CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS:

THE PRESIDENT AND THE GENERAL

by

DOUGLAS KINNARD

© 1985 Douglas Kinnard

In any discussion of American civil-military relations in the post-World War II period, the question of civilian supremacy over the military, which so occupied the Founding Fathers at Philadelphia and other political thinkers through the last century, is no longer an issue. The nature of the civil-military relations of concern today had its origins in the new world role in which the United States found itself at the end of the Second World War.

Obviously, this new role required the US to support substantial military forces in being, and necessitated a sustained and active involvement in world affairs not previously part of the American experience. Given this new situation, the manner in which foreign and security problems were conceived, and the processes by which policies were developed and implemented to meet these problems, would have to be different from before the Second World War.

From 1945 to 1947 organizational options for conceptualizing and executing national security policy were proffered, debated, and finally articulated in the National Security Act of 1947. Among other things, the act established a National Security Council to advise the President on foreign and defense matters; a national Military Establishment headed by a Secretary of Defense supervising (initially in a kind of federalized arrangement) the military departments including the new Department of the Air Force; and a statutory Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The central issue faced by those whose task was to implement the new law was how to reconcile the resources required by America's new world role with competing and growing demands for social programs, and at the same time to promote a viable economy. It is within this context that civil-military relations in the postwar period must be viewed.

It fell to the Eisenhower Administration—which shortly after taking office terminated the Korean War—once again to face the problem of the new civil-military relations in a peacetime environment, and to set the direction these relations would take for the remainder of the 1950s. In examining civil-military relations during the Eisenhower Administration, this article will concentrate on the budgetary-strategic doctrine dialogue within the context of the processes Eisenhower established to control its outcome.

For the purpose of this examination, the Eisenhower presidency can be divided into two related but different periods. During the first, 1953 and 1954, the President was establishing his strategic doctrine and budgetary priorities. In the second period, beginning in 1955, he was struggling to hold the line against those who would change the direction of his strategic and budgetary approach. Of principal concern here is the

second period, not only because of its importance in its own right but also because actions taken during the period considerably influenced civil-military relations in the next decade, the decade of Vietnam.

For the military counterpoint to President Eisenhower, I have chosen General Maxwell Taylor, Army Chief of Staff from 1955 to 1959. Although Chiefs of Staff of other services played important roles, the Army's challenge to the President was probably the most pointed. In addition, it was the Army's doctrinal challenge that was to provide the basis for a new strategic approach in the 1960s.

I

By the time Maxwell Taylor arrived in Washington to become Army Chief of Staff, Eisenhower had established his own strategic policies and budgetary goals and had superimposed his own ideas on the process employed for conducting national security affairs. During the 1952 campaign, Eisenhower's two major promises were to end the Korean War and reduce the budget. There was a direct relationship between the two: ending the war, which he did within six months of taking office, was a necessity for reducing the budget, but he needed to do more. It should be stressed that Eisenhower's genuinely held conservative views were central to his thinking on all issues, including national security. To reduce the overall budget from $74 billion the fiscal year he took office to $70 billion the next year, and to $60 billion the following, meant a further paring of the defense budget. This would require a close look at the kind of strategy the United States was going to pursue in the post-Korean War period.

Eisenhower's strategic concepts on assuming office are set forth for us in his memoirs: to rely on deterrence and rule out preventive war; to stress the role of nuclear technology, reducing reliance on US conventional force; to place heavy reliance on allied land forces around the Soviet periphery; to stress economic strength, especially through reduced defense budgets; and to be prepared to continue the struggle with the USSR over decades.[1] His problem was to blend these strategic views into a credible strategy that could be implemented at a fairly low cost and be sold both to the American public and America's allies. To accomplish this objective, the President used organizational means, careful selection of key appointees, his long experience in handling bureaucracies, and his great rapport with the American people.

