

From Containment to Detente:
The Seventh Floor and U.S. Foreign Policy
(1961-1976)

Senior Honors Thesis

by
Brian Thomas Cartwright

for
Dr. William P. Snyder

April 18, 1984

A nation's values define what is just;
its strength determines what is possible.
The policymaker, therefore, must strike a
balance between what is desirable and what is
possible.

--Henry Kissinger,
U.S. Secretary of State

Preface

The development of ^{U.S.} foreign policy doctrine is a very complex and highly dynamic process. The Department of State is an integral part of these proceedings. Considered to be the experts in international affairs, it is their duty to "promote the long-range security and well-being of the United States."¹

There exists within the State Department a group of officials known as the "Seventh Floor." It is composed of the top-level policy making officials in the Department. Thomas Estes and E. Lightner, Jr., authors of The Department of State, describe them as being "the power center of the Department of State."² Its members include the secretary, deputy secretary, three under secretaries, deputy under secretary, and the State Department counselor.³

Being the center of decision making in the Department, the Seventh Floor possesses a great deal of potential to influence U.S. foreign affairs. While true, the issue is not as simple as this. Many extraneous factors exist affecting the Seventh Floor's efforts. How much authority the president wants to give them, who is appointed to the particular Seventh Floor posts, and a host of other variables must be considered.

The period between 1961-1976 provides an excellent case in point. In fifteen years, the United States pursued two diverging foreign policy strategies: containment followed by detente. By examining U.S. foreign policy between 1961-1976, it is hoped important obser-

vations can be made outlining the Seventh Floor's role in U.S. foreign affairs; and its relationship with the other actors in the policy making process.

A delicate balance exists in the formation of U.S. foreign policy: that between the expertise used in its development and the subtle considerations needed to gain its acceptance, or at least recognition, domestically as well as internationally. The role of the Department of State in this process is of vital importance, and its participation, or lack thereof, can have a significant impact on the proceedings as a whole.

Affecting the Department's ability to function effectively is largely dependent upon three interrelated factors: 1) State Department leadership (i.e.- the Seventh Floor). 2) Their leadership's relationship with the president. 3) "The president's propensity to become directly involved in foreign-policymaking."¹ How much weight each is afforded greatly determines in what capacity the State Department will act: mere implementers of policy or the actual formulators of it.

The evolution of American foreign policy between 1961-1976 clearly illustrates the above points. While the first eight years were locked in a struggle over "containment" (or the "containing" of communism within then existing boundaries), the latter eight years shifted the emphasis to detente (or peaceful coexistence). Much discussion has been generated over the causes for such an extreme fluctuation. The purpose of this paper is threefold: First, to examine the shift in U.S. foreign policy that occurred between 1961-1976; second, to investi-

gate, the Seventh Floor's role in this; and finally, to determine the effects that this transformation had on the Seventh Floor itself.

Containment (1961-1969)

During Containment, the Seventh Floor's influence on foreign policymaking steadily declined. The reasons for this can be linked to those administrations occupying the White House between 1961-1969: John F. Kennedy's and Lyndon B. Johnson's. Like most of America, both Presidents mistrusted communist nations as a whole; ^{and} particularly any attempts they made to expand their borders. JFK's and LBJ's desire to prevent such encroachments led them to become involved, both directly and indirectly, in the formation of foreign affairs doctrine. In doing this, they were able to develop almost "tailor-made" policy measures in order to contain the spread of the "red threat." Unfortunately, the more the presidents participated in the policy making process the less they seemed to listen to their experts ^r in the Seventh Floor. With public opinion on the presidents' side, though, there was little the State Department could do or say to persuade either Kennedy or Johnson ⁿ to redistribute power amongst all the actors in foreign policy. The following discussion will try to illustrate these truisms.

JFK

When John F. Kennedy assumed office, he was the first Democratic candidate elected president in over eight years. Admittedly, many supporters as well as nonsupporters looked toward him for a change in

policy directives to contrast Eisenhower's previous Republican administrations. JFK did not disappoint those searching for such a break. To accomplish his task he brought to the White House "unusual firsthand knowledge of the foreign, domestic, legislative and political arenas."¹ Always more interested in policy than in administration, Kennedy used his talents to "reshape executive procedures throughout his term."² Indeed, he abandoned from the outset Eisenhower's notion of a "collective, institutionalized Presidency."³ On the contrary, JFK strongly "preferred to make all major decisions with far fewer people present."⁴ Consequently, "he paid little attention to organization charts and chains of command which diluted and distributed his authority."⁵ Kennedy's approach to governmental policy making, therefore, was to strengthen departmental (State, Defense, etc.) responsibilities, while still maintaining his dominance on the overall process. As he put it:

I will] maintain direct communication with the responsible agencies, so that everyone will know what I have decided, while in turn keep fully informed of the actions taken to carry out decisions. We of course expect that the policy of the White House will be the policy of the Executive Branch as a whole, and we shall take such steps as are needed to ensure this result.⁶

U.S. foreign affairs would be encompassed in Kennedy's unique presidential style. Evidently, the formation of foreign policy would be left to the president; and its implementation to the Department of State. As Warren I. Cohen, in his book Dean Rusk, stated, "The president-elect intended to dominate foreign policy."⁷

From the very outset of his short term in office, JFK was generating initiatives to change the country's position in the world community. The

product of his efforts became known as the "New Frontier," and the path that it set marked the beginning of many of the policies that would lead to the end of containment. Inherent in Kennedy's program was the concept of "flexible response," or the ability to intervene anywhere at any time on a conventional as well as nuclear level. It became an important modification to Eisenhower's New Look, and subsequent New New Look. Kennedy discovered from Ike's practices that heavy reliance on atomic weapons, with a small arsenal of conventional forces, left but two fundamental alternatives: do nothing or risk all-out war. The President understood an "all or nothing" strategy significantly weakened the country's stance in its ability to deal effectively in world crises. Consequently, he used "flexible response" as a means to create a realistic threat that other nations would perceive and hence be deterred by. Thus, JFK concentrated on upgrading U.S. conventional forces and the strategies used to employ them in limited conflicts, particularly in the combatting of guerilla warfare.⁸

The driving force behind the New Frontier was John F. Kennedy; the implementer of the New Frontier was the Department of State. The Seventh Floor illustrated this fact ⁱⁿ _A two of the most important foreign policy measures of this administration: the Cuban Missile Crisis and the introduction of the Green Berets into Vietnam.

Cuba

October 1962, marked a turning point in world history. For the first time, the international community was held hostage by the threat of all-out nuclear war. After the failed U.S.-backed invasion attempt

at the Bay of Pigs in 1961, Cuban President Fidel Castro asked Soviet Premier Nikita Krushchev to station medium-range nuclear missiles in Cuba. Admittedly, this was a golden opportunity for Russia. The small Latin American nation was a mere 90 miles from the North American Continent and provided the communists the foothold they had been looking for in that region. Even better, they could come in the name of "defense" because of America's unpeaceful action in 1961. The Russians accepted the invitation eagerly.

When American intelligence aircraft discovered the missiles, JFK immediately setup a panel of experts to help advise him. He was careful to avoid choosing the type of panel that helped him with the Bay of Pigs. The president and many others had learned, without a set of varying opinions and reliable information, Kennedy's success in the international scene would be severely diminished. Lincoln Bloomfield explains, in his book The Foreign Policy Process:

The disastrous U.S.-sponsored invasion by Cuban emigres at the Bay of Pigs in 1961 was in part . . . because faulty U.S. intelligence predictions of mass uprising of the Cuban people. And in part it happened because the State Department . . . were bashful with their advice that an attempt to overthrow Castro would produce a disastrous setback in U.S.-Latin American relations.⁹

As a result, "ExCom," short for executive committee, was created. Its mission was to provide the president with a balanced set of alternatives in order to reach a workable solution to the crisis. ExCom was a loose conglomerate of Kennedy's top military and civilian advisors. Those who participated from the Seventh Floor included: Dean Rusk, Secretary of State; George Ball, Under Secretary of State; and Adlai Stevenson, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. ExCom's discussions took the form of a very open, uninhibited debate. Each person presented

various alternatives to solve the crisis. The military, amongst others, advocated aerial bombardment of the missile sites. Critics of this view feared bombing might kill soviet advisers helping the Cubans deploy the missiles. The Attorney General, Bobby Kennedy, feared such an action would make the U.S. appear to be the aggressors rather than the U.S.S.R. While it could always be employed later should other methods fail, it was abandoned for better solutions.

After much debate, one proposal was agreed upon by a majority of those present in ExCom: a quarantine on all incoming Soviet ships to Cuba. It was a "middle of the road" solution that Kennedy and the military could both accept. The president reasoned such a move would allow Krushev time to reevaluate his decision to station the missiles in Cuba; the military reasoned they could still initiate aerial bombardment if the blockade failed. The decision was ultimately Kennedy's though, and as Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., in his book A Thousand Days, relates:

When someone proposed that each participant write down his recommendation, Kennedy said he did not want people, if things went wrong, claiming that their plans would have worked. . . . Then he issued orders to get everything ready for the quarantine. . . . His course was now firmly set.¹⁰

What was the Seventh Floor's role in ExCom? Some have charged, "Not much." Most of these comments have been aimed at Secretary of State Dean Rusk. Schlesinger comments, "The Secretary of State took little part in these discussions."¹¹ While this is true, a reason exists to explain why. Rusk preferred to delegate much of his authority in presenting the State Department's viewpoint to Under Secretary Ball. John M. Hightower, a reporter who covered the State Department for

the Associated Press, wrote on August 22, 1965:

Criticism over his role in the Missile Crisis angered Rusk to the point that he heatedly defended it in talks with newsmen on one or two occasions. He said the responsibility of the Secretary of State was to advise the President and he did not think he should commit himself before all the facts were in.¹²

In a NBC interview, Rusk clarified his position:

You see, any one of us can make our own predictions about what this or the other line of action might produce, but the President of the United States has to live with results, whatever they are.¹³

Consequently, rather than promoting a view that may have been contrary to Kennedy's best interests, Rusk used his negotiating skill in helping to gain acceptance for the President's policy decision. Warren Cohen asserted Rusk was quite successful in his efforts:

[The Secretary] reached out in all directions to collect ideas and information. He listened at some of the 'ExCom meetings, checked in with task forces examining particulars of the problem and contacted a number of outsiders, oblivious to the crisis but possessed of expertise on some relevant matter . . . he scouted the alignment of forces within the administration, preparing to protect the President . . .¹⁴

As the discussion became bogged down to two choices, quarantine or air strike, Rusk summarized the arguments for each side. When it became apparent that the President favored blockade, and the military was planning to contest the issue, Rusk came forward to force agreement.¹⁵ Cohen says, "a year and a half earlier, Rusk had been ineffectual in preventing the Bay of Pigs operation, but in October, 1962, his was a virtuoso performance."¹⁶

As for the rest of the Seventh Floor, when the blockade was authorized, the Cuban Missile Crisis largely became a test of wills, that between President Kennedy versus Soviet Premier Khrushchev.

Acceptance for Kennedy's measures would be closely examined by the international community. One place to gain their support was the United Nations. U.N. Ambassador, Adlai Stevenson, with the help of presidential aide, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., worked diligently in New York to present the president's decision as one of restrained response, rather than open aggression. Robert Kennedy summarized their task: "We will have to make a deal at the end, but we must stand firm now. Concessions must come at the end of negotiation, not at the beginning."¹⁷

Taking this into account, Stevenson realized that time was of the essence. Indeed, from the moment the Russian missiles were detected to the time they could be fully operational was less than two weeks; therefore, the ambassador's strategy would have to be formed and implemented before the Soviet delegation could have a chance to stall his efforts, thus allowing enough time for the missiles to be armed and ready for launching. After Kennedy informed the world of the crisis at hand, "Stevenson had to talk so much to U.N. delegates from other nations tht he had little time left for his own speeches and strategy."¹⁸ His original plan was to propose a political path out of the military crisis. It encompassed the removal of Soviet military equipment and personnel under U.N. auspices and "the introduction of U.N. influence into Cuba in the hope of ending communist domination of the Cuban government. He would throw in a non-invasion guarantee and Guantanamo [the only U.S. naval base in Cuba] into the bargain to evidence our restraint and good faith."¹⁹ As Bobby Kennedy had said,

however, there could be no negotiation until the missiles were out. (Stevenson had suggested earlier to ExCom another proposal dealing with the removal of U.S.-based Nike-Zeus missiles stationed in Italy and Turkey. The Soviets were trying to use the situation as justification for their own actions. Stevenson suggested the United States make a "trade-off" and pull-out the missiles if Russia pulled-out their's. Kennedy rejected this, however, for he had already ordered the missiles removal before the missile crisis even emerged. Any action now could give the appearance of U.S. weakness in handling communist aggression).

