Sessions (as covered in the Morning Meeting, 21 November 1963)," McCone Papers, box 3, folder 4. McCone's encounter with Lodge did not produce the rapprochement that McGeorge Bundy had hoped for. At a preconference staff meeting on 13 November, he had remarked that "if we could just get the ex-Eisenhower administration people together, everything would be fine." "Memorandum for the Record of Discussion at the Daily White House Staff Meeting...November 13, 1963...," *FRUS, 1961–1963, IV, Vietnam, August–December 1963*, 593. ~~(S)~~

[71] Sources for this section are: Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy*, 722–23; Giglio, 253–54; Rust, x–xi; Smith, *An International History of the Vietnam War*, 198–209; Fredrik Logevall, "Vietnam and the Question of What Might Have Been," in Mark J. White, ed., *Kennedy: The New Frontier Revisited*, 19–62; *Robert Kennedy In His Own Words*, 394–95; *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy, 1963*, 660, 673; Thomas Brown, *JFK: History of an Image*, 37. The most persuasive argument that Kennedy would not have withdrawn US personnel from Vietnam is Noam Chomsky, *Rethinking Camelot*, 63–86; the most elaborate argument that he would have is Jones, *Death of a Generation;* and James K. Galbraith, "Exit Strategy," *Boston Review* 28, no. 5 (October–November 2003): 353–407. (U)

CHAPTER 9

Managing the Technological Revolution in Intelligence (U)

John McCone's leadership of CIA stands out for two significant achievements in science and technology: the creation of a directorate dedicated to those fields and the defense of CIA's role in satellite reconnaissance against a takeover by the Pentagon. McCone's experience as an engineer and manager of large technology, military, and energy organizations in the private and public sectors suited him to reorganize and supervise the Agency's mélange of scientific and technical offices. He believed strongly that to compete in bureaucratic battles over space reconnaissance, especially against an aggressive Air Force leadership, CIA had to strengthen management of its scientific and technological capabilities. In creating a Directorate of Science and Technology and in making Albert Wheelon the DS&T's first leader, McCone set up a unit with the personnel, budget, and mission to manage coherently CIA's scientific and technological programs inside the Agency and to assert its interests in the Intelligence Community. By carrying out the largest rearrangement of human, financial, and material resources of his tenure, McCone—with Wheelon's indispensable help—went far toward regaining for CIA the stature it had lost after the Bay of Pigs disaster and enabling it to fight an interdepartmental struggle over the future of technical intelligence collection. Lastly, the two initiated a change in the Agency's culture that reduced the influence of clandestine operators and Eastern-educated intellectuals and raised the standing of experts in esoteric disciplines, who had entered the secret world from outside customary social and professional circles. (U)

The Seeds of the DS&T (U)

That CIA needed a separate science and technology component was evident to an influential study group called the Technological Capabilities Panel (TCP). The panel was convened in 1954 by President Dwight Eisenhower, who was concerned that the United States was vulnerable to a surprise strategic attack from the Soviet Union. Eisenhower authorized the president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, James Killian, to organize a team of experts to study the potential for a nuclear Pearl Harbor.[1] Killian hoped the TCP exercise would persuade Eisenhower that strategic policymaking needed more scientific and technical input than it was receiving from the advocates of various weapons systems. One of the group's subcommittees, headed by Polaroid's president Edwin "Din" Land, investigated the nation's intelligence capabilities, especially against the Soviet Union. ~~(S)~~

Edwin "Din" Land (U)

The TCP's report, titled "Meeting the Threat of Surprise Attack," declared that "We obtain little significant information from classical covert operations inside Russia....We cannot hope to circumvent these elaborate [Soviet security] measures in an easy way. But we can use the ultimate in science and technology to improve our intelligence take." The TCP recommended "a vigorous program for the extensive use, in many intelligence procedures, of the most advanced knowledge in science and technology"—"a research program producing a stream of new intelligence tools and techniques." Land's subcommittee encouraged DCI Allen Dulles to seize "a unique opportunity for comprehensive intelligence" by developing a high-altitude reconnaissance aircraft—a proposal that soon led to the design and construction of the U-2.[2] ~~(S)~~

[1] Sources for this paragraph and the next are: Richard V. Damms, "James Killian, the Technological Capabilities Panel, and the Emergence of President Eisenhower's 'Scientific-Technological Elite,'" *DH* 24, no. 1 (Winter 2000): 59, 65–72; Dwayne A. Day, "A Strategy for Reconnaissance: Dwight D. Eisenhower and Freedom of Space," in Dwayne A. Day et al., eds., *Eye in the Sky: The Story of the Corona Spy Satellites*, 120–25; R. Cargill Hall, "The Eisenhower Administration and the Cold War," *Prologue* 27 (1995): 61–62, 70 n. 10; James R. Killian, *Sputnik, Scientists, and Eisenhower*, 67–90; The Directorate for Science and Technology, 1962–1970," DDS&T Historical Series No. 1, 5 vols. (1972), vol. 1, 3–4; Donald E. Welzenbach, "Science and Technology: Origins of a Directorate," *Studies* 30, no. 2 (Summer 1986): 13–16. ~~(S)~~

At about the same time, the Eisenhower administration and the Agency were taking in the admonitions of another presidential commission concerning technology and intelligence. This blue-ribbon panel, chaired by Gen. James Doolittle, the leader of the famous air raid on Tokyo in 1942, had been convened in mid-1954 to review CIA's clandestine operations and recommend improvements. Doolittle's commission concluded that the United States was losing the intelligence war to the more experienced and ruthless KGB and must play to its main strength—technological prowess—to prevail. "[M]uch more effort should be expended in exploring every possible scientific and technical avenue of approach to the intelligence problem," the panel stated in its September 1954 report.

> We believe that every known technique should be intensively applied and new ones should be developed to increase our intelligence acquisition by communications and electronic surveillance, high altitude visual, photographic and radar reconnaissance with manned or unmanned vehicles, upper atmosphere and oceanographic studies, [and] physical and chemical research. From such sources may come early warning of impending attack. No price is too high to pay for this knowledge.[3] (U)

CIA responded to these panels' recommendations by forming a Scientific Advisory Board comprising mainly former TCP members. The board, which came to be called the Land Panel after its chairman, had a major impact on the Agency's scientific and technical activities, especially in overhead reconnaissance. Administratively, the board was attached to the office of the DCI's special assistant for planning and coordination, Richard Bissell. Bissell ran the Development Projects Staff and oversaw the U-2, CORONA, and OXCART (A-12) reconnaissance programs. He was CIA's point man in exploiting science and technology for collection purposes and got along well with the board.[4] Nonetheless, the Agency did not have an entity dedicated to coordinating scientific and technical intelligence activities then pursued independently in CIA's three directorates. Dulles did not act on an internal proposal made in 1957 to create a science and technology directorate—probably because it got no support from Bissell, who wanted to keep tight control over his projects and opposed any consolidation.[5] ~~(S)~~

When Bissell became DDP in 1958, he took the Development Projects Staff with him, renamed it the Development Projects Division (DPD), and used it (along with the Technical Services Staff—which he would later elevate to a division) to support espionage and covert action operations. That rearrangement upset Land and Killian, who believed CIA's research and development efforts should remain separate from its clandestine activities. They also feared Bissell would become too involved with covert action to devote enough time to overhead reconnaissance. In his final months at CIA, Bissell found himself in a tussle with Land and Killian—PFIAB's two most influential members. At their urging, PFIAB advocated centralizing all CIA scientific and technical programs and separating scientific collection from covert operations. Bissell resisted, but his position grew untenable after his patron Dulles was forced to resign in November 1961 and McCone took over.[6] ~~(S)~~

By that time, traditional forms of intelligence collection—HUMINT and clandestine technical operations—were losing their primacy to overhead reconnaissance. CIA's achievements with the U-2 and CORONA in targeting the Soviet Union and Cuba demonstrated the value of aerial and space-based systems and underscored the limitations of HUMINT. McCone regarded what came to be called "national technical means" as more vital to the Agency's mission than agents or surveillance devices. He set out to overhaul CIA's scientific and technical programs, which he believed were inefficiently organized and poorly managed by executives wedded to clandestine operations. His preference for technical intelligence fit neatly with the White House's predisposition after the Cuban missile crisis to trust "hard intelligence," such as photographs and SIGINT, more than human sources and experts' assessments.[7] (U)

---

[2] Even before the TCP's report was released in February 1955, Land privately urged Dulles to "assert your first right to pioneer in scientific techniques for collecting intelligence." Land letter to Dulles with attached memorandum, "A Unique Opportunity for Comprehensive Intelligence," 5 November 1954, MORI doc. no. 38447. Land and Killian were also instrumental in promoting the joint CIA-Air Force reconnaissance satellite program later known as CORONA. (U)

[3] Special Study Group, "Report on the Covert Activities of the Central Intelligence Agency," 30 September 1954, CMS Files, Job 82M00311, box 1, folder 23. (U)

[4] Welzenbach, "Science and Technology," 16, 22; Day, "A Strategy for Reconnaissance," 135. ~~(S)~~

[5] [redacted] vol. 1, 4–5 ~~(S)~~

[6] Pedlow and Welzenbach, 191–92; Welzenbach, "Science and Technology," 22; Edwin H. Land oral history interview by [redacted], Cambridge, MA, 17 and 20 September 1984 (hereafter Land/[redacted] OH), 8. ~~(S)~~

Confronting Bureaucratic Resistance (U)

PFIAB pressure to consolidate CIA's scientific and technological capabilities peaked at about the time McCone became DCI. Killian and Land had worried that the post-Bay of Pigs leadership shakeup at Langley would damage the Agency's technical collection programs, but McCone's own agenda conformed closely to theirs.[8] He also had White House blessing to make substantial changes at Langley. As an outsider taking over at a time of management disarray and low morale, however, he had to act prudently. Killian and Land could remain above the fray, expressing dissatisfaction at the pace with which McCone implemented their *ex cathedra* recommendations, but the DCI had to move cautiously to preserve his authority and avoid a backlash from vested interests in the Agency. (U)

McCone found CIA's scientific and technological activities widely scattered. The reconnaissance program remained where Bissell had taken it, the DDP's Development Projects Division, as did the Technical Services Division (TSD), making devices for use in espionage and covert action [redacted] The DI had the Office of Scientific Intelligence (OSI) to analyze basic research, and it also ran NPIC. McCone's original concept was to pull together all of these components in one directorate, where the Agency's technical talent could exchange ideas and information, interact with private industry and other government agencies, and serve as a large organizational "magnet" to attract highly qualified personnel to careers in technical intelligence.[9] ~~(S)~~

In one of his first meetings with PFIAB, McCone heard Killian and Land strongly express their concern that continued association of the Agency's scientific and technical development programs with the DDP would harm them. After that meeting, McCone set up the Working Group on Organization and Activities, chaired by Inspector General Lyman Kirkpatrick, to review the Agency's structure and activities. The Kirkpatrick Working Group gave special attention to the idea of creating a new directorate of research and development. The DCI asked his deputy directors to comment on the suggestion. Bissell vehemently opposed it. Among other points, he argued that SIGINT collection should remain in the DDP because of [redacted] and he argued that TSD's development of tradecraft equipment could not be separated from the DDP's operational use of it. Bissell might have felt emboldened to resist because McCone, depressed and uncertain whether he would remain as DCI after his wife of many years died in December 1961, had asked Bissell to delay his resignation—indicating that the new DCI needed the veteran DDP's judgment and influence.[10] ~~(S)~~

McCone soon decided to stay, however, and in late January 1962, unconvinced and undaunted by Bissell's dissent, he told PFIAB that he intended to appoint a new deputy director to supervise technical collection and to consolidate CIA's scientific activities. Bissell sent the DCI additional objections in early February that, along with those he had raised earlier, presaged the internal opposition McCone would soon face. The DDP now criticized the proposed movement of OSI and NPIC from the DI to a new directorate. He also contended that activities that appropriately could be taken from the DDP and the DI—aerial and space reconnaissance—did not require the attention of a deputy director and could be managed by a special assistant. By now Bissell was ready to respond to McCone's request, made in December, that he run the new directorate. He declined, saying that acceptance "would mean a long step backward," and he resigned from CIA in mid-February.[11] ~~(S)~~

On 16 February, McCone issued a notice creating the Directorate of Research (DR), effective on the 19th. He promoted Herbert "Pete" Scoville, then head of OSI, making him the first deputy director for research (DDR). Before joining CIA in 1955, Scoville had been senior scientist at Los Alamos and technical director of the Armed Forces Special Weapons Project; colleagues considered him one of the nation's leading experts on warheads. He lacked Bissell's forceful character and bureaucratic clout, however, and soon

---

[7] Ranelagh, 415. For a description of John Kennedy's fascination with imagery, see Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball,* 57–58. (U)

[8] Transcript of Albert Wheelon lecture at CIA Headquarters, "Genesis of a Unique National Capability," 19 September 1984, 13, copy on file in the History Staff. (U)

[9] McCone untitled memorandum to Bundy, 12 February 1962, National Security Files, Departments and Agencies, Box 271, Central Intelligence Agency, General, 1/62–2/61, JFK Library; McCone memorandum about meeting with Robert Kennedy on 27 December 1961, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 173. ~~(S)~~

[10] Welzenbach, "Science and Technology," 22; [redacted] vol. 1, 7; Bissell, 203. ~~(S)~~

[11] Welzenbach, "Science and Technology," 22; [redacted] vol. 1, 7; Bissell letters to McCone, 7 and 16 February 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 18, folder 10. ~~(S)~~

found himself in the middle of an organizational conflict without the means or support to wage it effectively.[12]

Herbert "Pete" Scoville (U)

McCone's notice stated that "other activities in Research and Development will be placed under DD/R as appropriate." What "as appropriate" meant soon became apparent when Scoville circulated a draft proposal describing the responsibilities and structure of the new directorate. He recommended placing three types of activity under his management: research and development of technical collection and data processing systems, production of intelligence on foreign scientific and technical capabilities, and operations that used either technical collection methods or human assets against science and technology targets. Scoville specifically wanted the DR to take over the following:

- from the DDP, the [redacted] of DPD and the research, development, and laboratory component of TSD;
- from the DI, OSI;
- all ELINT activities Agency-wide; and
- from the Office of Communications (OC), research and development work [redacted].[13]

McCone's establishment of the DR and Scoville's proposed restructuring evoked intense reaction from senior Agency managers, who forced the DCI to curtail the pace and scope of his plan. The most vigorous resistance came from DDI Robert Amory and his successor, Ray Cline. They opposed the transfer of OSI, maintaining that jurisdiction for intelligence assessments of foreign countries—particularly the Soviet Union—should not be subdivided and that another office would have to be created to replace OSI's production of finished intelligence and contributions to estimates. Cline, well known for his bluntness, claimed later that McCone wanted to put OSI in the DR "to give some warm bodies and an appearance of bulk to the Directorate" and that, because of the shift, "CIA advocacy of its own scientific collection techniques became mixed up with its objective analysis of scientific and technical developments. The appearance of objectivity was hard to maintain when analysis and collection were supervised by the same staff." After the reorganization went into effect, Cline fought what he called a "rearguard action" to regain OSI's analytic function. The Kirkpatrick Working Group also commented on the issue in its report in early April, recommending that the DI keep OSI but give NPIC to the new directorate.[14]

Richard Helms, Bissell's replacement as DDP, saw early compromise as the best tactic. He agreed to relinquish the parts of TSD that did not directly support secret operations, but he fought tenaciously to retain those that did. Helms figured that McCone—contrary to the Kirkpatrick Working Group's recommendation that the DDR be given some operational responsibilities—would defer to his judgment on this issue as on others related to clandestine activities.[15]

After three months of high-level opposition, Kirkpatrick—by then named the first executive director—recommended to McCone that he accept less than total success. Kirkpatrick had spent several fruitless weeks working with Scoville on a draft headquarters notice setting forth the DR's terms of reference. In the face of the Amory-Cline-Helms resistance, the executive director had concluded that it was "preferable to allow the DD/R to grow by evolution and accretion rather than any drastic surgery on either DD/I or DD/P." Kirkpatrick's group regarded the OXCART, the projected supersonic successor to the U-2, as the DR's most important project and warned that the new directorate

[12] Headquarters Notice [HN] 1–9, 16 February 1962, [redacted] vol. 3, Appendix A, tab 2; biographic profile of Scoville, ibid., Appendix B, tab 26; Welzenbach, "Science and Technology," 24.

[13] [redacted] vol. 1, 10; Scoville memorandum to McCone, "Activities of DD/R," February 1962, ER Files, Job 80R01676R, box 32, folder 19.

[14] [redacted] vol. 1, 11–13; Welzenbach, "Science and Technology," 22–23; Amory memorandum to McCone, "The Proper Location of OSI," 19 March 1962, and S[redacted]emorandum to McCone, "Proper Location of OSI," 21 March 1962, ER Files, Job 80R01676R, box 32, folder 19; Cline, *Secrets, Spies, and Scholars*, 199–200; Cline/McAuliffe OH, 3–4.

[15] [redacted] ol. 1, 10–11; Helms memorandum to Kirkpatrick, "Location of TSD/R&D in the Agency," March 1962, ER Files, Job 80R01676R, box 32, folder 19; McCone memorandum about Kirkpatrick Working Group report, 29 March 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1; HN 1–15, 16 April 1962, [redacted] ol. 3, Appendix 1, tab 3.

"must be restrained from taking on collateral activities so fast that OXCART will suffer."[16]

A few more weeks of piecemeal progress followed. McCone approved personnel allocations for the DR staff and the appointment of an assistant deputy director for research, Col. Edward Giller. Giller was a trained engineer, worked on Air Force weapons projects in the 1950s, and most recently was deputy chief of TSD. McCone and Scoville may have selected Giller—his qualifications notwithstanding—to placate the DDP.[17]

By this time, McCone and Scoville wanted to get the new directorate up and running, so they deferred action on unresolved issues. They did not press further to strip the Clandestine Services of other scientific and technical elements because they had heard that key staffers in DPD were so mad at being moved to the DR that they were considering leaving the Agency and working for some of its contractors. McCone later wrote that forcing the intelligence and operations directorates to turn over OSI and TSD, respectively, "would incur great risk of impairing [their] fundamental missions." The long-awaited headquarters notice describing the DR's mission and responsibilities came out in late July. The DR would have authority over scientific and technical research and development in support of intelligence collection, but the DDP would stay in charge of technical programs supporting agent operations and covert action. The DDR would provide overall guidance of ELINT activities but would not delve into related operational matters. Three new components were created: the Offices of Research and Development (ORD), Electronic Collection (OEL), and Special Activities (OSA), the latter dealing with overhead reconnaissance.[18]

McCone's actions during the DR's first months typify his "chairman of the board" leadership style as DCI. He was content to lay down general guidelines for the directorate at the outset and leave administrative details, especially resolution of jurisdictional conflicts, to others. He was willing to take bureaucratic risks but in ways that contained potential damage. Creating the DR inevitably would be controversial because, as Executive Assistant Walter Elder later remarked, "you could do it only by carving it out of the flesh and blood of existing components."[19] By delegating turf battles to his DDCI and executive director, McCone gave the new directorate's critics, such as Cline and Helms, opportunities to mobilize allies and obstruct implementation. The DCI, however—belying his reputation as a brusque, heavy handed boss—appears in this case to have concluded that a major organizational change could best be achieved by letting bureaucratic politics and tempers run their courses instead of imposing the new arrangement by fiat. He took a more guarded approach here than in the management shuffle he quickly carried out in his first 100 days because far more serious and extensive equities were now at stake.

Disarray, Distractions, and Disputes (U)

The new arrangement McCone's deputies had worked out soon proved unsatisfactory. Even with its more limited responsibilities, the DR as mandated by McCone in July 1962 "never had a fighting chance," a former CIA historian and DS&T officer has concluded. "Pete Scoville's writ ran long on the tasks his new directorate was supposed to accomplish and short on the manpower needed to achieve such goals." Aside from some officers in OSA, who took responsibility for the old DPD's reconnaissance projects, most of the Agency's scientific and technical talent remained in OSI. In addition, delays in securing enough space in the new Headquarters building, transferring personnel from

---

vol. 1, 14–15; Kirkpatrick memorandum to McCone, "Organization of the Office of the Deputy Director (Research)," 17 May 1962, ER Files, 1676R, box 32, folder 19; McCone, "Notes on Discussion…Review of Report of the Kirkpatrick Committee," 29 March 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1.

vol. 2, 15–17; biographic profile of Giller, ibid., vol. 3, Appendix B, tab 13.