At the apex of the defense and foreign policy process, Eisenhower established a refurbished National Security Council, transforming it into a highly structured system. Although the restructured NSC was a formal organization with formal procedures, Eisenhower balanced this with informal organization and procedure. In practice, he placed even more emphasis on informal meetings and briefings on defense-related matters, and the number of such meetings was rather substantial.[2] "As a matter of fact," said one well-placed observer, "I think the Boss regarded both the Cabinet and the National Security Council meetings as debating societies . . . . His real decisions were in the Oval Room, with a small select group."[3]

By July 1953, Eisenhower felt that it was time for the newly appointed service Chiefs to take a new look at US strategic policy, and he asked them to come up with an agreed-upon paper on overall defense policy for the indefinite future. This paper was the first step toward what subsequently became known as

Brigadier General Douglas Kinnard (US Army, ret.) is Professor Emeritus of Political Science, University of Vermont. He was Chief of Military History, US Army, 1983-84. He graduated from the US Military Academy in 1944 and earned M.S., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees from Princeton University. He is the author of *President Eisenhower and Strategy Management, The War Managers,* and *The Secretary of Defense.* He is now a full-time writer residing in Lexington, Virginia, and is presently completing a book on Maxwell Taylor and one on The Second Indochina War.

the New Look, which the President later defined as "first a reallocation of resources among the five categories of forces, and second, the placing of greater emphasis than formerly on the deterrent and destructive power of improved nuclear weapons, better means of delivery, and effective air-defense units."[4]

The Chiefs of Staff were able to agree on a basic paper of strategic premises and guidelines, but translating these generalities into specifics for the fiscal year 1955 defense budget was another matter. Reasoning that there was no change in the perceived threat, no change in alliance commitments, and no new guidance on the employment of nuclear weapons, they decided that no substantial changes could be made in the defense budget of $42 billion.

It fell to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Arthur W. Radford, to defend the service Chiefs' premises before the NSC and particularly a skeptical Treasury Secretary George Humphrey. Radford centered his discussion at the 13 October 1953 NSC meeting on the nature of presidential guidance for employment of nuclear weapons. His message, which was to have very significant results, was that if the use of nuclear weapons from the outset of a conflict was accepted as a planning premise, then a less costly force structure could be developed.

Admiral Radford's premise led to a subsequent NSC session on 29 October, at which the President approved NSC-162/2, the policy basis of the New Look. The paper placed maximum reliance on nuclear weapons from the outset of a conflict. Radford's talk of 13 October had been entirely his own; neither the Army nor the Navy had agreed with the new NSC policy on nuclear war. Nevertheless, Secretary of Defense Charles Wilson, with Radford's help, was able to get qualified agreement from Army Chief Matthew B. Ridgway and Navy Chief Carney, and to use the new policy to get the defense budget down to a level acceptable to Eisenhower and the Secretary of the Treasury.

Throughout the fall and winter of 1953-54, high-level Administration spokesmen worked at selling the New Look to the public. Of all the speeches made to explain the new defense policy, only one is now remembered: John Foster Dulles's "massive retaliation" speech, made to the Council on Foreign Relations on 12 January 1954. This speech, which was surely one of the great moments in the rhetoric of the Cold War, caused such an uproar that Dulles published an article in the April 1954 issue of *Foreign Affairs* stressing that there were wider options than nuclear weapons.

Congress examined the New Look during hearings on the fiscal year 1955 defense budget, hearings which offered no challenge to the concept and almost none to the particulars. The Administration's image of unanimity on the Eisenhower strategy remained intact during the hearings, despite the misgivings Army Chief Ridgway voiced about the Administration's lack of emphasis on land forces. Floor debate was neither systematic nor informed. With the clearing of the defense appropriation, Eisenhower had his strategic policy.[5]

Although the main interaction between the military and the President over his strategy and budgetary constraints was still ahead, problems developed with Army Chief of Staff Ridgway in the final stages of executive development of the fiscal year 1956 budget. Ridgway had the opportunity to express his misgivings about the Army share of the budget when the National Security Council met on 3 December 1954. When asked a few days later about Ridgway's presentation, Eisenhower explained that he wished the Army Chief to have a chance to express his views at the highest level. Such a course was especially desirable since budgetary action was to be taken with which Ridgway would probably not agree.[6] Within a fortnight, Eisenhower was ready to give the Secretary of Defense and the service Chiefs his final decision to proceed with his original plans. As Commander in Chief, he said, he was entitled to loyal support for his position and he expected to have it. He had read and considered the differences that the Army and Navy Chiefs had set forth, but now the decision had been made and all must follow

it.[7] Eisenhower's attitude was to figure significantly in his handling of dissentions from service Chiefs in later years, particularly from Ridgway's soon-to-be-appointed successor.