The ambassador's revised position was to carry out the wishes of his administration. He prepared a speech for the U.N. General Assembly outlining the American position. In the meantime, he waited for the Organization of American States (OAS) to comment on Kennedy's momentous speech. With their multilateral support, the U.S. would have some credibility in the international community. The OAS did give its approval, and just in the nick of time. Stevenson received the word in the middle of his speech to the Assembly! When the paper was set on the podium informing of the OAS's support, no one was sure if he had seen the piece of paper. Indeed, he did not even look at it for the longest time. President Kennedy, watching the speech on closed-circuit television, called an aide to inquire if the ambassador had seen the note. Just then "on the screen Stevenson reached for the paper. Kennedy said 'I guess he has it now.'"²⁰

In his closing remarks, Adlai Stevenson proclaimed:

Let [this day] be remembered, not as the day when the world came to the edge of nuclear war, but as the day when resolved to let nothing thereafter stop them in their quest for peace.²¹

After his speech, the President dictated a telegram:

Dear Adlai: I watched your speech this afternoon with great satisfaction. It has given our cause a great start. . . . The United States is fortunate to have your advocacy. You have my warm personal thanks.

Despite Stevenson's admirable performance, many criticized his suggestions for a political solution rather than a military one. As the Daily News headline (typically critical of the Kennedy Administration) put it: "ADLAI ON SKIS OVER PACIFIST STAND IN CUBA."²³ Many perceived this article as a signal from the White House that Stevenson was about to "resign" from his office. The President eventually wrote a letter to the press trying to dispel such rumors. Within 48 hours, the furor died away. The point to be made here is the willingness of Seventh Floor officials to subordinate their policy making instincts and effectively implement something of anathema to them. John G. Stoessinger, in his book Crusaders and Pragmatists, wrote, "The missile crisis was in its essence a nuclear war, but one that was fought in the minds of two men and their perceptions of themselves and each other."²⁴ Undeniable to be sure, but the role of the Seventh Floor as implementers was an integral part in the success of Kennedy's handling of the crisis.

Vietnam: The Beginning

Even before the Cuban Missile Crisis, Kennedy determined it was imperative to prevent wars of national liberation. Kennedy noticed such "wars" were predominantly fought in Third World countries using

guerrilla tactics. The president understood the United States was quite limited in its ability to combat such fighting. At the suggestion of General Maxwell Taylor, military adviser to the president, JFK ordered an elite group of U.S. Army personnel be formed to train specifically in counterinsurgency. They were known as the Green Berets, and under Kennedy's close scrutiny, they received the best equipment, and best training money could buy. Ambrose, in his book Rise to Globalism, stated explicitly, "With his counterinsurgency force, Kennedy would prove to the world that the so-called wars of national liberation did not work."¹ When they were ready, the President would send them out into the world wherever he deemed them most useful.

The search for the "perfect place" began shortly after the U.S. embarrassment at the Bay of Pigs. Kennedy appointed a task force of State-Defense-CIA-USIA-White House personnel to examine a small country in Southeast Asia that had been a source of great controversy in Eisenhower's administrations: Vietnam. In 1954 the nation was partitioned into two territories, North and South Vietnam, at the 17th parallel. This came after French colonialists were defeated at Dien Bien Phu, and subsequently pulled out of the region. North Vietnam was under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh, a communist, who had played an influential role in the struggle against the French. South Vietnam was under the Nationalist leader, Ngo Diem. Elections were to take place in 1955 to select one leader and thus reunify Vietnam. They never occurred, however, largely because of Diem and his fears of losing a free-election to Ho. As a result, Ho's Vietcong (V.C.) began a second struggle to gain a sovereign nation. Soon after, the U.S. signed an agreement with those

Southeast Asian countries opposed to the spread of communism. It was called SEATO, short for Southeast Treaty Organization, and provided for the collective security of its signatories.

Approximately 400 U.S. "advisors" were already stationed in South Vietnam when Kennedy assumed office. After an intense investigation, the task force sent to investigate the area for potential use of the Green Berets recommended escalation. JFK approved a limited increase in U.S. involvement by raising force levels to 1,300. As time went on, however, the use of guerrilla tactics and terror were taking its toll on the advisors. Kennedy sent Vice President Johnson to the area to investigate the situation. LBJ returned from his 1961 trip reporting:

if America did not stand behind Diem, 'we would say to the world that we don't live up to our treaties and don't stand behind our friends [i.e., SEATO].³

He advocated "the battle against communism be joined in Southeast Asia with strength and determination."⁴

Following LBJ's fervent recommendations, Kennedy appointed a new high-level mission to go to Vietnam. It was headed by Walt W. Rostow, Counselor from the State Department's Seventh Floor, and General Maxwell Taylor. Their collective answer "to Kennedy's question was that South Vietnam had enough vitality to justify a major United States effort."⁵ The report they filed mainly focused on military matters, suggesting large infusion of U.S. combat troops for limited combat purposes and contingency planning of air strikes and other activities in North Vietnam for any significant increases in North Vietnam's intervention.⁶ Kennedy shied away from the use of combat troops, however,

fearing an escalation to all-out nuclear with the communist world. Indeed, in typical fashion, all of his principal advisers on Vietnam favored the use of combat troops, calling it "the 'touchstone' of our good faith, a symbol of our determination."⁷ But the President's vote in effect was "no"-- "and only his vote counted."⁸ Thus, "Plan 6" as it was called, was filed away; but not forever. Philip Geyelin, in his book Lyndon B. Johnson and the World, stated, "Their [Rostow's and Taylor's] recommendations came close to being a blueprint for what was to come under Lyndon Johnson."⁹ Kennedy found a suitable alternative to combat troops: the Green Berets. JFK knew the unit possessed a very special quality, forbearance. Indeed, counterinsurgency greatly diminished the risk of nuclear war because it avoided a direct confrontation with Soviet Union. Consequently, America could use her enormous military power for political gains by using this "backdoor" approach to involvement.¹⁰ With the tools of intervention ready, Ambrose claims the President would be able to:

- 1) Show interest in the Third World, and thus raise America's international prestige;
- 2) Live up to treaty commitments (the 1954 SEATO Treaty had extended to South Vietnam if it were attacked from without; and
- 3) Play the exciting game of counterinsurgency.¹¹

In fact, the Green Berets would be the difference between "feudal colonialism" (e.g.- the French), and totalitarian communism (Ho Chi Minh).¹² They would assist the South Vietnamese government institute political reforms that would separate the guerrillas from the people.¹³ By the end of 1961 the American contingency had been raised to over

1,000. While the introduction of the Green Berets in Vietnam may have seemed somewhat simplistic, this was not quite the case. When the presidential decree to deploy the Green Berets was finally issued, the next problem was to implement the policy. Certainly, this was no small task, for standing in the U.S.'s way were the 1954 Geneva Accords and the nature of the struggle itself. This is where the Seventh Floor came into the process.

When the Accords were ratified, they established North and South Vietnam. In addition, the leaders of both territories, Ho and Diem respectively, promised to abstain from allowing the introduction of foreign troops in either territory. Even though the U.S. had never signed the Accords, the United States did provide assurances that it would not upset what had been established by the use of force. Knowing this, the question raised to the State Department was: "How does the U.S. infuse 'advisers' into South Vietnam without renegeing on their promises?" Very simply, redefine the Accords. The Seventh Floor deliberately created "the fiction that Geneva had set up two Vietnams, North and South."¹⁴ Thus, both were sovereign nationas because each agreed to the Accords. As a result, each could make alliances with any country they wanted, and invite foreign troops if they felt it was necessary for their defense. The Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, made the redefinition complete in 1963:

the other side [North Vietnam] was fully committed-- fully committed-- in the original Geneva settlement of 1954 to the arrangements which provided for South Vietnam as an independent entity.¹⁵

A rather contorted redefinition, but it worked, although with some skepticism.

The nature of the Vietnam intervention itself was the second problem facing the Seventh Floor. After Secretary of State John Foster Dulles wrote the SEATO Treaty in 1954, extending protection to South Vietnam, he assured the Senate that the U.S. would not be required to put down any internal uprisings or civil wars. In the instance of South Vietnam, it was very difficult to determine if opposition to Diem's government came from within or without. North Vietnam, since 1956, had concentrated on reconstruction in its own territory. When Diem refused to hold elections in 1956, the Viet Minh (Communist supporters of Ho Chi Minh) in the South staged a systematic campaign to destroy Diem's hold on the countryside. They suffered from political persecution, but so to did all of Diem's opponents.¹⁶

In March 1960, a full-scale revolt began. Diem labeled his opponents Viet Cong (V.C.) or Vietnamese communists. They formed the National Liberation Front (NLF) as their political arm. Busy with the reconstruction of North Vietnam, Ho offered the VC little help, thus leaving them to recruit in South Vietnam, and supply their soldiers with captured arms.¹⁷

Under this light, it was very difficult to prove that South Vietnam was the victim of actual "outside" aggression. Dean Rusk, however, quickly went to work on the matter. As he saw it, "the war in Vietnam was sponsored by Hanoi, which in turn was acting as the agent of Peking. If the United States allowed the Viet Cong to win in South Vietnam, the Chinese would quickly up the rest of Asia."¹⁸ (He had directed the same accusation toward North Korea just a decade before during the Korean War). Comparing Ho Chi Minh with Hitler, Rusk warned U.S. officials of another Munich. This drew some ridicule from Kennedy's

younger cabinet colleagues, particularly Theodore Sorenson and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. They charged Rusk never "understood the new sophistication of the Kennedy foreign policy,"¹⁹ and that he was a "figure out of the past, a man caught up in the cliches of the later forties."²⁰ This is a somewhat harsh critique of the Secretary and therefore will be dealt with later. One fact still remains, however, Rusk did use his slurs against the "red threat" very effectively in gaining support for U.S. involvement in South Vietnam. America's cold warrior spirit was quite prevalent at the time .

By the end of 1961 there were 1364 U.S. advisers in South Vietnam; by 1962, nearly 10,000; and by November 1963, when Kennedy was shot, 15,000.²¹ Just before he was assassinated, JFK announced: "In my opinion, for us to withdraw from that effort would mean a collapse not only of South Vietnam but Southeast Asia. So we are going to stay."²² The U.S. was now formally committed. The Seventh Floor had worked diligently in implementing the President's policies. They would work just as hard for their next President, Lyndon Baines Johnson.

Johnson Years

Lyndon Johnson became President of the United States on November 27, 1963. He had received a limited apprenticeship in foreign affairs while serving as Vice President. Of course, this was not enough time to prepare adequately for his future responsibilities, but it did familiarize him with those policy initiatives JFK was promoting before his assassination. Maintaining continuity after Kennedy's death was important since the nation was severely shaken by the slaying and any

sharp deviations from his "status quo" might have had^a profound effects on the integrity of the nation's policies. Thus, LBJ would "keep the nation's foreign policy commitments from South Vietnam to West Berlin;" and "to deal with what he considered to be Kennedy legacies, he used Kennedy men."¹

Such a wise appraisal may have looked reassuring to cabinet officials when Johnson took over, but the styles of the two Presidents were quite different. Indeed, Kennedy, while a strong personality, was interested in the "full picture" and capable of admitting his mistakes; "the celebrated Johnson ego . . . was king-sized, [and] was working two ways. If it impelled him toward crowd-pleasing heroics, it also warned him away from anything that might cause him to fall on his face."² The consequences emanating from these two extremes induced policymaking to become more of a one-sided presidential affair, with his advisers' participation in the process limited to two primary roles: 1) agree with the President and provide moral support for his decisions; or 2) disagree, and be ignored. As Stoessinger points out, "He did not have advisers to seek advice, but to elicit emotional support for his personal beliefs."³

The cornerstones of the new President's domestic and foreign policy measures were summarized by Johnson himself in Vantage Point:

. . . opposition to aggression; war against poverty, illiteracy, and disease; economic, social, and cultural cooperation on a regional basis; searching for reconciliation and peace.⁴

As in all doctrine, however, saying and doing became two totally different things. In fact, Johnson had great difficulty in striking a balance between domestic and foreign policy. As will be discussed later, the Seventh Floor can be considered partially responsible for this.

LBJ's preoccupation with his Great Society legislation often lead him to neglect foreign affairs. Such domestic reform measures were a direct result of the President's deep admiration for FDR. He often argued that "the New Deal is what made Roosevelt a commanding figure around the world when the United States hardly had a foreign policy at all."⁵ Johnson's competitive nature, coupled with his enormous ego, sparked a deep desire to accomplish a similar feat, and if possible, to surpass it. After much work, Johnson began to lament over criticism that he was spending too much time in this area, and not enough on the world situation. Secretary of State Dean Rusk quickly flew to the President's rescue. He "took the trouble to look up the work habits of FDR, and on more than one occasion took pains to reassure the President that the Johnson idol of the 1930s had not spent an inordinate amount of time on foreign policy questions himself."⁶

What the Secretary seemed to neglect was that the U.S. commitment to become an active leader in the international community was taken only late in FDR's career. Indeed, Roosevelt was President in an America that preached isolationism, and could thus afford to neglect active foreign policy participation. The war he could leave to his military men, particularly George Marshall. For Johnson to assume such a role would prove disastrous. Investigation of his handling of the Vietnam War clearly demonstrates this.

The most significant and prolonged foreign policy issue during Lyndon Johnson's presidency was the Vietnam War. While the historical roots of the controversy run deeply to World War II, U.S. involvement

would not fully blossom until LBJ's first Administration.

