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President Eisenhower and Strategy Management: A Study in Defense Politics

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United States," a statement which is simply inaccurate as a reading of the records of the meeting makes clear. The Tenth Plenum of the Central Committee of the Vietnam Worker's Party (the Communist Party of North Vietnam) is described as "the Tenth Congress."

Historiographic deficiencies also mar the overall quality. The extensive footnotes provide guidance to the wider materials on which the study is based, but a number of major sources cited with some frequency is not found in the Bibliography; one is the Commander in Chief, French Forces, Indochina, *Lessons of the War in Indochina*. Because the normal convention of providing a full citation the first time a source is referenced in each chapter is not followed, the reader is driven to distraction trying to find the identity of the work, which is normally cited only in the short form as *Lessons of the War in Indochina*. The only full citation is "buried" in a footnote on page 96. And, given the book's general survey and introductory nature as the first in a series, a more comprehensive bibliography would have been of considerable value.

There is certainly general misunderstanding of the extent to which naval activities were crucial to military operations in and around Indochina during the period treated in this volume and later as well. The fact that the enemy had little naval capacity leads many to ignore the vital role of seapower (and river power) for France, South Vietnam, and the United States. Unfortunately this book does not do enough to remedy that deficiency, if for no other reason than that it does not maintain a consistent central focus on the issue. Subsequent volumes, and the series as a whole, will be successful to the extent they rectify the problem of fragmented focus and fall into the tradition more of Samuel Eliot Morison than of a committee report.

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Kinnard, Douglas. *President Eisenhower and Strategy Management: A Study in Defense Politics*. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1977. 169pp.

This brief monograph examines President Dwight D. Eisenhower's role in the formulation and implementation of U.S. strategic policy. The author refutes the claim that the President was an indecisive, politically naive figurehead, dominated by strong personalities within his Administration and insulated from political reality by an excessively formal staff system. Kinnard maintains that Eisenhower undertook the management of America's defense program with a confidence born of a lifetime of professional military experience, and that he provided strong, effective leadership, personally articulating the strategic policy of his Presidency and skillfully defending it throughout his tenure.

The program Eisenhower initiated came to be known as the New Look—a long-term strategic plan designed to support existing containment policy through a careful balancing of military necessity and economic capability. Predicated on a concern for a healthy economy and balanced budget, this program sought to achieve "more bang for the buck" by major reallocation of resources among military components. Greater emphasis was placed on the deterrent and destructive power of nuclear weapons, i.e., massive retaliation; missile delivery systems and air defenses were upgraded; conventional forces were reduced; and allies, supplemented by U.S. logistic, air and naval support, were given primary responsibility for local defense. The new strategic goal, reflecting Eisenhower's disbelief in the possibility of a conventional war with the Soviet Union, was military sufficiency and economic stability over a prolonged period.

Not only was the President architect of this strategic program but, according to Kinnard, he developed effective bureaucratic techniques to manage and defend it. He revitalized the National

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Security Council system: a new planning staff provided long-range strategic guidance as well as continuous policy planning; an operations coordinating board implemented and supervised agreed defense programs. He utilized the Council as a device to discuss issues, elicit support and attain consensus, but reserved to himself final decisionmaking authority, a function exercised through informal meetings with advisers in the Oval Office, not through the bureaucratic mechanisms of the NSC. The President also enlisted the cooperation of potentially recalcitrant military leaders. He selected service chiefs amenable to his program, carefully indoctrinated them in their responsibilities and loyalties, and secured Joint Chiefs' endorsement of his overall program while tolerating service competition for individual shares of the defense budget. In this manner he avoided major military defections until late in his Administration.

Kinnard also lays to rest any question of Eisenhower's primacy on defense matters within his own Cabinet. Dulles, lacking any expertise on strategic issues, never challenged the President. Defense Secretaries Wilson and McElroy, similarly inexperienced in military affairs, contributed little to discussions of fundamental strategic doctrine; they were functionalists, used by Eisenhower to manage the Pentagon and keep a tight rein on defense budgets. Secretary of the Treasury Humphrey certainly reinforced the President's fiscal conservatism, but beyond that influenced the Administration's defense program primarily as advocate and publicist. Even Adm. Arthur Radford, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, was an enthusiastic convert to Eisenhower's defense policies rather than a source of independent strategic advice.

