

***INCIDENTAL PAPER***

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Communications, and Intelligence**

**C<sup>3</sup>I and the Telecommunications  
at the Policy Level  
William Odom**

**Guest Presentations, Spring 1980**

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## **C<sup>3</sup>I AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS AT THE POLICY LEVEL**

**William Odom**

**Military Assistant to the Assistant to the  
President for National Security Affairs**

**Partly through his closeness to the President of the United States, partly by his own nature, Bill Odom has unusual sensitivity to the question of how muscle is related to brain in national affairs, and what happens when command, control, communications and intelligence functions cannot be taken for granted. He speaks about some of the problems he deals with, and about the structures and realities within the government that either help or hinder dealing with those problems.**

The problem I have with my topic is that it means everything. How you get hold of it and talk about it conceptually in a sensible, operational way is a task and a problem I have not fully come to grips with. To put some structure into it, I thought I would begin with some background: how I got into this, and how the National Security Council (NSC) staff got into it. Then I'll dwell a bit on strategic military doctrine and its significance. Then I'll talk about how C<sup>3</sup>I requirements are determined, particularly as regards national security — who pays for them, and the catalytic effect of the threat of telecommunications deregulation legislation on national security. Finally, we'll look at some of the three Cs, command, control and communications, in this — and some of the Cs that get left out, that is, the sort of things that we will sooner or later have to address, not in this administration but somewhat later on.

One of my first staff responsibilities on arrival at the NSC was one I did not anticipate or want anything to do with. It was called "crisis management;" and when I heard that I said to myself: that's a job structured to fail, and we're being set up. The next thought that crossed my mind, which is probably quite true, is that no staffer can manage crises.

Once a crisis starts you can bet your life that, if you are the crisis manager's staffer, you will be kicked aside and all the principals, the President, the Secretaries, will take over and run it, and you might as well go home. During the crisis — that's the time to be away — that's your staff responsibility.

So you see I came to the job with not all that much enthusiasm. But I began to nose around, and tried to find out what people who had been there thought it meant. (I remember a conference on the Middle East in 1968 at West Point where the big joke was that we overused this word "crisis management," and it ought to be banned from our vocabulary. I had promptly taken that advice and stopped using it; but it was still in people's vocabulary down in Washington, so I had to look into it.)

I began to look around for communications and those sorts of things, and came on a National Security Action Memorandum (NSAM) from the Kennedy days establishing the National Communications System. It took me a long time to find out what that was. Eventually I learned that it was a directive written because of the President's frustration that some departments, because they couldn't communicate with other departments, became obstructions to coordination rather than assets for coordination. This National Communications System, the executive responsibility for which was placed with the Secretary of Defense, was an interagency system to which other agencies applied and were accepted for membership, and it in turn tried to coordinate the telecommunications programs of various agencies so that information could be transmitted laterally as well as up and down. There may have been more to it than that, but that was my primitive understanding.

**Oettinger.** Let me interject that next week that memorandum to which you referred, at least the charter of the National Communications System, will be part of the class hand-outs; so you will be able to go into some detail on what that meant. Also, one of our future speakers, General Paschall, will be able to go into more detail on what it really means to run such a system from a different vantage point.

**Odom.** Well, the next thing I began to notice, with curiosity but without much operational association, was the reorganizations that were taking place in the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD). Harold Brown was shuffling chairs and diagrams, and came up with two Undersecretaries, one for Defense Research and Engineering and another one for Policy; and then under the DR&E Undersecretary we had an Assistant Secretary for C<sup>3</sup>I. C<sup>3</sup>I struck me as a curious buzzword or acronym, but this assistant secretary was looking into it. However, he only had responsibility for the engineering side of things. I found that Admiral Murphy under the Deputy Undersecretary of Policy had the policy side of C<sup>3</sup>I. Knowing his background and staff, I realized that about the only thing that would get any attention would be the "I," and probably not very much of the communications part of the "I."

So that was my image of what the Defense Department had done. They seemed very happy to have this C<sup>3</sup>I thing, and to regard it as a great step forward. But I was dubious. I kept asking myself how the Intelligence part had gotten in with the three Cs. The only reason I could see was that highly technical satellite and heavy intelligence support for the Single Integrated Operation Plan (SIOP) and for tactical warning on the strategic weapons had come to depend heavily upon telecommunications, and so the "I" had been left in. But it seemed to me this boiled down to the "signal officer" role writ large. Just as

in a tank battalion you have a signal officer, the Defense Communications Agency (DCA) was to be the signal officer for the Defense Department and a number of agencies that had to do with foreign policy, and even some domestic policy. Now, you either look at it that way or, if you're familiar with military command and operations, you could say C<sup>3</sup>I means everything. It means hierarchy, it means methods of control, it means staffing methods — and as the signal officer, the only way you can succeed is through empathy, projecting your own expertise into the mind and attention of the commander, the guy who is going to run things. The signal officer will be effective to the extent that he is able to serve the world view and operational preferences of the commander. The problem was a very clear one that you frequently see in organizations. Something I doubted could be functionally differentiated into a staff section had been functionally differentiated, and I didn't see how that expertise could be translated into the world view of Harold Brown, the President or anybody else.

That was the NSC staff world I came to, and my initial imperfect knowledge about it. I had asked myself, "What's an NSC staffer doing in this? What role should I, or Brzezinski, have in all this?" Well, because of peculiarities of the way we came into office, and because of the staffing changes in the military office of the White House, we became intimately involved in rigging the President up for SIOP execution. That was one of my first tasks, something I didn't know anything about, hadn't heard anything of before. And I really didn't much want to do with it, but I was thrust into it. Moreover, I didn't own the White House communications, the airplanes, cars — the assets you can move around and cause things to happen with. The Military Office operationally controls them. Once again, functional differentiation. I as a staffer was sitting over at the NSC trying to project some sense and understanding into the operational side, where it wasn't always happily received. But we did bridge that gap and reached a modus operandi, and I think we achieved a lot more over a period of time in that regard than I first thought we would, and a lot more than has been realized since.

I was very proud of that effort, because it led to the President becoming personally involved in exercising command and control of the strategic forces. I don't think that has ever been done before. Kennedy may have played around with it a little, but the President's attitude toward command and control, particularly of the strategic forces, has typically been one of benign neglect. But President Carter opened up his decision handbook, he really got into the procedures, ran through numerous scenarios and became very comfortable with it. He wanted to be able to be awakened at three o'clock in the morning and not be confused, and understand what he was going to have to see, or what he was about to hear, what the voice would sound like on the other end of the line, and that sort of thing. We covered that particular aspect of command and control over a period of about a year, or a year and a half, and we achieved a fair amount. I think that was a legitimate entree for an NSC staffer into the main control system situation.

Another entree is our review of defense programs. The Defense Department buys a lot of things that it relegates to the C<sup>3</sup>I category. And we, presumably, should review those from a policy perspective. The trouble is, if you try to get an idea of the Defense Department's posture on the budget from the documents that come over, it's just fragmented; there's no way to pull it together. There are little pieces of programs here, programs there, and there is no gripping way to integrate them. The one possible exception is the World Wide Military Command and Control System (WWMCCS)'s budget. The WWMCCS is an

effort to budget all the Defense Department's communications activities together in a comprehensive program.