II

By early 1955, the decision had been made that Ridgway would be replaced as Army Chief of Staff that summer. The leading candidate was General Maxwell Taylor, then commander of Army forces in the Far East. When Taylor met with the President on 24 February, Eisenhower had two things on his mind. The new Chief of Staff would have to "wholeheartedly accept that his primary responsibility relates to his joint duties," and he must "hold views as to doctrine, basic principles, and relationships which are in accord with those of the President. Loyalty in spirit as well as in letter is essential." Taylor "indicated complete understanding and acceptance of these views of the President."[8]

Eisenhower's first point with Taylor—his duties as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff—was a subject of considerable interest to the Commander in Chief. Between Taylor's February interview and his June arrival in Washington, the President became concerned about how to prevent members of the Joint Chiefs from voicing opposition to his policies when they were testifying before Congress. Astonished by public criticisms by Ridgway and others of his policies, however implied, Eisenhower had been thinking about a new type of oath to be taken by senior Defense Department officials.[9] Welcoming Taylor to his new duties on 29 June, the President indicated that what he particularly wanted from the general was "teamwork."[10]

In his first year as Army Chief, Taylor was involved with strategic issues of a doctrinal nature, issues which were eventually to bring him into conflict with the President. Shortly after returning to Japan following his February 1955 meeting with Eisenhower, Taylor received a copy of the Administration's 1955 Basic National Security Policy paper. In examining the document, he was "struck by the breadth of its language and the degree of departure from the dogma of Massive Retaliation."[11] Accordingly, he decided to develop his own "National Military Program" more in keeping with the Army viewpoint and yet, as he saw it, consistent with the guidance provided in the BNSP. The National Military Program went through several refinements during Taylor's early months in Washington and became the basis of what eventually became his proposed strategy of flexible response.

Taylor's National Military Program stressed the need for the deterrence and defeat of local aggression in addition to the deterrence in general war that was already emphasized in Eisenhower's New Look strategy. What this meant in terms of resources was an increased commitment to conventional forces, together with the mobility and logistic support to permit and sustain their intervention wherever required. Additionally, as Taylor saw it, these forces needed the capability to employ tactical atomic weapons, the technical feasibility of which was, by then, certain.

By late winter of 1956, Secretary Wilson thought it was time to get the military Chiefs off together to reexamine the basic strategic issues. He set up a meeting for them in Puerto Rico and joined them at its conclusion. Taylor felt that this would be a good opportunity to introduce into the joint arena his National Military Program. As he tells it, however, "My colleagues read this Army study politely and then quietly put it to one side."[12] This was not a surprising reaction, for Taylor's program would mean additional budgetary resources for the Army, presumably at the expense of the other services if Eisenhower was to hold the lid on the budget. As a result of the meeting, the Chiefs did call for an overall increase in budgetary outlays from the earlier target of $34 billion to $40 billion by 1960, but this did not involve any basic changes in the New Look strategy.

A few days after the meeting in Puerto Rico ended, Wilson was in to see the President with a draft memorandum on the thinking of the Joint Chiefs. The tenor of the memorandum bothered Eisenhower. "The

memorandum seemed to say that the US military position has worsened in the last three years," and with that he would not agree. Specifically, the President could not understand why manpower could not be cut, given American technological superiority. Wilson agreed and opined that more military strength over the past three years "would not have bettered us in our international position."[13] Taylor's new program was off to a bad start.

That same March, the drafting of the new Joint Strategic Objectives Plan was the occasion for Taylor's questioning a basic premise of Eisenhower's strategy. Increasing defense costs had convinced Chairman Radford that economies at the expense of conventional (primarily Army) forces were in order. The issue focused on early use of atomics. Taylor proposed language in the new JSOP that would place some limitations on the use of atomics in the initial stages of a conflict with the USSR. Radford and the other Chiefs opposed this deviation from the basic premise of the New Look strategy.[14] The issue was the occasion for a couple of meetings between the President and his military advisers that spring.

In late March, Radford brought the Chiefs to the White House and opened the meeting with the President by saying "that unless brought under control, a situation may develop in which the Services will become involved in increasing public disagreement among themselves. Also, in the last four or five months, quite a large number of 'split' issues had to be taken to Secretary Wilson." The most basic issue concerned the use of atomic weapons. The President agreed that the subject was one that "required great care in discussion"; he was, however, clear in his own mind that "in any war with the Soviets we would use them." While he had the Chiefs there, the President went on to tell them that he wanted it understood "that any of them who wished could always come along with Radford to see him."[15]

Two months later, in late May 1956, Taylor took the President up on his offer. He and Radford appeared at the President's office to discuss the use of atomics, again in the context of the JSOP, which was by now before the Chiefs for decision. The Chairman and the Air Force and Navy Chiefs took the view, said Taylor, that all strategic planning must be based on the use of atomic weapons. Taylor, on the other hand, felt that given the concept of nuclear deterrence, the most likely contingency would be small wars not requiring the use of atomic weapons.