Admittedly, Johnson assumed responsibility for the Vietnam conflict on November 27, 1963, the day John F. Kennedy was assassinated. From this moment forward, the struggle became not just a distant incursion in a faraway country but a "personal war" to be waged from the halls of the White House itself. LBJ would often spend his Tuesday "lunch bunch" conferences personally selecting bombing and other military targets for attack. As Johnson once said, "I am not going to the President who saw Southeast Asia go the way China went."⁷

Just prior to his inheritance of the conflict, South Vietnam's president, Ngo Diem, was assassinated. The question that Johnson was immediately faced with was: What to do with this politically unstable nation? Two predominant views existed on this dilemma: First, immediate restructuring of the U.S. stance toward Vietnam; or maintain the status quo.

Supporting the first argument was Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Averell Harriman, Assistant Secretary of State Hilsman, and White House staffer, Michael Forrestal. They proposed:

an improved counterinsurgency program with larger emphasis^a on the social, political, and economic aspects of the struggle to serve as an antidote to the revolutionary rallying cry the Vietcong-- and more U.S. troops would be needed.⁸

Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara was on the other side. He claimed, he was having enough trouble keeping the military "in line" much less having to raise additional force levels. His recommendation, therefore, advocated strategic bombing.

The deciding factor was LBJ. The president would temper foreign policy with domestic policy. He reasoned strategic bombing was im-

personal, and kept U.S. troops out of the area. It should be remembered LBJ was looking for support for his Great Society program in Congress. Having U.S. "boys" doing the job of "Asian boys" in South Vietnam may have proved detrimental to his plans. Thus, he was supportive of McNamara's suggestions. The problem then became: When to instigate the bombing. The answer was provided in August of 1964 with the Tonkin Gulf incident.

Briefly, the "incident" involved two U.S. gunboats, C. Turner Joy and Maddox, having allegedly been fired upon by North Vietnamese torpedo boats. The U.S. ships had been escorting South Vietnamese commando raids in the Gul of Tonkin. Almost immediately, Johnson ordered retaliatory bombing strikes on North Vietnamese positions. He referred to it as a "positive reply."⁹ After the operations, LBJ colorfully commented: "I didn't just screw Ho Chi Minh; I cut his pecker off."¹⁰ The circumstances surrounding the Tonkin crisis, however, are very vague, thus it is difficult to say whether it was as serious as Johnson would make it out to be. One thing is certain, though, the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, that resulted, locked U.S. foreign policy into a dangerous mold.

Drafted primarily by Dean Rusk and several State Department officers, the Resolution allowed LBJ to expand the use of force as " he saw fit without consulting Congress."¹¹ In addition, he was provided authority to use "all necessary measures" to "repel any armed attack" against American armed forces; to "prevent further aggression;" and to take "all necessary steps . . . to protect any nation covered by SEATO that 'might request aid in defense of its freedom."¹² The Resolution was

passed overwhelmingly by both the House and Senate. (There were only two opposing votes: Wayne Morse and Ernest Gruening).

Many have claimed that such a broad issuance of power provided a "blank check" for the President to escalate the war without Congressional supervision. In addition, other critics have accused Johnson of obtaining the Resolution through "pressure tactics," pushing Congress into something it would later regret. While true to a certain extent, further investigation of these claims reveals important insights that explain, at least partially, Johnson's reasoning and actions.

The Tonkin Gulf Resolution did grant the President a great deal of discretionary powers in his handling of the Vietnam conflict, but it should be noted that it was a logical extension of three earlier resolutions: Middle East (Eisenhower Doctrine, 1957); Formosa Resolution (January 29, 1955); and the Cuban Resolution (October 3, 1962). All of these had a common purpose:

to provide dramatic evidence of agreement between the executive and legislative branches to defend a vital security interest of the United States.¹³

The first two authorized the President to use "the armed forces alone, or in concert with other nations, to protect the nation's diplomatic interests."¹⁴ The major purpose in the Cuba document was to display American resolve in preventing the use of Cuba as a base for "communizing Latin America or as a foreign military installation jeopardizing the security of the United States."¹⁵

The Tonkin Gulf Resolution, in contrast, did not authorize the president to employ armed force in Southeast Asia. As Crabb stated in his book The Doctrines of American Foreign Policy:

It approved and supported his determination to do so and stated that the United States (not merely the President alone) was 'prepared' to use armed force to defend its security interests.¹⁶

Thus, while broad, the Resolution may not have been as unique and extensive a grant of power as many have made it out to be.

In addressing Johnson's "methods" in gaining acceptance for the measure, several important factors must be revealed explaining how and why the Resolution was passed. They include public opinion, Congress itself, and the State Department's Seventh Floor.

Public opinion is often the basis for U.S. foreign and defense policy initiatives. While the public may seem oblivious to most measures, their popular support or overwhelming disdain can directly influence what road foreign and defense policy will take. The Tonkin Gulf Crisis provides an important example of the interplay that is involved in gaining this support.

LBJ believed that armed with the Resolution, he could "cultivate the image of himself as a leader who could not and would not, be taken advantage of by communist nations."¹⁷ By fostering such an impression, the public would develop a sense of nationalism, hence creating support for LBJ's policies. Johnson, of course, perceived that from such events as the Korean War and Cuban Missile Crisis, public opinion was already on his side. Indeed, "the strong underlying anti-communist cast of American public opinion served 'to support any actions which the president can argue need to be taken to defeat this enemy."¹⁸ Public opinion polls showed "the predominant stance of the America public toward the Vietnam War was 'hawkish.'" Even down to the closing months of his Administration, public opinion polls indicated President Johnson's judgment was correct.¹⁹

The same press that eventually destroyed LBJ's credibility in the late 1960s was even favorable of Johnson's actions. The Washington Post complemented LBJ's "careful and effective handling" of the crisis.²⁰ The New York Times added their support by applauding "the administration's restrained behavior and endorsed Congress' approval of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution."²¹

With such strong backing, the passing of the Tonkin Gulf Resolution seems less of a forced affair, and more a logical extension of prevailing U.S. public opinion.

In examining Congressional support of the Resolution, Crabb noted, "[Congress] could scarcely have done otherwise. . . . it is hard to imagine any Congress -- even one dominated by the opposition party -- doing otherwise."²² Why? Crabb went on to add:

Such a request by the president for expeditious congressional action seems logically in keeping with the context of the Tonkin Gulf crisis; and it is also comfortable with presidential actions [not necessarily LBJ's alone either] in earlier instances involving similar congressional resolutions.²³

Admittedly, with strong public support already in existence, it seems Congress could react in only one way: support. Anything less would have tarnished ~~its~~ preferred image as strong leaders in the policy of containment and the fight against the spread of communism. Johnson could not rely on public opinion alone, however, to sway Congressional opinion. Instead, he had to cultivate it in a host of different ways. To help him he called upon Senator William Fulbright, Chairman of the ~~Senate~~ Foreign Relations Committee. With the Senator's vote of confidence, as well as political influence, others joined in supporting

the Tonkin Gulf Resolution.

Two distinct advantages did exist for Johnson in gaining Congressional support: First, he had to have it to get the Resolution enacted; and second, by having it, if anything were to go wrong, as it eventually did, Congressional criticism would be held down to a minimum. Indeed, how could they complain about something they originally approved? LBJ reasoned they could not.

Some have claimed that LBJ's methods were predicated in manipulation and deceit; some say his intentions were less than honorable; and still some accuse Johnson of the use of "bully tactics" to gain support of the Resolution. This author finds such explanations founded in too much emotion and not enough analysis. Based on previous and future dialogue, this researcher believes in a more Machiavellian interpretation of Johnson's actions. Given public opinion, past resolutions, and a host of other factors, LBJ's actions were not necessarily "bullying" in nature. Instead, they were an integral part of what makes our governmental system work so well: politics.

As time went on, the Congressional attitude did change somewhat. After mid-1964, the ensuing controversy over the scope of the president's powers to wage the Vietnam War -- and of the issue of Congressional noninvolvement in key decisions related to conflict -- contributed significantly to internal divisiveness, "leading ultimately to President Johnson's decision not to seek reelection in 1968."²⁴ Still, as late as 1966, the Senate was very supportive of LBJ and his doctrine. This was symbolized in a 92-5 vote against its "abrogation."²⁵

An examination of the State Department's Seventh Floor is also important in understanding the underlying reasons for the passage of the Tonkin Gulf Resolution. Sometimes referred to as the Southeast Asia Resolution, the measure "ultimately presented to Congress was prepared by Secretary of State Rusk, Under Secretary of State George Ball, and leaders of both political parties in Congress."²⁶ Indeed, Rusk and his colleagues persuasively argued for the passage of the President's plan through a host of Congressional Committee meetings. Defending it in Senate committee testimony, Secretary of State Rusk said the Resolution was limited in three aspects:

- (1) it applied only to defense of America's SEATO allies in Asia;
- (2) the United States would only provide assistance to maintain the security of those states requesting it;
- and (3) the powers of the resolution would be invoked only to cover cases of aggression committed by communist countries.²⁷

Its two-fold objective he claimed was "the deterrence of communist expansionism in Southeast Asia, and the creation and maintenance of a strong sense of national unity toward the Vietnam War."²⁸ Armed with such admirable intentions, the Seventh Floor found it much easier to gain acceptance for the president's policy.

While Rusk and other Seventh Floor officials did an admirable job, their success was facilitated by an extensive contingency plan that had already been formed for the writing and implementation of a resolution much like the one formed for the Tonkin Gulf Crisis. Steps to develop preliminary drafts of Congressional resolutions were first proposed by W. W. Rostow, Chairman of the Policy Planning Council also referred to as the Counselor, in February, 1964. "Again in

June, Secretary Rusk proposed such a resolution to the president since (in any planned escalation of the Vietnam War) Congressional approval for an expansion of the armed forces would be required."²⁹ Thus, when Johnson finally ordered the writing of the actual Tonkin Gulf Resolution, the State Department was ready.

Despite Rusk's and his colleagues' initial success, as time went on, the State Department's ability to act as credible promoters of this "sound policy" slowly deteriorated. Early in 1966, Dean Rusk was asked to defend the Resolution before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The committee was chaired by Senator William Fulbright, the man who had originally been a major driving force in pushing the measure through Congress. Fulbright had become increasingly skeptical of LBJ's Vietnam policy. As Stoessinger accused, "In 1966, Fulbright was to remember Tonkin Gulf with deep regret and bitterness. Like so many people, he had been used by Lyndon Johnson."³⁰ As a result, Fulbright used his influence as Chairman to hold a number of highly publicized hearings concerning the events that led to the Tonkin Gulf Resolution. Fulbright and his committee tried desperately to prove that the Tonkin Gulf incident never occurred, that Johnson had merely created a fiction to provide the necessary impetus for the acceptance of his policies. Rusk tried to fend off such accusations. He testified that the Resolution:

constituted a more general grant of power to the Chief Executive, authorizing the steps taken by the Johnson Administration after mid-1964 to save Vietnam from Communist domination.³¹

Under Secretary of State Nicholas Katzenbach, who had replaced George Ball, went on to say "the resolution served as the 'functional equivalent' of a decision of war by the House and Senate."³² Their efforts bought LBJ more time to try and make his plan work, but the Seventh Floor could not hold off this criticism forever. People were growing increasingly despondent and within two years, the doctrine known as the Tonkin Gulf Resolution would be classified as a "failure."³³

Escalation

After Tonkin Gulf, the U.S. was quick to respond with retaliatory air strikes on North Vietnamese positions. Ironically, however, once the bombing had taken place, instead of calling for peace negotiations, Johnson kept pressing for escalation of military operations in Southeast Asia. As Ambrose stated, "The very word 'negotiations' was an anathema in the Administration."³⁴ Indeed:

The path to peace was not open, because neither Lyndon Johnson nor the key men around him -- McNamara, Rusk, McGeorge Bundy -- could see it leading anywhere.³⁵

Such a stance rested on the Cold War attitudes that most of America possessed at this time. Dean Rusk went so far as to compare appeasement with the communists with the appeasement at Munich with Hitler. It just could not happen again lest serious consequences to the freedom of the Western World arising.

As previously mentioned, the Administration advocated strategic bombing in lieu of other military alternatives. The concept was favorably accepted by most government officials. One exception, however,

was Robert Johnson, the deputy for the Policy Planning Committee in the State Department. He made a careful study of the probable effects of bombing. Robert Johnson determined such actions would at best "not work," and at worst "imprison the American government."³⁶ He concluded that:

Hanoi had two formidable pillars of strength: the nationalist component of unity and the Communist component of control, which made for an organized, unified, modern state. Bombing would not affect such a regime. On the contrary, it might even strengthen it.³⁷

While prophetic, the study was ignored by Johnson's chief, Walt Rostow. Rostow was totally committed to bombing, therefore, he never brought the study to the president's attention. John Stoessinger, criticizes Rostow for this move, charging Rostow should have listened to his subordinate and forwarded the study for the president's perusal.³⁸

Although no one can predict ^{for certain} if the study would have been accepted by the President or not, it does not seem likely it would have. LBJ made his own decisions, and elicited "emotional support" from his advisers. For Rostow to have forwarded the study, whether he agreed or disagreed with it, would have had at least two foreseeable, and somewhat realistic, consequences: 1) LBJ could have ignored it altogether; 2) He could have taken the study as an affront to his foreign policy making judgement and to dismiss Rostow and Robert Johnson as nonconformists trying to disrupt his policy initiatives. Either way it does not seem Stoessinger's arguments, written after the Vietnam War, have as much credibility. Admittedly, the reality of the situation simply precluded acceptance of the study. Thus, now the problem was when to employ the bombing. The answer came in 1965.