**Oettinger.** It will be important for us to follow in some detail what that means in relationship to the kinds of goals you're talking about, and what kind of shadow falls between staff or line wish and actual execution will be important for us to follow as a sequel. Some details on that will be forthcoming next week in Ray Tate's presentation.

**Odom.** Traditionally Clements, the Deputy Secretary, had taken a strong interest in running the WWMCCS Council. Then a process was underway about which I was ignorant. I had heard of the Office of Telecommunications Policy in the Executive Office of the President, and that the President's reorganization staff greatly desired to do away with it. And they did. They chopped it up, parceled it out here and there. But they found that some of its functions were difficult to tuck away. They were looking for places to put the last loose ends, one of which was emergency management of telecommunications during a crisis. Because Brzezinski is not confirmed by the Senate he could not be given those responsibilities. But Frank Press, the head of the Office of Science Technology Policy (OSTP), is confirmed; so management of the restoration priorities and emergency signals was placed with Press. Policy oversight on these matters, however, was dispatched over the NSC. Presidential Directive 2 set up the NSC system for this President; it describes the Special Coordination Committee — that is, everybody who is a member of the NSC except the President. It had three responsibilities: overseeing crosscutting issues, intelligence functions, and assisting the President in crisis management. And since telecommunications policy seemed somehow related to crisis management, they said, well, the NSC can take it. Executive Order 12046 assigned that to Brzezinski. Telecommunications, to foreign policy managers and defense analysts (which all NSC staffers believe themselves to be), is a word that causes their eyes to glaze over. So it wasn't very difficult to get that piece of turf; in fact, I found it thrust upon me whether I wanted it or not.

**Oettinger.** Well, there is a bit more to it than that (I was somewhat involved in trying to sensitize people to the rubric). It might well have fallen in the cracks altogether. The fact that it was remembered at all was not wholly accidental. There were lots of us running around trying to remind the transition folks that you can't just expect the Department of Commerce to take care of it. That there is more to it than the functions that got moved over to Commerce. And they were all too eager to forget about it.

**Odom.** Well, in retrospect I think it would have been next to disastrous if that had happened, considering what has transpired since; and I want to get on to that. But I'm trying to give you a sense of the level of awareness at which government is run! Well, once I had this responsibility, I felt I ought to take it seriously, and I went over to see the people who run the National Communications System (NCS), and I asked the Assistant Secretary of Defense for C<sup>3</sup>I, "Do you have any policy problems? If you do, why don't you just give me some illustration. I am not technically competent, so I would like to get a feel for the kinds of decisions you need at the national level." Now you may think that's a ridiculous way to go about getting into an area you are not totally familiar with. Because if your interlocutor is really competent, he will give you a couple of snappy examples and it will be clear to you fairly quickly why you need it. (And if he can't give you any, you'd better be as paranoid as can be, because you are being had and you'd better start developing

your own agents to ferret him out and find out what policy issues he is sitting on and hiding from you.) I soon determined that there were policy issues. I wasn't sure I understood them very well, but I was also fairly clear in my own mind that they were prepared to keep them suppressed, that they did not want policy decisions. Now, that ends my first point — background. And now we're really operating in C<sup>3</sup>I and telecommunications policy.

The next episode I want to introduce you to is doctrine developments. You know, I have long been unable to comprehend discussions of deterrence theory, and escalation control, and a lot more of the rhetoric that has developed over the years in this respect. I took a very simple-minded ground force officer point of view that there are two kinds of military operations: offensive and defensive. You start with those categories, and I didn't see why they weren't adaptable to other modern things. As far as I can work out what people meant by the word deterrence, that meant that you had military capabilities that made other people very reluctant to take you on. Of course there are ways and ways to develop those capabilities. But the thing that has always bothered me about deterrence is that it has somehow relegated strategic defense to oblivion. Strategic defense is no longer an operational concept. You should be prepared to dump lots of highly destructive offensive weapons on other people, but you shouldn't consider or concern yourself with your own population's psychological reaction that a counterblow might be incoming. I find that a highly unstable circumstance. How deterrence figured in this I wasn't really clear, unless it was self-deterrence. But I was not a strategic forces specialist, so I left it to others to work this out.

Well, I found myself looking at SIOP, which is our most well developed and, I would say, staggering war contingency plan. It allows the President within two or three minutes of tactical warning to be on the wire, talking to his nuclear commanders-in-chief, and if he decides to, he can send an emergency action message that will do anything from releasing 70 to 80 percent of our nuclear megatonnage in one orgasmic whump, or just sit there and say "Don't do anything, and we will just take the incoming blow." Looking at the SIOP, you saw the realities. They were right there. All of a sudden we were out of the realm of academic deterrence theory and into real operations — what the real choices were. As I think a member of the faculty at this institution says, you tend to do the things you are organized to do; at least, you are constrained in choices by what you are organized to do.

The more I thought about the way we were organized, the more it reminded me of 1914. We were organized in one big war plan; everybody expected a very short war. There weren't any mobilization plans or any other support — you didn't need it, that was just excess baggage — and you expected to fight the war with your initial onslaught, with all the stocks in being. That is precisely the way the general staffs in Europe entered World War I. They had no economic mobilization plans. They were going to fight the war. They believed they could win it in six weeks. They could do that with the ammunition stocks in being and whatever other stocks they needed, and they didn't expect to be bogged down. Once they had launched these operations plans, they were extremely difficult to alter or reverse. Probably most staggering is that it was difficult at the start of the war to imagine any politically chosen war aims to which one could harness these great war plans.

Well, I asked myself, what political goals could be achieved with SIOP? That's a sobering question. It's difficult to imagine what you could do besides destroy a lot of Soviet

industry, etcetera. There never was much attention to destroying Soviet divisions. It should occur even to the more ordinary of us that if you destroy the industry and leave the divisions alone, they may come to the Rhine and on to the Channel.

So SIOP seemed to create more problems than it solved. I managed to convey these concerns to my boss, Brzezinski, and I took him on a trip through SAC and NORAD. He became very familiar with the operation and, as I said, the President practiced the procedures.

If you take the things that are disturbing about the way we are organized, and compare that with what you see of Soviet force developments, you see a very large Soviet arsenal, rivaling and in some categories exceeding ours. You see a kind of accuracy which, if used selectively, could call into question the existence and endurance of our own command and control systems, our ability to even ride out and respond to the retaliatory shot — to do what we are organized to do. These all seem to me to have been called into question by what we were seeing in the changes in intelligence assessments in the latter half of the 1970s. It was just not the same world as the 1950s and the 1960s, when we had enormous edges in almost everything — in command and control, in weapons — and we felt sure we were deterring.

It became very clear to me that if we were going to move seriously to enhance deterrence, to create a posture which may make opponents more reluctant to take us on, just doing more of what we were doing would no longer be enough. Let me give you an example of what I mean by “doing more of what we have been doing.” There was a great hue and cry and an enormous public debate — many of you up here participated in it — about Minuteman vulnerability, the vulnerability of our land-based missiles. You can go through a lot of calculations, and you can talk about what you have to do to make them less vulnerable. People developed MX systems, shell games, basing systems. But that’s hardware. What I never really understood was why that kind of vulnerability was so much analyzed when a much easier targeting problem was getting almost no public attention. Now, there are 1,054 missile silos, and people could work up enormous concern about an attack that would get them all in one snap! But I could pick for you a much smaller set of much more attractive targets — the President, the Secretary of Defense, the military operations staffs at the Pentagon and the command and control centers in the major unified commands — whose destruction would do much more perilous damage to our ability to conduct a war, or respond sensibly, or run our system. I don’t mean to belittle the Minuteman vulnerability problem; it may be very real. I am merely speaking in comparative terms. I discussed this one day with a journalist (there is enough information in the public domain, you don’t have to have a lot of classified information to conceptualize this problem) and he said “I guarantee I could write about it and nobody would read it if it were published, and my publisher won’t publish it anyway.” So that seems to be a psychological reality — it’s the kind of problem that just doesn’t sell.