[18] "CIA and the National Reconnaissance Office," unpublished manuscript (April 1986), 22–23; Scoville memorandum to McCone, "Responsibilities of the DD/R," 20 June 1962, ER Files, Job 80R01676R, box 32, folder 19; McCone memorandum, "Organization of DD/R," 24 July 1962, quoted in vol. 1, 17; HN 1-23, 30 July 1962, ibid., vol. 3, Appendix A, tab 4. The directorate's new components are described in ibid., vol. 1, 19–29. Oddly, considering the importance the DCI placed on the concept and the clamor it raised, the notice was issued over DDCI Marshall Carter's signature, not McCone's. The DCI probably was busy preparing for his upcoming wedding.

[19] Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 12–13.

other components, and setting up a new career service with a special pay structure made the DR seem like a bureaucratic stepchild.[20] (S)

Difficult, high-profile technical intelligence problems arose during Scoville's first months and diverted his and McCone's time and attention from building the DR. The most difficult of these was the discovery of Soviet offensive missiles in Cuba in October 1962. The DCI, the DDR, and the ADDR—along with NPIC director Arthur Lundahl—were the primary Agency participants in meetings on the crisis. A less well-known distraction was determining whether a newly discovered Soviet missile installation near Tallinn, Estonia, was intended to intercept aircraft or missiles.[21] Moreover, throughout late 1962 and early 1963, McCone and Scoville clashed continually with the Department of Defense over control of the recently created NRO and the nature of the satellite reconnaissance program. The DCI and the DDR did not always agree on how to manage the Agency's side of the dispute, however, and both the development of the new directorate and Scoville's standing with McCone suffered from this interdepartmental conflict. (S)

Seventh Floor Frustrations (U)

By late 1962, the halting development of the DR and Scoville's ineffectiveness plainly displeased McCone. He regarded CIA's entire scientific effort as unimaginative and sluggish and Scoville as too passive in projecting the Agency's viewpoint in the Intelligence Community. He thought, for example, that the DDR's diffidence caused the White House to assign responsibility for evaluating Soviet nuclear tests to an outside group of experts (the Bethe Panel) instead of to Agency officers. McCone wearied of Scoville's continual complaints about inadequate resources. According to Kirkpatrick, the DCI "exploded" when informed that Scoville wanted to discuss organization again and said he "ought to get down to work...and stop fussing about what he didn't have because morale in his own organization was rock bottom." The DDP's and DI's foot dragging also annoyed McCone, and he complained that the two deputy directors never raised scientific matters with him.

> If you [Helms and Cline] would only come in and talk to me just once about science I'd feel better about [the] scientific end of your business. But you come in and talk to me about clandestine operations, and about reports, and about studies, and about every other damn thing, but you never come in and talk to me about science.... Ray [Cline] will sit up all night and talk about history, but he won't talk about [science].

In addition, McCone and Scoville's differences over arms control—on which the DCI had hardline views—may have caused further contention. As an assistant to President Eisenhower's science adviser, Scoville—a liberal Democrat—had urged negotiation of a test ban treaty and contended that it could be adequately monitored using then-current technology, a position McCone, then chairman of the AEC, opposed.[22] (S)

For his part, Scoville was frustrated by what he considered McCone's lack of support, and he was tired of the internal and external turf battles and the DCI's unrelenting pressure. "Hardly a day went by," he recalled, "that [McCone] wasn't down on my neck because we hadn't done this or that...." Some DR staff members thought Scoville was "too gentlemanly" to assert his Agency and community roles, but he believed McCone had weakened his position by failing to resolve the feud over NRO. Scoville thought he could not simultaneously represent CIA's interests in government-wide programs and administer its own scientific and technical activities without the full backing of the Agency's top managers, especially the DCI. He later wrote that "I found myself continuously in the position of being held responsible for matters which I have had neither the authority nor the means to control."[23] (S)

Killian and Land were not satisfied with the new directorate either and complained to McCone in January 1963.

---

[20] Welzenbach, "Science and Technology," 23–24; Herbert "Pete" Scoville oral history interview by [redacted] McLean, VA, 27 January 1989 (hereafter Scoville/[redacted]OH), 17; [redacted] vol. 1, 29–37. Years later, Scoville disparaged OSA as an attempt "to try and bring together some of the cats and dogs." The DR career service finally was instituted in February 1963. DR Directive 20-1, 19 February 1963, [redacted] vol. 3, Appendix A, tab 5. (S)

[21] Welzenbach, "Science and Technology," 24. (S)

[22] Transcript of McCone-Wheelon meeting, 16 July 1963, 7, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 4; [redacted] vol. 1, 38–39; Kirkpatrick Diary, vol. 5, entry for 10 August 1962; Kirkpatrick memorandum, "Discussion with the Director of Central Intelligence on Deputy Director/Research...," 1 October 1962, ibid., box 32, folder 19; [redacted] "CIA and the NRO," 21; Scoville, "Policing a Nuclear Test Ban," *Studies* 3, no. 1 (Winter 1959): 1–14. The DCI also became visibly perturbed when Scoville called him "John" instead of "Mr. McCone." Wheelon [redacted] OH, 22. (S)

The DCI explained that under current circumstances, the massive restructuring Killian had in mind could not be brought about "unless by direct order from me against the objections from General Carter and virtually the entire organization within CIA." Two months later, PFIAB issued a paper, "Recommendations on Technical Capabilities," which criticized the community for inadequately exploiting science and technology for intelligence purposes. Two of the board's many detailed proposals related directly to the DR's shortcomings. Creating "an administrative arrangement in the CIA whereby the whole spectrum of modern science and technology can be brought into contact with major programs and projects of the Agency" would remedy the "present fragmentation and compartmentation." The board also called for "clear vesting of these broadened responsibilities in the top technical official of the CIA, operating at the level of Deputy Director." In effect, Killian and Land were telling McCone to be much bolder in consolidating the Agency's scientific and technical efforts. In April, he responded that he had made some progress and promised more. The "period of observation" of internal reaction "has now lapsed," and he would "move ahead with additional changes" that included giving the DDR "expanded responsibilities."[24] ~~(S)~~

In mid-1963, McCone established three panels to help him address some of the problems PFIAB identified—especially interdirectorate miscommunication and miscoordination—and to provide him with an objective assessment of CIA's scientific enterprises. Internally, he set up the Agency Research and Development Review Board, comprising the heads of offices engaged in technical work—the DR, TSD, OSI, NPIC, and OC—and chaired by the DDCI. This group reviewed and integrated projects and activities to encourage cooperation and focus on the Agency's broader mission of collecting and analyzing scientific intelligence. It discussed subjects such as [redacted] audiosurveillance countermeasures, the use of bioelectronic techniques to monitor human physiological reactions, multisensor imagery systems, and ways to keep CIA informed about innovations in American industry. The board acted more as an arbiter of programmatic compromises than as a true agenda-setting and coordinating body. According to one member, it believed that one of its main functions was to protect the DR from bureaucratic poaching. A second inside entity, the Scientific and Technical Personnel Advisory Committee, was tasked with improving CIA's ability to attract, use, and retain personnel from the science and technology world. Headed by the director of personnel, its members came from the DR, TSD, OSI, and OC. It established criteria for appointments and instituted a premium pay schedule for technical positions.[25] ~~(S)~~

Externally, McCone formed a Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) to review and advise him on the Agency's scientific and technical enterprises. The DCI, who favored the concept of the experts' advisory committee, initially raised the idea soon after the DR was formed. The SAB, a panel of prominent practitioners from the principal branches of science, superseded the CIA Research Board (also known as the de Flores Committee) that for years had concentrated on scientific work for TSD to support clandestine operations. The new board was to evaluate individual programs run by staff and contractors and to point out possible applications of new technologies to intelligence activities. The SAB met periodically through McCone's tenure, and the DCI conferred with its chairman—Augustus Kinzel, a metallurgist and vice president of Union Carbide—at least 10 times through early 1965 (all off the record).[26] ~~(S)~~

The New Chief Wizard (U)

Scoville sent McCone a letter of resignation on 25 April 1963, citing the other deputy directors' inflexibility and the DCI's indecisiveness as the reasons for his departure. Years later, Scoville added that he left because McCone made him answerable for the performance of scientific and technical

---

[23] Welzenbach, "Science and Technology," 24; Scoville/[redacted] OH, 4; Jeffrey T. Richelson, *The Wizards of Langley*, 57–58; Scoville letter to McCone, 25 April 1963, on National Security Archive Web site at www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB35, doc. 20 ~~(S)~~

[24] McCone letter to Killian, 27 December 1962, HS Files, HS/HC-383, Job 84T00286R, box 2, folder 11; McCone memorandum, "Discussion with Dr. Killian, January 21st," dated 22 January 1963, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 4; [redacted] vol. 1, 42–46; Welzenbach, "Science and Technology," 24–25 ~~(S)~~

[25] Agency Research and Development Review Board documentation in DS&T Files, Job 79R00313A, box 4, folder 8; [redacted] vol. 1, 35–37, 80–81; HN 20-88, 26 March 1963, ibid., vol. 3, Appendix A, tab 6. When Albert Wheelon became DDS&T in August 1963, he replaced Carter as chairman of the Research and Development Review Board. ~~(S)~~

[26] [redacted] vol. 1, 82–83, vol. 3, Appendix A, tab 9, vol. 6, Appendix F, tab 1; Scoville memorandum to McCone, "CIA Science Advisory Committee," 5 May 1962, HS Files, HS/HC-385, Job 84T00286R, box 2, folder 11; McCone memorandum to PFIAB, "Establishment of a CIA Research and Development Advisory Board," July 1963, ER Files, Job 80R01676R, box 12, folder 347. The SAB was different from the older panel of the same name that Edwin Land headed. McCone's successor, William Raborn, disbanded the newer SAB in late 1965, and Wheelon designated several specialized committees to take over its function. ~~(S)~~

components over which he had no authority. "McCone would go around town saying I was responsible for all scientific activity in the Agency, and yet he refused to transfer to me the biggest scientific group, my old group of people with whom I had worked [OSI]...." Scoville asked that his resignation take effect 1 June (later extended to the 14th).[27]


Albert "Bud" Wheelon (U)

McCone earlier had said he did not care who ran the DR as long as it was organized and managed properly, and he moved to ensure that it was by asking Albert "Bud" Wheelon, the acting director of OSI, to replace Scoville.[28] Wheelon, the son of an aeronautical engineer, was a technical *wunderkind* who enrolled at Stanford University at age 16 and earned a Ph.D. in physics from MIT when he was just 23. He worked as a missile and space engineer at Douglas Aircraft and Ramo-Woolridge (the predecessor of TRW) before joining the Agency to replace Scoville as director of OSI in June 1962. He impressed the Agency's leadership with his work as chairman of the interagency Guided Missile and Astronautics Intelligence Committee during the Cuban missile crisis and on the nuclear test ban negotiations in early 1963. DDCI Carter, who was handling the high-level implementation of the DR's creation, told McCone that he had been "singularly impressed...at the calm, unruffled, quietly analytical, and remarkably astute manner in which Bud Wheelon approaches all problems.... He is one of our finest assets...." In addition, according to Wheelon, McCone appreciated that Wheelon alone had agreed with his judgment that the Soviet Union planned to put offensive nuclear missiles in Cuba.

When asked to become DDR, the brilliant and brash, 34-year-old Wheelon told McCone that "we shouldn't screw a good light bulb into a burned out socket." He was not interested in running the DR unless he had a mandate to make fundamental changes. After discussing the directorate's problems at length with Scoville, Wheelon agreed to serve with several provisos. He did not want the DR to be a staff entity, like the research and engineering component of the Department of Defense, but "a real honest-to-God line organization to carry out assigned responsibilities." He insisted on bringing OSI with him from the DI. He wanted full authority over Agency research and development, and he asked for a computer center and a missile intelligence center. Wheelon may have believed he could drive such a hard bargain because Elder had already assured him that the DCI would back him against the other deputy directors.

McCone said he saw "great advantages" in Wheelon's general plan, which fit his own preference for centralizing the Agency's scientific and technical functions, but also "dangers...unless Cline, Helms, and [DDS Lawrence K.] White are all aboard 100 percent." He again left the details and negotiations to the DDCI and the executive director—Cline once more proved the most implacable—and by the end of July an agreement was ready. Wheelon got most of what he wanted and a few other things besides. At his insistence, the DR would be renamed the Directorate of Science and Technology, and PFIAB's March 1963 recommendations would constitute its operating charter. The reorganization went into effect on 5 August.[29]

In Wheelon, McCone had the hard-driving, steely infighter he needed to make the new directorate work. The new DDS&T had "three times the energy level" of his predecessor, one of his deputies recalled. Wheelon saw officials in the Intelligence Community either as colleagues, with whom he could cooperate, or as competitors, and, dur-

[27] Scoville letter to McCone, 25 April 1963, on National Security Archive Web site at www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB35, doc. 20; Scoville OH, 18–19; vol. 1, 46–47. McCone later claimed that the intractability of the CIA-NRO dispute caused Scoville nearly to have a nervous breakdown and prompted his resignation. Transcript of McCone telephone conversation with Clark Clifford, 6 April 1964, McCone Papers, box 10, folder 6. At the time Scoville resigned, he also was serving as deputy director of NRO. After he left the Agency, he became assistant director for science and technology at the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. Welzenbach, "Science and Technology," 26; vol. 2, 213–15.

[28] Sources for this paragraph and the next are: vol. 1, 40, 47–50, 58–59; biographic profile of Wheelon, ibid., vol. 3, Appendix B, tab 32; transcript of McCone-Wheelon meeting, 16 July 1963, 4, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 4; biographic profile of Wheelon, HS Files, Job 84B00443R, box 1, folder 7; Wheelon personnel file no. 36534, HRM Files, Job 76-00195R, box 41, folder 9; Wheelon OH, 1-30; Wheelon lecture, 16; Welzenbach, "Science and Technology," 26; Richelson, *The Wizards of Langley*, 68–73; Philip Taubman, *Secret Empire*, 333–37; Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 12; Albert D. Wheelon oral history interview by 15 October 1995 (hereafter Wheelon OH), 3, 18, 25–26. Wheelon's first experience with CIA was in 1956, when he was selected to assess the results of a "major breakthrough of heretofore denied intelligence on the Soviet missile program"—U-2 photography of previously unknown facilities—for USIB. Wheelon lecture, 8.

[29] vol. 1, 50–57; HN 1-36 and HN 20-111, 5 August 1963, ibid., vol. 3, Appendix. A, tabs 10 and 11. Helms argued to Carter that TSD should remain in the DDI. Wheelon later said he did not ask for TSD because he did not think "the gadgetry of the Clandestine Service...was very important." Helms memorandum to Carter, "DDP/TSD Relationship to the DDS&T," DS&T Files, Job 66R00546R, box 1, folder 1; Wheelon/ OH, 26; Richelson, *The Wizards of Langley*, 72–73.

ing his rapid ascent through academe and the defense industry, he had rarely experienced defeat. He consistently outmaneuvered Agency rivals in internal empire building. One colleague recalled that "[w]hen you take on Bud Wheelon, you're taking on a bureaucratic master, and Bud Wheelon ripped Ray [Cline] to shreds" in the dispute over where to put OSI. Agency veterans viewed Wheelon as an upstart outsider, but he did not seem to care. Before he joined the Agency, he told McCone and Kirkpatrick that he did not plan to make a career at Langley and was not bothered by the prospect of antagonizing other intelligence professionals. McCone, perhaps seeing some of his own traits in his assertive new deputy director, must have judged that Wheelon's determination and intelligence outweighed his faults and helped the intelligence process produce the results the DCI and policymakers demanded—always McCone's ultimate test of how well programs or personnel worked. Wheelon, in turn, thought McCone had "the finest analytical mind I had ever seen" and regarded him less as a manager than as "an extraordinarily intelligent entrepreneur, accustomed to changing course rapidly as events and opportunities presented themselves."[30]

Wheelon achieved several of McCone's goals during the nearly two years they served together. Using the DS&T's expanded charter and special pay scale, he fashioned what possibly was the nation's most powerful development and engineering establishment. By the end of the decade, the directorate would design, build, and deploy technical collection systems that gave the United States a substantial intelligence advantage over its adversaries. During his first year, Wheelon integrated OSI and the DS's Office of Computer Support into his directorate; established a missile and space analysis center over the vituperative opposition of powerful Air Force commanders, including Gen. Curtis LeMay; recruited senior personnel, mostly from industry; acquired sufficient space and budget during a period of fiscal stringency; organized a network of scientific boards and panels; and produced a new publication on current scientific intelligence, the *Daily Surveyor*.[31]

Conflict between the DS&T and the DI persisted, and Carter, at McCone's request, had to intervene and delineate areas of responsibility. Wheelon's directorate would produce finished intelligence on scientific and technical subjects (including contributions to estimates), and the DDS&T would be McCone's liaison with the scientific committees of USIB, which the DCI chaired. Cline's directorate retained overall responsibility for producing and disseminating finished intelligence, and the DDI would establish the Agency position on analytical issues USIB was considering. A senior officer in each directorate was designated to manage information sharing, coordination, and other forms of cooperation and support, which the DDCI instructed was to be "extensive…vigorous and effective."[32]

By 1964, the DS&T comprised six offices: Computer Services, ELINT (renamed SIGINT Operations in 1978), Research and Development, Special Activities (renamed Development and Engineering in 1973), Scientific Intelligence, and the Foreign Missile and Space Analysis Center (FMSAC). (The two principal scientific and technical com-

[30] vol. 1, 60; and "Transfer of OSI from the Directorate of Intelligence," 6 August 1963; Ranelagh, 491; Richelson, *The Wizards of Langley*, 72; Wheelon lecture, 13–14; Carter memorandum, "Relationships Between DD/I and DD/S&T," 30 October 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 3, folder 4; Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 10; Wheelon OH, 13; McCone memorandum, "Organization of DD/R," 24 July 1963, and Kirkpatrick memorandum to Carter, "Organization of DD/R," 30 July 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 32, folder 19; 440–52.

Wheelon could be overbearing even with his boss, which prompted an informal intervention from Kirkpatrick. In August 1964, the executive director advised him "to be more diplomatic" with McCone, reminding Wheelon that "he had no more persuasive advocate than the DCI, who was trying to fight his battles with other agencies." Kirkpatrick also suggested that Wheelon ease up on his subordinates and delegate more authority to DS&T managers. Wheelon "took all of this in good grace" but did not change his management style. Kirkpatrick Diary, vol. 6, entry for 14 August 1964.

In the tussle over OSI, Wheelon may have been settling a recent score with Cline. In early 1963, Wheelon—then head of OSI—told Kirkpatrick that he probably would not want to stay at the Agency much past the summer because he and Cline did not get along. He said their personalities were too much alike, and that Cline gave OCI precedence over Wheelon's shop in substantive matters and briefings, and wanted to relocate some OSI components into a new strategic problems office under Wheelon, who did not want that job. Kirkpatrick Diary, vol. 5, entry for 28 January 1963. Cline regarded the loss of OSI as the greatest bureaucratic defeat of his career. 440.

[31] Welzenbach, "Science and Technology," 26; vol. 1, 61–75, 84–87, 97–100, 107–23, 129–30; HN 20-115, HN 20-116, HN 1-39, and HN 20-125, dated 13 and 25 September and 7 and 13 November 1963, ibid., vol. 3, Appendix A, tabs 12, 13, 16, and 18; Headquarters Regulation 20-24, 5 November 1964, ibid., vol. 3, Appendix. A, tab 26; HN 20-111, 5 August 1963, and HN 1-41, 26 November 1963, HS Files, Job 84-00161R, box 4, folder 15; (executive assistant to the DDR) memorandum to the executive assistant to the DDS, "Publication of the Organization of the Deputy Director (Research), 20 February 1963, DS&T Files, Job 66R00546R, box 1, folder 1; Carter memoranda, "Approval of Separate Activities in the Science and Technology Area," and "Approval of Research and Development Activities," both dated 23 December 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 2; Karl H. Weber, "The Office of Scientific Intelligence, 1949–68," DDS&T Historical Series No. OSI-1, 3 vols. (June 1972), vol. 1, 57–72, copy on file in the DDS&T Information Review Office.