The first major escalation of the Vietnam conflict came after an attack on the U.S. Air Base at Pleiku, South Vietnam, on February 7, 1965. A Viet Cong mortar attack killed 8 American soldiers. In addition, 6 helicopters and one plane were destroyed. Presidential aide McGeorge Bundy was dispatched to investigate the damage. Bundy's immediate reaction was to call for a retaliatory air strike. Everyone agreed, including most of the Seventh Floor. It should be noted here that Dean Rusk had removed the State Department from taking even a limited role in the policy making function. He believed that the type of decisions that had to be made concerning Vietnam were of a military nature. Because the president was ultimately responsible for any actions taken, the State Department should not take an active role in formulating policy someone else was held accountable for. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara quickly stepped in to become the chief promoter and ^{mm}for_ul_ater of both defense and foreign policy in this distant country. Jordan and Taylor state in their American National Security: "Secretary McNamara . . . became an early spokesman for military escalation in Vietnam. Secretary of State Dean Rusk let the initiative rest with the Defense Department; he became its quiet supporter."³⁹

When Bundy prepared the statement, therefore, the State Department "prepared the political justification."⁴⁰ On February 27, the Department issued a 64-page White Paper "detailing expanded infiltration and seeking to document the hand of Hanoi in control of the insurrection in the South."⁴¹ Its major theme was :

above all the war in Vietnam is not a spontaneous and local rebellion against the established government. . . . In Vietnam a communist government has set out deliberately to conquer

a sovereign people in a neighboring state . . . North Vietnam's commitment to seize control of the South is no less total than was the commitment of the regime in North Korea in 1950.⁴²

The Seventh Floor supplemented this White Paper with an elaborate plan to convince communist nations that Johnson's actions were directed only at North Vietnam's aggressive nature. Convincing these countries was essential if escalation were to occur without causing a full-scale war. Llewelyn Thompson, a special advisor to Rusk on Soviet affairs, was taking pains to reassure Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin that:

the U.S. escalation would be restrained, fitting to the military needs, and not intended to plunge Asia into World War.⁴³

In Warsaw, limited U.S. objectives were also spelled out by Ambassador John M. Cabot to his Chinese communist counterpart. In the U.S. lawmakers were briefed unendingly and newsmen were summoned for "backgrounders."⁴⁴

The result was a brilliant[†] success. As Philip Geyelin claims, in his book LBJ and the World, "almost imperceptibly, the United States switched from reprisal bombing of the North without ever admitting that this was established policy."⁴⁵

In early 1965, the bombing campaign known to most as Operation Rolling Thunder got under way. LBJ "saw our bombs as [his] political resources for negotiating a peace. On the one hand, our planes and our bombs could be used as carrots for the South, strengthening the morale of the South Vietnamese . . . On the other hand, our bombs could be used as sticks against the North, pressuring North Vietnam to stop its aggression against the South."⁴⁶ (Understanding LBJ, emphasis was to lay with the latter alternative). The decision to go ahead with the

operation was supported by all advisers except Rusk, He was out of town. In his place was Under Secretary of State George Ball. The Under Secretary bitterly opposed the bombing. LBJ ignored his advice, however, and steadily increased the intensity of the bombing.

By the end of 1965, it became apparent that "Rolling Thunder" was like "weeding a garden with a bulldozer."⁴⁷ Johnson knew, however, that while he could cancel the operation, he could not halt the bombing. In a rather candid explanation, LBJ reasoned, "I halt and then Ho Chi Minh shoves his trucks right up my ass."⁴⁸ To remedy this fear a three option proposal was presented to the President. It was drafted by Rusk, Gen. Taylor, and General Westmoreland, Commander of U.S. forces in Southeast Asia in 1965. They believed the President had three basic alternatives: 1) expand the military pressure; 2) continue fighting at current levels; 3) cut losses and withdraw.⁴⁹ The general consensus was for the first. LBJ agreed. As a result, U.S. troop concentrations were raised from 50,000 to 200,000 in 1965; to 400,000 in 1966; and to a staggering half-a-million in 1967.

The State Department took the initiative in a public relations campaign to prepare American citizens for the certain prospect of increased casualties. The explanations used, however, were "a little lame."⁵⁰ Public opinion began to decline. In 1967 the "doves" were calling LBJ a "monster." He called them "chicken shit."⁵¹ Time became Johnson's worst enemy. The Vietnam issue eventually devoured the President's popular support, and by late 1967 "the barriers separating irrational thought from delusion were fast crumbling."⁵²

The 1968 Tet offensive proved to be the breaking point. It was

a last ditch effort by communist forces to gain control of South Vietnam. While the huge offensive was repulsed, the U.S. press portrayed it as a communist victory. Growing dismay over Johnson's policies in Vietnam were a strong impetus for the press' actions. So effective was the ^{press} public opinion polls registered a drop from 40% support for Johnson's policies to 28% in six short weeks. The American public was at its limit. On Sunday, March 31, 1968, the President of the United States announced on national television he was stopping the bombing in North Vietnam, except for that area around the 17th parallel. He then withdrew from the Presidential race.⁵³

In the final analysis many have claimed the events leading up to Lyndon Johnson's "disgrace" were a direct result of his "celebrated ego." Some even charge his advisors were "ignorant" of the Vietnam issue and Asian affairs, thus influencing policies they knew nothing of. Such accusations do hold considerable weight as more and more studies of the conflict come out. One thing must be cautioned here, however. Researchers should avoid becoming so involved with the points they are trying to make that their emotions block rational thought. Two examples of this are seen in Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.'s, A Thousand Days, and John G. Stoessinger's Crusaders and Pragmatists.

Schlesinger makes repeated attacks upon Secretary of State Dean Rusk. He ridicules Rusk for his less than aggressive attempts to shape foreign policy measures. Schlesinger claims that the Secretary would sit like a "Buddha" in cabinet meetings, offering little, if no,

advice at all. Ambrose implies that Schlesinger's dislike may have stemmed from Rusk's repeated comparisons of Ho Chi Minh to Hitler. Such comments revealed to Schlesinger that Rusk was "rigidly doctrinaire" and did not perceive the true nature of Kennedy's New Frontier. While there is some truth to what Schlesinger has to say, his rather biased presentation of his material colors the points he has to make. The obvious friction between the two men were an apparent cause for this. As Rusk noted: "Schlesinger claims I 'sit like a Buddha at meetings." When he was in the same room I sure as hell did!"⁵⁴

Throughout 1000 Days, Schlesinger went on to emphasize that Rusk gave responsibility for the Vietnam War over to the Department of Defense. He used the Rostow-Taylor mission in October, 1961, as a prime example of Rusk's resignation from the issue. He states:

A mission headed by a general, with a White House aide as deputy and no comparable figure from the Department of State, expressed a conscious decision by the Secretary of State to turn the Vietnam problem over to the Secretary of Defense.⁵⁵

This researcher has mixed feelings on such a claim. On the one hand, Rusk did in fact resign the issue to Secretary McNamara. But on the other hand, it is difficult to use this example as a relevant analogy. Schlesinger calls Rostow "a White House aide." Rostow was not just a "White House aide," he was a member of the State Department's Seventh Floor. He was the Chairman of the Policy Planning Committee. It seems logical that the Secretary of State would dispatch such a man to investigate the viability of U.S. intervention in Southeast Asia. If the Secretary of State had gone, his world image as chief adviser to the President on foreign affairs, whether he was or was not

in reality, may have presented the impression that the U.S. was formally committed to increasing aid. A tenuous explanation perhaps, but one that Schlesinger neglects. This researcher feels a more detailed investigation is most definitely needed before Schlesinger's comments should be accepted.

John G. Stoessinger presents his material in much the same manner as Schlesinger does. He goes through a lengthy, but very interesting, analysis of LBJ's "colorful" handling of the Vietnam conflict. In addition, Stoessinger investigates the presidential advisers role during the conflict. He asserts:

His advisers, brilliant intellectuals though they were, were almost equally ignorant about Asian affairs. Rusk, Taylor, Rostow, and Westmoreland had no real Asian expertise.⁵⁶

Stoessinger may have wished to choose his examples better. Speaking only for Dean Rusk, the Secretary of State not only had "Asian expertise" but he had followed the problems in this region for nearly a decade and a half. Indeed, Rusk's knowledge of the area began to accumulate in World War II when he served as Chief of Plans for the China-Burma-India Theater. After World War II, he served as Under Secretary of State and later as Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs. Certainly, Rusk knew of Ho Chi Minh when the leader was still a Nationalist, and had seen Ho's transformation into a communist. Of course, one can easily claim that such experience may have indoctrinated Rusk with a rather rigid view of Asian countries and their relationship in the Cold War with the U.S. But whether one chooses to accept this explanation or not, the fact still remains Rusk did have an extensive knowledge of Asian affairs. Stoessinger's

example lends important support for the idea that researchers must temper their studies with rationale and informed analysis.

The latter half of this chapter will investigate the shift in foreign policy from Containment to Detente, and the role of the Seventh Floor in that change.

Nixon: The First Administration

Richard Milhous Nixon was elected President on November 5, 1968, by one of the narrowest margins in U.S. history. He captured a mere 43.5% of the votes, while his only serious competitor, Hubert Humphrey, received 42.7%.¹ The essence of Nixon's campaign centered around his "secret plan" to end the Vietnam War. He never revealed just what that plan was, and amazingly enough he was never forced to. Nixon's answer would come, however, in a series of post-election speeches that mapped out his new approach to foreign policy: detente. The concept centered on the idea of reaching nuclear "sufficiency," rather than superiority. By doing this, the dangerous arms race that had precipitated as a result of the Cuban Missile Crisis could, theoretically, be stopped. As Henry Kissinger explained in 1973:

Detente is necessary because of the danger posed by the accumulation of nuclear weapons on both sides. We are in favour of detente because we want to limit the risks of major nuclear conflict. That gives us an opportunity to communicate and to move rapidly if we want to. It does not eliminate [however] the conflicting interests.²

How Nixon achieved detente started with the men he appointed to assist him.

Nixon brought to the White House a strong opinion on how the nation's foreign affairs were to be run. At the helm would be the president himself; immediately following would be Henry Kissinger, national security adviser; and running a very distant third would be the Secretary of State, William P. Rogers. Kissinger was a well-known Harvard professor, and expert on foreign affairs. Rogers was a New York lawyer that Nixon had been closely associated with in the past. By creating a system, where^e_Aby, Nixon could become his own

Secretary of State, the President could shift policy making authority to the White House, and thus control it. Kissinger, responsible only to Nixon as a result of his position, could provide the necessary advice needed to form viable policy measures. Consequently, Rogers would become the mere implementer of Nixon's decisions. Facilitating the President's efforts was Rogers' "ignorance" of foreign affairs. Indeed, "It was that ignorance," Nixon claimed, "that made the job his."³ Rogers recalls:

I recognized that he [Nixon] wanted to his own foreign policy leader and did not want others to share that role . . . I knew that Nixon would be the principal actor, and when Kissinger came along, I recognized that he would be a very valuable asset to the Presidency.⁴

Bruce Mazlish, in his book Kissinger! The European Mind in American policy, summarized the turn of events:

Nixon wanted to run foreign policy himself, to be his own Secretary of State, and Kissinger, unrepresentative of any constituency and seemingly totally dependent on Nixon, could be the perfect tool to help him (it is noteworthy that Kissinger was appointed before the Secretary of State, Rogers, was selected, an important signal in the fervid Washington atmosphere of power).⁵

Nixon's approach to foreign policy was not unique to previous administrations. What was unique, however, was the new relationship that emerged in the world community: from bipolar to multipolar. Such a shift emphasized a "balance of power" between many countries rather than the traditional focus between just the two superpowers: Russia and the U.S. In an interview with Time magazine, Nixon stated:

We must remember the only time in the history of the world that we have had any extended period of peace is when there has been balance of power. It is when one nation becomes infinitely more powerful in relation to its potential competition that the danger of war arises. So I believe in

a world in which the United States is powerful. I think it will be a safer world and a better world if we have a strong, healthy United States, Europe, Soviet Union, China, Japan, each balancing the other, not playing one against the other, on an even balance.⁶

This was not all that was unique, however; For the first time in many years, a majority of the American populace questioned the U.S.'s stance in the world community. Indeed, Nixon realized that public resentment over Vietnam had been a major issue in the 1968 Presidential campaign. For him to have maintained the then existing policy of escalation would have been political suicide.

To bridge the gap created by the old balance of power with the new equilibrium, as well as quell public opinion, Nixon understood a new foreign policy approach had to be developed.⁷ The product became known as the Nixon Doctrine, and its essence was succinctly outlined by Robert E. Osgood in his essay "The Nixon Doctrine and Strategy." He claimed the "essence of the Nixon strategy lies in fostering the international conditions under which to reduce America's burden of involvement without undermining its global commitments and influence." In addition, "the confidence of its allies depends critically upon reducing the level of international tensions and the expectation of war with adversaries."⁹

The Doctrine was issued in a rather disjointed fashion; through a series of speeches rather than just one. Some have speculated that Nixon did this to protect himself. By issuing "noncommittal terms" he could not be quoted directly.¹⁰ Nixon preferred saying that such a strategy was important in keeping the Doctrine as more of a "philosophic attitude" toward foreign relations, rather than a "finished and

detailed 'design' for American foreign policy."¹¹ The core of his new approach was outlined in a statement given on the Island of Guam on July 25, 1969:

First, the United States will keep all of its treaty commitments.