**Oettinger.** If there is one *raison d’être* for this seminar it’s to try to fill that gap. That is one of the reasons why you are here.

**Odom.** Let me give you what emerged from many discussions and back-and-forth memos and debates with Brzezinski about what we might do, or how we ought to begin to think about modifications in our strategic doctrine. He framed three questions which, I

think, really are the right questions to answer. He said, first, "What will it take to deter in the 1980s and the 1990s?" And I think it is clear that given the changes in Soviet arsenal and capabilities, and the enormous emphasis the Soviets put on C<sup>3</sup>, it is going to take either more or different things to deter than it did in the 1950s and 1960s. It's not simply a matter of staying where we are. One of my colleagues refers to McGeorge Bundy, who just made a speech over at the International Institution for Strategic Studies, and who holds that Kissinger's assertion that we need more counterforce, more hard target kill capability in order to have effective diplomacy, is nonsense. Well, for that speech he got the nickname "One Bomb Bundy" — that is, it only takes one bomb to deter. You know, maybe that's true; but I just wouldn't want to test that proposition. I am willing to spend quite a bit of money and do a lot of things to avoid having to test it. And if you don't want to test it, then I think you are faced with worrying about altering your posture so it can meet the deterrence requirements of the 1980s.

Brzezinski's second question was "What will it take to bargain stably in a crisis confrontation with the Soviet Union?" I think people more or less ruled that out during the detente period, but in recent weeks and months it has become much more conceivable. I don't think we can bargain stably the way we did in the past. Our traditional crisis management approach to the Soviets on the nuclear level has been to escalate our threats very early to the highest level, and then negotiate our way back down. We veiled threats in 1948 over Berlin, and several times in the 1950s, but the most spectacular was the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. Then in 1973, when we went to DEFCON 3 to transmit the word to the Soviet Union, we really meant what we said: we did not want them to send airborne divisions into Egypt. But I don't think, with the changed balance of forces today, that I would feel very comfortable about going all the way up and saying okay, we are going to bargain down. I have a feeling that they would go on up with us. Considering current Soviet force structure, if I were advising Brezhnev I think I would feel confident about staying in the bargaining on the way up a little longer than before. So that raises real questions about whether we can continue to behave the way we have in the past.

Brzezinski's third question is, "What would it take to manage a conflict, or pursue politically chosen war aims, if deterrents fail?" With Schlesinger's new targeting doctrine, in about 1974, there was a lot of talk that we wanted smaller options that would be more credible. Nobody believed we would shoot everything at once, but we might shoot small amounts, fire six or ten or a dozen nuclear warheads over some part of the Soviet Union, let them take that hit, and say, okay, let's get on the hot line and talk about it. If you work that through realistically, you can expect to take a counterhit. And what do you do, call up the people in Boise, Idaho and say "Too bad, you've had it, there will be a moment of silent prayer in Chicago and St. Louis for you?" I just don't see that as a viable posture for a National Command Authority to have vis-a-vis the population. You can't just conduct escalation control with no attention to the psyche, the population and the other things going on inside this country. It's irresponsible and mindless to think about it that way; and yet I don't see anything in a lot of the literature on escalation control about what seem to me these very pressing concerns that a National Command Authority is going to have to deal with.

So, if you ask yourself what it will take to manage this situation, you'll find it's going to take some things that are different from what we have had in the past. If you can answer Brzezinski's last question effectively, then I think you will be able to bargain

stably, and you probably will deter. The most distinctive thing about answering the third question is to break away from the idea of having only one option — to fire one blast at a lot of predetermined targets — and instead be able to conduct a long campaign in which you may choose new targets, even after the war has gone on. I emphasize choosing new targets because in C<sup>3</sup>I we have almost no capability to acquire new targets after the start, beyond those already in the data base for the Strategic Integrated Operations Plan. In other words, anything that turns up after the war starts must be found, and you must locate it and determine what kind of weapon you need to hit it with. Unless you can go through that process, you have a really rigid set of choices which within minutes become inappropriate for the realities you will be facing in a campaign. So one of the most important changes we must take to achieve a posture which will deter in this sense in the 1980s and beyond is an enduring, robust C<sup>3</sup>I system.

The WWMCCS system is interesting in this regard. I'll try to show you how I as a non-expert began to get a little grasp of it. I thought it was some sort of budgeting trick, and people would show me great stacks of computers, and how they were interrelated, and all that. And then one day somebody drew a simple chart showing the National Command Authority, the White House, the White House Communications Agency, and the Defense Department, each as circles involving communications. The CINCs, the unified commands, are another set of circles, as are the forces under the unified commands. Now what WWMCCS allows you to do is link the national command authority by the chain of command, from the President to the Secretary of Defense and then through, and I emphasize through, the JCS to the CINCs.

**Oettinger.** Just one interjection. The statutes do not say "through." That comes from DoD or presidential directives.

**Odom.** But whatever the statutes say, the practice, the understanding, the common law development is that the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs does not Command any CINC. The CINC's commander is the Secretary of Defense. I want to make the point — I see it as a real problem for the future — that the CINC's don't take nonsense from the Chairman. They will take it from the Secretary, and they will take it from the President, but they are very jealous of that President-Secretary link and don't want the Chairman and his Joint Staff out there nibbling at their lines of communication. They are the President's communications assets — the Secretary of Defense's assets, the CINC's assets. Now normally, if something happens out on the line, it is reported up through the chain of command to the Secretary of Defense through his operations, and it may reach the White House Situation room, or the President may get it in his airplane or his car or wherever he is. That's the normal chain of command. But with the WWMCCS system, commands would be in different sectors. Suppose the problem comes from the strategic sector, from, say, SAC and NORAD. Almost instantaneously the President links out to the CINCs, and can even link out to the forces. The communications links are greatly compressed. In the case of a helicopter going down on the DMZ in Korea, the White House situation room can zip right down through the echelons, deal directly with it, and go all the way back up. WWMCCS has given us a lot of flexibility in being able to talk right down through the command line to the cutting edge, leap over it, go around, monitor — but some of the disadvantages of doing that are —

**Oettinger.** Yes, but since pieces of WWMCCS and its management are not unrelated to Joint Chiefs activities and so forth, some of the administrative and "technical" difficulties in its realization are not unrelated to the situation you have just described. I want to underscore that because, in terms of some of the things we need to look at throughout this semester, when you try to sort out the relationship among realization of systems, the agents for realizing them, and the agents' roles, that's where a lot of the agony comes.

**Odom.** Right. Now, I want to get back to the doctrinal question. Ask yourself what kind of capability we have in principle, if not in fact (though I think we do have some in fact). We have a reasonably flexible system for controlling our forces in a benign environment. There are problems with it, but we can incrementally improve it — that's a task that the present Department of Defense and the present structure can deal with rather adequately.