[32] Carter memorandum to Kirkpatrick et al., "Relationships Between DD/I and DD/S&T," 30 October 1963, DS&T Files, Job 66R00546R, box 1, folder 1; 452.

ponents still not included in the directorate were TSD and NPIC.) DS&T personnel respected Wheelon's brilliance, drive, and watchful oversight, but his demanding and sometimes harsh management and zealous protection of directorate prerogatives alienated many subordinates, officers elsewhere in the Agency (especially in the DI), and other Intelligence Community components. Old organizational loyalties, disruptions caused by personnel transfers (especially among the SIGINT staff), and disagreement over the authority the DI's Collection Guidance Staff had in tasking the DS&T, caused friction between the directorates. Nevertheless, McCone supported Wheelon's ends (in the same position, he probably would have used most of the same means), backed his DDS&T in most internal disputes, and favorably represented Wheelon's accomplishments to PFIAB and the White House.[33] (S)

The creation of FMSAC exemplified McCone's resoluteness.[34] He was dissatisfied with the community's analysis of foreign missile and space activity—learning of a Soviet space event from a wire service, not US intelligence sources, particularly irked him—and in late 1962 he discussed forming a joint intelligence center with the Department of Defense. After Pentagon officials raised jurisdictional objections, McCone told them CIA would establish its own all-source analysis facility to serve as a national component and not duplicate the activities of any service organization, such as the Army's missile intelligence unit and the Air Force's Foreign Technology Division. (S)

FMSAC came into existence on 7 November 1963, under the direction of Carl Duckett, who joined the Agency after serving at the Army's Redstone Arsenal. Wheelon had met Duckett while working as a consultant in the late 1950s, and Duckett had so impressed McCone at a USIB meeting in 1962 that the DCI offered him a job. Under its charter, FMSAC would provide detailed technical intelligence on Soviet, Chinese, and other foreign space and offensive missile systems—including information on the trajectories, range, number of warheads, and accuracy of long-range missiles, and the movements and missions of satellites and space shots. The new organization would be the place in which all missile and space intelligence would be processed and analyzed, with results distributed to the White House, NASA, and other agencies. FMSAC also was to contribute indirectly to the development and deployment of collection systems. (S)

The Air Force tried to obstruct FMSAC's work. Gen. Bernard Schriever, head of the Air Force Space Systems Command, bluntly explained the opposition of his service to FMSAC:

> The establishment of this activity within CIA is most certainly the first step in competing with and possibly attempting to usurp the Services' capabilities in this area of scientific and technical intelligence...establishment of FMSAC has already resulted in undesirable competition for special talent and for special data...Such duplication and proselyting [sic] are unwise and imprudent, and could result in serious degradation of our Service intelligence capability.... CIA must be restrained from duplicating and eroding DOD technical intelligence capabilities which are vital to military technology just as CIA has been restrained from duplicating DOD strategic bombing intelligence...I believe immediate action should be taken to slow down or block CIA action to duplicate DOD missile and space intelligence.[35]

Having failed to prevent the creation of FMSAC, the Pentagon established the Defense Special Missile and Astronautics Center—a combined DIA-NSA operation—in June 1964. (U)

McCone spurned Secretary of Defense McNamara's follow-up suggestion that the two agencies form a joint committee on missile and space intelligence. By March 1965, FMSAC was operating 24 hours a day, and later that year, it was elevated to office status. The CIA-Pentagon competition to be first "on the street" with reports caused redundant effort, but the rivalry proved to be healthy and

---

[33] [redacted] 455–77; McCone memorandum to Bundy, "CIA Organization for Scientific and Technical Intelligence," 10 September 1963, DS&T Files, Job 66R00546R, box 1, folder 1. (S)

[34] Sources used on FMSAC were [redacted] vol. 2, 335–38; McCone untitled memorandum to Carter on establishing FMSAC, 21 October 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XXV, Organization of Foreign Policy...*, 218–19; "Notice: Establishment of the Foreign Missile and Space Analysis Center," 24 October 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 3, folder 1; John Bross (NIPE) memorandum, "Conversation with Dr. Eugene Fubini," 6 March 1964, OGC Files, Job 86-00167R, box 3, folder 1589; Curtis Peebles, *The CORONA Project*, 252; Richelson, *The Wizards of Langley*, 79–87. Wheelon and OSI officer Sidney Graybeal argued the case for an entity like FMSAC in 1961; see their article "Intelligence for the Space Race," *Studies* 5, no. 4 (Fall 1961): 1–13. (S)

[35] Schriever letter to Curtis LeMay (Air Force Chief of Staff), 26 December 1963, on National Security Archive Web site at www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB35, doc. 22. (U)

productive—unlike other aspects of the Agency's relations with the Department of Defense.

Fight for the Sky Spies (U)

No issue other than Cuba and Vietnam occupied more of McCone's time than the protracted dispute over management of the National Reconnaissance Program (NRP) and NRO. With the assistance of Scoville and then Wheelon, McCone turned back Air Force attempts to monopolize space reconnaissance for military purposes. McCone held, almost to the point of dogma, that overhead reconnaissance was the sole responsibility of the DCI and that only CIA could effectively operate such programs. He believed the fate of satellite reconnaissance—widely viewed then as the future foundation of US intelligence collection—hinged on whether the Agency or the military controlled development and management of current and next-generation systems. He was determined to overcome what he termed the Air Force's "almost unbelievable phobia over [its] position in space" and to keep NRO from answering only to the secretary of defense. Well-versed in the NRP's engineering arcana, such as camera apertures and orbital apogees, McCone often wielded his knowledge as a weapon to defend CIA's technical accomplishments and protect its place in the program's organizational protocols. Ray Cline recalled that "only a few people really understood what [satellite collection] was all about, but [McCone] understood it. He never lost sight of it."[36]

As DCI and chairman of USIB, McCone had some ostensibly neutral managerial tasks to perform in the NRP. He needed to ensure that no gaps in satellite coverage arose, that reconnaissance missions did not overload the Intelligence Community's capacity to interpret the imagery acquired, and that community components struck the right balance between refining existing programs and technologies and advancing the state of the art with new systems. He found that photointerpreters and analysts disagreed over what camera resolution was needed to answer key intelligence questions and that scientists and engineers differed over how far photographic technology could be improved. In addition, a basic divergence existed between analysts, who concentrated on finding out what policymakers wanted or needed to know, and technical specialists, who focused on what a given system could best accomplish. McCone wanted community officers to reach a consensus on each issue so that, as DCI, he could work to rationalize technological research, production of satellites, and the conduct of reconnaissance missions. He sought a bottom-line conclusion on whether improved techniques really yielded better intelligence.[37]

These decisions did not, and could not, occur in a political vacuum. McCone and his deputies—along with their counterparts elsewhere in the NRP—did not always subordinate narrow interests to the broader task of improving US strategic reconnaissance capabilities. Bureaucratic chauvinism and personal discord kept the key players at CIA and the Department of Defense from compromising at the policy level and interfered with the lower-level management of current programs and decisionmaking on future systems. During 1963–65 especially, these interwoven controversies involving institutions, technological goals, management authority, and personal prerogatives threatened to impair the NRP's ability to meet US intelligence requirements. McCone regarded the row as one of the low points of his tenure as DCI, calling it "confusing...and absolutely disgusting." At his last staff meeting as DCI, he expressed regret at "not having done more to fix the NRO problem"—without conceding how much he had contributed to it.[38]

McCone's suspicion about the Air Force's intentions was probably a product of his not-always-pleasant experience as the service's under secretary during 1950–51. As DCI, he rarely disguised his disdain for the Air Force bureaucracy. "I have lived with this thing...since 1947, and I know how this thing works, and I am just not going to be satisfied with it,"

[36] Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 1326–27; transcript of McCone meeting with Brockway McMillan (Director, NRO) on 27 November 1963, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 7; CIA memorandum, "DCI Views on NRO Matters," 4 March 1964, *FRUS, 1964–1968, XXXIII, Organization and Management of U.S. Foreign Policy...*, 428–31; Cline/McAuliffe OH, 4. The most complete nonofficial account of the creation of NRO and CIA's conflict with it is Jeffrey T. Richelson, "Civilians, Spies, and Blue Suits: The Bureaucratic War for Control of Overhead Reconnaissance," on National Security Archive Web site at www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/monograph/nro/. See also Richelson, "Undercover in Outer Space: The Creation and Evolution of the NRO, 1960–1963," *IJIC* 13, no. 3 (Fall 2000): 301–44; idem, *The Wizards of Langley*, chap. 4; and R. Cargill Hall, "Interagency Dynamics and Organizational Myths," *Studies* 46, no. 2 (2002): 21–28. A good overview of the space policy context within which the satellite programs functioned is Paul B. Stares, *The Militarization of Space*, chaps. 3–5.

[37] Elder untitled memorandum about meeting with McCone on 30 June 1964, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 17, folder 347.

[38] Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 95; McCone memorandum of meeting with Bundy on 11 January 1963, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 4; transcript of McCone meeting with PFIAB members on 2 March 1964, ibid., box 7, folder 8; Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 1; Wheelon OH, 37. The various agencies' institutional views of the conflict are summarized in Dwayne A. Day, "Rashomon in Space: A Short Review of Official Spy Satellite Histories," *Quest* 8, no. 2 (2000): 45–53.

he told a senior Pentagon official at one point. Despite his first-hand knowledge, however, it was not always clear in the fight over the NRP whom McCone regarded as his opponent. When he criticized "the Air Force," he did not indicate whether he meant the Air Force as a separate military branch; the "blue" Air Force, particularly SAC; the "black" Air Force, the Special Projects Office that NRO oversaw; the director of NRO in his capacity as under secretary of the Air Force; or the Air Force as a stalking horse for the whole Pentagon and the threat of military control of all space intelligence programs. Moreover, McCone's comments during the dispute do not convey an awareness of conflicts within the Air Force between the bomber and missile factions, or between the "blue" and "black" elements, disputes he might have exploited to win supporters in the Air Force or among sympathetic civilian defense officials. Perhaps in talking about an "Air Force takeover" of statellite reconnaissance, McCone was just employing a convenient shorthand, or minimizing or ignoring nuances to make his adversary seem more formidable. In some respects, he seemed uncharacteristically misinformed about specific CIA-Air Force relationships in the satellite programs, and he might have misinterpreted the omission of references to the Agency in Pentagon directives about the NRP as signals that the military planned to force CIA off the field. Overall, these obfuscations and misconceptions, coupled with McCone's occasional tactlessness, made his position toward NRO seem intemperate and intransigent.[39]

By the time McCone became DCI, the Air Force was working to establish itself as the preeminent player in space intelligence by developing its own reconnaissance satellite (SAMOS) and an orbiting early warning platform (MIDAS).[40] From its perspective, the Air Force saw much more at stake in the NRO controversy than control of a single program. It was fighting for a primary mission. The manned bomber was losing importance in the age of intercontinental ballistic missiles; NASA had been assigned a coequal role in space; and the first NRP directive in September 1961 formalized CIA's responsibilities in satellite reconnaissance. Having made an enormous investment in space activities already, the Air Force was reluctant to lose more ground, especially to a nonmilitary agency whose extended involvement in this area had not been anticipated. As McCone later viewed the problem, "the Air Force, having suffered from being removed from any space activities except military [ones]...had to scoop up everything they could...and one of the things was to become a single instrument in this [overhead reconnaissance] field." The Air Force maintained, however, that because it was providing 80 percent of the resources for CORONA and had managed most of the program's development and operations, it should run the project as part of a military-dominated NRP. The service also resented the efforts of McCone and Wheelon to preserve CIA's independence in developing and using new systems while obliging the Air Force to pay for most of the research and administration. "The bright folks" at CIA would come up with the ideas, a high-ranking Agency official remarked, "and then...you hand them over to the blue-suits, where the treasury is...." Working to the Air Force's advantage was the Kennedy administration's post-Bay of Pigs disillusionment with CIA management—especially

[39] Author's conversation with NRO historian R. Cargill Hall, 10 and 11 June 1998; R. Cargill Hall, "Civil-Military Relations in America's Early Space Program," in R. Cargill Hall and Jacob Neufeld, eds., *The U.S. Air Force in Space*, 11; Robert L. Perry, *Management of the National Reconnaissance Program, 1960–1965*, 18, 36; National Reconnaissance Office, *The CORONA Story*, 71–72; transcript of McCone telephone conversation with McMillan on 27 October 1963, McCone Papers, box 10, folder 4; Department of Defense Directive 5105.23, "National Reconnaissance Office," 27 March 1964, on National Security Archive Web site at www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB35, doc. 8.

The rivalry between the "blue" and "black" Air Force was institutionalized in 1960, when, acting on instructions from President Eisenhower, Secretary of the Air Force Dudley C. Sharp established a new satellite project office with a direct line of authority to the service's under secretary and secretary, bypassing the Air Staff. When the Special Projects Office (SPO) was created to manage all Air Force satellite programs, it remained entirely outside the service's regular chain of command. Its employees viewed themselves as members of a Department of Defense organization first and as Air Force officers second. SPO was so insulated operationally that when it was mentioned at one of Secretary of the Air Force Eugene Zuckert's staff meetings, he snappishly called it "Charyk's Air Force"—referring to the service under secretary, Joseph Charyk, who oversaw it. The service's chief of staff disparagingly referred to SPO as "that Hollywood Air Force" (alluding to its location in Los Angeles), and much of the Air Staff looked on the "black" Air Force as a group of dissidents under CIA influence. Perry *Management of the NRO*, ix, 65; Day, "Rashomon in Space," 49. McCone showed little appreciation of these attitudes, in part because his stint at the Pentagon predated the satellite programs. To him, there was only one Air Force. For purposes of literary convenience in this discussion, "Air Force" will mean the "black" element of the service—in NRP parlance, "Program A"—unless otherwise indicated. (U)

[40] SAMOS (originally named SENTRY) represented about 90 percent of the Air Force's space mission by the early 1960s. (The acronym is popularly, but incorrectly, thought to mean "Satellite and Missile Observation System." Actually it is the name of a Greek island.) The program sought to develop several different systems, including one that would send imagery to earth using technology similar to that which newspapers employed to transmit photographs electronically, and another that would return film capsules, as did CORONA. When SAMOS and MIDAS (Missile Defense Alarm System) ran into serious technical and administrative difficulties during 1960–63—SAMOS imagery was no clearer than that obtainable from low-flying aircraft, and seven of the first eight MIDAS missions failed—the Air Force became more determined to contest CIA's role in space reconnaissance. During the same period, McNamara proposed that the Air Force take over the Gemini manned space flight program from NASA. Author's conversation with R. Cargill Hall, 10 August 1998; Dwayne A. Day, "The Development and Improvement of the CORONA Satellite," in *Eye in the Sky*, 71–74, 78, 258 n. 104; Peebles, *CORONA Project*, 94–95; Curtis Peebles, *Guardians: Strategic Reconnaissance Satellites*, 306–11; Jeffrey T. Richelson, *America's Space Sentinels*, 234-44; Howard Simons, "Our Fantastic Eye in the Sky," *Washington Post*, 8 December 1963, Overhead Reconnaissance clipping file, HIC. (U)

Richard Bissell, who ran CORONA in tandem with Under Secretary of the Air Force Joseph Charyk. With the White House questioning whether the Agency could administer that vital program, the Air Force had a reason and an opportunity to take it over.[41] (S)

McCone also had to consider—although to a lesser degree than with the Air Force—other services' interests in space reconnaissance. The Army was developing a mapping satellite (ARGON) for targeting purposes and wanted more CORONA payloads dedicated to that purpose. Meanwhile, the Navy wanted to launch more of the GRAB (Galactic Radiation and Background) satellites and its successors to collect ELINT on Soviet air defense systems. The record does not indicate whether McCone considered an alliance with those branches against the Air Force. At one point, he directed that mapping must never take priority over intelligence collection in setting launch schedules. The Army and the Navy got around that problem by using their own rockets (the Redstone and Vanguard, respectively). Lastly, all NRP principals had to take into account the private sector's accomplishments with communications satellites: AT&T's Telstar (1962) and the Hughes Corporation's Syncom (1963), both of which received funding from NASA and the Department of Defense's Advanced Research Projects Agency.[42] (S)

McCone's limited authority over the Intelligence Community complicated his and CIA's standing in the interdepartmental feud. The DCI did not have the final say over all intelligence matters, regardless of the power he believed President Kennedy had given him in early 1962. He had to share responsibility for space reconnaissance with the Department of Defense. Under the first NRP agreement (NRP-1) in September 1961, which created NRO, the under secretary of the Air Force and the DDP jointly managed "all satellite and overflight reconnaissance projects whether overt or covert," while NRO responded to intelligence requirements that USIB laid down. NRP-1, which PFIAB's Killian and Land encouraged, codified the loose, collegial relationship that Charyk and Bissell had used to run CORONA so effectively. Their guidance was vague; they were to "ensure that the particular talents, experience, and capabilities within the Department of Defense and the Central Intelligence Agency are fully and most effectively utilized...." As subsequent events showed, individuals made all the difference in the interpretation of that language. Bissell's departure and Scoville's problems at the new DR, which handled CIA's participation in the NRP, made the agreement unworkable.[43] (U)

Chafing Under New Rules (U)

In May 1962, McCone and Deputy Secretary of Defense Roswell Gilpatric, acquaintances since McCone's time at the Pentagon, signed a second NRP agreement (NRP-2).[44] The DCI's goal, he wrote, was "that the Agency, because of its flexibility, be kept in the picture at all times and not merely brought in by sufferance or when and as desired by [the Department of] Defense." (S)

Roswell Gilpatric (U)

McCone achieved much of what he wanted. NRP-2 more clearly enumerated the administrative and budgetary authority of NRO and established a single NRO director (DNRO) to be appointed by the secretary of defense and

[41] Gerald K. Haines, *The National Reconnaissance Office (NRO)*, 19; Leary, *The Central Intelligence Agency*, 86–87; William E. Burrows, *Deep Black: Space Espionage and National Security*, 87–88, 196, 201; Richelson, *America's Secret Eyes in Space*, 44–46, Peebles, *Guardians*, 61–65, 70–71, 306–11; Stares, 61–62; Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 23–26; NRO, *The CORONA Story*, 70–71; Robert L. Perry, "A History of Satellite Reconnaissance: Volume I—CORONA," unpublished manuscript prepared for the NRO (1973), 142–43; Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 8; Carter-Knoche OH, 33; transcript of McCone-Land-Wheelon meeting on 25 June 1964, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 11. (S)

Air Force mission-building carried over from satellites into aircraft reconnaissance. Arguing that CIA's cover for the U-2 Cuban overflight program was weak, it succeeded in taking over the flights during the Cuban missile crisis. McCone kept CIA control of overflights of other denied areas. The Air Force also was getting its own version of CIA's supersonic spyplane, assuring competition for that mission as well. Pedlow and Welzenbach, 207; McCone memorandum about meeting with McNamara on 8 January 1963, and "Memorandum for the Files—Various Activities, 3 January 1963," McCone Papers, box 2, folder 4; McCone memorandum dated 4 June 1963 about various discussions with Gilpatric, and McCone letter to Gilpatric, 11 June 1963 [redacted] vol. 4, Appendix D, tabs 27 and 30; Carter letter to Eugene Fubini (Deputy Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering), 20 August 1963, ibid., tab 40. (S)