The President held the contrary view—that the USSR would use atomic weapons "at once" should they decide to go to war, and further, that American thinking should be based on such use. It was, he said, "fatuous to think that the U.S. and USSR would be locked into a life or death struggle without using such weapons." "As to local wars," the President thought that "the tactical use of atomic weapons against military targets would be no more likely to trigger off a big war than the use of twenty-ton block busters."[16] All in all, it was a frustrating first year for the new Army Chief of Staff and his National Military Program.

In addition to his day with the other Chiefs, the Secretary of Defense, and the President in pushing his program, General Taylor also was very active in interviews for magazines, journals, and newspapers, and especially active on the speaking circuit.[17] One of his speeches, "A National Military Program," was presented off the record to the Council on Foreign Relations in that same month of May 1956. The message, though in a somewhat broader context, was essentially as summarized earlier.

Hamilton Fish Armstrong, editor of the council's journal, *Foreign Affairs,* was impressed, and invited Taylor to write an article. Taylor was happy to comply, as the journal was read by many influential people in the private sector who were interested in foreign policy and security issues. The result was an article entitled "Security Through Deterrence." The piece ran into clearance problems in the Departments of Defense and State as well as with the JCS Chairman, however, and was never published. The Defense Department declined clearance on the basis that Taylor's views were in conflict with approved policy and that the argument

should not be carried into the public forum. Eisenhower's reaction to Ridgway's post-retirement pronouncements on the New Look was still very fresh in the Department's consciousness.

Although President Eisenhower was always willing to discuss the doctrinal aspects of his strategic policy, he was most interested in any direct challenge to his budgetary ceilings, particularly when it came from within the Defense Department. That spring the challenge came not from the Army but from the service that was getting the largest share of the defense budget—the Air Force.

Pressures on the Administration had developed in Congress in early 1956 to raise the level of defense expenditures in fiscal year 1957. These were not related to any extraordinary event but mainly to the fact that 1956 was a presidential election year. The pressures also came from the Air Force in their efforts to secure additional funds for the strategic bomber force. Senator Stuart Symington, an Air Force proponent, obliged that spring with airpower hearings by his subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

It was in this context that Eisenhower met with Defense Secretary Wilson and Chairman Radford concerning congressional probes and possible Air Force testimony. His message to the senior military went beyond the immediate question of the Air Force budget, however. The President maintained that "a Chief of Staff of one service should not present just the picture of his own service . . . each man testifying must think of what other services contribute. If he can't bring himself to do this, he doesn't belong in the position he holds."[18]

Space does not permit detailed discussion of the development of the defense budget for fiscal years 1958 and 1959. There are, however, some matters that should be highlighted.

A press conference by Treasury Secretary George Humphrey in early 1957 in which he predicted a "depression that will curl your hair" galvanized congressional efforts to join the President in holding down the defense budget for fiscal year 1958.

The psychological and strategic impact of the orbiting of Sputnik in early October 1957, on the other hand, brought on pressure to increase the size of the fiscal year 1959 defense budget. The President, however, was not one to overreact, especially when it came to defense spending. On 30 October he met with the new Secretary of Defense, Neil McElroy, who had just replaced Wilson, to discuss the defense budget. To be certain that McElroy was properly oriented, the President gave him the little talk that the others had heard before: "If the budget is too high, inflation occurs, which in effect cuts down the value of the dollar, so that nothing is gained and the process is self-defeating."

The following spring Eisenhower submitted messages to Congress containing proposals for reorganization of the Defense Department, which he felt was badly needed. Certain of these proposals were actions he could take as President, such as establishing unified commands under the Secretary of Defense who would operate them through the JCS, strengthening the Secretary's authority over the budget, and making the Joint Staff a truly operational staff. Other presidential proposals required legislative action. They included repeal of the authority of JCS members to present recommendations to the Congress on their own initiative, authorization for Chiefs to delegate duties to Vice Chiefs, and repeal of the right of the service Secretaries to present recommendations to the Congress.