The next capability at hand is the strategic forces capability. It can take a large nuclear strike and then retaliate in a coordinated fashion. Some people would say, I think justly, that over the past three or four years that capability may have been cast into doubt; that under tremendous stress the new Soviet capabilities might cause considerable difficulty for our strategic integrated operations plan (SIOP) execution by pulling the lanyard and shooting the one big spastic shot. (I don't want to get into all the details of why that's true. Partly it has to do with our tactical warning intelligence systems — whether they can really see an attack coming, whether they can be spoofed, or whether they can be destroyed before the attacks so that the first information you get is that you are not getting any information. What kind of decision do you make when your sensors stop working? Do you shoot back? That's not unambiguous information; it doesn't give you a lot of confidence; so you don't want to do that.)

What about the third capability, endurance? Will a command and control system be around to pick up some of the pieces? (Providing it's not a massive exchange that wipes the world out, but only a partial one, a massive one that misfired — and I think the probabilities are that some things will go wrong and there will be some forces around.) If you decide that you want to try to pick up those pieces and control and coordinate them, do you have a system that will allow you to do that? I think the answer is, by and large, no. If C<sup>3</sup>I is going to enhance deterrence in the 1980s and '90s, in my view it has to begin to acquire some of that endurance, and give us somewhat greater probability that we can put it back together as a credible capability, so that our opponent has to take us seriously and realize that one surgical C<sup>3</sup>I strike by his strategic forces will not be enough to put us out of control indefinitely.

**Oettinger.** I think your third point about endurance is related to the first two, and I am not persuaded that things work as well as you might think under benign conditions. It seems to me that, if you have true workability under benign conditions, that is perhaps tantamount to ensuring that they will endure. I don't think you can separate those three questions as if they were totally distinct.

**Odom.** Well, I'm not separating them for practical purposes, I'm just separating them conceptually.

Then, what does the task become? We tried to put an instruction out to the Defense Department, to the Chairman of the WWMCCS Council. We said, "You have this two-

dimensional system. It will do the benign business, and it will do the emergency action. Let's get a third dimension, endurance. Start showing us what it is about your present programs that not only gives you these two, but begins to turn the corner and add this third dimension." That was my initial conceptual way to try to put pressure on the NCS and the Defense Department to move in that direction. How you do it practically is a nightmare engineering and analytical problem, and a nightmare bureaucratic problem as well. I don't want to address that now. I just want to bring my doctrinal comments to a close, having explained how C<sup>3</sup>I becomes very, very critical for deterrence.

I'll put it this way. (These are very private views; don't take them as government views. A lot of people, maybe even my boss, wouldn't agree with me on this at all.) If I could choose between great enhancement of a C<sup>3</sup>I system with a very high probability of control under very adverse conditions, stressed by pretty large strikes, I'd take that over MX. Yet, when you start talking about this, you risk being called a warmonger. The whole logic of deterrence theory is that you are better off vulnerable, and if you want to do anything to avoid vulnerability, then somehow you must be itching for a fight. I think that's an anti-intellectual, know-nothing approach to this kind of problem, but I bring it up merely to try to preempt that kind of cynicism. Given the nature of the Soviet arsenal, you can no longer stay locked in that tidy, rigorous paradigm of thought. You have to begin thinking about what kinds of things you are going to need to deter in a new environment. And one of the first things needed, I think, is ability to ensure, under the most adverse conditions, that we can stay in control.

**Student.** I agree with you on the desire for good C<sup>3</sup> in the strategic system. The Soviets have spent a great deal of effort in obtaining that. But don't the Soviets have a philosophy of turning a great deal of autonomy over to the field commanders, much more than we do? On the assumption that they will lose command and control over them in a hostile environment? And compared to us they have very explicit instructions for conducting the war. As you say, the White House can now pick up the phone and talk to the field, which may be a great vulnerability to us, as opposed to having predetermined instructions to the field command.

**Odom.** In other words, more autonomy in command and control of the field command will cause the Soviets to lose political control?

**Student.** No. It will do what some believe it has done for us. Better central communications, better control from the center, will weaken the field commander's strength to act autonomously if he needs to. If no instructions come from the center, then —

**Odom.** You are raising a topic which I think is interesting and fascinating, but it is on a slightly different tangent than what we are talking about today. It's not clear to me that more communications will do that. A typical example some of your military colleagues would tell you about is a Vietnam squad leader. Behind the squad leader who is in contact with some Vietnamese unit in a fire fight, the platoon leader and the company commander are trying to find out what's going on. The battalion commander is in a helicopter right over them, and a brigade is coming in another 500 feet higher, the Division Commander's up above — and all of them are on the air screaming to the squad leader and the company leader. But you don't have to work that way. I don't think the

technology forces you to. That's why I say it's another issue. How you are going to use your operational doctrines, how you will exercise leadership, seems to me a different issue from how your capabilities behave when they are stressed by the Soviets, and, indeed, whether you even have the choice. What I am talking about with regard to C<sup>3</sup>I is generating the capabilities to have the choice. I'm not discussing prescriptions for how one would exercise it. That's a very important area, but I don't think it will move us down this track.

**Student.** It's just that you were commenting on the Soviet C<sup>3</sup> expenditures and their philosophy about C<sup>3</sup>, and I agree that is a good assessment. They also very much stress the field commander's ability to take autonomous action up to the nuclear level.

**Odom.** I quite agree they do. And the reason is that there are going to be periods when you don't have command and control. But it's autonomy-exercising behavior within well prescribed and clearly understood doctrinal patterns. In other words, doctrine helps you coordinate when you don't have somebody on the wire to tell you how to do it.

**Student.** My question is, then, do we have the same type of philosophy, so that when our communications have been disrupted to a certain extent our field commanders have that autonomy?

**Odom.** They will have autonomy de facto . . . in that nobody can get to them to tell them what to do or not to do. They automatically have a lot of autonomy. Now, if you are asking me whether our field commanders would be very able and impressive in exercising that autonomy, I would comment on it simply this way. I think we are very far behind in doctrinal developments to cope with the stressed kind of environment and its off-and-on-again kind of command, control and coordination. I think we have a lot of work to do there, particularly in ground forces, which are not at all adequate in that area. In that way, I think, the Soviets are far ahead of us. They have thought these things through and have taken a more down-to-earth pragmatic approach: work out a doctrine, test it under stress and field conditions, and see how it goes. I don't think we have done this nearly to the extent they have.

Next I want to talk about determining requirements. When I first got into it I realized that the Joint Chiefs of Staff have traditionally been the developers of the DoD requirements; they derive them from the services and they get requests or comments about C<sup>3</sup>I from the unified and specified commands, from the CINCs. They put all that together, and traditionally a J-32 (not the J3, the Operations Deputy Chief, but one of his subordinates; recently that has been upgraded to a full J staff member, a three-star general is now responsible for C<sup>3</sup>I) has aggregated all the service requirements and CINC requirements and tried to put them into a coherent package for the defense budget. He has had real problems. (A relevant, important point here is that although the JCS has that requirement, nobody seems to have had any responsibility for generating national-level requirements. Or interdepartmental requirements, non-military, diplomatic, etc. Requirements are developed, it seems, on a departmental basis; it's not clear, you know, where those things came from. If somebody decides that we need a new communications system for intelligence or for diplomatic channels, it's a real task to discover who decided we needed, or validated, that requirement. So that's a problem.