[42] McCone letter to Fubini, 6 October 1964, DS&T Files, Job 78B03193A, box 60, folder 1409; Joseph V. Charyk oral history interview by [redacted] Washington, DC, 5 December 1984 (hereafter Charyk [redacted] OH), 2, 12; NRO, *The CORONA Story*, 46, 49–50, 82, 86; Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 21; Perry, "History of Satellite Reconnaissance," 139; Naval Research Laboratory, *GRAB: Galactic Radiation and Background: First Reconnaissance Satellite*; GRAB information on Naval Research Laboratory Web site www.nrl.navy.mil; Dwayne A. Day, "Listening from Above: The First Signals Intelligence Satellite," *Spaceflight* 41, no. 8 (August 1999): 338–46; Bamford, *Body of Secrets*, 363–66; Joan Lisa Bromberg, *NASA and the Space Industry*, 46–56. The ARGON program had seven successful missions out of 12 attempted between February 1961 and August 1964, when it was ended. [redacted] (S)

the DCI. The "letter" programs—A (Air Force satellites), B (CORONA), C (Navy satellites), and D (aerial reconnaissance)—were organized, with DDR Scoville running Program B. To the dismay of some senior Agency executives, NRO would control all spending on satellite reconnaissance, including funds previously in the CIA budget. McCone agreed to that provision to allay congressional concerns about CIA's swelling "black" expenditures. In exchange, the DCI demanded assurances that the Agency would continue to control research, development, and contracting of covert reconnaissance programs and that only USIB, which he chaired, would set requirements for the satellites. [redacted]

Joseph Charyk (U)

McCone had not liked what he termed the "two-headed" leadership under NRP-1 and consented to having Joseph Charyk selected as the first DNRO. He believed he could trust Charyk, whom he called "unusually capable," to protect CIA's equities. They both considered reconnaissance satellites as national intelligence assets that should not be controlled by a military branch for targeting purposes. The new agreement did not provide for a deputy director because Charyk thought having one would create an unnecessary layer of management. Absence of the position deprived CIA of a senior representative at NRO. Some Agency managers saw the deficiency as a Pentagon ploy to ease CIA out of the NRP. The overall executive agent of the space reconnaissance program, the DNRO, still came from the Department of Defense and was not truly a half-subordinate of the DCI. McCone presumably believed he could offset the concessions he made through his good relations with Gilpatric and Charyk, his leverage as USIB chairman, and the responsibilities he retained for CIA.[45] [redacted]

Although the Agency retained management of CORONA, McCone and Scoville soon perceived that the NRP was biased toward the Pentagon's preferences. McCone had preferred that the DNRO serve as a "chairman of the board" of the reconnaissance community and preside, without delving into operational details, over several "companies" that built and launched their own satellites. Instead, the DNRO—as under secretary of the Air Force—was functioning as the NRP's "chief executive officer," managing the letter programs as if they were line offices. At the same time, he kept reporting directly to the secretary of defense, his organizational superior. Adding to the confusion was the role of the DDR, the Agency's representative in the NRP. As head of Program B, nominally administered under the NRP, Scoville nevertheless still reported to the DCI, his boss at CIA. Although the senior military officers who led the other NRP programs might have thought this situation benefited CIA—unlike them, the DDR had direct access to a Cabinet-level official—McCone thought the arrangement bred inefficiency and unproductive rivalry. He suggested to

---

[43] Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 143–45, for the terms of NRP-1, signed by Deputy Secretary of Defense Roswell Gilpatric and DDCI Charles P. Cabell. See also Gilpatric's letter to Dulles, 6 September 1961, on National Security Archive Web site at www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB35, doc. 5. The basic division of labor that Bissell and Charyk worked out on the CORONA project went so: the CIA handled the funds for the covert projects, procured the cameras and recovery vehicles, and provided most of the security; the Air Force built and launched the rockets, and retrieved the payloads. Haines, *National Reconnaissance Office*, 17. Dwayne Day concisely captures the "neither fish nor fowl" character of NRO that was the source of so much of the controversy described herein:

> [NRO] was not a distinct entity in itself. Officially, it was a civilian office located in the Department of Defense and headed by a civilian Air Force secretary who also had Air Force responsibilities as well. But it was composed of a combination of offices belonging to other organizations, primarily CIA and the Air Force, and its Pentagon headquarters was staffed primarily by Air Force officers. The Director of NRO during the early years had only limited authority over his organization. Because of his Air Force title, he had greater control over the Air Force component of the NRO, known as Program A and located in Los Angeles. The CIA component of NRO, known as Program B and located at CIA headquarters, was more directly responsive to the CIA's Deputy [Director] for Science and Technology than to the [DNRO].

Day, "Rashomon in Space," 46. (U)

[44] Sources for this paragraph and the next two are: [redacted] vol. 2, chap. 5; Haines, *National Reconnaissance Office*, 21–22; Charyk/[redacted] OH, 8; [redacted] "The View from the CIA: The Development, Management, and Exploitation of Satellite Reconnaissance," unpublished manuscript (1990), 41–46; idem, "CIA and NRO," 28; NRO, *The CORONA Story*, 67–70, 73–75, 90–91; Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 11, 27, 31–35, 149–52; Perry, "History of Satellite Reconnaissance," 147; McCone memorandum (dated 3 January 1962) about meeting with Gilpatric and Charyk on 28 December 1961, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1; Elder memorandum (dated 2 July 1962) about CIA meeting with Bureau of the Budget on 29 June 1962, ibid., folder 2; McCone memorandum (dated 15 December 1962) about meeting with Gilpatric on 14 December 1962, ibid., folder 3; R. Cargill Hall letter to author, 7 October 1998. [redacted]

[45] McCone had different working relationships with McNamara and Gilpatric. Gilpatric recalled that McNamara "didn't like to deal with McCone unless he had to, because McCone was another very strong-minded person who wasn't going to easily be overridden by the Secretary of Defense. But with McCone, McNamara just left it up to me. I'd worked for McCone, knew him very well, and we'd just...sit down and negotiate...a modus vivendi." Gilpatric oral history interview, 1970, JFK Library, 91. Wheelon has claimed that McCone's willingness to compromise with Gilpatric, particularly on budget issues, sent the wrong signal to the Pentagon. Wheelon/[redacted] OH, 20; Wheelon, "CORONA: A Triumph of American Technology," in *Eye in the Sky*, 41. (U)

McNamara that the only way to clear up the bureaucratic muddle was to remove NRO from the purview of the under secretary of the Air Force and put it under either the deputy secretary of defense for research and engineering or create a new position, assistant secretary of defense for intelligence. McNamara responded positively, but nothing came of McCone's ideas at that time.

To justify the Agency's position, McCone questioned the ability of the Air Force's Program A office and NRO to develop and deploy satellite reconnaissance systems. He pointed out that Air Force rockets were responsible for most CORONA launch failures and that the service had not been able to develop the SAMOS. He again raised the "competency" argument in mid-1963, soon after a series of booster rocket mishaps caused an alarming interruption in satellite intelligence collection. "We had these failures," he told the Pentagon's chief of research and engineering,

> for the simple reason that the people that were running that operation were not thoroughly aware of how serious a failure was from the standpoint of the mission. Sure, they hated to see a satellite fail because they were in the business of making satellites succeed, but they didn't realize

"[T]he importance of this type of intelligence to our national security cannot be over-emphasized," McCone chastised the DNRO, "and it is essential that there be no repetition of the hiatus in this type of coverage such as has existed for the past three months." He also accused McNamara and Gilpatric of being "entirely preoccupied" with defending weapons systems on Capitol Hill instead of managing the complex space intelligence program.[46]

McCone tried a couple of bureaucratic maneuvers in late 1962 to secure CIA's independence from NRO. First, he proposed to McNamara that NRP-2 be revised by the creation of a "National Reconnaissance Planning Group," consisting of the DCI and the secretary of defense, with authority to make final decisions on aspects of space reconnaissance that did not require presidential assent. Under this plan, the DNRO would only have review and approval authority over the whole NRP budget but not over individual programs. CIA would have total management responsibility for Program B (CORONA), from the DCI level on down. Charyk and Gilpatric balked at McCone's idea, so the DCI took another tack. He asked McNamara to recommend that the Bureau of the Budget release directly to CIA all funds required to run covert satellite projects. He knew that if the Agency controlled its own reconnaissance purse-strings, the precise place it occupied in the NRP wiring diagram would be largely irrelevant. Again Charyk objected. "[I]f NRO is to function," he wrote to Gilpatric, "it must be responsible for continuous monitoring of financial and technical program status, must control the release of funds to programs, and must be able to reallocate [funds] between NRP programs." McNamara did not act on McCone's request, so CIA continued using funds from non-NRP sources for Program B activities—which Charyk believed went outside established procedures and probably violated the law. McCone argued to PFIAB, however, that the DNRO could not have fiscal control over Program B because Congress appropriated those funds to CIA through the committees to which the Agency was responsible. Budgetary accountability would be lost if NRO had its way. He further claimed (to Gilpatric) that Air Force budget officers had used their authority to frustrate CIA activities in aerial reconnaissance, implying that they would do the same with satellite projects. The funding problem could be solved, he suggested later, if the same congressional subcommittees dealt with both CIA's and the Pentagon's portions of the NRP.[47]

McCone and Gilpatric, with input from Charyk, tried to address the shortcomings of NRP-2 through a third agreement in March 1963. NRP-3 established a deputy director of NRO position to be filled by a CIA officer;[48] gave both the DCI and secretary of defense responsibility for manag-

[46] Perry, "History of Satellite Reconnaissance," 148–49; NRO, *The CORONA Story*, 94; transcript of McCone conversation with Fubini, 22 July 1963, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 4.

[47] Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 43–44; Kirkpatrick memoranda, "DCI Presentation to the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, 7 December 1962" and "Briefing of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board by the Director of Central Intelligence...8 March 1963," CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 8, folder 140; McCone memorandum about discussion with Gilpatric on 14 December 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 3.

[48] Scoville nominally was DDNRO for 10 weeks, but Eugene Kiefer of the DS&T's OSA became the first true incumbent in July 1963. Kiefer, educated as an aeronautical engineer, had designed reconnaissance aircraft during World War II. Unlike Scoville, Kiefer occupied the Pentagon office to which he was entitled. Outranked and isolated within NRO, and with McCone and Wheelon making the important decisions affecting CIA, he never became a significant figure in NRP affairs and asked to be reassigned after one year vol. 2, 219, 266–67; CIA and the NRO," 41; Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 58–59, 82, 97–98.

ing the NRP; but designated the latter as the program's executive agent with ultimate responsibility for NRO. Charyk's handiwork showed where the authority of NRO and its director was strengthened. The agreement referred to "a single NRP," made NRO an operating agency of the Department of Defense, and gave the DNRO authority to "assign all project tasks such as technical management, contracting, etc., to appropriate elements of the DOD and CIA, changing such assignments and taking any such steps he may determine necessary to the efficient management of the NRP"—including not consulting CIA in those areas at his discretion. At the same time, CIA retained budget and operational authority over Program B. (McCone may have negotiated some changes with Gilpatric after Charyk left; when PFIAB asked if he was satisfied with the text, he replied that he "had written it himself.") In a separate funding agreement that McCone and Gilpatric signed in April, the DNRO received control over most of the NRP budget, but spending on "black" projects had to go through CIA's procurement process. Although McCone felt some satisfaction from the new agreements, PFIAB took NRO's side by advising the president that the Pentagon should more thoroughly manage all overhead reconnaissance programs. McCone responded that making the Department of Defense the exclusive agent of the NRP would mean a "loss of responsibility and imaginativeness which exists in CIA and which has made many valuable contributions in the [satellite] field...."[49] (S)

Fighting Executives (U)

In June 1962, PFIAB made this comment about the power of personal ties in making the NRP work properly: "The actual structure of the document...is inadequate to support an efficient organization when the present experienced and distinguished group moves on to other tasks." The board could hardly have been more prescient. Longstanding animosity between "Bud" Wheelon and Brockway McMillan, Charyk's successor as under secretary of the Air Force and DNRO, carried over into the interdepartmental dispute and further damaged relations between their superiors at CIA and the Department of Defense.[50] (U)

Brockway McMillan (U)

Both men were on the scene by late summer 1963. McMillan—nicknamed "Breakaway" by his staff—came to the Pentagon in June 1961 from Bell Telephone Laboratories. He had been assistant secretary of the Air Force for research and development before his elevation. He insisted that NRO had received full management authority over space reconnaissance and was determined to break CIA's hold on designing and procuring broad-search satellites. In McMillan's mind, a truly national reconnaissance effort could not exist if CIA held custody of one of the major programs (CORONA) and could spend its NRP funds as it chose. He proceeded to undercut Scoville, with whom he had served on Killian's Technological Capabilities Panel in the mid-1950s, and then took on the DDS&T after the embittered DDR left. McMillan and Wheelon—both smart, strong-willed, prideful, and ambitious—let an old disagreement about a technical subject grow into a personal feud that distorted their perspective on the bureaucratic controversy. If anything, Wheelon was even blunter (and occasionally more off the mark) than McCone in characterizing it:

> The Air Force objective—as repeatedly stated by General LeMay—is to eliminate CIA from all reconnaissance operations.... If exploited, the present NRO agreement provides the enabling legislation by which CIA can be so eliminated...[The DNRO] has come to be identified with the Under Secretary of the Air Force, thereby posing an unparalleled conflict of interest question...The DNRO considers his decision on program allocation or reassignment final, and states that their challenge is unacceptable.

The new DDS&T's declared intention was to "get CIA into the satellite business in a contributing, not just a bureaucratic, way." He got himself into the business more directly after November 1963, when McCone made him the

[49] Haines, *National Reconnaissance Office*, 23; NRO, *The CORONA Story*, 92; Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 53–57; Kirkpatrick memorandum about McCone briefing of PFIAB on 8 March 1963, CMS Files, Job 92B01029R, box 8, folder 140; "Agreement Between the Secretary of Defense and the Director of Central Intelligence on Management of the National Reconnaissance Program," 13 March 1963, McCone Papers, box 8, folder 9. As with NRP-2, McCone agreed to keep CIA's money for its reconnaissance programs in the NRP budget as an accounting procedure. He did not regard that step as a relinquishment of authority over those programs. (S)

[50] Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 39. Charyk had received an offer from the Comsat Corporation in December 1962, and his plans to leave the US government were known soon after. Richelson, *The Wizards of Langley*, 64. (U)

Agency's day-to-day representative in NRP matters (replacing DDCI Carter, who assumed high-level duties in the program). McMillan, in turn, was convinced that Wheelon had fomented all the interdepartmental discord to grab power and perpetuate a grudge.[51] ~~(S)~~

McCone and McMillan quickly replicated the acrimony, fighting over contracts, budgets, and delegation, and nearly brought the NRP to a halt. Walter Elder recalled McCone accusing McMillan of "lying...deceit and fraud," while the DNRO thought the DCI was "aggressive and not entirely trustworthy." McCone admonished McMillan for being too obedient to the Pentagon, turning the NRP into a "handmaiden" of the Air Force, failing to include CIA in decision-making, and giving priority to development projects over intelligence collection. He asserted that McMillan could not properly manage NRO while serving simultaneously as under secretary of the Air Force and called one of the DNRO's management proposals "damned foolishness." He refused to let other NRO departments use the Agency's covert procurement channels out of concern not only for security, but also to keep CIA from turning into a "support organization" for the Pentagon. ~~(S)~~

McMillan was not an Air Force "shill," however. He later said he never considered turning over the NRP to that service because he did not think he could rely on the Air Staff to make it work. He told McNamara in late 1963 that, in contrast to CORONA, the SAMOS project "was ill-considered, undisciplined, and poorly managed. It would have, at best, floundered into success at a much later date." McMillan saw himself caught in the crossfire between CIA and the "blue" and "black" Air Forces and believed that only the DNRO had the broad vision to run space reconnaissance programs in the national interest. "I believe in a strong NRO. I do not believe that either CIA or the military are capable of accepting effectively an autonomous responsibility. Both need the discipline of a central problem-oriented management." As former NRO historian Gerald Haines has noted:

> In this fight, McMillan and his NRO staff stood virtually alone in attempting to defend the authorities of the NRO. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and most of the Department of Defense were preoccupied with Vietnam. The regular Air Force totally ignored space activities. The Air Force Space Systems [Command] and Air Staff were still smarting from being excluded from most satellite developments. Even [the Special Projects Office of Program A] took a limited interest. Located in Los Angeles, [Program A] officers concerned themselves solely with operations. They saw their role as strictly "birding" (launching and operating satellites). Future systems were not their concern. Nor was politics. They saw politics as strictly a function of their "Washington branch." ~~(S)~~

McCone did not accept McMillan's self-portrayal or sympathize with his bureaucratic plight. As he watched NRP-3 being implemented, he saw NRO being transformed from an interdepartment management and planning office into a Pentagon line organization taking operational responsibility away from CIA. After months of futile bickering, he complained to Deputy Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering Eugene Fubini:

> I never knew the first damn thing that's going on. I have yet to see the [NRO's] budget. [The NRP agreement] just isn't functioning at all as I anticipated in any respect and as near as I can see the whole thing is

---

[51] Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 70, 78; [redacted] vol. 2, 246–49; Scoville memorandum to Carter, "Recent DD/R Problems with the DOD," 21 January 1963, ibid., vol. 4, Appendix D, tab 12; McCone memoranda about meetings with Bundy on 10 January 1963 and with McNamara and Gilpatric on 22 March 1963, McCone Papers, box 2, folders 4 and 5; Haines, *National Reconnaissance Office*, 22–23; Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 6–7, 10; Wheelon memorandum, "DDS&T View on NRO Problem," 22 August 1963, DS&T Files, Job 66R00546R, box 1, folder 8; Carter memorandum to Wheelon, "Monitorship of National Reconnaissance Activities," 6 November 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 3, folder 1. ~~(S)~~

Richard Bissell recalled Wheelon's—and, by extension, McCone's—conflict with McMillan and the "black" Air Force this way:

> Bud Wheelon, essentially, was battling to maintain the [A]gency's influence in the reconnaissance programs, and also to have the [A]gency designated by the NRO as the procurement agency for a lot of the payloads. The Air Force was battling for the exact opposite. They wanted to do as much as possible of the procurement and have as much influence as possible on the technical decisions and operational matters. And that was really the essence of Bud's continuing battles. What kind of programs will receive what kind of funding? Who will be the procurement agency for this or that? And [the battles] went on, and on, and on....

Burrows, 199–200. (U)

McMillan and Wheelon's mutual animosity originated when McMillan, as editor of a physics journal, rejected an article Wheelon submitted while at MIT. According to McMillan, the article began in a boastful tone and contained a serious error; Wheelon believed the evaluation was unfair and uninformed. At first, McCone did not know that their feud went back so far or was so deeply personal. When the DCI criticized McMillan for injecting personal issues into the debate, the DNRO replied, "if you knew Bud Wheelon as well as I do, you would know why I started...." Richelson, *The Wizards of Langley*, 103; Taubman, 345; Brockway McMillan oral history interview by Gerald K. Haines, Winter Harbor, ME, 15 November 1996, videotape in NRO History Office (hereafter McMillan/Haines OH); Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 10; transcript of McCone-McMillan meeting on 28 May 1964, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 10. ~~(S)~~

moving ever and ever closer and closer into becoming an instrument of the Air Force.