Second, We shall provide a shield if a nuclear power threatens the freedom of a nation allied with us or of a nation whose survival we consider vital to our security.

Third, in cases involving other types of aggression, we shall furnish military and economic assistance when requested in accordance with our treaty commitments. But we shall look to the nation directly threatened to assume the primary responsibility of providing the manpower for its defense.¹²

Earl C. Ravenal, quoted in Crabb's Doctrines of American Foreign Policy, explained that the Nixon Doctrine could be construed as an effort:

to enable the United States to do essentially as much in the world as before, but with an economy of means, a fairer distribution of burdens, and a more rational allocation of tasks among allies.¹³

On a more selfish note this measure was also a product of Nixon's dire urge to produce "something great;" a "new structure for peace" that bore "his name."¹⁴ Unfortunately for Nixon, his most widely publicized "contribution" to the annals of history would come later with the Watergate scandal.

Two prevalent trends expedited implementation of this policy: First, a substantial increase in the National Security Council's policy making power, of which Henry Kissinger was head of; and second, a substantial loss of the Department of State's influence on the foreign policy making process.

The National Security Council (NSC) was established in 1947 to

advise the President "with respect to the integration of domestic, foreign and military policies relating to national security."¹⁵ In addition, Congress ordered it to independently "assess and appraise objectives, commitments, and risks of the United States in relation to our actual and potential military power."¹⁶ Its statutory members include the President, Vice President, Secretaries of State and Defense, and the director of the Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization.¹⁷ Its influence in the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations was negligible at best, but with Nixon, the NSC would be recharged and thrust into the center of the policy making process. The idea for this was strongly suggested by Henry Kissinger. As Nixon remembered:

[Kissinger] said that if I intended to operate on such a wide-ranging basis, I was going to need the best possible system for getting advice. . . . Kissinger recommended that I structure a national security apparatus within the White House that, in addition to coordinating foreign and defense policy, could also develop policy options for me to consider before making decisions.¹⁸

Nixon concurred with Kissinger's analysis. A significant reason for this was Nixon's and Kissinger's distrust of the foreign affairs bureaucracy. Admittedly, both felt the State Department and Foreign Service were "too slow" and "stifled creativity." As a result, Nixon gave his National Security adviser the power to begin reorganizing the NSC and appoint new members. By the time he was finished a small group of hand-picked elite was ready to begin its task.

The NSC's major distinguishing feature in Nixon's Administration was that Kissinger sought to control all information within its realm.

Kissinger setup a small number of committees, each chaired by himself, to insure his dominance over the process. In addition, Kissinger established a series of "backdoor" contacts within the State Department. The idea was to have prominent ambassadors report directly to him on important happenings. By doing this, Kissinger received information not only quickly but on a first-hand basis as well. This route also cut out, what Kissinger felt was a major stumbling block in U.S. foreign policy: William Pierce Rogers. Perhaps Kissinger's kindest description of the Secretary of State was "uninformed," and at worst an "insensitive neophyte."¹⁹ Ironically, such criticism stemmed from the very reason why Rogers was selected by Nixon, his ignorance of foreign affairs.

With any increase in power, however, it always seems someone or something must lose it. The victim in this case was the U.S. State Department. Crabb claimed, "Under the Nixon Administration the 'decline of the State Department' -- a process that began with the Franklin Roosevelt Administration -- reached its nadir."²⁰ Indeed, the Seventh Floor and the State Department would not just suffer from being mere implementers of policy, as in the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations, but at times they sank so low as to having absolutely no role in the foreign policy process. Kissinger, in his book The White House Years, provided a long list of examples displaying State's loss of power:

Nixon kept his private exchange with North Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh in July-August 1969 from Rogers until forty-eight hours before he revealed it on television in November. . . .

In May 1971 the Secretary of State did not know of the negotiations in White House-Kremlin channels that led to the breakthrough in the SALT talks until seventy-two hours before there was a formal announcement. In July 1971 Rogers was told of my secret trip to China only after I was already on the way. . . . ²¹

The list went on, but as one can surmise, the State Department was being cut out of the policy making process quite effectively. Rogers' reluctance to fight created an "immediate loss of morale in the State Department."²² Roger Morris, one of Kissinger's "backdoor" contacts, and Lawrence Eagleburger, another State Department official, summarized the situation quite bluntly for Arthur Hartman, a career diplomat who was in charge of the State Department's Senior Inter-departmental Group (SIG): "You're going to get screwed; you're going to lose all kinds of power. We don't think this building should be cut out."²³ Hartman later replied apologetically that no one wanted to fight Kissinger. "We can't get anyone to step forward."²⁴ Kissinger soon dismantled the SIG. Morris finished by saying: "State's idea was to wait it out and see if once the first wave of White House enthusiasm had passed, the bureaucratic flow would go back to State."²⁵ It did not.

With the power shifted to the White House, the next major problem facing the Nixon Administration was how to apply it. Kissinger had the answer. He advocated that the first step Nixon had to take was to get the U.S. out of Vietnam. To do this though the President had to realize that public opinion was pointing in two conflicting directions:

On the one hand, most Americans wanted the conflict brought to a rapid end; and on the other, they also desired an honorable and durable peace settlement, commensurate with the enormous sacrifices the United States had made in this contest.²⁶

Some argued for an immediate unilateral withdrawal of U.S. troops. Kissinger advised the President that this would not be advantageous, not only because of the hazardeous military consequences, but even more importantly the enormous damage that would be done to America's credibility as an ally.²⁷ Thus, to remedy, at least partially, some of these difficulties Kissinger proposed the idea of "linkage."

Linkage was an entirely new foreign policy ploy. It rested on the idea that the path to peace in Vietnam led through Moscow and Peking. If the two Communist countries would stop arms shipments to Hanoi, then North Vietnam would have to come to the bargaining table. The plan seemed particularly logical in 1969 due to a sharp deterioration in relations between the Soviet Union and China. But this alone would not be enough to persuade these two communist super-powers. Something more tangible than an ideological split had to be offered. Coral Bell, in The Diplomacy of Detente, explained what this would be:

The three powers seek and obtain their 'payoffs' in different fields: the Russians mainly in economic benefits, the Chinese in improvement of their strategic position, and the Americans in increased diplomatic leverage, flexibility and power of manoeuvre, and reduction of their burdens in maintenance of the status quo.²⁸

The first step would be an arms-control agreement with the U.S.S.R. Kissinger advocated the concept of nuclear "sufficiency" rather than

"superiority." Instead of trying to outdo the other, he would try to reach a parity. Opposing Kissinger would be members of the far right, the "hawks." Kissinger was afraid that this faction's overwhelming strength would succeed in blocking his efforts. As one observer put it, however, "Only Kissinger by the force and strength of his personality, and the power of his position in the government, was able to hold the Pentagon at bay."²⁹ Thus, the Strategic Arms Limitations Talks (SALT) became a major issue from the outset of the Nixon Administration.

Before Russia would come to the tables, a sign of U.S. sincerity to negotiate had to be offered. Consequently, one of Nixon's first acts as President was to send the nuclear nonproliferation treaty (which prevented nations that did not have nuclear weapons from getting them) to the Senate. It was ratified. Ironically, the day after this act was passed, Nixon announced a new Anti-Ballistic missile (ABM) program. The president's purpose was simple: show your sincerity, but also have some "bargaining chips" before you go into the talks.³⁰ The president also approved another program which increased the Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) force's destructive power 3 to 10 times. It was called MIRV, short for Multiple Independently Targeted Reentry Vehicle, and would give each ICBM 3 to 10 separately targeted nuclear warheads.³¹ Nixon, however, did not want MIRV included in SALT until after it had been perfected and deployed. This posed some problems for U.S. mediators but they eventually gained its acceptance through many hours of negotiations.

After three years SALT I was signed on May 26, 1972. It consisted of three separate documents: A formal treaty limiting ABM systems, an interim agreement on the limitation for up to five years of offensive strategic systems, and a protocol outlining the constraints on Submarine-launched Ballistic Missiles (SLBM).³² The agreements did not include MIRV, but they also did not include the Soviet's new strategic bomber, the "backfire." Kissinger's efforts were a major success in reducing Cold War hostilities and bringing the world closer to detente.

Despite the incredible magnitude of the issue at hand, Kissinger as well as others did find time to relieve the tension created by these talks. Richard Valeriani, in his book Travels with Kissinger, recalls:

During a toilet break in the talks that were being held in Brezhnev's study, the members of the American delegation all went into an elegant Kremlin bathroom with paneled walls. Kissinger shouted out to his aides from one of the stalls, 'It's really been modernized. It's got a bug built into the seat.' . . .

[Two of his aides] laughed about finding a good spot in one of the men's rooms to tell Barry Goldwater about. (Goldwater had once suggested lobbing a bomb into the men's room of the Kremlin to make the Russians show a little respect).
End of bathroom humor.³³

The next step was to bring China into the picture.

Since 1949, the U.S. had had no relations with Communist leader Mao Tse-tung and the People's Republic of China (PRC). Instead, the U.S. chose to recognize Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek located on the Isle of Taiwan. America's resentment of communism helps to explain this turn of events. With each passing year, this policy of nonrecognition of the PRC led to increased misconceptions about this nation. When Nixon announced in July 1971 that he would visit the PRC,

America and the world was shocked. No one understood why a reexamination of the "old policy" was taking place. As Ambrose states, "There had been no public pressure to change the China policy, and no public debate had taken place on the subject for years."³⁴ Why then? Some speculate Kissinger sold Nixon on the idea that a Sino-Soviet split had vast possibilities for the U.S. Indeed, Kissinger's "active pursuit of detente could not help but make China worry about a possible U.S.-U.S.S.R. alliance against China."³⁵ Likewise, "Kissinger's opening to China, meanwhile, made Russia's leaders fearful of a U.S.-China alliance directed against them."³⁶ The purpose was always the same, however:

to get Moscow and Peking to force Hanoi to allow the United States to extract itself from South Vietnam and to refrain from toppling Thieu [President of South Vietnam] until a 'decent interval' had gone by.³⁷

Ultimately, if these were Kissinger's designs, they did not work as planned. The major contributing factor for this was Hanoi itself. The North Vietnamese leaders reasoned that they were not "pawns" for the superpowers to play with. The only route to peace would be through Hanoi and the only acceptable compromise was a complete withdrawal of U.S. forces and the reunification of Vietnam.

Despite the fact that Kissinger's originally intended plan did not work, one important consequence did result: the opening of China. Kissinger had secretly begun arranging Nixon's 1972 trip to China in 1970. He had informed Yahya Khan, the President of Pakistan,

who had frequent dealings with the Chinese, of the president's new interest in the PRC. Khan, acting as Kissinger's confidential courier, was received by Mao in November 1970. After this meeting, a steady stream of unsigned notes from Peking were received by the National Security adviser. In March 1971, one of them invited an "American envoy" to come to Peking, either Secretary of State Rogers or Henry Kissinger. Who did the President select to go? Kissinger left Washington on July 1, 1971, allegedly on a round-the-world trip. Stopping in Pakistan, Kissinger "acquired" the flu, and claimed he would have to rest. Actually, Kissinger was in perfect health. At 3:00 a.m. on July 9, Kissinger took off on a Pakistani International Airlines jet from Peking.³⁸ One reporter, following a lead, sent a dispatch to his paper that he had seen Kissinger take off, and that Kissinger's destination was China. The editor receiving the message calmly shook his head saying: "Drunk again."³⁹

Kissinger spent more than twenty hours of his two-day visit in conversations with Chou-en-lai, China's Premier. The two discovered they shared the same philosophy on many subjects. When it came time for Kissinger to leave, two important things had been accomplished: First, Chou extended an invitation to Nixon to visit China in early 1972; and second, "They agreed in principle that Taiwan should be considered as a part of China and that the political future of the Island should be settled peacefully by the Chinese themselves."⁴⁰ With these two issues, hashed-out Kissinger left.