Now another problem is, who pays? Who do you think pays for the JCS and the CINCs and the President's command and control — or, to put it colloquially, their telephone bill? The military services. And this creates enormous budgetary and political strain within the Defense Department. If the Air Force has a choice between buying more airplanes or providing a command and control airplane for the President, and providing more radios and more ADP capability for control of the center of the JCS, they prefer the airplanes, not the control. The Army prefers tanks to paying for the President's White House communications system. The Navy has its preferences along the same lines. So there is, in the way the Defense Department budgets are developed, an inherent bias against funding JCS-level, Defense Department-level and, certainly, NCA-level communications. I learned that when I thought I could take two or three enduring elements of the WWMCCS program and try to push them through. I fought those right down to the end. Friday night we had the budget issues nailed down, but by Monday morning they were pulled out. Some Air Force staff experts had gotten to the WWMCCS Chairman on Saturday, and I was left with no programs on Monday!

**Oettinger.** Let me just interject, for purposes of papers or further discussion: this is why it is critical to be able to distinguish between what's embedded in statute and what is in directive. The question of how much is at whose disposal in dealing with these problems, and what might be done, is one that as far as I can see has not received a hell of a lot of attention. And guys like Bill who are on the firing line don't have time to worry about how they got into the present problem. So an over-arching question we will pay attention to is why the structure is the way it is now, and how it might be altered, if at all, in response to these kinds of questions.

**Odom.** Now, more on who pays. Within the defense and the military, the services pay. There have been some thoughts about how to change that — for example, the Defense Communications Agency might be given a new budget line. But then there is another "who pays" problem. It has to do with the way the telephone monopoly works, and how the Defense Department and the services pay for the telecommunications they get from the common carriers. To appreciate that, let me give you one datum from which to extrapolate. An enormous amount of military communications is transmitted over public telephone lines. Completely integrated, self-contained military communications only involve low-level units on ships, fighter squadrons, bomber squadrons, etc. Once any distance is involved, and once you get further up the command structure — for example, if the President gets the word that there is an incoming Soviet missile attack — it travels many legs of the trip from the satellite centers on AT&T. If you want not just strategic command and control but lots of other command and control, the common carriers are intimately involved in telecommunications policy.

You realize that how AT&T operates is absolutely critical for C<sup>3</sup>I costs. I had gone to OSD/C<sup>3</sup>I to ask them what their policy problems were and they kept telling me they were serenely happy, no problems. Well, one day that changed. What caused it to change was that somebody introduced some legislation in Congress to deregulate the telecommunications industry, and they immediately began to knock on my door and they wanted me to understand — they began to educate me on the virtues of AT&T, why it was a national asset: it does all these marvelous things, it provides us an absolutely survivable system which the Soviets can't destroy. I got more and more briefings on what I had already

heard at SAC and NORAD to the effect that, even though in principle market competition is a good thing, national security is a somewhat better thing when they are competing with one another. Therefore we should defend AT&T.

And I thought about that. It seemed to me a reasonably compelling argument. Telephone service is a little like a public good. If somebody gets it, everybody gets it. And then you begin to hear people talk — I learned the Department of Agriculture was on our side. It turned out they are on our side because there are not many subscribers out in the country, they are not as dense as in urban areas; and so somebody thought they ought to have to pay more for their telephone. My point is, if they close the telephone company down in Montana, people in Washington have fewer numbers they can call in Montana, and not only the people in Montana, but the people in New York City and elsewhere lose something. So it wasn't so clear that competition was an unmitigated virtue and benefit in this regard. I saw that the Defense Department wasn't going to do the kind of analysis AT&T reportedly was doing. I was taken around and shown hardened sites which in the 1950s had protected many of their lines against enemy attack. For a while I thought we had little or no choice but to oppose deregulation. Then, as the process of sorting this problem worked itself out, these positions seemed to emerge: Commerce (by Commerce I mean the NTIA) wanted deregulation right down the line. They would hear nothing of the Defense Department's arguments. Defense, insofar as we could determine their position, wanted to protect AT&T as a system. Commerce wanted to force the "who pays" issue into the open.

And who does pay? I should elaborate on that a bit. If AT&T does things to enhance the system, or to improve the system's ability to resist foreign attack, should it charge the Defense Department? In the past it has not done so. It did not try to segregate out those additional costs and say they belong to the Defense Department, it merely passed along the cost to the subscribers in their rates. So that many of the national security attributes of the AT&T Long Lines and the common carrier systems were being paid for by private users, rather than by the department that had the responsibility to provide that service — the Defense Department. Commerce's basic argument was that that ought to be broken out into the open, and while it's all right if you want to buy all that command and control and all that hardness and all that capability, the ordinary telephone subscriber should not have to pay for it. I had learned back in the beginning that it was difficult to get DoD to do anything to sort out these vulnerability issues. So what we at the NSC wanted to do was devise a mechanism to put more pressure on the Defense Department and the NCS to give AT&T newer and up-to-date guidance. The AT&T Long Lines people complained to me that they would be glad to follow Defense Department guidance, but they hadn't been getting any; what could I do in the way of generating some policy for them? This was the first cry for policy. And then, of course, when the legislation came along, the issues really began to move. Well, as I said, the study crystalized for me the need for some national C<sup>3</sup>I, national security telecommunications objectives. There weren't any.

So we wrote some down. This is the way you make national policy. We took them to a meeting, and nobody really objected to them, and then we got them signed out in a memorandum to the Secretary of Defense as the executive agent to go into the national communications system and staff them and see if he wanted to add anything or alter them, and whether he would accept the objectives. Defense altered them a little. I think they improved them. They added one or two, and changed them in a way that made them say

more effectively what we wanted to say, and they added some additional language to the statement to give some basic guidance parameters to common carriers to achieve the objectives. And that was eventually signed into law as Presidential Directive #53, the National Security Telecommunications Policy directive. Now while that is an unclassified document, as a matter of practice we don't pass it out. Its substance, though, is being made available to the private sector, and the original request for the Defense Department to keep the directive unclassified was aimed at precisely that. So we can use it to deal directly with the common carriers.

So with PD 53 we now have a basis on which to begin to judge national as well as Defense Department requirements. But we have put aside the "who pays" issue with respect to common carriers' monopolies, etc. And our tradeoff with the Commerce Department was, if you are willing to let us go ahead with the telecommunications policy directive, then we will support you in deregulation. Essentially they accepted that trade; I don't think they liked it, but I think they decided the costs of fighting were not really worth it, so we got the PD. The real question left with PD 53 is: how much deregulation can you really write into legislation? I really don't know the answer to that. Van Deerlin's Bill 6121, I think, and one or two others were back on the floor again this year, and that will be the ongoing fight. Thus far the initial drafts of those have included language the people in the Defense Department think meets the PD 53 requirements. If that circle can be squared, we are in pretty good shape. There may be ways to work it out. There may be a way to achieve more deregulation than I originally thought possible.

One more point on PD 53. You can get the Defense Department to use PD 53 to fight Commerce and Congress on the legislation. But getting the Defense Department to translate those objectives into precise operational guidance to the common carriers, the services and the various other elements of our telecommunications system is another problem; and they are not racing ahead with great enthusiasm in that direction. I think it will take considerable pressure before we get them to move on that.