Telling McMillan that "left in the hands of the Air Force, [reconnaissance satellites] would not be taking a picture of the Soviet Union today," McCone threatened to see the secretary of defense and the president about getting the DNRO removed unless matters changed to his liking. Short of that, he tried (without success) to have McMillan made a member of USIB, where, as chairman, McCone could exert more influence over NRO through the Committee on Reconnaissance.[52] ~~(S)~~

Interagency relations seemed to improve in January 1964, when McCone agreed to Fubini's compromise proposal under which CIA would be responsible for research, development, engineering, and early flights of new reconnaissance payloads and then would turn over their operation to the Air Force.[53] The DCI and the secretary of defense (through the DNRO) would share authority over the NRP. However much the feuding executives agreed in principle on the need for change, they could not put that sentiment into practice. Wheelon persuaded McCone that it would be unwise to stake CIA's entire future role in satellite reconnaissance on its ability to develop a single second generation system. A more sensible division of labor, he suggested, would put CIA in charge of all broad-coverage systems and give the Air Force responsibility for close-look satellites. McMillan seemed to agree, telling McNamara that "the final price of peace with the CIA, considering the temperament of its leaders, at least is to give them carte blanche for the development of a new general search system." The Agency's lack of fiscal autonomy in the NRP precluded that scheme, however, as did McMillan's reluctance to make deals based on undeveloped technologies. ~~(S)~~

Eugene Fubini (U)

On more than one occasion, McCone unleashed his formidable temper in frustration over his lack of authority to resolve these bureaucratic battles. He told Fubini that he was "just about ready to tell the Secretary of Defense and the President [that] they can take NRO and shove it.... [M]y patience is gone!" In a contentious meeting with McMillan, McCone called the latter's failure to include Agency officers in the investigation of recent CORONA failures "criminal" and said the DNRO was "just grabbing for power...you don't want to work with people—all you want to do is say, 'Give it to me and the hell with you.'" To Edwin Land, he vented his frustration over government bureaucracies:

Hell! I was the Director of the Standard Oil of California and we had no problems of this type with that company. I was also Director of Caltex, which is

[52] Sources for the above three paragraphs are: McCone untitled memorandum, 3 June 1963, [redacted] vol. 4, Appendix D, tab 25; transcript of McCone-Fubini meeting on 22 July 1963, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 4; transcript of McCone-McMillan meeting on 11 September 1963, ibid., folder 5; transcript of McCone-McMillan telephone conversation on 7 June 1963, ibid., folder 4; transcript of McCone-McMillan telephone conversation on 29 October 1963, ibid., box 10, folder 4; transcript of McCone-McMillan meeting on 27 November 1963, ibid., box 7, folder 7; McCone memorandum about meeting with McMillan on 11 February 1964, ibid., box 2, folder 10; transcript of McCone-McMillan meeting on 10 December 1963, ibid., box 7, folder 7; transcript of McCone-Fubini meeting on 17 August 1963, ibid., folder 5; transcript of McCone-Fubini meeting on 16 October 1963, ibid., folder 6; McCone memorandum, "Problems Relating to the National Reconnaissance Organization Plan and its Implementation...," 20 August 1963, ibid., box 8, folder 9; McCone untitled memorandum to McNamara, 23 September 1963, CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 1, folder 24; McMillan/Haines OH; Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 10–11; Haines, *National Reconnaissance Office*, 22–24; Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 19–20, 52; Gerald K. Haines, "Critical to US Security: Development of the [redacted] Satellite Reconnaissance System," unpublished manuscript (1997), 9; [redacted] "CIA and the NRO," 35, 39. ~~(S)~~

Inadequate, often nonexistent, record keeping contributed to acrimony among NRP principals. They held many meetings at which no minutes were kept and no assistants were present, and often no agenda was circulated ahead of time. These lapses caused confusion and misconceptions about what the attendees had agreed to or disagreed about. They and their deputies often acted on their own interpretations of what transpired at conferences and did not coordinate with other involved departments. Memoranda written by different principals describing the same meetings reveal the parochialism that distorted their perceptions and affected their ability to recount events. ~~(S)~~

[53] Sources for this paragraph and the next are: Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 79–81; transcript of McCone-Fubini meeting on 13 January 1964 and Fubini's accompanying memorandum, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 7; transcript of McCone-Fubini telephone conversation on 13 February 1964, *FRUS, 1964–1968, XXXIII, Organization and Management of U.S. Foreign Policy...*, 420–21; transcript of McCone-McMillan meeting on 28 May 1964, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 10; transcript of McCone-McMillan meeting on 11 February 1964, ibid., folder 7; McCone memorandum about meeting with Gilpatric and Vance on 14 January 1964, and McCone memorandum about meeting with McMillan on 11 February 1964, ibid., box 2, folder 10; transcript of McCone-McMillan-Fubini-Wheelon meeting on 26 June 1964, and transcript of McCone-Land-Wheelon meeting on 25 June 1964, ibid., box 7, folder 7; Wheelon memorandum to McCone, "Recommendation re Fubini's Proposal," 3 February 1964, National Reconnaissance Office, CORONA-ARGON-LANYARD Declassified Files Collection, cabinet 1, drawer C, folder 67, document number 1400022840, FOIA Reading Room, NRO Headquarters, Chantilly, VA (documents from this collection will be cited hereafter in this form: NRO CAL 1/C/0067, no. 1400022840). Fubini was McMillan's strongest Pentagon ally in the CIA-NRO dispute. McCone thought he was "volatile and in matters of management not always...thoroughly sound." Transcript of McCone-Gilpatric telephone conversation, 13 January 1964, *FRUS, 1964–1968, XXXIII, Organization and Management of U.S. Foreign Policy...*, 411 ~~(S)~~

owned jointly by the Standard Oil of California and the Texas Company, and there the Directors spent all their time on allocating responsibilities: [W]ho's going to be responsible for the sales in France.... Who's going to be responsible for the next group of tankers? I can tell you in the six companies when we built the Boulder Dam, this is what we had to do: who is going to be responsible for the gravel plant, is it going to be Kaiser, is it going to be Shay? This is the kind of thing that the Directors of the six companies had to deal with. Wherever you've got an integrated company you don't have that problem. Management can handle the problem. ~~(S)~~

PFIAB waded into the controversy with an investigation, begun in March 1964 and completed in May. Much to the consternation of McCone, who viewed the board's monitoring as irritating and superfluous, it did not reach the conclusions he wanted.[54] "The National Reconnaissance Program, despite its achievements, has not yet reached its full potential," the panel reported, due to "inadequacies in organizational structure" that provided no clear division of responsibility between the Pentagon, NRO, CIA, and the DCI. Although PFIAB acknowledged that the DCI needed to have a "large and important role" in space reconnaissance matters—especially in establishing requirements and exploiting collected intelligence—it recommended that the secretary of defense be designated the executive agent of the NRP, with "responsibility for the management, overall systems engineering, procurement and operation of all satellite reconnaissance systems." NRO should function as an operating agency of the Department of Defense, with the DNRO continuing to serve as under secretary of the Air Force and accountable solely to the secretary of defense. The NRP budget should be consolidated and centrally administered, and members of the NRO staff (including detailees) should work directly and fully for the DNRO.[55] ~~(S)~~

McCone grumbled that PFIAB's recommendations would relegate the DCI's role "maybe to be advised about something someplace along the line." As USIB chairman, he might be in charge of setting collection requirements, but if the secretary of defense managed the whole satellite program, the DCI's role would be "absolutely meaningless." If launch schedules slipped for technical or other reasons, how could requirements be met, and who would be held accountable? McCone also believed that implementing the board's main recommendation, a presidential directive ordering centralization of the NRP, would reduce the space reconnaissance program to "a single instrument resting with the Air Force." He countered with his own proposals that assigned program decisions to the DCI and secretary of defense (his earlier National Reconnaissance Planning Group idea) and placed the DNRO organizationally under the Office of the Secretary of Defense, in a manner similar to NSA. ~~(S)~~

Cyrus Vance (U)

Over the summer, McCone discussed his ideas with McGeorge Bundy, McNamara, and Gilpatric's replacement as deputy secretary of defense, Cyrus Vance. They all supported his general position—including Vance, who initially endorsed the PFIAB recommendations. McNamara and his new deputy secretary, however, had reservations about potential bureaucratic and political fallout from McCone's specific suggestions.[56] ~~(S)~~

In any event, PFIAB's recommendations had no perceptible impact. No presidential directive and no Pentagon implementation orders were issued. Meanwhile, McCone grew more impatient over the impasse. "He says that if the straightening out of this matter requires a Presidential decision," wrote Marshall Carter, "he insists upon it and he insists upon it now. He is not going to see the CIA capability frittered away by fiat or by decisions at a lower level." Lacking White House intervention, McCone—perhaps more out of frustration than anything else—contemplated that "the whole reconnaissance operation be turned over to the Department of Defense, along with all the responsibilities and the dangers of such a decision."[57] (U)

---

[54] The previous June, PFIAB had appeared more critical of NRO. Edwin Land, in particular, was annoyed to learn that the NRO staff consisted almost entirely of Air Force personnel. [redacted] vol. 2, 227–28. The influence of PFIAB's new chairman, Clark Clifford, with whom McCone did not get along, might have had something to do with the board taking a more critical stance toward CIA. The PFIAB committee that looked at the CIA-NRO problem was called the Baker Panel, named for William O. Baker of Bell Telephone Laboratories. He did not recuse himself from the inquiry despite his former association with McMillan. ~~(S)~~

[55] Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 82–83; [redacted] vol. 2, 263–64; [redacted] "CIA and the NRO," 43–45; PFIAB memorandum to President Johnson, "National Reconnaissance Program," 2 May 1964, *FRUS, 1964–1968, XXXIII, Organization and Management of U.S. Foreign Policy...*, 442–50. ~~(S)~~

Controlling CORONA (U)

These contretemps did not transpire only among deputy-level policymakers and department directors. They were fought out as well at upper management levels and in the field and affected the administration of current space reconnaissance programs and decisions about future systems. Control of CORONA—the most successful collection program in US intelligence history up to then—was the first prize in the CIA-NRO-Air Force battle royal. The initiative came from NRO and the "black" Air Force, which wanted to change the status quo; CIA at first sought to keep what responsibilities it already had. After difficulties with developing a follow-on satellite made it evident that CORONA was not going to be just an interim system, the contesting agencies became even more determined to either take or retain authority over the program. In CIA's case, McCone and Wheelon sought to insulate the Agency's CORONA activities more thoroughly from outside intervention—at times even of the sort envisioned under the various NRP agreements. From their vantage point, in Wheelon's words, "there is no honorable way to lose this one."[58] (U)

During early and mid-1963, when technical problems plagued the satellite programs, McMillan called for consolidating all of them under Program A to streamline management and resolve engineering and operational glitches quicker. "I am convinced," he wrote, "that the Director, NRO Program A, because of the direct authority he has over the necessary Air Force resources, is the only one to whom I can reasonably assign this responsibility." McMillan contended that he was following up his predecessor Charyk's plan to put all satellite activities under one organization; there could be no community program if one department (CIA) monopolized one of its main elements. McCone parried that stroke by noting that the problems then being encountered were with the Air Force's rockets, not with CIA's cameras. (That argument was persistent and persuasive; although not all the film returned from every mission was usable, there were no CORONA-series camera failures in 46 consecutive "shots" from July 1961 to November 1964.) The DCI also directed Carter and Wheelon to arrange for backup CORONA missions after he learned that the launch schedule for mid-1963 had slipped enough to jeopardize collection needed for upcoming estimates on Soviet strategic weapons.[59] ~~(S)~~

Then, in late November 1963, McMillan proposed putting CIA's CORONA contracting officer in California under the "management guidance" of the Air Force two-star general, Robert Greer, who ran Program A's office there. Greer—who answered only to the DNRO—would have authority to make "minor changes and improvements" in CORONA and would determine the threshold between minor and major. McCone and Wheelon vigorously rejected the move. Program A's failures with SAMOS offset its successes with CORONA, they argued. If anything, CIA's record showed that it ought to be more involved in all CORONA activities. The DCI charged McMillan with wanting "to take the whole project over" and, the DNRO later said, warned that "he would not stand for submersion of this project into the bureaucracy of the Air Force and that he would liquidate NRO if necessary to prevent this." In the meantime, McCone enjoined McMillan to leave things as they were. In early 1964, however, the DNRO directed that all changes in any NRP programs be referred to him; disbanded a separate Air Force liaison component with which CIA had dealt and required the Agency to communicate only with Program A managers; and seconded personnel from Program B to serve on two study groups run out of his office. Wheelon objected proprietarily that it was "inappro-

[56] Transcript of McCone-Fubini meeting on 19 June 1964, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 10; McCone memoranda, "2 May President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board on the NRO," 1 June 1964, and "Evolution of the National Reconnaissance Organization and Certain Proposals...," 17 June 1964, ibid., box 8, folder 9; McCone memorandum about meeting with McNamara, 17 June 1964, ibid.; McCone memorandum dated 12 July 1964 about meeting with Bundy and Vance on 9 July 1964, ibid., box 2, folder 12; Vance memorandum to Bundy, "Memorandum for the President, by the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, re National Reconnaissance Program," 2 June 1964, and McCone memorandum to Bundy, "National Reconnaissance Program," 11 June 1964, *FRUS, 1964–1968, XXXIII, Organization and Management of U.S. Foreign Policy...*, 454–59; Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 83. Since at least late 1962, McCone had known that Bundy agreed with his overall perspective vis-à-vis NRO, and in mid-1963 the national security adviser told the DCI that he was not impressed with McMillan's "competence and drive." McCone memorandum about meeting with Bundy on 10 January 1963, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 4; McCone memorandum about NSC meeting on 31 July 1963, ibid., box 9, folder 5. The political fallout Vance had in mind was "a possible flare-up by [the secretary of the Air Force, Eugene] Zuckert and [the Air Force chief of staff, Gen. Curtis] LeMay which would be somewhat embarrassing, and furthermore McMillan would quit." McCone memorandum (dated 12 July 1964) about meeting with Bundy and Vance on 9 July 1964, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 12. ~~(S)~~

[57] Carter untitled memorandum, 31 July 1964, *FRUS, 1964–1968, XXXIII, Organization and Management of U.S. Foreign Policy...*, 467. (U)

[58] The feud over CORONA is described most thoroughly, albeit from an NRO perspective, in Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 74 passim. The Wheelon quote comes from his memorandum to McCone, "Final Report on CORONA Management," 21 December 1963, NRO CAL 1/C/0064, no. 1400022841. (U)

[59] Perry, "History of Satellite Reconnaissance," 160; McMillan memorandum to Directors of Programs A and B, "Responsibility for the CORONA Project," 1 May 1963, NRO CAL 1/A/0039, no. 1400038980; McCone memorandum to Carter and Wheelon, "Satellite Reconnaissance Program," 19 August 1963, DCI Files, Job 98B01712R, box 1, folder 19. ~~(S)~~

priate for the NRO Staff to be designating individuals in CIA for such purposes." Although NRP-3 made no such distinction, McMillan conceded the point. The Agency's CORONA officers had been taking instructions only from the DDS&T and the director of Program B for several months already, but this skirmish increased the separation between CIA's NRP personnel and the rest of NRO, as McCone and Wheelon wanted.[60]

McCone and McMillan reached a seemingly unbreakable stalemate in mid-to-late 1964, when the DNRO tried to transfer CORONA's overall systems engineering contract from Lockheed to an Air Force-funded research center called Aerospace.[61] After CORONA rockets failed in March and April of that year, USIB directed NRO to correct deficiencies in the program. McMillan interpreted that guidance broadly and concluded that the best way to rectify problems with CORONA was to change its systems engineering contractor. McCone initially concurred in late May, but he soon changed his mind after further reflection and advice from Wheelon, Carter, and other Agency executives. Three successful CORONA missions in early June indicated that Lockheed had taken care of specific technical flaws, and changing management teams then would be too disruptive—particularly when demands for satellite imagery of the Soviet Union and Communist China were increasing. McCone wanted no changes in contracts or procedures for the time being. McMillan ordered the transfer anyway, citing "a decision that has been coordinated with the Secretary of Defense and Director, Central Intelligence."

With that, McCone lost his patience. Claiming he was through trying to work with Fubini and McMillan, he went to McNamara and Vance to plead his case. He charged that the DNRO ignored intelligence considerations, did not communicate with the Agency or use the DDNRO meaningfully, "lacked integrity," and exhibited "an element of dishonesty [that] made him totally unsatisfactory." McNamara conceded that the DNRO's behavior in the contract affair was "indefensible" and at last agreed in principle with McCone's recommendation to take NRO out of the Air Force and make it a coordinating office rather than a line organization. He told McCone, however, that he would do nothing until after the November elections. McMillan temporarily backed down and suspended the contract transfer, but in August, Vance and Fubini sided with him against McCone, and Aerospace was designated as Lockheed's replacement.[62] CIA remained in charge of the cameras and security for CORONA, but the Air Force's Program A office now had responsibility for overall systems engineering and contract integration.

Further disagreement quickly arose between CIA and the Department of Defense over how far Aerospace's authority

[60] McNamara draft memorandum to McMillan, "Policy Guidance on Management Control over Reconnaissance Programs," 22 October 1963, NRO CAL 1/A/0043, no. 1400038981; McMillan memorandum to McCone, "Management of the CORONA Project," 28 October 1963, NRO CAL 1/A/0044, no. 1400038973; Wheelon memoranda to McCone, both titled "CORONA Management," 18 November and 10 December 1963, NRO CAL 1/C/0058, no. 1400022830, and 1/C/0062, no. 1400029819; transcript of McCone-McMillan meeting on 27 November 1963, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 7; McMillan memorandum to McCone, "Management of CORONA Project" with attachment, "Responsibility for Operating Management of the CORONA Project," both dated 10 December 1963, NRO CAL 1/A/0045, nos. 1400038975 and 1400038976; McMillan untitled memorandum to McNamara and McCone, 12 December 1963, NRO CAL 1/A/0046, no. 1400038982; McCone letter to McMillan, 13 December 1963, NRO CAL 1/A/0047, no. 1400038974; McMillan letter to McCone, 4 February 1964, with attached memorandum to Directors of Programs A and B, "Operating and Engineering Objectives for Corona," 3 February 1964, NRO CAL 1/A/0049, nos. 1400022836 and 1400022837; Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 75, 80; [redacted] CIA and the NRO," 42–43, 45–46.

[61] Sources for the Aerospace affair are: Day, "Development and Improvement of the CORONA Satellite," in *Eye in the Sky*, 79, 259 n. 109; Wheelon, "CORONA," in ibid., 41–43; transcript of McCone-McMillan meeting on 28 May 1964, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 10; Carter memorandum about meeting with McMillan on 25 June 1964, transcript of McCone-McMillan telephone conversation on 27 June 1964, cable [redacted] o Director), 27 June 1964, McCone memorandum about meeting with McNamara and Vance on 29 June 1964, and McCone memorandum about meeting with NRO ExComm, 12 August 1964, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 11; Carter memorandum about NRO ExComm meeting on 6 October 1964, ibid., folder 13; Vance letter to McCone, 4 September 1964, and McCone's reply, 10 September 1964, ibid., box 8, folder 9; McCone/McAuliffe OH, 12–13, 47; McMillan untitled memorandum to Carter, 30 June 1964, DS&T Files, Job 78B03193A, box 60, folder 1409; Carter letter to Vance, 28 August 1964, DCI Files, Job 98B01712R, box 1, folder 18; McMillan untitled memorandum to Director of Program B, 18 May 1964, NRO CAL 1/A/0054, no. 1400022831; McMillan cable to Directors of Programs A and B, 17 August 1964, NRO CAL 1/A/0061, no. 1400073399; Carter memorandum about NRO ExComm meeting on 1 September 1964, NRO CAL 1/A/0064, no. 1400069468; Carter memorandum to Vance, "CIA Program B Participation in CORONA," NRO CAL 1/A/0066, no. 1400022723; Carter memorandum about NRO ExComm meeting on 29 September 1964, NRO CAL 1/A/0067, no. 1400066666; McCone letter to Vance, 6 October 1964, NRO CAL 1/A/0070, no. 1400022813; McCone letter to Vance, 21 October 1964, NRO CAL 1/A/0073, no. 1400022785; Carter cable to McMillan, 2 December 1964, NRO CAL 1/A/0083, no. 1400022777; Carter memorandum to Wheelon, 8 December 1964, NRO CAL 1/A/0085, no. 1400022775; McMillan letter to Carter, 2 March 1965, NRO CAL 1/A/0089, no. 1400067052; Carter letter to McMillan, 16 March 1965, NRO CAL 1/A/0094, no. 1400022890; Carter memorandum about meetings with Vance and McMillan on 25 March 1965, NRO CAL 1/A/0096, no. 1400022888; *The Aerospace Corporation: Its Work, 1960–1980*, 17–19; Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 83–86. Clarence "Kelly" Johnson of Lockheed, who designed the U-2 and A-12 aircraft, appealed directly to McCone to work against the contract transfer. Johnson letter to McCone, 6 July 1964, McCone Papers, box 8, folder 1.