The struggle with Congress over the reorganization went on throughout the spring and early summer. In the end the President got most of what he wanted but lost on two important items designed to reduce meaningful interaction between the military departments and Congress: JCS members retained the right to present recommendations to Congress on their own initiative, as did the service Secretaries. Notwithstanding these latter points, Eisenhower's proposals becoming law increased the authority of the

Secretary of Defense considerably. The new law provided all the legal authority Robert McNamara was to need to gain true secretarial control of the Pentagon during the next Administration.

III

In his memoirs, President Eisenhower expressed his determination to get a balanced budget in fiscal year 1960:

> I planned to let the Congress know that if it materially added to the budget, I would respond with a veto . . . . In preparing the budget, the giant military demands gave us, as usual, the gigantic headaches. No major item budgeted in each of the Armed Services was approved for inclusion unless the question "why" was answered to my satisfaction.[19]

As the preparation of the fiscal year 1960 defense budget reached its final stages, the President met on 28 November 1958 with his civilian defense advisers and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. In the Defense Department presentation, McElroy developed the major issues and pointed out that he had reduced the service estimates by almost a billion in recent months. The Director of the Bureau of the Budget, Maurice Stans, agreed that the Defense Department had made substantial cuts, but said more cuts were needed—in the vicinity of $3 to $4 billion. The President asked McElroy to look over the budget again to see what cuts could be made. Meanwhile, Eisenhower thought it wise to have a stag dinner, to include the Joint Chiefs, prior to having a formal NSC meeting on the reworked Defense Department budget.[20]

Taylor described the session as follows:

> We Chiefs had been given to understand that the purpose of the meeting was to allow us to discuss the problems of the new budget with the President. However it turned out to be quite otherwise . . . . After receiving something in the nature of a "pep talk," the Chiefs were allowed an opportunity to respond.[21]

The White House memorandum for record of the meeting states that President Eisenhower asked each of the Chiefs to express his views in light of the "vital necessity of maintaining both an adequate defense and a national economy not impaired by inflation, loss of confidence, or run on the dollar." The paragraph summarizing Taylor's reply to the President and the latter's rejoinder is instructive:

> General Taylor, who spoke first, questioned the division of Defense funds among the services, indicating that the decision to carry forward the same percentage division this year as existed in previous years was arbitrary and failed to take into account the completing of the Air Force re-equipment phase and the rising need for army modernization. As to the broad point concerning consideration of a sound economy, he said that he as a military man respected this consideration but felt that it lay outside his responsibility. The President contested this view, pointing out that at our military colleges a major subject of inquiry is the economy and industrial base of popular adversaries; if these considerations have military significance for our adversaries, they have military significance for ourselves.[22]

Within a few days of the stag dinner, McElroy was pressing the Chiefs for their written endorsement of the new budget, though as a group they had limited time to consider the document. Finally, on 19 January 1959, the Chiefs gave the budget what Taylor called "rather tepid support," which McElroy nonetheless presented to Congress. The Chiefs' major reservation was not on the overall dollar total of the defense budget, but rather on the way the individual services were funded.[23] McElroy's action was later to boomerang during the congressional phase of the fiscal year 1960 defense budget examination.

By 1959, the climate was right for Congress to try to intervene more forcefully in defense matters. Technology was in a state of flux, raising many technical and strategic

questions, and few people seemed certain of the answers. The goals of the services were sufficiently far apart that it was not difficult to find points of conflict between services or between a service and the Administration. Finally, the political climate created by the congressional elections just passed and the presidential election on the horizon encouraged Congress to take on the Administration.

Committees in the House and Senate asked the usual questions about hardware and strategy, and the more unusual question about who had played what part in the development of the defense budget, including the guidelines on which it was based. In these hearings, the senior military began showing in public their lack of consensus regarding the particulars of the defense budget. The most spectacular hearings that spring, though, were not those related directly to the appropriations process, but rather those conducted by Senator Lyndon B. Johnson's Preparedness Subcommittee,[24] which was unusually interested in exactly how the Eisenhower defense budget had been developed. Of particular interest was the use of budgetary ceilings and the role of the Bureau of the Budget.