**Oettinger.** Well, it's worse, I think, in one respect: I think a fair case can be made that the flow was the other way over the years, and that the problem was to get guidance out of the Defense Department into the telecommunications industry, rather than vice versa. That is a profound cultural problem.

**Odom.** You mean the idea that Defense should tell the common carriers what to do is just not in their self-interest? I think they don't know that. But they need to find out.

I would like to end with these points. Notice that I have talked by and large only about the third C, communications. What about command, what about control, what about intelligence? We have only talked about the signal officer's responsibility. And I think there are some command and control problems, and some very real control problems. The first one is the services' reluctance to pay for C<sup>3</sup>I. I think that organizational problem, the command of budgetary program authority, is a very central "what next" we have to do something about. Another command and control question is, can we create a sufficient set of command centers and a sufficient military staff that can survive to support the President under periods of stress, perhaps even in the event that deterrents fail? You have heard me say how vulnerable the National Command Authority and the Command Centers are. Are there different ways to proliferate, harden, or make mobile our command

structure so that it can survive? That's a real problem that has to be worked out. The JCS (the only thing that approximates a national military staff) has, as I see it, little or no chance of surviving in its present housing arrangement. For this really is a housing as well as a telephone communication problem.

Then there is another aspect of survival. What about our economic civil mobilization command and control structure? That seems to me to be in a state of total neglect. I am not even sure that what was left over from World War II, if it had been maintained, would be adequate — we are almost in the position of having to start from scratch there. Now, we have made one organizational change which, if it is carried through as it should be, will improve our institutional ability to cope with economic mobilization: pulling back together the Office of Emergency Preparedness into what is now called the Federal Emergency Management Agency. It is having growing pains, but at least the potential is there.

The final kind of problem has to do with the national military command staff. Let me offer a thought to you. If you remember anything about the history of World War II, you remember there were great arguments between the Pacific theater commanders and the European theater commanders. MacArthur really was furious. And in Europe there were all sorts of squabbles between Montgomery, Patton — and Eisenhower was known as a great coalition politician. The important conclusion that can be drawn from that is that any President with six or seven Commanders in Chief for the major theaters of the world is going to be dealing with people who don't agree with each other on much of anything about military operations. They are all going to be posing as the Napoleons of the modern age, who have the last word on what is the militarily appropriate thing to do. If you have seven of them, you can get seven absolutely irreconcilable proposals. How does a President cope with that? He has to have a staff to sort out the merits of the arguments and tell him how to knock heads together: how to reconcile them in the most effective operational fashion.

I am making a pitch for some kind of national military staff surviving and protecting the President. Otherwise he is going to go off and probably be taken into refuge in one of the commanders' staffs. So I wonder if the National Security Act of 1947 is adequate any longer. I wonder if it is adequate for deterrence in the 1980s and '90s. I wonder if we must not have some kind of military staff which stands above the military services, which is not a prisoner of those services and has some sort of survivability billeting or a system of command centers that will allow it to support the President in a variety of situations. Historically, about every 20 or 30 years our military command arrangements seem to break down. They become inadequate. I am suggesting something functionally equivalent to a general staff. Most of you are going to object to that on wholly emotional, ahistorical or poor historical grounds. You tend to think of the Nazis, militarism, and things like that. But I defy you to give me an example of a modern industrial state whose general staff transformed its political system. The Germans' general staff did not transform the political system in Germany: the Nazis did. In fact, the Nazis didn't even like the general staff officers. And it was the Bolshevik Party, not the general staff, nor the Imperial general staff, in Russia. In fact, the changes in authority on the Soviet general staff were very interesting. I think they were enormously improved in 1956, '57, '58 when the strategic forces came into being; and again in the early 1970s, when Kulikov was made chief of staff, it was given additional command authority over the five branches of service under it. So I think the Soviets are reflecting, in some of their organizational changes, a

key operational awareness of the demands of this kind of stressed environment. I know it's a provocative proposal for the U.S. I just throw it out and there I end.

**Student.** The notion of the President as a prisoner of an area commander, or of something else, is at the heart of the relationship between technical means, organizational structure and notions of what is politically appropriate command — if for no other reason, for reexamining the question of how balance between civilian and military authority is maintained or exercised in an era when the means have changed so radically. Not only muscle, which we have focused on; but the nervous system — which is way overdue.

**Odom.** I would like to get the category straight here, so this discussion doesn't go afield. You talk about civilian control. I understand civilian control to mean control of the military establishment by elected officials. Is that fair? Now that's a very important point. Does it mean civil servants with GS numbers? GS-18s? You see, I am not sure that the OSD staff is any more responsible to the electorate, or is any less a political danger, than a uniformed national command staff. There is enormous confusion on that point, and most discussions like this — you hear it every day in the Pentagon — justify redundancy, layers of staff, extra people looking at papers they don't even understand, in the name of civilian control. The discussion won't go far if you get that red herring mixed in.

One other point. An interesting dynamic happens around the Executive Office of the President: if a staff feels responsible to the President (which I think a National Military Command Staff would do), I think you would find it being very much more responsive to political considerations than the Joint Chiefs will be. There is a great tendency to take the President's side. I know that from where I sit. I take his side on issues that I really have trouble with personally. But I can work up a lot of enthusiasm just because of the atmosphere.

**Student.** What the President has to have to avoid being held prisoner by the CINCs appears to be some sort of information system, some sort of staff, to provide him with options and help him understand them. The problem seems to be that if he wakes up at two o'clock in the morning and it is just a question of firing or not firing the SIOP, it is easy. But if you have 150 options, which do you want to do? You have to have some people who are pretty smart in those particular areas. Would it be possible to finesse the unacceptability of a general staff by putting into either EOP or an NSC-type framework a civilian-and-military group of people who are in fact that kind of a staff but are not so labelled? I mean, it's almost in the Constitution not to put in a four-star general, not to have that kind of direct-line authority.

**Odom.** Too big — I just don't see how you could do it. You would just end up duplicating what J5 and J3 are doing. You don't want it over at the NSC. You want it with the military services.

**Student.** I have heard it said that this is one of the few countries in the world where people wear civilian clothes in OSD. In the Soviet Union they all have to wear uniforms to do the same kinds of jobs. So addressing the problem here is a GS-18 exerting civilian control. Is it necessary to have people in green suits or blue suits or maroon suits running this kind of staff? Or can we use long-term civilians who would accept the fact that they don't wear uniforms?

**Oettinger.** Let me just suggest something that is an important point. There are lots of other people beyond those present here in the Kennedy School who are better equipped to deal with that, and in particular some who have been very close to the development, say, of the Senior Executive Service and those kinds of efforts, which are only in part personnel development. We have the genesis of questions of "who's loyal to whom." So if you want to pursue it, I would want you to think about that.

**Student.** Well, the concern was that we are working very hard to provide the technology for the man who talks straight to the operating commander. But as you brought up, he doesn't have the capability to make decisions, and since the emotional problem seems to be a fear of some sort of military takeover or militarism of the nation, you have a need for a staff that is not solely answered by a General Staff. It could be done like an NSC staff. I mean, NSC is fairly operative in that area.