[62] An early sign of Vance's attitudes on the NRP issue came in July 1961, when, as general counsel for the Department of Defense, he drafted a management proposal for the program. Instead of continuing to have the Pentagon and CIA run it jointly, Vance suggested placing responsibility for NRP management solely in the hands of a special assistant for reconnaissance whom the secretary of defense would select. CIA, in a subordinate role, would "assist the Department of Defense by providing support as required in areas of program security, communications, and covert contract administration." Vance, draft memorandum, "Management of the National Reconnaissance Program," 21 July 1961, on National Security Archive Web site at www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB35, doc. 3. (U)

extended into Program B. Agency leaders took the position that the Pentagon's contractor would have nothing to do with CIA's designated duties in the NRP. If, in the judgment of the DCI or his deputies, Aerospace or Program A officials tried to act in any manner that adversely affected CORONA payloads or security, CIA would veto them. When Vance advised McCone that the Agency was acting contrary to Department of Defense directives on contracting, the DCI replied flatly: "[T]he man charged by the president with the responsibility of running an organization should run it in accordance with the policies and procedures which best conform to the particular organization, not the policies and procedures established in some other department of government." Moreover, CIA management would not allow the expanded Agency presence in Los Angeles—which was agreed to during preceding months in order to encourage interdepartmental cooperation—to be subsumed under Program A or used merely for "backstopping" Air Force activities. Instead of being left to "watch the parade go by," as Carter put it, McCone wanted CIA's West Coast personnel to take part in all aspects of the CORONA program that affected Agency equities—including Program A affairs. (S)

The test of wills over CORONA management persisted into late 1964 and early 1965, by which time Carter—with McCone's support—succeeded in countermanding the DNRO's orders to Agency personnel in Program B. As far as the Seventh Floor was concerned, the Program B chain of command circumvented NRO altogether. Lockheed remained under CIA contract and was paid with Agency (not NRP) funds. This particular squabble ended in March 1965 when McCone and Vance agreed to suspend changes in contracting or management procedures in the CORONA program until the larger issue of NRP authority was resolved. McCone, Carter, and Wheelon had achieved a clear bureaucratic victory. They had prevented McMillan from exercising control over any important aspect of CIA's CORONA activities—to a significant degree because the DCI and DDCI were willing to go over the DNRO's head and deal directly with the secretary and deputy secretary of defense.[63] (U)

Dueling Systems (U)

McCone and the other NRP principals also fought over what community organization would have primacy in next-generation imagery satellites. Although CORONA's accomplishments exceeded the expectations of its designers, it was still regarded as a stopgap collection and recovery system. American intelligence planners and analysts needed, and demanded, higher resolution imagery to provide policymakers with estimates and warnings about Soviet strategic weapons and military intentions. (U)

Ironically, two of CORONA's achievements spurred efforts to replace it. Imagery obtained in June 1961 revealed a facility near Leningrad that some analysts believed was a new antiballistic missile (ABM) system for countering US intermediate-range missiles. In 1962, photoanalysts detected a suspected ABM site in Tallinn, Estonia. Lacking relevant HUMINT, the Kennedy administration turned to CORONA for more information. Designed for wide-area search missions, CORONA cameras had a resolution of six to nine meters, and even the newest system could not resolve objects as small as surface-to-air missiles. (S)

[redacted] The decision about what system would replace CORONA was continually complicated by bureaucratic politics between CIA, NRO, and the Department of Defense. The technical choice between a close-look and a wide-area system also involved determining which NRP agency would take the lead in developing and operating CORONA's successor. In the perception of top CIA and Pentagon officials, that selection would determine the course of American space reconnaissance for years to come.[64] (S)

The first moves in this controversy occurred in 1962. McCone and then-DNRO Charyk prodded the "black" Air Force to speed up work on a high-resolution (two to three feet) spotting satellite called [redacted] (also known by the designation of the camera it would use, the KH-7) and to begin a joint CIA-Air Force effort to produce an interim

[63] Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 89–94, 98–100. Also, the DNRO insisted on adhering to a "two buckets a month" launch schedule set forth in October 1964—contrary to McCone's preferences that enough time be allowed between shots to permit film readout in case targets needed to be changed. McMillan still had authority to cancel CORONA launchings—as he did on 23 March 1965, citing CIA's failure to provide Program A managers with information needed to conduct the mission. McMillan memorandum to McCone and Vance, "Requirement for Return of CORONA Data," 11 March 1965, and McCone letter to McMillan, 13 March 1965, DCI Files, Job 98B01712R, box 1, folder 17; Jackson D. Maxey (DS&T/Special Projects Staff) memorandum to Carter, "The CORONA Program" (with attachment), 29 March 1965, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 20, folder 413. (S)

[64] [redacted] "View from CIA: The Development, Management, and Exploitation of Satellite Reconnaissance," unpublished manuscript (1990), 27–28; Haines, "Critical to US Security," 4; National Reconnaissance Office, *The Story*, 16, 179–82. (S)

close-look satellite, LANYARD, using "off-the-shelf" equipment. under development since 1960, would not be ready until mid-1963, and LANYARD was intended to fill the requirement for detailed imagery of the Tallinn facility. LANYARD combined a high-resolution camera (the KH-6) developed for the cancelled SAMOS program with the launch and recovery systems used on CORONA missions.[65] ~~(S)~~

McCone's pessimism about the two projects—he told PFIAB in December 1962 that "both of them have serious problems" that "may not be licked.... I am afraid we might run into trouble with them"—was justified. Nothing in LANYARD, from the boosters to the film return capsule to the cameras, worked reliably, and only one of three missions attempted during March–July 1963 was even partly successful. got off to a bad start as well when Trouble-shooting quickly resolved the problems, however, and three missions during July–September returned usable photography. With the Air Force's satellite evidently a success, McMillan cancelled LANYARD soon after. (Earlier, he had used that project's difficulties as a justification for giving the Air Force full control of it—even though the problems were with the rockets, not the cameras.) Meanwhile, the new KH-4 camera, with a resolution of 10 feet, was successfully deployed in June, but another mission using the KH-2 stereoscopic camera to photograph the Leningrad complex failed. Overall, 1963 was a bleak year for US satellite reconnaissance. One third of the CORONA missions failed—including one in June that targeted the Leningrad site—compared to only three of 20 the year before. ~~(S)~~

CORONA's inconsistent performance around this time, and the Air Force's achievement with gave McCone a powerful incentive to establish a CIA-only program to develop a satellite system with both close-look and broad-search capabilities. The technical, bureaucratic, and personal lines of force in the "fight for the sky spies" converged over that project, called The episode showed the strength of McCone and Wheelon's determination to secure for CIA an unassailable place in post-CORONA space reconnaissance. It began in May 1963, when McCone convened a panel of experts chaired by to take a sweeping look at the future of satellite reconnaissance. He asked the to devote special attention to the amount of camera resolution needed to satisfy intelligence requirements, how far photographic technology could be expected to improve, and how vulnerable US satellites were to Soviet attack. The DCI had hoped this distinguished group would endorse his plan to have CIA develop a system to replace CORONA. Instead, the experts recommended improvements to CORONA, judging that "an attempt to make a completely new system which would provide equally wide coverage with a modest improvement in resolution...would not be a wise investment of resources."[66] ~~(S)~~

Not dissuaded, McCone directed Wheelon to investigate the requirements for and the possible configuration of a second-generation search satellite. The main question the DDS&T and his staff had to address was how much resolution was needed to fulfill community requirements for imagery of Soviet strategic targets. A detailed in-house experiment, which included 25 NPIC photointerpreters, concluded that most targets could be properly identified at a resolution of two to four feet. Wheelon decided that an entirely new camera system with a longer focal length would have to be developed to meet such requirements. While the DS&T was working on its study, CORONA's Performance Evaluation Team reached the contrary assessment that the lenses on the KH-series cameras could be enlarged without losing acuity; in other words, the old system could be improved sufficiently to satisfy the community's imagery needs.[67] ~~(S)~~

At this point, NRP principals squared off over McMillan and the NRO staff did not want CIA independently to design a replacement for CORONA, and supported the recommendations of the and the CORONA evaluation team that the old system be

[65] Sources for this paragraph and the next are: "Corona," in ed., *CORONA: America's First Satellite Program*, 31; Dwayne A. Day, "Failed Phoenix: The KH-6 LANYARD Reconnaissance Satellite," *Spaceflight* 39, no. 5 (May 1997): 170–74; "CORONA: The Final Years," unpublished manuscript (1986), 12–14, 26–27, and idem, "The View from CIA," 28, 47; Perry, "History of Satellite Reconnaissance," 144; NRO, *The CORONA Story*, 94, 99; NRO, 41, 179–82; McCone memorandum (dated 10 December 1962) about meeting with PFIAB on 7 December 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 3; McCone untitled memorandum to Carter and Wheelon, 20 September 1963, NRO CAL 1/A/0041, no. 1400067071. Because of recurrent poor weather, th ~~(S)~~

[66] Purcell Panel report in DS&T Files, Job 78B03193A, box 60, folder 1406. McCone was so determined that CIA develop a new satellite that in early 1964 he even considered (albeit temporarily) relinquishing much of the Agency's authority over CORONA in return from a free hand with its successor. Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 79 ~~(S)~~

[67] Wheelon memorandum, "Project May 1964, DS&T Files, Job 78B03193A, box 60, folder 1408; Haines, "Critical to US Security," 5–6. ~~(S)~~

"scaled up." They were counting on the success of and, as described above, hoped to maneuver as much of CORONA as possible out of Program B and into Program A. McCone disagreed with the NRO view and discussed the matter with Deputy Secretary Gilpatric and other NRP officials in late October 1963. They decided to form, under joint CIA-NRO-Air Force sponsorship, a group of the nation's leading optical experts to explore ways to improve satellite photography (and specifically to investigate why CORONA film was clouding). The panel, named the Satellite Photography Working Group and headed by physicist Sidney Drell of Stanford University, basically supported the Agency's contentions that CORONA had been pushed to its technical limits, and that a new system was needed to provide both wide-area and close-look capabilities. Studies Wheelon had obtained from two contractors, concurred. McMillan pigeonholed the Drell Committee assessment inside NRO by referring it to another review panel, but he could do nothing about the DS&T reports, which McCone and Wheelon used along with the Drell study to justify their next, controversial, move.[68]

In May 1964, Wheelon contracted with to prepare a joint proposal for a CORONA replacement.[69] The contractors returned with specifications for a photographic payload, a reeentry vehicle, and a launch rocket. Over the strong objections of McMillan and Fubini, McCone asked Gilpatric to direct the DNRO to establish as an NRO project and assign responsibility for its research, development and operation to CIA. McCone received a timely endorsement in June from another panel of experts, chaired by Edwin Land, which called "extremely attractive" and said it deserved an immediate investment of In early July, Wheelon formally presented a project plan to McMillan. Vance, just installed as number-two man at the Pentagon, tried to slow the process by suggesting the DNRO complete comparative studies and explore alternatives before committing to the Agency proposal. Vance authorized CIA to pursue "design tests necessary to establish the feasibility of the proposed camera concept."

Wheelon, with McCone's approval, went far beyond design studies. After USIB in late July called for developing a broad-search and a spotting system, he created a Special Projects Staff in the DS&T to handle all Agency satellite reconnaissance programs; proposed that CIA sponsor two competitions for contracts to design the camera's film-handling system; and invited proposals and bids for the spacecraft and recovery vehicle. When the DNRO asked Wheelon to furnish a briefing to a steering group Vance had set up to evaluate satellite designs, the DDS&T refused. He "would have to await instructions from 'his boss'" before agreeing to brief the group. Moreover, in NRP meetings, McCone and Carter argued that cost too much and that combining close-look and wide-area capabilities in would save up to

These events infuriated McMillan.[71] He argued against (and for Air Force designs) on engineering grounds—"[t]he issue is whether a system that involved many fewer technical risks than this one but which only painted a stripe might not in the end be a valid competitor to this"—and asserted that under NRP-3, CIA had no authority to contract for anything besides cameras and other sensor systems; spacecraft and rockets were the Air Force's responsibility. Allowing McCone and Wheelon to implement their plan would give CIA "an independent capability for full-scale development of space systems," which he, as DNRO, could not countenance.

[68] Drell Committee report in DS&T Files, Job 79B00314A, box 5, folder 7; Haines, "Critical to US Security," 6.

[69] Sources for this paragraph and the next are: Jonathan E. Lewis, *Spy Capitalism*, 232–35; Haines, "Critical to US Security," 7–9; Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 86–89; Wheelon memoranda, "Land Panel Review of and "Proposal for both dated 26 June 1964, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 11; Carter memorandum to Wheelon, "Conduct of the Program," 27 August 1964, and Wheelon memorandum to McCone, "Conduct of the Program," 31 August 1964, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 19, folder 378; Carter memorandum about NRO ExComm meeting on 5 January 1965, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 6; Carter memorandum about NRO ExComm meeting on 12 January 1965, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 15.

[70] The Land Panel was a working group the President's Science Advisory Committee had set up to oversee satellite reconnaissance programs. (U)

[71] Sources for this paragraph and the next two are: transcript of McCone meeting with McMillan, Fubini, Wheelon, and Maxey on 26 June 1964, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 11; transcript of McCone-McMillan meeting on 28 May 1964, ibid., folder 10; McCone untitled memorandum to Carter, 22 June 1964, ibid., box 9, folder 5; Carter memorandum about meeting with McMillan on 25 June 1964, ibid., box 2, folder 11; McCone memorandum about NRO ExComm meeting on 12 August 1964, ibid., folder 12; Carter memorandum about NRO ExComm meeting on 12 January 1965, ibid., folder 15; McMillan letter to McCone, 22 January 1965, ibid., box 8, folder 9; Haines, "Critical to US Security," 7–8; Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 86–87; Lewis, *Spy Capitalism*, 233–34.

Accordingly, when Carter asked McMillan to commit upwards of NRO funds to he declined unless he controlled the project. Throughout the dispute, McMillan accused Wheelon of concealing from him important activities the DS&T was conducting under NRP auspices. The DNRO did not mention, however, that he had violated NRP-3 as well. In early 1964—even before began—he approved Program A contracts with for cameras with wide-area capabilities. That action infringed on CIA's responsibility under NRP-3. (McMillan also tried to enter an agreement with a CIA contractor, but the company refused because it was already working on a similar project for the Agency.) Even after received formal approval, the DNRO authorized additional studies of cameras for use in a Program A project called (S)

Moreover, McMillan committed so much NRP money in FY 1965 to a significantly improved system (called G-3) that little was left for and he delayed the release of unspent FY 1964 funds that had been authorized for the Agency's project. When McCone found out, he complained that McMillan was, in effect, unilaterally establishing collection requirements by allocating funds for a particular system and restricting expenditures for others. At a time when the community was "bleeding" for a higher resolution search system to acquire strategic intelligence, the DCI said, the DNRO was concentrating on a targeting satellite for military uses. By late August, provisional NRP funds for had been found, and development work seemed about to move ahead. (S)

The contracting dispute heated up in the autumn of 1964, however. In the field, the relationship between CIA was stormy because of differences between two stiff-necked employees—Wheelon's deputy for special projects, Jackson Maxey, and the company's chief engineer, —over contract specifications and management procedures. When Richard Bissell directed CIA's satellite programs, he gave contractors wide latitude. In contrast, Wheelon recalls, Maxey "tended to give them a good deal more direction than they felt they needed." At the top leadership level, Vance—trying to counter Wheelon's practice of letting contracts without McMillan's approval—told McCone that he preferred that technical direction of the project be given to a systems engineering contractor. The DCI resisted; doing so "would mean liquidating CIA's in-house capability, transferring it to some contractor, schooling him in the project...and just hoping it would work out." Vance replied that he would then reconsider his decision to proceed with McCone countered that Vance's idea was "bad business...improper...a stupid procedure" that would cause delays and waste money. "I tried to avoid such mistakes in both business and government and did not intend to make one in the instance of ' he said. Direction of the project must remain within the US government. If the deputy secretary of defense insisted on giving such managerial responsibility to a contractor, the DCI would consider pursuing independently of the NRP.

> I did not think that Dr. McMillan or General Greer's organization [the Program A office] had the competence, the imagination[,] nor the will to do the job properly.... [A]s DCI, I could not live under arrangements which I thought ultimately would deprive the Intelligence Community and the United States Government of an intelligence gathering resource that would be essential...and would be the best resource science could produce.[72] (S)

At a meeting in early October, querulous NRP principals traded charges and countercharges about CIA's handling of Words such as "deceit," "fair-haired boy," "reneged," "disgust," and "arrogant intransigence" captured the sorry state of relations among the attendees, who already were mad at one another over the CORONA argument. A few days later, a defiant McCone told the director of the Bureau of the Budget that he "had no intention of stopping" would pay for it from CIA research and development funds for FY 1965, and "would not, under any circumstances," turn over technical direction of the project to a contractor. If "McMillan's organization," which "lacked competence and breadth," had its way, McCone could not discharge his responsibilities as DCI.[73] (S)

The feud subsided briefly toward the end of 1964 but erupted again with full force in early 1965. Harbingers of trouble appeared in mid-January, when McCone, Wheelon, Maxey, Fubini, McMillan, Land, and others from CIA and the Pentagon went to to discuss the project with company executives and

[72] Lewis, *Spy Capitalism*, 241; "Charting a Technical Revolution: An Interview with Former DDS&T Albert Wheelon," *Studies* 45, no. 2 (2001): 40; McCone memorandum about NRO ExComm meeting on 15 September 1964, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 13, (S)

engineers. McCone asked the president of [redacted] and his head engineer, [redacted] if [redacted] was "the best approach" to the close look/broad search requirement. They gave guardedly affirmative answers ("Yes...considering the constraints..."; "Yes, at the moment..."). Privately [redacted] told McCone that [redacted] was under an NRO contract with the Air Force to develop alternatives to [redacted] At the NRO ExComm meeting to discuss the trip, McMillan made two statements that rankled McCone, who resented their "turnabout is fair play" subtext. The DNRO said that several contractors, including [redacted] conducting NRO-funded studies of search systems that would compete with [redacted] and he claimed that Wheelon had instructed an Agency contractor, [redacted] not to tell NRO that it was working on a [redacted] alternative. McCone denounced the "bureaucratic nonsense" that was delaying NRO's reimbursement of CIA for its expenditures on the project, and McMillan agreed to look into the matter immediately.[74] ~~(S)~~

After the meeting, the DCI spoke with Vance alone. He said that the DNRO's action—releasing money to a contractor for projects that properly were CIA's, without informing him, and warning the contractor not to divulge the arrangement to the Agency—was "the last straw." If Vance and McNamara would not straighten out NRO, McCone "intend[ed] to take [the issue] to higher authority." Vance replied that he was "fully sympathetic," but that resolving the CIA-NRO controversy "was deferred by other and more pressing problems." A resolution appeared still farther away after Carter and Vance got into an argument over the latter's refusal to release more NRP funds for [redacted] Carter charged Vance with letting politics sway his decision, at which point the deputy secretary of defense "became visibly upset, broke up the meeting, and invited General Carter to leave his office."[75] ~~(S)~~

In late February 1965, [redacted] stunned Agency managers by suddenly announcing that Itek was withdrawing from the [redacted] contract—potentially worth [redacted] He claimed that the technical specifications CIA demanded were not required under the contract and that Itek had told Agency officers that those details were causing performance problems. In response to that warning, according to [redacted] CIA's representatives rebuffed the company's proposed alternatives and tried to pressure its executives into endorsing a flawed design by promising jobs or threatening to "take over" the company. ~~(S)~~

Several aspects of [redacted] action upset McCone, Carter, and Wheelon, who lit into [redacted] in meetings at CIA Headquarters. First was what they regarded as [redacted] clumsy handling of the decision. The company had decided on the pullout later on the same day that it had briefed Edwin Land's panel about [redacted] in the same cautiously optimistic tone it had used at the mid-January conference. McCone upbraided [redacted] for that "stupid" move. In addition, the DCI felt he had been duped (and by a former