Nixon announced his trip to China in November 1971. At the same time he revealed his new stance on Taiwan. The response to the president's announcement was emotional. Chiang Kai Shek felt utterly betrayed; while the American public, although somewhat shocked, applauded his trip. Of course, from the American perspective, who could disagree? As Nixon later admitted in 1978:

no other American politician could have gotten away with it. The move was good politics. The right wing might (and to some extent did) complain, but it had no one but Nixon to cling to. The left wing could only applaud.⁴¹

Thus, when Nixon and Kissinger arrived in China on February 21, 1972, all eyes were focused on Nixon. The week spent there was filled with negotiations between the Nixon-Kissinger team on the American side, and the Chou En-Lai-Chiao Kuan-hua (Deputy Foreign Minister) team on the Chinese side. (Secretary of State William Rogers and China's Foreign Minister Chi Peng-fei were left to discuss questions of travel, tourism, and trade). The evenings were "taken up with banquets, table-tennis exhibitions, and a performance of Red Detachment of Women."⁴² Before Nixon and Kissinger left, a joint communique was hammered out. The American stance acknowledged that there was:

but one China and that Taiwan [was] a part of China,' but insisted on 'a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan question by the Chinese themselves.' He also pledged 'the ultimate withdrawal of all U.S. forces and military installations from Taiwan,' and a gradual reduction of American forces 'as the tension in the area diminish[ed].'⁴³

Stoessinger points out:

The implication was that the United States would gradually withdraw as the Vietnam war drew to a close, but would pull out completely only after Peking had renounced force as a way of 'liberating' Taiwan.⁴⁴

The Chinese asserted:

'the Taiwan question was the crucial question obstructing the normalization of relations between China and the United States,' and reasserted the position that the island was a Chinese province. It also implied, however, that Taiwan's ultimate absorption into China would not take place by force. This was about as far as the two sides were able to move toward a compromise.⁴⁵

When Nixon and Kissinger left, they returned home to "heroes' welcomes." Domestically, their trip had been a success, particularly for Nixon. As Ambrose noted: "The boldness and drama of the new policy, the basic common sense in recognizing China, and the magnificent television coverage of the trip itself, with Nixon always at the center, could not help but win him millions of votes."⁴⁶ Elsewhere, the trip was not viewed as positively. In Moscow, "the reaction was one of sullen anger and suspicion."⁴⁷ In Tokyo, "the Sato government collapsed, and on Taiwan, Chiang Kai-shek declared that the United States could no longer be trusted as an ally."⁴⁸ Despite these happenings, one thing was assured, at least theoretically: According to Kissinger's "linkage theory," peace in Vietnam could now be attained.

Vietnam

Coincidentally, soon after the China trip, the last U.S. troops were pulled out of Vietnam. But the beginnings of the withdrawal occurred well-before the journey was even planned. The impetus for the removal was created not by Kissinger's "linkage" theory, but by Nixon's "Vietnamization" policy. Vietnamization was deeply rooted in the Nixon Doctrine. It called for maintaining the U.S.'s treaty commitments (i.e.-SEATO), but also required South Vietnam to take much of the burden for

its own defense. To accomplish this the U.S. would begin withdrawing American combat troops, unit by unit, while pledging only to rearm South Vietnamese units as needed. The policy was officially put into effect on June 8, 1969, when Nixon announced the first U.S. troop withdrawals. By the end of 1969, U.S. troop strength fell from 542,500 to 472,500, the lowest level since 1967.⁴⁹ As one author claimed, "It was a historic turning point. Johnson's policy of escalation in Vietnam had been reversed."⁵⁰

The president did not stop here, however. Along with these measures, Nixon announced the end of the draft and institution of an All-Volunteer Force (AVF). The AVF was excellent politics. The antiwar movement was fueled mainly by young male college students who protested serving in the armed forces. Nixon, therefore, gave the young men exactly what they wanted: no more conscription. As a result, instituting an all-volunteer army "seriously weakened the political impact of the doves by robbing them of their major support, male college students."⁵¹ Consequently, "Nixon had less trouble with street demonstrations than did his predecessor."⁵²

While Nixon was announcing his formal public posture, Kissinger was pursuing secret peace talks in Paris with North Vietnam's Le Duc Tho, a member of Hanoi's Politburo. Beginning in August 1969, Kissinger concentrated on gaining an armistice that would allow for the return of American P.O.W.s, keep South Vietnam's President Thieu in power, and a general cessation of hostilities.⁵³ In return, the U.S. would remove all of its troops, and recognize "Communist possessions of large sections of the South Vietnamese countryside."⁵⁴ Hanoi viewed Kissinger's

offer as an attempt to buy them off; Thieu viewed it as a sellout. It took Kissinger four long years, but he finally achieved his victory. His efforts were frustrated both by Le Duc Tho's incessant "nitpicking" and the series of events that took place in between those four years. The first of which was the U.S. invasion of Cambodia in 1970.

On April 30, 1970, President Nixon announced that a large force of U.S. troops had invaded Cambodia. The United States had originally agreed never to enter the nation's borders. But, Nixon justified that Cambodia was a haven for North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces. Nixon, reported in Congressional Quarterly, claimed, "the incursion was necessary to protect U.S. forces during the prolonged withdrawal process from Vietnam."⁵⁵ His objective was COSVN, which he described as the "command headquarters of the entire North Vietnamese and V.C. effort."⁵⁶ This "headquarters" never existed, however. Thus, the invasion resulted in the death of a few communist troops, while serving as a major catalyst for a short-lived revival of antiwar sentiment in the United States. After a seven-week debate, the U.S. Senate called for immediate withdrawal of the troops. The troops left soon after this bill's passage.

Congress did not stop here though. Indeed, on December 31, 1970, the Tonkin Gulf Resolution was repealed. A symbolic gesture of Congress' willingness to regain its influence in the foreign policy arena. Nixon simply ignored their action though, claiming he did not need the Resolution to justify his actions as Commander-in-Chief. He had the Constitution on his side. Congress retaliated by refusing to appropriate any funds used to widen the war. In addition, they specifically forbade the use of American ground troops in Cambodia or Laos.⁵⁷

They forgot to mention use of air power, however, because on February 8, 1971, when South Vietnamese forces invaded Laos, Nixon had American bombers and helicopters fly missions to protect them. As time would tell, the air cover made no difference. The South Vietnamese armies suffered a 50% casualty rate during the 45-day operation. It was a major embarrassment.⁵⁸ By the end of 1971, Nixon elected to withdraw an additional 45,000 troops from combat.

1972 marked the last year U.S. combat troops would be stationed in Vietnam. Before the final pull-out, however, Hanoi launched a major offensive across the demilitarized zone at the 17th parallel on March 30. Two weeks later, Nixon ordered an intensive bombing campaign of the North, hitting Hanoi and other key cities. He also approved the mining of Haiphong Harbor. Contrary to popular speculation, Russia acted as if nothing had happened. Why the communist superpower responded so mildly as it did perplexed many people. Kissinger attributed it to linkage and detente; others to Russia's need for America's wheat and corn. Peking limited it self to verbal denunciations. While the communists' reactions were important to take into consideration, so to was the potential domestic reaction. Nixon had suddenly got the U.S. back into the war and he was up for reelection in November. Determined to win by the largest margin ever, the incumbent had "to have some semblance of peace in Vietnam, but he also had to have Thieu still in power in Saigon, or he would become 'the first President to lose a war.'"⁵⁹ His solution was to further escalate and thus force Le Duc Tho to the negotiating table. It came primarily in the form of an air offensive

against North Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. (A ground offensive would have been virtually impossible. U.S. troop levels were down to less than 70,000).

The president's plan seemed to work. After a long series of debates, Le Duc Tho indicated his willingness to sign an agreement. The terms were as follows: Safe evacuation for all remaining U.S. forces, and return of all American POWs. Why Le Duc Tho indicated a willingness to sign such a plan remains a mystery. Some speculate he realized that once the Americans were gone, Nixon and Kissinger would have great difficulty in influencing events there. Others claim he responded to a bribe: Nixon had offered a major reconstruction program for North Vietnam once the shooting quit.⁶⁰ In any event, on October 26, 1972, Nixon could claim "peace with honor." Democratic candidate George McGovern lost the only issue keeping his campaign afloat. Nixon won the election by the largest margin in U.S. history.

Immediately after the election, peace talks broke down again. Nixon changed the terms of the agreement just before Le Duc Tho was ready to sign. Kissinger now had to get North Vietnam to pledge that Thieu would stay in power. The reason for this move was mainly due to Thieu himself. He felt sold out, and thus would not adhere to any ceasefire formulated by North Vietnam and the U.S. Kissinger began offering extravagant promises to both countries, mainly centering on reconstruction projects. Meanwhile, Nixon resumed bombing of Hanoi.

The president told the American public that the air strikes were necessary to force the release of American POWs. The result was quite the opposite, however. Instead of gaining their release, Nixon added

93 to the list. Hanoi was one of the most heavily defended cities against air attack in modern history. Fifteen B-52s and eleven fighter-bombers were lost because of Nixon's plan.

Responding to public resentment and lack of Congressional support and funding, Nixon called off the bombing and signed an agreement with North Vietnam. On January 23, 1973, all active American participation in Vietnam ended.

Despite direct U.S. involvement being cut, Nixon still continued rushing more arms to Thieu. As time passed, however, the president had to turn his attention to defending himself against accusations aimed at his involvement in the Watergate scandal. As a result, Kissinger kept Nixon's support of Thieu's regime alive, even into the Ford Administration. Eventually though, Kissinger's efforts would cease. The final collapse of South Vietnam occurred in 1975 after a major North Vietnamese offensive sent Thieu's forces reeling. On April 30, 1975, the remnants of the South Vietnamese government announced unconditional surrender to the communists. Saigon became Ho Chi Minh city; and Vietnam was reunited. After a struggle beginning in 1954, America's longest running war had finally come to an end.

Through this discussion, it should be apparent that the Seventh Floor's role in foreign policy making in Nixon's first administration was virtually nonexistent. As Crabb noted in The Doctrines of American Foreign Policy, this was simply a continuation of a decline that had been occurring since World War II. But the effects of Nixon and other presidents centralizing power within the White House were not restricted to the State Department alone. Congress slowly demanded more of an

active role in foreign policy making. Indeed, after the passage of the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, Congressional participation resembled little more than blind followership. In the Nixon Administrations alone Congress had been left out of almost every major foreign affairs decision (No different than the Seventh Floor though): Vietnamization, the air and ground offensives against Cambodia and Laos, the China trip, detente, linkage, the mining of Haiphong harbor, the Christmas bombing, and the cease-fire agreement.⁶¹ In an attempt to reverse this trend, Congress passed the War Powers Act in 1973. It required "the President to give an accounting of his actions within 30 days of committing troops to a foreign war."⁶² After that time period, Congress had to approve his actions.

Whether the act really had any effect on the President's power over foreign policy is debatable. While it did serve as a symbolic measure, and perhaps deterred later presidents on matters of little importance, in times of crisis the act has meant little. A primary example of this is Ford's handling of the Mayaguez Affair. After the cargo ship had been captured in Cambodia in May 1975, the president immediately sent in the Marines to rescue it. To the best of this researcher's knowledge, the War Powers Act took little part in Ford's decision to act. Ambrose noted:

The affair revealed that the quickest path to popularity for a President remained a successful military adventure. In such situations, hopes for a less active, more cautious and realistic, less expansive foreign policy, were slim.⁶³

Admittedly, if Congress was to affect foreign policy, its most effective methods of doing so resided in more definitive ways; specifically, their treaty ratification powers and their control over appropriations.

This researcher does not mean to imply that symbolic measures such as The War Powers Act are completely useless, he simply wishes to note that there are better methods Congress can revert ^{to} in order to become an important actor in U.S. foreign affairs.

The Middle East

When Nixon was reelected president in 1972, he replaced Secretary of State William Rogers with Henry Kissinger. (Kissinger still retained his position as National Security adviser). This made Kissinger one of the most powerful men in U.S. foreign policy. Indeed, excluding Nixon, who would soon be wrapped up in Watergate, Kissinger was second to no one. He not only controlled the NSC bureaucracy, but also controlled the State Department's bureaucracy as well. Kissinger's reign lasted through Ford's Administration, but his greatest accomplishment by far was his handling of the 1973 Middle East crisis known as the Yom Kippur War.

On October 6, 1973, the Egyptian and Syrian armies launched a surprise attack against Israel on the Jewish religious holiday Yom Kippur. The Israelis were driven off the Golan Heights, and from defensive positions along the Suez. (Most of this territory had been captured by Israel in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War).

When Kissinger learned of the attack, he began formulating potential policy options that could be followed to restore peace in the area. Interestingly, the Secretary of State, prior to this crisis, had not concentrated much of his attention on the Middle East. Because

of his Jewish background, Nixon preferred to use Kissinger's talents elsewhere.

The Secretary put together a list of three goals the U.S. would actively pursue: First, to save Israel, a U.S. ally; second, to avoid an Arab oil embargo; and third, to develop a formula to bring peace to the Middle East.

On the first point Kissinger was persuaded by the Jewish lobby and several other groups to advise Nixon to send military aid to Israel. As time would show, however, the Secretary would choose the proper moment when to send such aid. (Nixon was so preoccupied with Watergate at this time, Kissinger was in complete charge of U.S. foreign policy).⁶⁴ Kissinger's reasoning ^{for waiting} was sound. He did not want Israel armed to the teeth to defeat the Egyptians and Syrians. If the Israelis humiliated their attackers, as in earlier wars, effective negotiations would be next to impossible. Thus, Kissinger waited.

Russia began a large-scale airlift of arms to Syria and Egypt in an attempt to resupply lost or expended materiel. This became the major impetus for Kissinger to ask for an American airlift of military equipment to Israel. On October 15, the United States announced it was resupplying Israel to "counterbalance" the Soviet move.⁶⁵

With the new equipment, the Israelis launched a counterattack, crossing the Suez at two points. They succeeded in pushing the Syrians off of the Golan Heights, and encircling the Egyptian Third Army.⁶⁶

Meanwhile, the Arab oil states imposed an embargo on oil shipments to the U.S. and Israel's allies in Europe. This move had a

significant effect on the world as a whole. Oil prices soared, and inflation spiralled upward. To get this embargo lifted, Kissinger believed he had to achieve a peace in the Middle East quickly. He began by instituting a plan referred to as "step-by-step" diplomacy. The concept was to gain agreement on the most insignificant points in preliminary negotiations, build a level of trust between the belligerents, then move to the next more difficult issue.