The memorandum of support for the budget McElroy solicited from the Chiefs proved to be the catalyst for the Johnson subcommittee hearings. The Chiefs were summoned before the subcommittee to express their views under oath and subsequently to file written statements concerning their reservations on the budget. There is no question that these hearings provided an open break between the Administration and the Chiefs, especially Taylor, on both strategic and budgetary issues. Taylor summed up his own view of the importance of these hearings as follows:

> This open testimony of the Chiefs of Staff before the Johnson Subcommittee had a country-wide impact. Along with their testimony released from closed hearings before other Congressional committees, it revealed for the first time the extent of the schism within the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the division in their views on Massive Retaliation and related matters of strategy. This revelation profoundly disturbed many members of Congress as well as thoughtful citizens generally.[25]

Under the heading "Four Military Chiefs List Objections to Budget Limits," *The New York Times* of 9 March 1959 carried the story of the Chiefs' testimony before Johnson's subcommittee, as well as the written texts of their memoranda. "Gen. Maxwell D. Taylor, the Army's Chief of Staff," it reported, "was most vehement in his comments." Meeting that same morning with JCS Chairman Twining, President Eisenhower brought up the article, which he had read. The President instructed Twining "to caution the Joint Chiefs that the military in this country is a tool and not a policy-making body; the Joint Chiefs are not responsible for high-level political decisions." As the meeting was coming to a close, "the President philosophized briefly on the difficulties of a democracy running a military establishment in peacetime."[26]

There is no doubt that the hearings were politically embarrassing to the Administration, and that they were so designed. Neither is there any question of the breakdown in public consensus within the Administration, which had started earlier that year with the testimony of the Army and Navy leaders at appropriation hearings. In retrospect, however, the effect of these hearings on the Eisenhower strategy and defense budget can be seen as negligible. The primary motivation for the hearings was probably the 1960 presidential campaign. From that perspective, perhaps, they were successful in setting the stage for the defense debate during the approaching national electoral struggle.

Taylor's departure from military service at the end of June 1959 brought forth a flurry of newspaper articles on his views of the inadequate state of US defenses. Much of this was occasioned by remarks he made before the National Press Club in Washington about a week before he retired. His more permanent contribution in the way of critiquing Eisenhower's defense policies was in the form of

his book *The Uncertain Trumpet*, published just before the opening of the new congressional session and, as it turned out, in time to be of some use in John F. Kennedy's campaign.

As for Eisenhower, his strategic views remained unchanged. In the days just after Taylor's departure, there was a series of White House meetings over the wording of the 1959 version of the Basic National Security Policy paper. McElroy pointed out to the President that the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps felt that there should be more reliance on conventional forces. Christian Herter, Dulles's replacement as Secretary of State, argued for a greater conventional capability and for the use of nuclear weapons only as a last resort. Eisenhower thought this too cautious a view. In the end, Ike had no interest in any significant revision of his strategy, and none was effected.[27]

AN INTERPRETATION AND CONCLUSION

We have considered civil-military relations during the Eisenhower presidency, with emphasis on the period 1955-59 and in the context of the budget-strategic doctrine dialogue. The Truman Administration had been the first to experience the effects of the 1947 act on the national security process. The tumultuous nature of that experience—four Secretaries of Defense in four years and a substantial war—was such that it did not really set the direction that postwar civil-military relations were to take in the future. This was left for the Eisenhower Administration.

As he indicated in his memoirs, the new President brought to his office what he called "logical guidelines for designing and employing a security establishment."[28] How could it have been otherwise, given his adult experiences? Eisenhower's design, based on a technologically heavy strategy, can be understood only in the context of his strongly held belief that the nation's strength and security depended on a fine balance between its economy and its military capabilities. In imposing and retaining his views, he ran into increasing opposition, including from the senior military, over which he managed to prevail by employing various leadership techniques and organizational processes.

Eisenhower's basic power lay in his wide public support and, as it pertained to defense issues, the American public's perception that he was the most important military figure of that time. His success in making this power effective lay in part in the considerable time he spent as President on military matters—not because they interested him, which they did, but because he perceived them to be a vital element in carrying out his overall presidential goals.

One of Eisenhower's successful approaches to leadership, an approach which comes through clearly in his dealings with the Joint Chiefs, might be termed avoidance of public confrontation. Specifically, he sought prior agreement on issues to prevent their becoming matters of public debate. In particular, his key political and military appointees had to undergo a kind of loyalty test to convince him of their willingness to support his policies. (Taylor's interview with the President prior to appointment as Army Chief of Staff is a good illustration.)