**Odom.** No way. You see, there is no statutory authority for implementation by NSC staff. You have to have statutory authority to implement; that's one of the problems. Right now the J3 has to be the most direct tie with the President, with the White House communications system for controlling the forces. The J3 can be keenly aware that three or four CINCs don't agree with each other, but he can't make them resolve their quarrels.

**Student.** But executing is only one part. The other point that you made had to do with staff capability. It seems to me, in answer to the question you raised earlier about talking only of the signal officer and not much about intelligence, that one of the roles the intelligence community has played is providing alternative analysis. They may not have done it well, or often enough, but I think that's an important link to some of the questions you raised.

**Odom.** I didn't get to intelligence, and on that I have a lot of strongheaded notions in the same way. Down at the battalion level you have personnel, intelligence, operations, and logistics supply. These should be together; splitting them up we functionally differentiate them and push intelligence out, and the commander has to operate on conventional wisdom for intelligence. That's not an exaggeration, either at the battalion or the national level. We functionally separated the CIA out; and Defense Department intelligence — well, you know, some people don't take it seriously, some do. And we are not in a position to transit easily from peace to war. In other words, the intelligence community sitting out here talks about Red information. But you can't staff an issue for the President unless you know about the interrelations between Red and Blue information. The only place you can talk about Red and Blue together is in the Pentagon, and that's by statute. They raise hell when Turner starts putting Blue figures on the charts he sends up to Congress to talk about Soviet force levels. Harold Brown really gets upset about that.

**Student.** What's Red and Blue?

**Odom.** Enemy and friendly forces. In other words, Turner isn't allowed to talk about U.S. force levels as compared to Soviet force levels, netting things out. So the only place I see to integrate intelligence is in an operational command staff.

**Student.** Why can't the Secretary of Defense do a lot of these things?

**Odom.** Do you want me to tell you why he can't? He has two staffs, the J staff and his own Office of the Secretary of Defense staff. OSD seems to be very much the creature of the personality of the Secretary, and it doesn't have a lot of what I would call momentum and ballast. The J staff does have that. Not completely — the Chairman can shake it up, bypass it, reduce the role of one senior staff member to another — but it has a more resilient structure that sort of carries on. Moreover, it's one thing to be able to sit down and be an absolute first-class analyst at OSD and do systems analysis or do the work of one of the other offices, ISA or something. That is policy work. Policy work is one thing. Conducting operations and making operational decisions is somewhat different. It is much more pressured; and one of the most interesting and confusing things in the world is to see people in OSD and ISA try to get into the J staff in the J3 section and play commander there. It really creates a mess. The OSD staff can help the Secretary enormously with slow-moving things like manpower allocations, logistics allocations, mobilization — that kind of routine staff function. In fact, you might even say civilians could do an enormous amount of that. But the operations of putting the incoming intelligence together rapidly, and deciding what kind of implementation orders need to go out — you were making the distinction between uniformed and civilian — well, it seems to me the uniformed members of the Pentagon just have more practice at, and are more familiar with, those routines.

**Student.** It seems to me that part of what exacerbates all this is that the distinction between what is staff work and what is background, and between what is command as opposed to intelligence, or tactical as opposed to strategic, is vanishing. So this is another one of those things that has changed in 30 years, and while the structures may have been barely adequate for one or two kinds of situations created in response to Pearl Harbor-type things, in the situations you described, where you want broader choices between SIOP and nothing, distinctions at the Pentagon between what's strategic, and national, and tactical aren't valid any more.

**Odom.** Presidential Agreement Memorandum #11, which restructured the intelligence community, turned out to be an enormous turf fight between Turner and Brown. And they never addressed the transition problem. Instead they were arguing about who was going to control the budget; and intelligence itself is our problem.

**Student.** Let me try to get at what I am worried about: a big red flag. I haven't really thought about this notion of the President being captured by one of those seven guys out there, but I can just see that happening. So here is a problem. I've just spent 18 months identifying another problem, a screw-up involving policy to deal with radioactive waste. In both cases, people who identify problems want to create a new staff office. My reaction is, you have got a chief line officer, a Secretary of Energy, a Secretary of Defense — in a corporate sense, you have got Vice Presidents. I mean, call those guys in!

**Oettinger.** I want that kind of discussion taboo for the rest of the semester. There are a zillion places in and out of Washington where that discussion, in terms of short-term remedies, can be had. As I have tried to make clear and I will have to make clear again, one of the luxuries we have here is to spend the whole semester framing the questions, and then worrying about solutions. I don't think we are here to worry about whether to use existing or nonexistent staff.

**Odom.** I think that is a very provocative and interesting counterquestion, though, because it makes me ask: Why can't we make the J3 tell CINCSAC and CINCLANT that they have got to get together and resolve a dispute? Now, there are two reasons you can't do it. One is statutory, the other is arrangement of personalities. If you have a Secretary of Defense and two or three other people here in the building — with the right kind of personality they would do it anyway. The information structure —

**Oettinger.** What's troubling me is, I want to ask more questions before we get worried about this. Hold on! Because the whole notion of area commanders may not make any sense. You know, we got burned in World War II because people were doing this, that and the other. So now we have unified and specified commands. Does that make any sense? What does it mean to talk about the Pacific Theater or Europe?

**Odom.** Space is a problem. You have to know what space you are responsible for. One of the first things you do to put order into chaos is start drawing up categories. And space and boundaries seem to me to be extremely relevant categories. You may want to draw them in different ways. But the idea of abandoning that category —

**Oettinger.** Abandoning space as a category?

**Student.** I want to dwell on this point. You mentioned the fact that the President can go around to the CINCs, but that doesn't really address the problem — the problem is that the CINC will not have the experience to deal with the problems when there are too many for the President to handle. You are suggesting a general staff to institutionalize that, to have a formal bypass from the CINCs through the general staff. They actually make the decisions for the staff, and the CINCs are just implementers, they are no longer strategists, and they no longer have to be dependent on the management. Do you think this is really useful?

**Odom.** I don't accept the notion that because you have a general staff there is nothing left for the CINC to do, or that because you have some command and control from the center you can micro-manage everything, or make all the intermediate command levels irrelevant. There is going to be a certain amount of trauma. There is no way to run these operations without making people mad. And every commander is going to feel he has been abused and his prerogatives have been overridden — and that is something you just have to accept. For instance, in the Persian Gulf we don't have a unified command, and that means we are trying to do a lot of things right off the back of an envelope, out of the NSC, out of OSD. And I feel a crying need for a CINC, in spite of all the modern communications.

**Student.** There is a serious problem, I think, about how useful intelligence is to the command level. You commented in the beginning that you can't manage a crisis, because as soon as something happens the President grabs the phone and tries to handle it off the cuff. Add to that the old definition that the bureaucracy knows more and more about less and less until it knows everything about nothing. It seems to me that by focusing on C<sup>3</sup>I, integrating it, building new staffs and building our strategy and philosophy around it, we risk a situation in which the President is handed the ball in every situation and forced to

make decisions without information he can use. I have seen cases where the President has been glad to act on raw intelligence which happened to be false, and use it to justify actions which were based on other political motives. But even with the best will in the world, the President who is dealing with all the problems a President deals with is not going to be familiar with what is happening in all the CINCs' operational fields; he has to go to his staff. So you have two irreconcilable objectives. You need fast response in the nuclear age. But the thing that delays the response from the normal channels is a necessary filtering and sophisticated manipulation of information so that by the time it gets to the guys on top it means something.