Kissinger's first move was to get a cease-fire. The U.N. Security Council agreed to it by a vote of 14-0 (China abstained). Still, Israel chose to ignore it. General Moshe Dayan, Israel's Defense Minister, wanted the aggressors to know they had lost. Kissinger was infuriated. Such a move would destroy his plans for peace talks. He, thus, delivered Israel with an ultimatum: Adhere to a ceasefire or lose U.S. aid. Simultaneously, the Soviet Union proposed a joint U.S.-U.S.S.R. task force be formed to save the Egyptian Third Army. If the U.S. refused, Russia would go in alone. Kissinger responded in the "strongest terms possible, short of actual war."⁶⁷ He persuaded Nixon to place U.S. armed forces on a worldwide alert. This signalled Russia that Kissinger would "go to the limit" to keep Soviet troops out of the area.⁶⁸ A U.N. peacekeeping force would have to be formed from nonnuclear countries. Russia agreed, the U.S. alert was called off, and Israel ended its counterattack. The war was over. It was now time for diplomacy.

On November 7, 1973, Kissinger began his "shuttle diplomacy;" flying from capital to capital trying to gain acceptance of an agree-

ment. First, he flew to Cairo to meet with Egyptian President Anwar Sadat. It was the first diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Egypt since the 1967 war. Kissinger then arranged an exchange of POWs; and in secret negotiations, and Egyptian-Israeli accord. This agreement provided for "a mutual disengagement and pullback of force ^{to} along the Suez and the establishment of a U.N. Emergency buffer zone between them."⁶⁸ It was signed on January 18, 1974.

Soon afterward, the Arab states lifted their oil embargo; and on May 31, after shuttling back and forth between Syria and Israel, Kissinger achieved a ceasefire and troop disengagement agreement on the Golan Heights.⁶⁹

In the ensuing two-and-a-half years, the U.S. continued shipping arms to Israel; ^h the Israelis still occupied most of the Sinai, the Golan Heights, and the West Bank of Jordan; and hostilities continued between all of the original belligerents. This led many to ask: Was Kissinger really as successful in the Middle East as some made him out to be? The answer is not a simple one. On one side, it can be argued that "No, he was not." The region was still immersed in the same problems that had plagued it before the 1973 War. However, one can counter this by asserting that one man cannot change the feelings of nations that had been fostered over many generations. Stephen Ambrose chose the former explanation. While he did admit Kissinger increased America's influence in the region, at the expense of the Soviets, he still claimed: "As Kissinger left office in January 1977, he had little to show for shuttle diplomacy."⁷⁰ This researcher must accept both explanations, however; tempering each with the understanding that neither

one explanation or the other can ever fully break the problem down into nice neat answers.

Regardless of who is right or wrong, if there is a right or wrong, peace in the Middle East still remained a high goal of American foreign policy even after Kissinger left office. It still has not been found, but the path for many of the successes that have been seen in the past several years did seem to be opened by Kissinger's efforts as Secretary of State.

Analysis

In the course of writing this paper, an interesting discovery took place. It was originally hypothesized that a general decline in Seventh Floor influence on foreign policy making occurred up to Nixon's second administration. When Henry Kissinger was appointed Secretary of State, it was then believed that he would bring at least a portion of the foreign policy making power back to the State Department. In doing this he would allow the Seventh Floor to take a more aggressive role in U.S. foreign affairs.

This researcher, however, discovered that this was not quite the case. On the contrary, the State Department's decline never stopped. Appointing Kissinger to the Secretaryship simply multiplied his power twofold. No longer did he have to resort to "backdoor contacts" for information on the dealings of the State Department. Instead, he could ask directly, he was the Secretary. At the same time, he never relinquished his power as National Security adviser. Thus, his control over this portion of the process was assured also. As Nixon became increasingly preoccupied with Watergate, Kissinger's power was multiplied even more.

As this researcher discovered, an increase in one man's power does not mean he will distribute it any more than he had in the past. To assume the State Department would instantly be raised to an important actor in the formulation of U.S. foreign policy doctrine simply because Kissinger became its secretary was slightly presumptuous.

Admittedly, many remembered Kissinger had little difficulty in accepting his new power and new position. Consequently, Kissinger proceeded to utilize all of the resources at his disposal in both the NSC and the State Department. But at the same time Kissinger was the one making the decisions; he was the one making policy. The NSC's role was still to develop policy options for the president; and the State Department's role was still to implement them.

Had anything changed? Not really. The State Department and its Seventh Floor was really no more visible in the policy making process than before. Whether or not this decline continued after 1976 is a subject for further research. What should be investigated here, however, concerns what effects are there on the policy making process when such an integral part as the Seventh Floor is removed from it. Indeed, while admittedly slow, are they not supposed to be the experts in foreign affairs? One could easily argue, "No, they are political appointees who follow the President's lead incessantly." Yes, to a limited extent they do, that is what makes the State Department such a cohesive and important part of the policies this nation follows; but not all Seventh Floor officials are given their position solely on the basis of political patronage. In the period between 1961-1976 just under 50% of all Seventh Floor appointees had prior State Department experience. While this does not confer expertise, the fact that some officials did have some form of experience implies they are not selected on political affiliation alone.

Moving away from such a narrow interpretation is essential to understand the implications of removing the Seventh Floor from

foreign policy making. After examining numerous possibilities, this researcher forwards what he thinks were two of the most logical consequences: 1) An inability to gain an equilibrium of influence amongst the foreign policy actors; 2) the ignoring of knowledgeable men with sound advice.

First, We live in a complex world, filled with many competing interests. As a result, in order to resolve the many confrontations that may arise, compromise between the conflicting parties is usually required. The object here is to gain not necessarily the best solution for one or the other, but an agreed upon solution for all involved. This requires a willingness to engage in a give-and-take process by the affected individuals. Unfortunately, compromise is often viewed as a sign of weakness. Thus, often times, negotiators are necessary to smooth over differences. By guiding the discussions, and trying to remain neutral, the negotiator can hopefully steer the discussion in the proper direction while at the same time preserving each actors self-perceived image.

A key element here is obviously the negotiator. If an expert in his craft, he serves as an important link between the opposing groups. Indeed, by remaining ^{an} impartial observer, he is capable of offering constructive criticism and the necessary advice required to reach a resolution of hostilities. In addition, he can help develop policies that would theoretically prevent future misunderstandings. Take him away and a serious gap is created. One that can lead to an imbalance in the system as a whole.

Like the negotiator, the U.S. State Department's Seventh Floor should play an important part in the nation's foreign policy making process. Possessing a wealth of expertise and potential, it can act in helping to guide the other participants (i.e.- the president, Congress, etc.) toward reaching the optimum foreign policy doctrine for America.

Unfortunately, this is a rather Utopian outlook. A host of important variables affects the extent to which this can occur. Anything from the president's "style" in handling foreign affairs to Congress' attitude towards his actions. Indeed, Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon all had a strong desire to run foreign affairs from the White House. As a result, the State Department was slowly eliminated from the process. When Congress began to actively reassert itself, a clash of authority occurred between the Legislative and Executive branches. Both sides went through a struggle, whereby, for every attempt at controlling the process, the opposing party would retaliate trying to gain the upperhand. This "game" went on until one or the other achieved their desired goals. The secret U.S. invasion of Cambodia and Laos ordered by Nixon is representative of this. When Congress learned of the president's actions, they refused to appropriate funds for further ground operations in either country. Nixon, in turn, ordered U.S. bombing missions in support of a South Vietnam invasion in 1972. He reasoned that since Congress had failed to stipulate this in their previous restrictions, his actions were justified.

From this example one may conclude that the direction U.S. foreign

policy will follow is predominantly set by the president. How knowledgeable was Nixon, or for that matter any president between 1961-1976, on foreign affairs? The answer: The presidents, on the whole, had a limited knowledge of foreign affairs. Yet they still chose to exclude the experts (i.e.- the Seventh Floor). Why? The Chief Executives were generally rather skeptical of the State Department bureaucracy. Kennedy went so far as to call it a "bowl of Jello."⁷¹ Thus, they chose to bypass the structure; either that or just ignore it. While such actions may have been justified to a limited extent, they still can not be completely vindicated. Just as the negotiator is needed for his expertise, so to is the Seventh Floor. Ironically, the president is the one who generally determines the extent they will be allowed to exercise such expertise in support of him. As one can see, it becomes a Catch-22 situation.

"If the Seventh Floor is readmitted back into the process, how closely should their suggestions be followed? Obviously, it cannot be asserted that their advice be followed blindly. If this were the case, then the policy making equilibrium would be offset again, only in the State Department's favor. But their opinion is important. They have direct contact to almost any area of the world, at almost any time. In addition, the Seventh Floor sets the policies that lead to the implementation of those policy guidelines passed down by the President. With such a vast wealth of resources ^{and power} at their fingertips, it seems illogical not to include them.

In short, the point to be made here is that every actor has his place in foreign policy making, (many times determined by the situation at hand). The president should give the process direction by outlining the policies he wants pursued and making necessary corrections as situations arise; Congress can, and should use, its treaty ratification powers and appropriations power to either deter or remedy presidential actions they feel detrimental; the NSC helps to provide options to the president to facilitate his decisions; and the Seventh Floor provides both advice to the president and sees that plans are developed to implement his policies. While a somewhat simplistic explanation, it is hoped this conglomeration will form a sound viable foreign policy. One based on rationale and understanding rather than one man's opinion or a small group's opinion.

It is unfortunate that a general equilibrium amongst the actors in the foreign policy making realm cannot be achieved. But as was stated before, this may be too Utopian. While our nation will not fall simply because a balance does not exist, this researcher feels by achieving one, it would develop a much stronger U.S. foreign policy doctrine. The intended results being to increase our image and influence in the world community. Through more indepth investigations, perhaps a way can be found to achieve, at least partially, this equilibrium. For now we must be content to simply stir up the water, and hope the solution is found before sentiments settle back into complacency.

Next to be investigated was the simple ignoring of some extremely capable men. As time progressed, members of the Seventh Floor had less and less influence on the foreign policy making process. However, after reviewing each member's personal background for the period between 1961-1976 some extraordinary things emerged. While they may be extremely tenuous factors, perhaps explaining nothing, the numbers do provide an interesting case.

The sample consisted of the 41 Seventh Floor officials serving between 1961-1976. This included the Secretaries of State, Under Secretary of State, Deputy Under Secretaries for Political Affairs, Economic Affairs, and Administration, the Counselor, Under Secretary for Coordinating Security Assistance programs, and the UN ambassador. The categories examined included: Education (Undergraduate, graduate, and professional), prior occupation, post career occupation, prior State Department experience, prior military experience, and special distinctions (Phi Beta Kappa/Rhodes Scholar).

In the area of education, all Seventh Floor members possessed undergraduate degrees. Of these, nearly 2 to 1 went to an Ivy League College (i.e.- Harvard, Yale, Princeton, etc). 42% had a Master's degree or Phd., with just under 60% ^{of these} receiving them from Ivy League institutions. A truly startling feature, however, was that one-half of all Seventh Floor members possessed a law degree, and of these, 80% received them from Ivy League colleges. It should also be mentioned that these statistics include 5 Rhodes Scholars and 7 Phi Beta Kappas. A rather impressive showing to say the least.

Being educated in some of the finest universities in this nation, ^{and abroad,} in addition to receiving numerous distinctions for their performance, the wealth of knowledge and "type," if you will, of men available to the president was incredible. It seems a shame to have ^{not used} it ^{fully.}

Education is important but not everything. Indeed, how you use it can be just as important as having it. 43% had been pursuing a career in government before entering the Seventh Floor. Generally, this experience came with the State Department. There were, however, 3 governors and 1 Lieutenant governor appointed. The next highest occupation was a distant 24%, and these members came from the business sector. As a ^{not} post career occupations changed little.

In addition, prior military experience showed important trends in Seventh Floor appointments. Over 61% had participated in the Armed Forces. An interesting point is that all but two were officers during World War II, the others served in the Korean War.¹

Through close examination, one should notice that while political appointees, most Seventh Floor officials were very well qualified for the positions they held. They had the potential to give sound policy advice, but on numerous occasions that proved to be irrelevant.

In conclusion, if one were to draw a social portrait of the "typical" Seventh Floor official between 1961-1976, it would look something like this: Generally, he was educated in Ivy League schools, a lawyer, held posts in government or business, and had probably served as an officer in World War II. A somewhat impressive

sketch to slowly push out of U.S. foreign policy, but then again the president felt justified in his actions. Since his opinion was the only one that counted, the issue was fairly well settled.

Organizational Authority

While these two consequences are important in the development of this paper, one final issue must be addressed before it can be closed: the shift in organization^a authority in the Seventh Floor between 1961-1976. For this researcher's purposes, the State Department was the "organization," and its "authority" came from the Secretary of State. He is defined in such a manner because, in the end, he was ultimately responsible to the president for his department's actions. The shift that was evidenced started with Dean Rusk; ended with Henry Kissinger; with William Rogers providing the transition. The styles of the three men were markedly different, and by examining each of them, one begins to get a broader understanding of how and why American foreign policy evolved the way it did.