[73] Carter memorandum about NRO ExComm meeting on 6 October 1964, and McCone memorandum about meeting with Bureau of the Budget officials on 9 October 1964, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 13. A few months earlier, McCone had applied his business experience to the question. "[If] a manufacturer takes a license to build a device developed by another organization...the device remains static. On the other hand, the product of the licensor continually improves because of the input of the creators. Having invented and developed the device, they wish to continually improve and perfect it. The licensee is not so motivated." Furthermore, "[n]ot many men feel really inspired and are inclined to put forth their best efforts if their role in research and development and the production [sic] of their ingenuity is turned over to others once it is completed." Untitled memorandum about the PFIAB/Baker Panel report, 25 June 1964, McCone Papers, box 8, folder 9. Unspoken throughout these discussions of [redacted] was the fact that problems with [redacted] were adding to the tension. [redacted] missions in 1964 encountered serious problems—a record of unreliability that helped CIA and hurt NRO and the Air Force. NRO, [redacted] ~~(S)~~

[74] [redacted] (Special Projects Staff) memorandum about trip to [redacted] 9 January 1965, and McCone memorandum about NRO ExComm meeting on 21 January 1965, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 15. The best open-source account of [redacted] is Lewis, *Spy Capitalism*, but it relies heavily on NRO histories, [redacted] and recollections of company executives offered many years later, and does not include enough information from Agency sources to tell the story thoroughly. ~~(S)~~

[75] McCone memorandum about meeting with Vance on 21 January 1965, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 15; Carter memorandum about NRO ExComm meeting on 27 January 1965, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 6. Soon after—and presumably with this senior executive animosity in mind—McCone decided not to increase short-term Agency spending on [redacted] He assumed the project would move ahead and wanted NRO to pay for the new system eventually. Carter untitled memorandum to Wheelon, 11 February 1965, DCI Files, Job 98B01712R, box 1, folder 17. ~~(S)~~

[76] Principal sources used on this phase of the [redacted] flap are: Paul Worthman (NRO) memorandum, "Telephone Conversations with Representatives of the [redacted] Corporation," 24 February 1965, on National Security Archive Web site at www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB54, doc. 24; transcripts of McCone meeting with Carter and [redacted] and Carter meeting with Wheelon, Bross, and [redacted] both on 25 February 1965, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 3; transcript of McCone meeting with Fubini on 27 February 1965, ibid; transcript of McCone meeting with Richard Garwin (IBM physicist) on 19 April 1965, ibid., folder 4; McCone memorandum about meeting with Vance on 25 February 1965, ibid., box 2, folder 15; McCone memorandum about meeting with Land on 8 March 1965, ibid., folder 16; Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 95–97; Haines, "Critical to US Security," 10; transcript of Wheelon [redacted] telephone conversation on 19 January 1965 [redacted] Corporation declassified files, NRO FOIA Reading Room, cabinet 7, drawer B, folder 61 (hereafter cited in this form: NRO [redacted] 7/B/61); [redacted] "Charting a Technical Revolution," 40–41; Lewis, *Spy Capitalism*, 244–6 [redacted] privately complained to an Air Force manager in Program A that he decided to pull out of the [redacted] project because the Agency was "fostering an 'immoral environment'" and that [redacted] could not survive under the 'domination of the CIA.'" Col. Paul E. Worthman, memorandum about [redacted] discussions with McMillan and Land, 25 February 1965, HS Files, Job 03-01724R, box 4, folder 2. ~~(S)~~

Agency officer, at that). Nobody from had told him during the January inspection, or at any other time, that company engineers were not getting along with Maxey or that they had reservations about design details (the "scan angle").[77] Drawing on his experience with contract disputes when he was a shipbuilder, the DCI could not fathom why had not mentioned those difficulties before they grew so severe. In his defense, argued that the Agency's project officers were running rough-shod over his technical experts for objecting to the design CIA allegedly had mandated. After having been "reduced to mechanical engineers, draftsmen, and manufacturers rather than creative scientists," officials resented having to take what they described as "an oath of loyalty" to CIA's concept, only to be blamed if the experimental system failed. McCone later conceded that "our people might have gone a little too far" in pushing for but he did not address allegations of Agency pressure, and he supported Wheelon's contention that the fault for the scan angle problem lay with (S)

Starting from admission that the company had an NRO contract, however, McCone and his deputies suspected that president was concealing a lucrative Air Force offer to his company to stop working with CIA. had no significant source of income other that its Agency contract, so the DCI and other CIA executives surmised that the Air Force had made the cancellation worthwhile. When McCone asked 'How much pressure has the Air Force put on you fellows to find a way to back out of this program?," the president replied, "Absolutely none in the recent—in the last two months. was working on a competing system for NRO, but no definitive evidence to support McCone's allegation has surfaced.[78] McCone also was bothered that had taken a large sum of money from the Agency but had delivered nothing. "I'm highly critical of for accepting what appears to me to be a several million dollar subsidy, and then, having gone all through this enthusiasm and support, everybody walks away from it," he told McCone was so indignant that he ushered out of their luncheon meeting without a handshake. (S)

Lastly, the DCI and his deputies feared that the affair would embarrass the Agency and call into question its competence to manage NRP contracts. The flap might cause a sudden political shift in favor of NRO and the Air Force, especially if PFIAB (through Land) criticized CIA to the White House for mishandling its relationship with Carter stated this concern more baldly (and conspiratorially) than anyone at the Agency, telling

> Had someone sat down and designed a procedure to totally discredit CIA and the technical competence of its people, in the presence of a political atmosphere which was well known to them, to completely destroy the morale of a group of certainly national-interest-oriented people of high competence, they could not have come up with a neater operation.... The logical process of what you've done is to discredit this Agency and its personnel in terms of its ability to pursue a program. You have established for the world that we were trying to sell a wooden nickel....

The Agency's concerns were not fanciful, as the NRO staff "received the news [of withdrawal] with undisguised glee" and "found the incident hilariously enjoyable," according to an internal NRO history. (S)

McCone and Wheelon tried to recover quickly. The Land Panel's preliminary endorsement of in early March 1965 (formally issued in July) helped keep the project on track. To preserve what had accomplished so far, Wheelon arranged the transfer of plans and prototypes to another Agency contractor, that had been working on a smaller backup design for CIA since 1964.

Lewis, *Spy Capitalism*, 242, 245. (U)

soon turned the charge back on CIA by alleging that unidentified Agency officers were "exerting improper pressure" on other contractors and other US government agencies. Jackson Maxey advised that CIA respond to this "affront" by forcing to prove its claims. The record does not indicate what follow-up occurred. Maxey memorandum to Carter, Allegations Against the Agency," 30 March 1965, NRO 8/C/82. (U)

Endgame (U)

At the same time they were engaged in these project-level battles, McCone and NRP principals made various efforts—some sincere, some halfhearted, some manipulative—to make the program work better, or at least to move it along the lines they and their departments wanted it to follow. In August 1964, McCone, Vance, Fubini, McMillan, and Carter began meeting weekly as an NRO Executive Committee—a format McCone supported but which, he commented to Vance, would not have been necessary if "a properly oriented DNRO was running the show." At the first meeting, however, the resentment McMillan and Fubini felt toward Wheelon's ambitions came through loud and clear. Fubini went so far as to insinuate that CIA was "trying to create another NASA." McCone insisted that Fubini withdraw the remark, but he did allow later that the Agency's growing in-house satellite capability seemed to be "worrying a lot of people around town." He informed the committee that much of CIA's recent effort in space reconnaissance responded to PFIAB's recommendations after the Cuban missile crisis. At a later meeting, McCone—perhaps to highlight McMillan's obstinacy—offered "any and all of CIA's technical capability," including Wheelon and his staff, to help the DNRO learn why the failure rate of CORONA missions had increased recently. McMillan did not accept, as McCone presumably had expected. Following the fall 1964 elections, McCone pushed for the idea, agreed to by McNamara the previous August, of putting NRO in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. Besides raising it with Vance, the DCI also lobbied Capitol Hill, particularly Rep. Mendel Rivers (D-SC), the new chairman of the House Armed Services Committee (one of the four committees that oversaw CIA). Vance was unresponsive, however, and Rivers did not commit himself.[80]

By this time, McCone had set a date for leaving CIA and was preparing to turn the NRO problem over to his successor.[81] "In an atmosphere of prejudice and antagonism, it was difficult to make progress," he told PFIAB. He had hoped McMillan would become frustrated with the infighting and leave, and, according to Elder, did what he could to bring that day closer. (Elder, however, has denied allegations that McCone and Vance agreed that if the former fired Wheelon, the latter would fire McMillan.) As it turned out, the DNRO outlasted the DCI on the job by five months. McCone had most of the last word on NRO, however. His 1964 reorganization scheme became the basis for a fourth, and much longer-lasting, NRP agreement (NRP-4) signed in August 1965 by Vance and McCone's successor, William Raborn, who had a similar attitude about NRO.[82] NRP-4 established NRO as a separate agency within the Depart-

[79] Garwin memorandum to Land with attached draft report of Land Panel, 5 March 1965, McCone Papers, box 8, folder 9; Haines, "Critical to US Security," 10; Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 105. In April 1965 wrote McCone an apology for handling of the contract withdrawal, but he conceded nothing on the technical reasons for the decision. The pullout irreparably damaged CIA's relations with They could not agree on terms for new CORONA contracts and instead just renewed old ones. Itek kept building CORONA cameras until the program ended in 1972, but the company never again won a contract for a new spy satellite camera system. Lewis, *Spy Capitalism*, 258–59.

[80] McCone memorandum about NRO ExComm meeting on 12 August 1964, and McCone memorandum to Vance, 14 August 1964 (with penciled notation, "Not sent—discussed in meeting") attached to McCone memorandum about NRO ExComm meeting on 18 August 1964, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 12; McCone memorandum about meeting with Vance on 16 December 1964, *FRUS, 1964–1968, XXXIII, Organization and Management of U.S. Foreign Policy...*, 479–81; McCone memorandum about NRO ExComm meeting on 23 October 1964, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 13; McCone memoranda about meetings with Vance on 21 January and 25 February 1965, ibid., folder 15; minutes of NRO ExComm meetings, 26 August 1964 to 5 February 1965, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 17, folder 15

A lower-level, less formal group—proposed in different form by Gilpatric, and comprising Carter, Wheelon, McMillan, and Fubini—had met in late 1963 and early 1964 in an unsuccessful attempt to achieve comity by committee. McCone and Wheelon had opposed Gilpatric's idea of creating a formal, chartered review committee. The DDS&T argued that he would be subordinate to the DNRO under the original scheme. Carter untitled memorandum to McCone, 6 December 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 3; Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 75; Wheelon memorandum to McCone, "Secretary Gilpatric's Proposal for an NRP Review Committee," 6 December 1963, NRO CAL 1/C/0060, no. 1400066670

[81] Sources for this section are: Kirkpatrick memorandum about McCone meeting with PFIAB on 4 February 1965, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 19, folder 382; "Agreement for Reorganization of the National Reconnaissance Program," 13 August 1965, *FRUS, 1964–1968, XXXIII, Organization and Management of U.S. Foreign Policy...*, 506–10; Haines, *National Reconnaissance Office*, 25; idem, "Critical to US Security," 10–11; Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 106–11; Perry, "History of Satellite Reconnaissance," 163–65; NRO, *The CORONA Story*, 103–8; Richelson, *The Wizards of Langley*, 112–21; McCone/McAuliffe OH, 11–12; Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 10–11; "CIA and the NRO," 49–52.

[82] Edwin Land had warned Wheelon and McMillan in early 1965 that unless they started cooperating with each other, "a strong wind would come along and blow them both out of the NRO tree." Still, Wheelon advised Raborn not to sign the agreement. John Bross, head of the NIPE, represented CIA in the NRP-4 negotiations; Fubini took the lead for the Pentagon. Land OH, 10; vol. 2, 254; Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 109.

ment of Defense; designated the secretary of defense as the executive branch agent of the NRP; set up a new Executive Committee (to include the DCI, the deputy secretary of defense, and the presidential science adviser) that would manage the program and report to the secretary of defense; and granted the DCI authority to establish collection requirements for reconnaissance satellites. The DNRO and DDS&T would attend Executive Committee meetings but could not vote, and the former's status was reduced to that of an assistant secretary—on par with a CIA deputy director. Also, three personnel changes eliminated much of the hostility: McCone resigned as DCI in April; Wheelon, although still DDS&T, no longer would be the Agency's NRO representative; and McMillan stepped down as DNRO in September. His replacement, Alexander Flax, joined the new DDCI, Richard Helms, in developing a more congenial relationship between CIA and the Pentagon. ~~(S)~~

NRP-4 was a compromise between CIA and the Air Force. It made NRO less parochial by taking it out of a service branch, but the NRP would remain ultimately under the Pentagon's authority, with direct CIA input in policymaking. The management of separate systems was divided. CIA would run CORONA and [redacted] and the Air Force would have charge of [redacted] and the proposed [redacted] CIA did not get control of the satellite operations center in Sunnyvale, California, which programmed collection schedules, nor was it relieved of the budgetary restrictions of earlier agreements. That NRP-4 distressed partisans on both sides suggested how Solomonic it was. McMillan believed it "weakened considerably" the authority of NRO, while Jackson Maxey, Wheelon's special projects chief, resigned from CIA because he believed it constrained the Agency too much.[83] ~~(S)~~

The fourth NRP agreement led to successful cooperation between CIA and the "black" Air Force on several satellite collection projects and worked better as a decisionmaking structure than the earlier accords. The two organizations still competed and occasionally overreacted to real or perceived slights, and the Agency remained underrepresented on the NRO staff. Despite their history of distrust, however, CIA and the Air Force gradually smoothed out the roughest spots in their relationship and avoided much of the interdepartmental fighting and personal bickering that had threatened to derail the US space reconnaissance effort.[84] ~~(S)~~

OXCART: Development, Deployment, and Disclosure (U)

One of CIA's most awe-inspiring technological achievements—the fastest, highest-flying manned jet aircraft ever built—reached its final stages of development while McCone was DCI. From his first days in office, McCone gave high priority to CIA's supersonic successor to the U-2, developed under a project named (with deliberate irony) OXCART. The program had its share of technical problems and bureaucratic run-ins, but none of the latter were nearly as serious as those that beset the NRP. McCone's main disappointment with the OXCART aircraft was not seeing it used for its intended purpose: overflights of the Soviet Union to photograph strategic targets. (U)

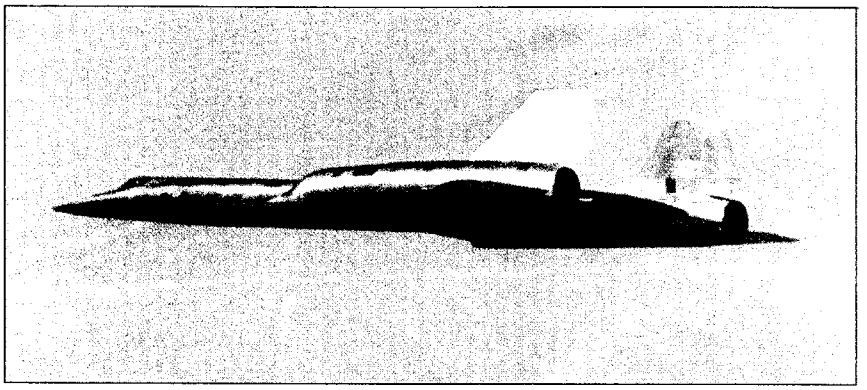
In 1957, while Washington worried about the U-2's growing vulnerability to Soviet air defenses, Agency engineers began considering a jet that could fly so high and so fast that it could not be shot down. Lockheed and Convair competed to design the concept the following year; Lockheed won the contract in 1959; and production of the aircraft, designated the A-12 (A for "Archangel"), commenced in 1960. Major technological and logistical challenges caused lengthy delays and large cost overruns, but Lockheed finally delivered the first A-12 [redacted] in late February 1962 and had it ready for flight testing two months later. In

[redacted]

[84] The recommendations of several reports on the NRP produced in the late 1960s and early 1970s—by the RAND Corporation, a presidential blue-ribbon commission, and a congressional study group—were shaped significantly by a historical review of the CIA-NRO dispute. Perry, "History of Satellite Reconnaissance," 146, 165. One subject McCone and the NRP principals had been able to agree on was putting US reconnaissance satellite programs under cover. He thought there should be no public discussion of spy satellites. When the programs received press coverage in early 1962, he advised the administration to acknowledge only that "the United States has long been engaged in…satellite research and development." On 23 March 1962, Gilpatric signed a memorandum, drafted by Charyk, imposing tightened security over the NRP. The existence of NRO already was classified, but now the cover story for CORONA—the "Discoverer" program of biomedical research—was jettisoned. All satellite projects afterward were classified Secret, no programs were identified by name, and launches were to be noted only by date. McCone concurred with the White House and the Pentagon that making the reconnaissance satellites "black" would deny important technical intelligence to the Soviets and reduce the likelihood of attacks on them. The Department of State and the newly created Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, however, opposed the security measures—the former because it believed openness would legitimize space reconnaissance better than secrecy, the latter because it believed the new strictures would impede progress toward an arms control agreement by preventing discussion of verification methods. Gerald M. Steinberg, *Satellite Reconnaissance: The Role of Informal Bargaining*, 47–48; Richelson, *America's Secret Eyes in Space*, 65–66; Peebles, *CORONA Project*, 129–30; Stares, 63–65. ~~(S)~~

July 1963, an A-12 first flew at Mach 3, and in November 1963, the design speed of Mach 3.2 was reached at an altitude of 78,000 feet.

As he had with the reconnaissance satellite systems, McCone quickly familiarized himself with OXCART's history and design and monitored the project throughout his tenure. During his first week at Langley, he wrote to the president of the United Aircraft Corporation about the problems its subsidiary Pratt and Whitney was having with the A-12's engines, and he told Pentagon officials he wanted to inspect the work being done on them in Miami. He requested briefings on the program and showed particular interest in the selection of personnel, training and testing procedures, and cover stories. The DCI sent a congratulatory telegram to the pilot of the first successful test flight. After an A-12 crashed on takeoff in December 1964, he ordered the Office of Security to investigate whether sabotage was involved. It was not.[86]



First flight of the A-12, 30 April 1962 (U)

After the A-12 had been tested, McCone met resistance from the Pentagon when he argued for its quick deployment. He regarded the A-12 as the best way to obtain crucial imagery of denied areas quickly, but McNamara and Gilpatric insisted that satellites were more practical and less expensive. McNamara went so far as to tell McCone in mid-1962 that he doubted OXCART would ever be used. The DCI—hoping the Kennedy administration would lift the ban on manned overflights of the Soviet Union now that an untouchable spyplane existed—replied that he had every intention of using the A-12 and had so advised the president. The Cuban missile crisis helped McCone make his case; a slow-moving U-2 was shot down, and satellites could not provide the short-notice coverage needed. The DCI also argued that enough engineering problems were still occurring in the satellite programs—several mishaps had occurred in 1963—that the US government should consider flying the OXCART over Soviet territory. After the rocket lifting the new LANYARD system failed in March 1963, McCone proposed to President Kennedy that the A-12 be used to photograph the suspected Soviet ABM sites the satellite was to have photographed. The president refused, expressing hope that space-based imagery systems would be improved instead.[87]

After Lyndon Johnson took office in November 1963, McCone pressed his point when the new president asked about overflight policies. In an exercise in sophistry, the DCI rationalized that Kennedy's suspension of flights over

[85] The developmental history of the OXCART is thoroughly covered in Paul F. Crickmore, *Lockheed SR-71: The Secret Missions Exposed*; Lou Drendel, *SR-71 Blackbird in Action*; Robert Jackson, *High Cold War*, chap. 15; Dennis R. Jenkins, *Lockheed SR-71/YF-12 Blackbirds*, chaps. 1–5; Clarence L. Johnson, "Development of the Lockheed SR-71 Blackbird," *Studies* 26, no. 2 (Summer 1982): 3–14; Clarence L. "Kelly" Johnson with Maggie Smith, *Kelly: More Than My Share of It All*, chap. 14; Thomas P. McIninch, "The OXCART Story," *Studies* 15, no. 1 (Winter 1971): 1–34; Pedlow and Welzenbach, chap. 6; Ben R. Rich and Leo Janos, *Skunk Works: A Personal Memoir of My Years at Lockheed*, chaps. 9–10; and Mike Spick, *American Spyplanes*, chaps. 7–8. A snapshot of the OXCART program toward the end of McCone's directorship is provided in two DS&T memoranda to McCone, both titled "OXCART Status Report," 26 January and 26 February 1965, MORI doc. nos. 207009 and 207011.