**Odom.** That is often true. I take it you are worried about making these things so streamlined that we will be — I mean, I was thinking about streamlining, not creating more bureaucracy.

**Student.** The purpose of the bureaucracy is to make the intelligence useful to the command. So this streamlining system certainly speeds it up, doesn't it?

**Odom.** Well, let me give an example. People sit out at the CIA — they never come to Washington and they never come to talk to us, and I don't think they go anyplace else in the world. They read all the cables and they write nice essays and papers that are distributed around the government and nobody reads them. So they really cut themselves out of the action. You talk about finished intelligence, putting all this stuff together, filtering it out; true, you do need that process. And in some respects it works. It works reasonably well in the CIA's current intelligence system. The Joint Chairman, briefing every day, gets a pretty good rundown. And then occasionally you get some rather sharp, useful, analytical and more long-term pieces; but most of the stuff that comes up through this process is junk, and has some built-in biases that just can't be overcome. That's a general comment; it's not always that way.

I've noticed some other anomalies. Let me give you one I was particularly concerned about, though I'm not so much concerned now. Remember the A team-B team arguments? What have you heard about that lately? What ever happened to the B team? Were they really all that wrong? Was the A team all that right? Actually they weren't, when you got into the studies. If it had been B team in 1976 versus the NIE in 1974 or '73, there would have been a great deal of difference. But by the fall of '76 the A team had closed up, so on B team the difference was not all that great. But what you had was an accumulation of very hard, real intelligence, not so much interpretation but an accumulation of sheer numbers (which keep accumulating faster than anybody would ever believe). And the view that the intelligence community and the Defense Department always overestimate seems to be almost exactly the opposite of what the rule ought to be. They have consistently underestimated most Soviet programs. And the estimates just go right on up, up, up. If you had read the NIEs in 1977 and 1978 about Soviet capabilities, goals and intentions, you would have thought they were complete news to the policymakers, because almost all the secretaries were behaving and talking as if that weren't the case at all. In other words, there is a tremendous gap between what was produced and blessed as national intelligence and what the people who were making the policy were willing to accept as intelligence, between what's reported as the intelligence reality and conventional wisdom.

Notice that I said it starts right down at the battalion level. You never trusted the S2 anyway; he is sort of a third-rate officer you want to get out of the way. Then it becomes sort of a second-rate operation and the S3 operator just assumes what the enemy is doing, or he gets it out of the newspaper, or he makes it up. There is, even at the national level, a tendency to get one's intelligence from the newspapers or from one's best friends or some current intelligence, and to operate off the cuff. I think there is a corrective effect eventually, and I think we have already had a swing back. But in the year 1978, during the budget cycle, that gap was pretty wide.

**Student.** If I can comment on what you said about the bottom looking up — those things were predicted and sent up. The impression always was that if they weren't accepted, it was not because the top people didn't read or use them because they didn't believe them, but that for political reasons they didn't suit their preference and so were shunted aside. I saw many cases in which what are now judged very good pieces of intelligence, long-term NIE-type things or even short-term current studies, were put aside because they weren't domestically-politically useful at the moment.

**Odom.** All right, your hypothesis could be true. And mine could also be true. In other words, there is nothing inconsistent about the two interpretations of the behaviors. I'm not disagreeing with you; I'm suggesting both can be right.

**Student.** I am saying that you are painting a very black and white picture there. And there are many people at the CIA, and the DIA, which I think is probably the most under-rated organization in the intelligence community, and State's I&R, who have both policy and intelligence responsibilities and who would corroborate my comments.

**Odom.** I agree that when you get out of the CIA and closer to where budgets are made up, the intelligence function is apt to have greater impact, and the possibility of them intermingling across the policymaking boundary is critical. But you can also find many episodes where people looked at things, were on to problems, and the intelligence community very early had a fine-grained sense of the situation, and they tried to transmit it to the top and — partly it may be that some things are politically acceptable while in other cases readers just won't accept the information coming through.

**Student.** I would like to comment on your argument about a general staff —

**Odom.** No, I said a National Military Staff. National Operations Staff. Military Operational Staff.

**Student.** It's basically an argument for efficiency, for increasing the efficiency of the process on the system. And yet I see no historical examples of decisions made for other than efficiency reasons. And all these political tradeoffs — the game in town is the tradeoff game. Is it that if you don't increase the efficiency you make decisions which may look very good at the moment, but in historical perspective may not be so useful?

**Odom.** There is something to that. I agree. But when you do analysis there are three games you can play in town. You can do analysis for the purposes of enlightenment, for a parochial advocacy, or to achieve bureaucratic paralysis. My argument would be that in

ordinary peacetime, under non-stress conditions, the second and third games get played with a great deal of vigor. But when the system is under stress from an external opponent, and the we/they syndrome is felt very strongly, I think the second and third games will be repressed, relatively speaking, and the incentives for getting it right and analysis for enlightenment go up. I quite agree that the national command staff, not under stress, left to look after the distribution of budgets, will become as corrupt and involved in games two and three as any other bureaucratic institution in the world. But if you put competitive units together, trying to put forth the most impressive operations plan for the President, under stress, I don't think the competitive mode is going to generate a better outcome. I think under stress I would rather have a well-structured timely bias than a group of biases with which I have to puzzle over when or how to choose.

**Student.** Yes. I accept that. But what I am saying is, suppose you put a system in place in a benign environment that gives you enhanced abilities to do things that you otherwise can't do — for example, to deploy forces to Pakistan right now. If we had that capability there would be a lot of pressure to do that, and it might not be in the best interests of the United States. The President, having that capability, may respond a lot quicker to do that.

**Odom.** You know my quick answer to that. You seem to be arguing that if you have power you might use it and hurt yourself, so it is better to be weak and not have any choices.

**Student.** I think there is a tradeoff: how much power you want to have.

**Odom.** I know that if you have choices and powers you can commit heinous crimes and great sins. But you can also choose not to do that. And policy is about choice. I just think you cannot get around the responsibility of choice-making. It's not a good argument for not having choices.

**Student.** The Vietnam analogy is not really valid a lot of the time, but the fact that we went, that we built up the extra divisions, meant that we had the forces to deploy. Had we not had those forces, perhaps we could have made more rational decisions.

**Odom.** I don't think that having a lot of idle divisions waiting around looking for something to do explains much about why we got into Vietnam and why we committed the forces.

**Student.** I'm saying the mere fact that we had to build those divisions up — having that extra capability would perhaps, in the test of time, have washed away a lot of the very analysis we based those decisions on.

**Student.** I am skeptical that what you described as another version of the general staff will, under stress, always or even often turn out better options than the current system does. Certainly in the private sector, organizations facing vast catastrophes may be struggling over power internally, so that even though their bankruptcy is literally a week away, their people have decided it is more important to win the internal brawl than survive. How do you feel you can motivate people, particularly if they are coming from outside?

An Army officer, for instance, when a colonel or a three-star general calls up and reminds him that he's holding this class 3 in front of his nose that he would like analyzed that says X, that that is not going to happen. It just doesn't seem to me that, at least as you described it, you have created any sort of system to obviate those catastrophes. In fact, if anything, it just makes it easier to mug somebody in a dark alley and ram through what you want.

**Odom.** Well, briefly, I think the kind of dysfunctional behavior you are talking about already takes place in the present system. You are going to have a certain amount of that.