The author further claims that Eisenhower effectively defended his strategic program against major challenges. The first of these came from world events which seemed to invalidate the premises of the New Look: increasing Communist

belligerency and military expenditures, a "bomber gap" in the early 1950s, Sputnik and a "missile gap" toward the end of the decade, and crises around the periphery of the Communist world, Berlin, Hungary, Lebanon, Suez, Vietnam and the Offshore Islands. And the Administration program came under increasing attack by defense intellectuals challenging the basic assumptions of massive retaliation, military leaders demanding improved limited war capabilities, and politicians seeking viable election issues. However, the President, capitalizing on his general popularity and unassailable military reputation, firmly maintained a solid, unified Administration position on defense policy. He carefully controlled the defense budget process and successfully advocated his strategic policy before Congress and the public until his final days, yielding only gradually to demands for increased military spending and altered strategic priorities.

Professor Kinnard has made an impressive case for Eisenhower's ability and primacy in matters of defense management, and he has done so with clarity and economy. However, is such a case necessary? Despite the author's and publisher's construction of a strawman of presidential ineptitude, analysts of bureaucratic politics and historians of the Eisenhower era have for over a decade clearly indicated the President's dominance in defense matters, many describing him as "his own Secretary of Defense." Even the more current and animated debate on the importance of his role in foreign policy determination has largely been resolved in the President's favor. So, while the author has certainly expanded our knowledge of Eisenhower's managerial techniques, this work does not provide the major reinterpretation that it claims.

Furthermore, this analysis seems to equate success in Eisenhower's defense program solely with political and managerial performance. Yet can an evaluation of the President's strategic policy exclude

considerations of substance and result? Although the author has deliberately confined his study to the area of bureaucratic policy, it is difficult to share his enthusiasm for Eisenhower's program without further discussion of its security implications. Was the New Look the optimum strategy for America in the 1950s? Did reliance on massive retaliation, subordination of limited war capabilities, modification of force structures and roles serve the interests of the nation? Did determination of strategy by budget rather than by threat, concentration on balanced budgets, establishment of fiscal ceilings as the initial step in defense calculations enhance the nation's security? Did politicizing the Joint Chiefs and formalizing the NSC staff system to suppress dissent contribute to a sounder estimate of defense policy? These are questions which bear on the "success" of President Eisenhower's management of strategy. For no matter how effective the President was in formulating and implementing a strategic program, his reputation in defense management must ultimately rest on the success of that program in protecting national interests. It is hoped that Professor Kinnard, having so ably described the mechanics of Eisenhower's defense policy management, will in the future address his talents to evaluating the worth of that effort.

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Korb, Lawrence J. *The FY 1979-1983 Defense Program: Issues and Trends*. Washington: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1978. 45pp., and Joseph A. Pechman, ed. *Setting National Priorities: the 1979 Budget*. Washington: Brookings Institution, 1978. 318pp.

"How much is enough?" is the question that Robert S. McNamara asked when he was making decisions on defense spending. The two studies

reviewed here examine the answer that the Carter Administration has given to this vital question as shown in the size and composition of the FY 1979 defense budget. Lawrence J. Korb is Professor of Management at the Naval War College and the author of several studies of the defense budget and Pentagon decisionmaking. The Brookings Institution volume contains two chapters (61 pages) on the defense budget, authored principally by Herschel Kanter and Charles A. Sorrels, members of the Brookings defense analysis staff that has produced much-discussed studies of U.S. defense policy. These two analyses would be excellent companions to the FY 1979 posture statement of Secretary of Defense Harold Brown. The Brookings volume comes from a noted liberal research institute, while Korb's monograph is published by a prominent center for conservative thought.

This review will contrast the major arguments in the Korb and Brookings analyses of the defense budget and then, more briefly, mention other parts of the FY 1979 federal budget that are treated by Brookings. Both Korb and Brookings provide fine overviews of defense spending, examining it in several dimensions. Although President Carter continues the trend that started in 1975 of increasing defense spending in dollars of constant purchasing power, in FY 1979 outlays for national defense will represent only 5.1 percent of gross national product (GNP), the lowest share of GNP going to defense since before the Korean war.

Korb provides more detail and explanation of the different ways of measuring defense spending and the various categories into which overall defense spending can be divided than is available in the Brookings study, although both works make extensive use of statistical tables. Korb's comparison of the Carter defense program for FY 1979 and projected out into the 1980s shows lower levels of defense spending