Several versions of the basic OXCART aircraft were built. The *A-12* was CIA's single-seat reconnaissance model, equipped with high-resolution cameras. Under a project codenamed TAGBOARD, The *YF-12A* was the Air Force's two-seat interceptor that carried radar, infrared sensors, and air-to-air missiles. Codenamed KEDLOCK, the craft was not deployed. The *SR-71* was the Air Force's two-seat reconnaissance model, fitted with optical Known as the Blackbird, it became the best-known and most-used version of the OXCART.

[86] McIninch, 13, 17, 19; McCone memorandum about meeting with McNamara and Gilpatric on December 4, 1961, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1; Elder untitled memorandum to Carter and Scoville, 27 April 1962, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 19, folder 397. To demonstrate his confidence in the A-12, Wheelon flew on a test flight of the two-seat trainer prototype. He recalled that McCone "roundly criticized" him for "risking my person" that way. Albert D. Wheelon, "And the Truth Shall Keep You Free: Recollections by the First Deputy Director for Science and Technology," *Studies* 39, no. 1 (Spring 1995): 76.

[87] 298–99; McCone memorandum about meeting with McNamara and Gilpatric on 5 July 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 2; Peebles, *CORONA Project*, 134, 136; McCone memorandum about meeting with the president on 15 April 1963, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 4.

the Soviet Union was not diplomatically binding. "Contrary to popular assumption, President Kennedy did not make any pledge or give an assurance, at least publicly, that there would be no further overflights. He limited his response to a statement that he had ordered that the flights not be resumed. An order, obviously, is valid only until countermanded." The new president did not seriously consider lifting the ban, however.[88]

Aerial reconnaissance of East and Southeast Asia was a different matter. Overflights of those regions did not create the diplomatic problems overflights of the Soviet Union did, and policymakers were anxious to learn about Communist China's nuclear program. Losses of four U-2s and numerous drones to Chinese air defenses in three years led the administration to consider flying the A-12 over the mainland. In mid-March 1965, McCone, McNamara, and Vance agreed to "authorize all preparatory steps" to fly OXCART missions against Chinese strategic targets if the president authorized them. Under Project BLACK SHIELD, an A-12 detachment was based on Okinawa, but authorization to fly over China never came.[89]

The question of whether the US government should publicly disclose the OXCART program arose periodically throughout McCone's directorship. He initially opposed "surfacing" the A-12 or its variants, but he changed his view as technical and political developments required. The Department of Defense in 1962 grew concerned that it could not overtly explain all the money the Air Force was spending on its versions of OXCART. At the same time, some CIA and Pentagon officials recognized that crashes or sightings of test flights could compromise the program. In late 1962 and early 1963, the Department of Defense considered surfacing the Air Force's YF-12A interceptor to provide a cover; divulging the existence of a purely tactical aircraft would not disclose any clandestine collection capabilities. McCone resisted publicity for the time being, but he was willing to entertain keeping the A-12's cover story if the Pentagon would not reveal its special features and take full responsibility for explaining its procurement procedure.[90]

The surfacing issue soon came to PFIAB's attention. Board members—particularly Killian and Land—objected strenuously to disclosing any version of OXCART on the grounds that publicity would compromise its design innovations, enable the Soviets to develop countermeasures, and destroy its value for reconnaissance. This would be a mistake, they argued, estimating that it would be many years before satellite photography would approach the resolution expected from the systems OXCART would carry. McCone suggested to Killian and Land that they join him in communicating those reservations to the president. They did so, and, after a meeting at the White House, McNamara agreed to develop the YF-12A under existing covert procedures and to discuss it—rather than the A-12—if an accident or forced landing required a public response.[91]

The issue lingered because OXCART technology would be useful for the Air Force's supersonic B-70 bomber, then under development, and for the proposed commercial supersonic transport (SST), federal subsidization of which was under discussion in Congress. As McCone told President Kennedy in September 1963, OXCART's contractors, Lockheed and Pratt and Whitney, had received a headstart over other aerospace firms in the race to develop an SST. This situation, he believed, could be rectified by providing selected executives of the competing companies with compartmented information about the A-12. (According to Wheelon, none of the companies accepted the Agency's offer.) At around the same time, McCone concluded that no good cover story for OXCART remained and that the aircraft's secrecy could not be preserved much

[88] Pedlow and Welzenbach, 195; McCone memorandum to President Johnson, "Response to Query Concerning U-2 Overflight Policy," 15 January 1964, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 19, folder 399. The OXCART program got a boost in mid-1964 after Soviet Premier Khrushchev threatened to start shooting down U-2s over Cuba later in the year. McCone laid out the case for using the A-12 to overfly Cuba in a project codenamed SKYLARK. In August, Acting DCI Carter directed that a detachment of A-12s be ready for emergency deployment over the island by early November. The scare passed, and the contingency plan was never put into effect. Pedlow and Welzenbach, 299–300; McIninch, 19–20; McCone memorandum, "Aerial Surveillance of Cuba," [May 1964,] DCI Files, Job 98B01712R, box 1, folder 3.

[89] Pedlow and Welzenbach, 300ff.; McIninch, 20–29; McCone memorandum about meeting with McNamara and Vance on 18 March 1965, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 16.

[90] Pedlow and Welzenbach, 292; McCone, "Memorandum for the Files—Various Activities," 3 January 1963, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 4; Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 9. Some early thought was given to declaring OXCART as part of a satellite launch system and concealing it in the space reconnaissance compartment. That procedure, however, would have complicated security for the satellites because of CIA's historical connection with reconnaissance aircraft. Scoville memorandum to McCone, "OXCART Cover Story," 14 May 1962, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 19, folder 397.

[91] Kirkpatrick memorandum about McCone meeting with PFIAB on 28 December 1962, CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 8, folder 140; McCone memorandum about meeting with Killian on 11 January 1963, and memorandum about meeting at the White House on 21 January 1963, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 4.

longer. Whatever story was used, Lockheed's role would indicate CIA involvement. McCone suggested one way out of the bind: changing the A-12's mission. Improvements in satellite photography—particularly better camera resolution—would reduce, if not eliminate, the need for aerial overflights of the Soviet Union, so the A-12 could be surfaced as a tactical military aircraft.

President Kennedy remained reluctant to give out information on OXCART except on a need-to-know basis, but his successor, Lyndon Johnson, was willing to reconsider surfacing—partly to generate good publicity for the military. At a meeting held less than a week after Kennedy's death, McCone, McNamara, Bundy, and Dean Rusk met with the new president to discuss OXCART. McNamara used the occasion to forcefully argue for surfacing, pointing out that the program was becoming harder to hide. McCone recommended not surfacing until strictly necessary but continued to ask permission to brief selected representatives of aviation companies active in the SST program. Johnson decided to defer the matter for further consideration.[93]

By early 1964, however, McCone found the argument for disclosure convincing.

The plane's existence probably would be revealed eventually under circumstances the US government could not control, such as a training accident or equipment malfunction, or through a news leak. Commercial airline crews had sighted the A-12 in flight, and the editor of *Aviation Week* indicated that he knew about highly secret activities at Lockheed's "Skunk Works" in Burbank, California, and would not let another publication "scoop" him. Moreover, the White House's reluctance to resume overflights of Soviet territory would soon force a change in the A-12's mission. Instead of flying over denied areas to collect strategic intelligence, it would most likely be used as a quick-reaction surveillance platform in fast-moving conflicts—a tactical function the Air Force should carry out, not CIA. Lastly, the White House—beset with bad news from Vietnam, and looking to rebut Republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater's charges that American weaponry was becoming obsolete—seemed determined to tout a military success story. For all these reasons, McCone rejected the advice of his senior deputies and joined in the NSC decision on 29 February to surface OXCART.[94]

At a press conference later that day, President Johnson announced the successful development of an "advanced experimental aircraft...which has been tested in sustained flight at more than 2,000 miles per hour and at altitudes in excess of 70,000 feet." For security reasons, the A-11, rather than the A-12, was mentioned, and the Air Force's interceptor, not the Agency's reconnaissance version, was later displayed at Edwards Air Force Base in California.[95] The faster and higher-flying A-12s continued testing CIA's involvement in the project remained classified, although it was widely assumed. Meanwhile, McCone briefed selected members of the aviation industry about OXCART technology and served on the President's Advisory Committee on Supersonic Transport, which gave special attention to the costs the US government and aircraft

[92] McCone memorandum about meeting with Killian on 21 January 1963, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 4; McCone memorandum about meeting with the president on 23 September 1963, ibid., box 6, folder 5; McCone memorandum about Special Group meeting on 17 October 1963, ibid., box 1, folder 5; Wheelon DH, 56.

[93] McCone memorandum about meeting with the president on 23 September 1963, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 5; McCone memorandum about meeting with the president, McNamara, Bundy, and Rusk on 29 November 1963, ibid., folder 6; Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 9. Among Agency officers who opposed surfacing, Carter objected that revealing the existence of the A-12 would compromise a collection method that McCone was legally required to protect. In late 1963, he told the DCI that he feared "the [Department of Defense] is trying to euchre us into a position where they surface it as a political thing." He was generally correct. Wheelon also opposed surfacing and warned the DCI against agreeing to Fubini's proposed statement that the entire project had been transferred to the Air Force, ostensibly for cover purposes. "I am convinced that such a statement will only be used to make the immediate fiction become an early reality." Knoche notes of discussion with Carter, 19 November 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 3; Carter-Knoche OH, p. 37; Wheelon memorandum to McCone, "OXCART Surfacing," 22 November 1963, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 19, folder 398.

[94] Sources for this paragraph and the next are: Lawrence K. White, "Diary Notes," 27 September 1963, on National Security Archive Web site at www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB74, doc. 17; Robert Bannerman (Office of Security) memorandum to McCone, "Project OXCART...," 7 October 1963, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 19, folder 398; McCone memorandum about meeting with the NSC on 29 February 1964, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 7; McCone untitled memorandum to Carter, 10 February 1964, ibid., box 9, folder 5; transcript of McCone telephone conversation with Clifford, 20 February 1964, ibid., box 10, folder 5; Pedlow and Welzenbach, 294–95; McIninch, 14–15; President Johnson letter to McCone, 3 April 1964, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 15, folder 323; McCone calendars, entries for April and May 1964 and March and April 1965; McCone memorandum about meeting with McNamara on 17 June 1964, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 11; transcripts of McCone meetings with United Airlines and TWA executives on 1 and 13 April 1965, ibid., box 9, folder 3; Laurence Barrett, "Debut in California—AF's Mystery Plane," *New York Herald Tribune*, 1 October 1964, Overhead Reconnaissance clipping file, HIC.

[95] When President Johnson disclosed the existence of the Blackbird in July 1964, he mistakenly transposed the intended designator letters RS (for Reconnaissance Strike) into SR. Rather than correct the commander-in-chief, Air Force officials let the error stand and came up with the Strategic Reconnaissance category so the SR designator could be used. Pedlow and Welzenbach, 312. (U)

manufacturers would incur in developing an SST. In addition, preliminary work on successors to the A-12 began during McCone's last months at CIA. The projects (ISINGLASS and RHEINBERRY) did not move beyond the design stage because of technical challenges, high projected costs, and advances in satellite reconnaissance.[96] ~~(S)~~

The OXCART proved to be a technically marvelous irrelevance. It never achieved its intended purpose of replacing the U-2 as a strategic collection platform. A-12s did not fly any missions until 1967, when they collected tactical intelligence over North Vietnam. By then, photo satellite systems were filling the role originally conceived for the OXCART. A CIA internal history concluded, "[t]he most advanced aircraft of the 20th century had become an anachronism before it was ever used operationally."[97] ~~(S)~~

Why, then, did McCone try so hard to preserve the A-12 program—which Wheelon recalled as a recurrent "four-alarm fire" that could have ruined CIA's "reputation for doing things on the cheap quickly"?[98] A technically knowledgeable, budget-minded executive with extensive experience in defense contracting, McCone certainly could recognize a "white elephant" when he saw one. He was confident that engineers could solve the design problems, but the best explanation for his persistence can be found in the larger fight with the Pentagon over satellite systems. He wanted to keep the OXCART as a CIA equity in case NRO and the "black" Air Force took over space reconnaissance for mainly military requirements.[99] To McCone, the dispute over the A-12 was another phase in what he perceived would be a protracted interagency conflict over the future of technical intelligence—what its principal purpose was, and which part of the community would control it. With so much at stake, the DCI was not willing to relinquish any program that allowed him to project Agency influence over strategic intelligence collection. (U)

The McCone-Wheelon Legacy (U)

CIA's "chairman of the board" and his "chief technology officer" left the Agency with a science and technology directorate much like the entity James Killian and Edwin Land had called for more than a decade before: a bureaucratically formidable concentration of research, development, collection, and analysis that secured CIA's international preeminence in technical espionage and strategic assessment. McCone and Wheelon permanently changed CIA, giving its science and technology mission equal standing with HUMINT collection and analysis. In one of his last actions as DCI, McCone issued a directive affirming the Agency's role in scientific and technical intelligence as a "service of common concern" for the Intelligence Community.[100] The organizational and administrative changes McCone and Wheelon instituted aided the development of a new generation of satellites that would permit the community to monitor events in denied areas, provide warning to policymakers, watch unfolding crises, and oversee arms control efforts. The leadership styles and personalities of the DCI and the DDS&T—activist and resolute to their allies, aggressive and intractable to their opponents—helped preserve CIA's role in technical collection. Sometimes, McCone and Wheelon—acting out of bureaucratic parochialism and personal spite—pursued counterproductive short-term objectives at the expense of the general welfare of the US space reconnaissance program. It is not clear, however, that a more conciliatory approach would have accomplished as much against the concerted effort of NRO, the "black" Air Force, and some senior Pentagon officials to take over the NRP for primarily military uses. ~~(S)~~

Both technically minded outsiders, McCone and Wheelon also effected a culture change at the Agency by diluting the influence of the "bold Easterners," "prudent professionals," and Ivy League intellectuals who had dominated CIA's clandestine and analytical components since their inception. With the emergence of the DS&T, "[n]ew men, with family names unfamiliar to the Eastern establishment, began to move into positions of prominence in the Agency," NPIC analyst Dino Brugioni has written. "They were experts in such disciplines

---

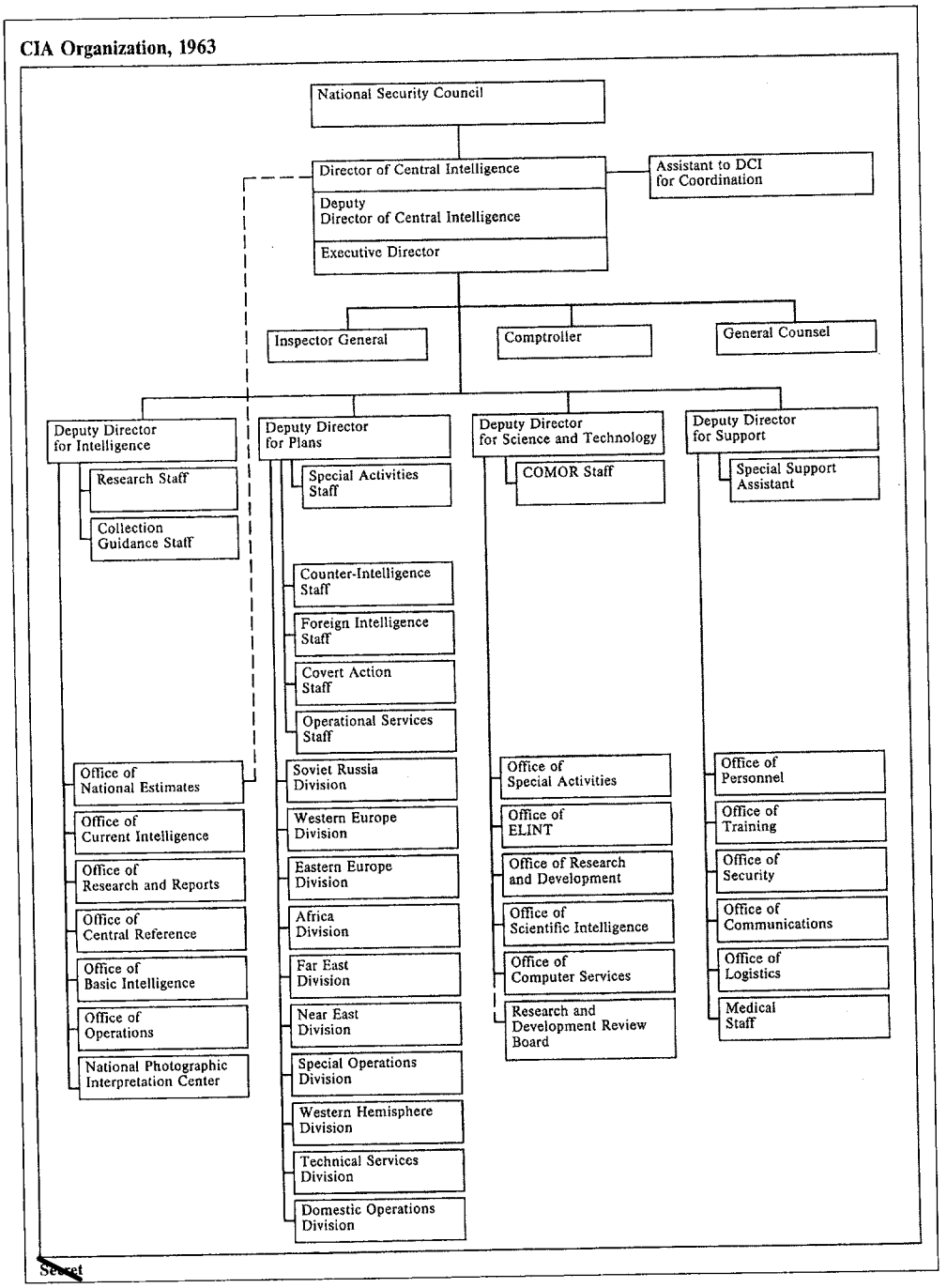
[96] Ibid. ~~(S)~~

[97] Ibid., 313. ~~(S)~~

[98] Richelson, *The Wizards of Langley*, 98. (U)

[99] McCone probably was aware that by mid-1963, the Air Force was trying to wrest control of all OXCART-related programs, except for the A-12, from NRO. Schriever letter to Zuckert, 11 July 1963, on National Security Archive Web site at www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB74, doc. 15. (U)

[100] DCID No. 3/5, "Production of Scientific and Technical Intelligence," 23 April 1965, DCI Files, Job 86T00268, box 2, folder 12. ~~(S)~~



as optics, electronics, chemistry, physics, engineering, and photography. Many were World War II veterans, educated under the provisions of the GI Bill."[101] OSS veterans, career field operatives, and graduates of elite liberal arts schools still set the social and intellectual tone at Langley, but the growing emphasis on technical collection and scientific specialization ensured that the Agency would have a more diverse cadre of experts than ever before. (U)

[101]Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 65. (U)

Looking back from the vantage point of nearly a quarter century, McCone expressed some reservations about selecting Wheelon as his head wizard: "I would have been more comfortable with a man that could be more reasonably adjusted to changes." Nevertheless, the structure they developed for the new directorate worked inside and outside the Agency. In 1973, when the DS&T acquired TSD from the DO and NPIC from the DI, it finally assumed the shape its creators had envisioned. As part of its 40th anniversary commemoration in 2003, the DS&T recognized McCone's contribution by creating the John A. McCone Award to honor CIA employees who creatively and effectively apply science and technology to solving intelligence problems.[102] ~~(S)~~

[102] McCone/McAuliffe OH, 44; *The Directorate of Science and Technology: The First 30 Years*, 2.7, 7.8; "DCI Creates Agency-Wide John A. McCone Award...," *What's News*, no. 1206, 18 July 2003. ~~(S)~~

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.