The most important comparison in this analysis is between Dean Rusk and Henry Kissinger. They were both amply suited for the time period and presidents they served, but each was the antithesis of the other. Where Rusk was shy and unob^btrusive, Kissinger was bold and conspicuous. To study each of them in their respective environments is to understand the truth of this assertion.

Rusk was fortunate in that public opinion was generally supportive

of America's foreign policy doctrine during a large portion of his tenure. Kissinger was also fortunate. Kissinger, as National Security adviser, had helped Nixon extensively to reduce U.S. involvement in Vietnam. In addition, Kissinger had been a major driving force in reaching a detente with the communist world. The public responded to these moves by displaying a new, yet wary, confidence in the U.S.'s rebuilt foreign policy doctrine. By having such support, the two secretary's had a much easier time in helping the president to develop policies; in addition to implementing them.

The difference between the two time frames in which each served was that in Rusk's case, public support was almost as inherent as it was blind. The fear of communism, and the policy of containment had been long established, and as a result, unified the nation. In Kissinger's case, he did not have such a strong base from which to work from. Indeed, the U.S.'s new foreign policy had only been in existence for approximately four years. People were still trying to understand detente and the Nixon Doctrine. Policy makers were still trying to define it. To assume that public opinion was automatically on his side, as Rusk could do to a limited extent, might have had disastrous consequences. Understanding this, one can begin to examine the differences in the two men's styles and personal backgrounds.

Both Rusk and Kissinger had impressive credentials for the position of Secretary of State. Rusk was a Rhodes Scholar. In the course of his studies, he had focused his attention on international relations.

Serving as an Army officer in the War Department during World War II, he gained a reputation for his knowledge and skill in foreign affairs. After the war, he quit the military, and was subsequently assigned to various State and Defense Department posts.

Kissinger, on the otherhand, was educated at Harvard. He entered the school in 1946 after serving as an Army Intelligence officer during World War II. Kissinger distinguished himself, in particular, with his doctoral thesis A World Restored. It dealt with the Congress of Vienna and how it restored world peace for almost 100 years. Even more importantly, it was a work that became almost a blueprint of his approach to foreign policy as ^{National Security adviser and} Secretary of State. After receiving his Phd., Kissinger continued as a professor of political science at Harvard, in addition to writing several books. He also served in a variety of advisory posts in the Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson administrations. They included the Psychological Strategy Board of the NSC and the Operations Coordinating Board of the CIA.

To be recognized is how each man applied the knowledge and experience he possessed. Rusk was, as Schlesinger previously mentioned, "rigidly doctrinaire." Indeed, one White House aide expanded this assertion by saying: "There was ^a sense that his [Rusk's] mind was not his own property, that he was not allowed to let it take him where it wanted to go. There were instead . . . limits to what you could think. Strict confines."¹

Kissinger was not this dogmatic. His mind grasped new concepts quickly. He implied this was a result, in part, of his schooling at Harvard. Kissinger stated: "That was the most liberal school in the world. . . You did your own thinking. You formed your own opinions."²

This difference surfaced repeatedly in the performance of their duties as secretary. Rusk was largely responsible for implementing the policies of Kennedy and Johnson. This task was greatly facilitated by having a man in the Secretaryship who accepted the president's "rules" and was willing to do his job quietly and efficiently. David Halberstam, in his book the Best and the Brightest, summarized Rusk's philosophy:

You played by the rules of the game and the rules were very strict, you did not indulge the whim of your own personality, you served at the whim and will of those above you.³

In this view was his hatred for:

the amateurs, the peddlers, the intellectuals around him, playing with power, testing their theories on the world. . . . Making their direct phone calls to the President, breaking⁴ regular channels with their phone calls and shortcuts.

Interestingly, while Kissinger was no "amateur," he was a man who enjoyed power; a man who loved to test the theories he had developed as a student and professor at Harvard; a man who frequently broke "regular channels" and called the president directly. His reorganization of the NSC during Nixon's first administration was evident of this.

Of course, these observations only briefly outline Rusk's and Kissinger's different approaches to U.S. foreign policy; therefore, a brief description of how they actually performed is necessary. Rusk treated his subordinates in much the same manner as his superiors. He was characterized by his controlled, and sometimes secretive style. He preferred to decentralize his power into the lower State Department echelons. By his own admittance he said:

Control was important, it was part of your discipline, of your attitude; it went with the position. If you lacked it, how could the men below you have it?⁵

There were advantages and disadvantages to such a philosophy. On the one hand, both superiors and subordinates respected him for his patience and ability to deal with people. But they also complained that "no one knew what he was thinking"⁶ This led to a lack of guidance for his subordinates, and a mistrust of his ability to actively assert their interests in the foreign policy making process. From outside the State Department, ^{many individuals} often accused him of being too silent as well as lacking aggressiveness. Theodore Sorenson, Special Counsel to President John F. Kennedy, wrote:

The gentle, gracious Rusk . . . deferred almost too amiably to White House initiatives and interference. He was quiet, courtly and cautious, noncommittal in press conferences and unaggressive in his excellent relations with the Congress. Intelligent and well informed but never patronizing, he chose his words coolly and carefully, avoiding controversies with bland and lucid logic . . . Kennedy liked his low-key Secretary of State. . . . Rusk in turn was wholly loyal to the President and wholly committed to his objectives.⁷

Kissinger was quite the opposite. He was rarely amiable, or gentle in his dealings with those who worked for him. While it was nothing more than he asked of himself, Kissinger often threw temper tantrums and pressed his subordinates to their limits. One aide called him the "Vince Lombardi of the State Department."⁸ Kissinger did qualify this by saying: "But nobody has ever seen me lose my temper in negotiations. It's only with people I'm close to that I can let go."⁹ One popular joke circulated throughout the State

Department and NSC typified his relationship with his underlings:

At 8 p.m. one night, Kissinger tells a subordinate he wants a paper on Project X in twelve hours. (Aide sweats over paper all night, hands it in; aide is then summoned).

Kis: Is that the best you can do?

Aide: I guess it could be better if I had more time.

Kis: Okay 2 days.

(Aide works 48 hours, hands in; three days later, Kissinger summons him)

Kis: Is that the best you can do?

Aide: Well, maybe I could do better if I had three days.

(He starts from scratch, then resubmits paper).

Kis: Well, is that the best you can do?

Aide: Yes, it is.

Kis: Okay, now I'll read it.¹⁰

Such an impersonal demeanor demoralized some, yet motivated others; in the performance of his duties, it did nothing but facilitate his efforts. Indeed, he quickly established the line of authority in the State Department, centralized his power, and proceeded to use it in the best way he knew how. Nixon could appreciate this because as the Water-gate investigation proceeded, he became further removed from foreign policy making; therefore, he needed a person who could continue his own aggressive foreign affairs style. Kissinger was the perfect man.

As one might notice, the styles of these two men are at opposite extremes. But there is a third person who must come into the picture now: William P. Rogers. He is the key in this brief survey of organizational authority. In fact, he was the link between Rusk and Kissinger; the man who made the shift from the one extreme to another possible.

Nixon selected Rogers for Secretary of State fully knowing the the man's inexperience in foreign affairs. As previously mentioned, this

was the overriding qualification that made the job his. Consequently, he was marked as being one of the most ineffectual Secretaries of State in modern history. Nixon and Kissinger both intentionally circumvented his authority, and left him to play the "figurehead" role as Secretary of State. The question now becomes: Why?

Richard Nixon was elected president in 1968 by one of the narrowest margins in U.S. history. The major reason was because of a failing foreign policy in Vietnam. Public opinion opposed further U.S. involvement, but at the same time did not want to damage the nation's image as "world protector." Nixon had promised to fulfill their needs of a "peace with honor" with a secret plan. The dilemma facing the newly elected president was to figure out just what that plan was.

Nixon's solution encompassed the Nixon Doctrine and detente. His method of implementing both could be considered political masterstrokes.

Nixon perceived the public's unrest. Even more importantly though, the president understood what it would take to quell their anxiety. With anti-war movement picking up momentum, there could only be one person that the public should look to in order to solve this problem, the president. After all, his predecessors had gotten the U.S. into the conflict, so he believed he should get us out. If he did not, he signed his political death warrant for the next election; therefore, Nixon was very interested in achieving peace.

To accomplish his task, the president decided to don the image

of a "white knight" coming to save the United States. He could not acquire this stature, however, if anyone else in the policy making process rivalled his authority. Certainly, if there was any confusion as to who was rescuing the country someone might be able to claim that it was not Nixon but official "X" who actually did the job. The most likely candidate of "robbing" Nixon of his prestige would have been the Secretary of State. Indeed, he was the head of a wealth of knowledge and expertise. Nixon would have to quiet such a potentially dangerous possibility by appointing a man virtually ignorant of foreign affairs. In doing this, Nixon could take the lead in foreign affairs.

His selection: William Rogers. Rogers was a New York lawyer that had rivalled Nixon's practice. They eventually became partners; with Rogers being the dominant partner. After a brief stint as U.S. Attorney General, Rogers went out on his own and cultivated a thriving practice. But in all of his background, he did not seem to possess one professional qualification that could justify his selection.

Nixon knew, however, he would need an expert to help him formulate foreign policy measures. His choice was Henry Kissinger. As National Security adviser, Kissinger would fill this role admirably. He kept Nixon abreast of any relevant world happenings, while giving him both policy options in order to deal with them and his own personal recommendations. In addition, Kissinger helped Nixon with future measures that may have become larger issues as the years passed. While

influential, the statutory role of the National Security adviser supposedly precluded Kissinger from being nothing more than an adviser. A man who developed only papers with options, in order to enlighten and facilitate the president's decision making. Such an interpretation provided the needed umbrella that preserved Nixon's "white knight" image; and, indeed, this is why he continually emphasized: "Dr. Kissinger is keenly aware of the necessity not to set himself up as a wall between the president and the Secretary of State or the Secretary of Defense. I intend to have a very strong Secretary of State."¹¹ This was perhaps the furthest thing from the truth. When Nixon first began making such remarks, Kissinger was busily reorganizing the National Security Council. Nixon and Kissinger both intended for this reorganization to centralize foreign policy making in the White House. It did. For the next four years, William P. Rogers took a backseat in the foreign policy process.

When Nixon was elected to office for a second time by a landslide victory, he replaced Rogers with Kissinger as Secretary of State. Was this a curious move for a man pretending to be the nation's saviour? Indeed, Kissinger would no longer possess his "neutral" position as National Security adviser, now he could rival Nixon for centerstage.

This researcher does not find the shift that extraordinary. In fact, it was a very logical move. Not only had Kissinger been hinting at the appointment but Nixon had accomplished the majority of his task as "white knight." Vietnam looked as if it were over; Nixon had

opened China; and worked closely with the Soviets. Public opinion was back on the president's side, and it was symbolized by the record amount of votes cast in his support. Since there would not be a third election, the president could safely let Kissinger out into the open. There really was no danger; and if anything, the public would applaud the move. It has often been quoted that the press, in particular, "loved Henry."

Kissinger's appointment was most opportune because as time slipped away Nixon was slowly drawn into the Watergate scandal. The President needed Kissinger's foreign affairs savvy, if you will, in order to proceed with an innovative foreign policy doctrine.

As one can hopefully see, Rogers provided the necessary link to join the wholly different "styles" of Rusk and Kissinger. An analogy is useful here. If a surgeon is to operate, the patient's vital signs must be stable. If they are not, then he must infuse more blood or drugs in order to stabilize him. Once given the time to work, the patient should be ready for operation. This was not very different from what Nixon did to U.S. foreign affairs. Public opinion was very unstable. He had to inject the nation with new policies and make them work in order to gain America's support. Once the populace's support was there, he could turn the patient over to the real surgeon, Henry Kissinger, with little fear of losing it. His confirmation came when he was reelected by one of the largest majorities in modern history. Kissinger could

now become Secretary. Thus, Rogers bought the president the time he needed in order to accomplish his objectives.

Concluding Notes

The formulation of foreign policy doctrine in this country is a very complex, and highly dynamic process. It is filled with many actors, each possessing a unique expertise that is vital to development of a sound, workable policy. But whether this "expertise" is to even to be considered, largely depends upon one person: the president. His style often determines the degree each actor will influence U.S. foreign affairs.

This is particularly symbolized in the State Department's Seventh Floor between 1961-1976. From Kennedy to Ford, this group of experts slowly lost its power.

The danger in this resides in the tendency to ignore very capable men with sound policy advice. It is realized their view cannot always be included, but on the same token it cannot be excluded either. One extreme or the other upsets the equilibrium of the process that is so vital to it.

Whether it be a survey of the consequences of this loss of influence or an examination of the shift in organizational authority, one thing does stand out: the State Department's Seventh Floor has a potential wealth of resources. If the president will just begin to tap its resources, his efforts will probably be vastly enhanced. As it stood at the end of 1976, however, this was not the case. But as Henry

Kissinger stated:

The statesman's responsibility is to struggle against transitoriness . . . he owes it to his people to strive, to create, and to resist the decay that besets all human institutions.¹²

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Endnotes

Preface

¹Thomas S. Estes and E. Allan Lightner, Jr., The Department of State (N.Y.: Praeger Publishers, 1976), p. 66.

²Estes and Lightner, p. 66.

³The U.N. Ambassador is not a statutory member of the Seventh Floor, but his close contact, and his ability to influence the policy making process justifies his "honorary" inclusion in this study.

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