This is one reason why Eisenhower was able to permit vigorous debate in the NSC forum and still expect support for his decisions. His decisions had, in many cases, already been made in smaller, informal meetings. The NSC served, however, the function of simultaneously widening the base of support for Eisenhower's decisions while clarifying his rationale to his key appointees. His employment of organizational process can be understood only in the context of an interplay between formal and small, informal groups.

One of the principal issues of the new civil-military relations was the distribution of influence over the policy-fiscal dialogue between the senior military and key civilian appointees. Eisenhower solved this problem through his predilection to be, in effect, his own Secretary of Defense. He accomplished this operationally by dealing directly with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on strategic matters and, as is normal, directly

with the Secretary of Defense on budgetary matters. Thus, the President became the first civilian official who dealt with all aspects of strategy and management. This will be recognized as one of the roles of the Secretary of Defense.

Eisenhower kept his Defense Secretaries—especially Wilson—on a fairly short leash. He perceived their major role as being manager of the Pentagon, especially in keeping the lid on defense budgets; and this functionalist approach was acceptable to both Wilson and McElroy, given the President's own strategic and managerial background. Eisenhower did, however, considerably strengthen the legal powers of the Secretary over the military departments through the 1953 and 1958 reorganizations of Defense. This was especially true of the 1958 reorganization, which was in response to the wide range of problems raised by service disagreements. It should be noted parenthetically that the full range of powers provided the Secretary by the 1958 legislation were not exploited until McNamara assumed that office in the Kennedy Administration.

In dealing with the military, either directly or through the Secretary of Defense, Eisenhower's basic goal was to gain their support on both strategic policy and his budgetary constraints. To achieve this goal, he employed techniques that conditioned the nature of civil-military relations during his presidency. There was careful selection of senior military appointees, followed by his conveying to them the role he expected them to play—particularly the requirement for public loyalty to his strategic and fiscal policies.

Eisenhower's predecessor in the oval office had needed military leaders with the prestige to provide effective public advocacy of his policies. Eisenhower, however, required only acceptance of his policies and silence. He had the public image to be his own advocate in strategic matters.

As illustrated in the several instances cited in the foregoing examination of the budgetary-strategic doctrine dialogue during his presidency, Eisenhower viewed the joint role of the service Chiefs as their most important function. In the model he conceived—but was never successful in establishing—the Chiefs would delegate their service functions to their Vice Chiefs. It was also clear that he wanted the Chiefs to think in broader categories than purely military considerations. In particular, he constantly stressed the need for them to view the condition of the US economy as a pillar of American security and, further, that this consideration should be taken into account in setting forth military requirements.[29]

General Maxwell Taylor, the military counterpoint to the President in this article, arrived in Washington in the summer of 1955 with a very extensive military background; his Washington experience, though ample, was not extensive.[30] His outlook on budgetary and strategic issues could be described as rational and highly professional, with unusual but not surprising emphasis on the Army perspective. His goal, as earlier described, was to modify the Eisenhower military strategy rather comprehensively. This goal, if it were to be realized, would be a direct threat to the budgetary underpinning of Eisenhower's own overall presidential goals.

Taylor approached his task in a rational manner, developing a National Military Program setting forth his strategic views, and subsequently introducing this paper into the joint arena. His colleagues on the Joint Chiefs of Staff were not impressed. Whatever the logic of his argument, it was viewed as essentially an Army argument. Its acceptance would pose a direct threat, especially in the case of the Air Force, to the other service Chiefs' more advantageous budgetary positions.

Soon thereafter, Taylor confronted the problem from what might be described as an organizational-psychological approach. The Army, to create a forward-looking image, embraced the new technology in the sense that it organized its divisions to fight on an atomic battlefield. Perhaps, it was thought, this would secure greater presidential support for the Army's efforts to loosen up the

budgetary restrictions imposed upon it. Eisenhower thought the idea a good one, especially since he perceived that personnel savings would result—a consideration quite opposite to what Taylor had in mind.

Taylor's efforts to secure bureaucratic allies eventually succeeded to a limited extent in the case of the Navy and at lower levels of the Department of State. None of this had any real influence on Eisenhower or his programs. Taylor's efforts outside the Administration met with some success, most notably with Congress in 1959. His success here was not in securing additional budgetary resources for the Army, but rather in helping to set the stage for the 1960 presidential campaign, in which defense issues played a prominent part.

Taylor's final effort, his publication after leaving office of *The Uncertain Trumpet*, also played a part in the 1960 campaign. Moreover, it helped bring about his return to office in a much more influential role in the Kennedy Administration. But that is another story.

In sum, civil-military relations in the Eisenhower Administration were characterized by: a President superbly equipped—in fact and in his public image—to deal with military matters; a chief executive who thoroughly dominated the relationship; a continuing strengthening, through reorganization and practice, of the civilian hand, thus setting the stage for an all-powerful Secretary of Defense in the next Administration; and a lessening influence of the senior military on major policy decisions, which was the beginning of a trend that was to continue during the next decade and beyond.

NOTES

1. Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The White House Years*, Vol. I, *Mandate for Change* (New York: Doubleday, 1963), pp. 445-47.
2. Andrew J. Goodpaster transcript, Columbia Oral History Project. Goodpaster, then a brigadier general, was staff secretary and defense liaison officer.
3. John S. D. Eisenhower, unpublished manuscript, 1972.
4. Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, p. 457.
5. NATO was brought on board at the December 1954 ministerial meeting when the NATO Council approved MC 48, which made NATO's primary strategy dependent upon nuclear weapons.
6. Memorandum of Conference with the President (MCP), 8 December 1954.
7. MCP, 22 December 1954.
8. Memorandum for Review (MR) of Taylor's meeting with Eisenhower, 24 February 1955. See also the significantly different version in Maxwell Taylor, *The Uncertain Trumpet* (New York: Harper, 1959, 1960), pp. 28-29.
9. MCP, 14 May 1956. Matthew Ridgway's memoirs began appearing as "My Battles in War and Peace: Conflict in the Pentagon," *Saturday Evening Post*, 21 January 1956, followed by *Soldier* (New York: Harper, 1956).
10. MCP, 29 June 1955.
11. Taylor, *Uncertain Trumpet*, pp. 29-30.
12. Ibid., p. 37.
13. MCP, 13 March 1956.
14. Taylor, *Uncertain Trumpet*, pp. 38-39.
15. MCP, 30 March 1956.
16. MCP, 24 May 1956.
17. In his first half year as Chief of Staff in 1955, Taylor made 20 speeches; in 1956, 47; in 1957, 34; in 1958, 34; and in 1958, his last full year as Chief, 22.
18. MCP, 5 April 1956. Pressure by the Air Force and its supporters had some success in securing an increase in the Air Force budget for fiscal year 1957 above the President's request. The Army's efforts, the so-called "revolt of the colonels" involved releases of position papers critical of the Air Force to the press. Largely due to Wilson's response, this attempt to give a greater role to the Army was abortive, and with the reassignment of the principals outside Washington, Army tactics of this sort ceased. See E. Bruce Geolhoed, *Charles E. Wilson and Controversy at the Pentagon* (Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, 1979), pp. 136-38.
19. Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The White House Years*, Vol. II, *Waging Peace* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1965), p. 252.
20. MCP, 28 November 1958.
21. Taylor, *Uncertain Trumpet*, pp. 70-71.
22. MR, 3 December 1958. Taylor would take an opposite position on his role in economic considerations during the Kennedy Administration.
23. Taylor, *Uncertain Trumpet*, pp. 72-73.
24. For an interesting perspective on LBJ's revitalization and use of this subcommittee, see George Reedy, *The Twilight of the Presidency* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973), pp. 52ff.
25. Taylor, *Uncertain Trumpet*, p. 78.
26. MCP, 9 March 1959. The Berlin Crisis of 1958-59 was a complicating factor at the time and in the Eisenhower-Twining discussion.
27. MCPs, 2, 14, and 27 July 1959.
28. Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, p. 445.
29. To help implement Eisenhower's views, Secretary Wilson published Department of Defense Directive No. 5158.1 of 26 July 1954, ordering the Chiefs to "avail themselves of military, scientific, industrial, and economic points of view."
30. From July 1941 until July 1942, Taylor was an assistant secretary of the Army General Staff in the ranks of major, lieutenant colonel, and colonel. He served on the Army General Staff from February 1951 through July 1951 as Assistant Chief of Staff G-3 (operations) and from August 1951 until February 1953 as Deputy Chief of Staff of Operations and Administration in the ranks of major general and lieutenant general, respectively.