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DUDLEY CRAWFORD SHARP—SECRETARY FOR AIR***ROBERT C. COTNER and PEYTON E. COOK**

The Eugene C. Barker Texas History Center at the University of Texas was the place of my first meeting with Dudley C. Sharp. Although a very busy man, with manufacturing interests in Houston, he had come to Austin with his mother, Mrs. Walter B. Sharp, to discuss the progress being made with the Pioneers of Texas Oil Project. As many of you know, the University has about 150 tape recordings, collected over the past ten years by Mody Boatright, William Owens, Winnie Allen and others, dealing with the pioneers in the oil business in Texas. The Sharps have been keenly interested in this program and have contributed most of the money made available for obtaining the recordings. Recall that Walter B. Sharp was an early water well drilling contractor, turned oil man. While studying the oil developments at Spindletop, I learned that he was a business associate of ex-Governor James S. Hogg. You may recall that Sharp died from heat exhaustion after fighting an oil fire in 1911. Mrs. Sharp was widowed with several small children. Dudley, born in 1905, was about six when his father died.¹

As I talked with Dudley Sharp in Austin I could see the resemblance to his father. Both were handsome men, over six feet tall, rangy rather than stout, with alert eyes and friendly countenance. Dudley had evidenced early a keen interest in things practical and theoretical. His mother with business acumen and by careful investment was able to travel and the varying experiences heightened the imaginations of her sons. Because of his religious and philosophical insights, Mrs. Sharp considered for a while sending Dudley to the Orient to absorb its ancient learning. However, he enrolled at Princeton in the early 1920's, taking five years to graduate because he spent one year in Europe. Later he and some other college youths went big game hunting in Malaysia and narrowly escaped death from jungle fever. When he traveled up the China coast the Chinese crew mutinied when the boat nearly sank in a typhoon. Dudley worked to save the ship and passengers.² I have stressed these events to show that he was not unaware of the distant parts of the world when he was called to public service by the Eisenhower Administration.

Mr. Sharp continued his interest in the sea and owned a yacht which he turned over to the Navy in 1942. At this time he was co-owner with his brother and mother of the Mission Manufacturing Company in Houston, continuing a pattern started by his father who was once a partner with Howard Hughes in the Sharp-Hughes Tool Co., primarily interested in oil drilling machinery. When Dudley volunteered for duty with the Navy he served two years as Executive Officer and later Commanding Officer of submarine chasers and destroyer escort vessels. Recognizing his special knowledge of business, he was assigned to the Office of Procurement

*This paper was delivered by Dr. Cotner of the University of Texas at the East Texas Historical Association meeting in Huntsville.

and Material. He also served for six months "as administrative manager of the Applied Physics Laboratory"³ at Silver Spring, Maryland, which was engaged in important research and development work for the Navy.

Following the truce in Korea, the Eisenhower Administration began to reorganize the various branches of the armed services and to seek ways to economize, hoping to obtain a balanced budget. In 1955 Dudley Sharp was called in as a civilian adviser to General Edwin M. Rawlins, Commander of the Air Force Materiel Command, at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio. His special duty related to the machine tool stockpiling program. It was apparent that Mr. Sharp was experienced in the field of manufacturing, had military experience both as a unit commander and as a staff officer, and he was learning the special problems of the Air Force. Apparently, he was making good for on July 12, 1955 the *New York Times* announced that "Dudley C. Sharp, a Houston manufacturer of oil field supplies, was said to be slated to succeed Roger Lewis as Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for procurement."⁴ Confirmation of Secretary Lewis's pending resignation effective September 20, 1955, was soon announced and Sharp's nomination was public knowledge.

People, in and out of Congress, now wanted to know more about Mr. Sharp and why he had been selected. Eisenhower, if not the Republican party, had carried Texas in 1952. One reason for the growing strength of the party in Houston was the fact that a man like Sharp had served as finance chairman of the Harris County Republicans since 1952. He would also represent the spirit of unification in the defense department since he had experience in materiel with the Navy. Furthermore, he ought to know what manufacturing costs were and was prepared to give contracts a close look with a view to effective, quality procurement and to economy. He could be of service to the Eisenhower administration and to the country. His sense of public duty was best stated by himself:

I feel that it is a duty of people in business, if we intend to preserve our system under which I prospered, and many others of us prosper, to offer our services whenever they are available, whenever they are asked for, and whenever we feel that we can do a fair job and are qualified to the job.⁵

He also felt that people who failed to accept public responsibility when asked to contribute their skills, even with some loss of income, should not complain about how government was run.

The *Houston Post* sent Sharp off to the tests of confirmation with the following:

Mr. Sharp, a man of many and wide interests, will take with him to Washington the good wishes of all Houstonians. His will be a big and complicated job, but in his years here he has demonstrated that he is well equipped to handle it.⁶

But the hazard course to confirmation was to be a rugged one. He arrived in Washington when the business interests of Harold E. Talbott, Secretary of the Air Force, were much in the news. The Senate Armed Services Committee was sensitive over the criticisms and proceeded to go thoroughly into Mr. Sharp's business interests and probed for any signs

of conflict of interest, which is considered to exist if an official, such as Mr. Talbott, owned stock or had any interest in an organization doing direct business with the government. Even the chance of favoritism was to be avoided. Even companies doing business indirectly with departments of government came within the meaning of "Conflict of Interest." Mr. Sharp understood his need to dispose of stocks in Gulf, Humble and Phillips oil companies, Libby-Owens-Ford Glass, etc. However, he expected to continue his interests in Texas Fund, Inc. and Mission Manufacturing (the father's company) which he felt "in no way, create a conflict of interest with my official duties."⁷ Senator Harry Byrd (D-Va.) concentrated his questions on Texas Fund, which owned stock in companies, such as the Texas Company, which did direct business with the Defense Department. While the Texas Company was the largest stock account of the Texas Fund, it was only about 4% of the total holdings. Many people in the Southwest had invested in Texas Fund because of Mr. Sharp and he was reluctant to sell although it represented much less than 1/100th of his total securities holdings. Even giving up offices would not suffice, and after a conference with Senator Leveret Saltonstall (R-Mass.) he agreed to sell "as proof of my sincerity."⁸ Except for the "Talbott Affair" and his desire to aid Eisenhower, he would probably have turned around and returned to Houston. However, he would not give up holdings in the family owned Mission Manufacturing.

Mr. Sharp promised that he would "take no part in the management of the company while in the Air Force post." Talbott had transferred some of the holdings to his children. Senators Byrd and Russell wanted to know if he would sell "on the open market."⁹ He answered, "Yes." He considered the cost financially very great, but he had been nominated by the President and he decided to accept the confirmation and go to work. In 1962 he still felt that "the Senate Armed Services Committee was a little unreasonable with me, maybe because they thought it was the thing to do at the moment."¹⁰ The Committee had approved the nomination on July 30, 1955 and the Senate confirmed two days later.

On October 3, 1955 Dudley Sharp was sworn in as Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (Materiel). His duties were largely in the area of procurement of equipment and supplies—aircraft to nuts and bolts. He was responsible for storage and handling of supplies, transportation and communications for the Air Force, contracting, and for matters relating to civil aviation. The Assistant Secretary made policy in areas of responsibility. He must work in close coordination with his immediate superior—the Under Secretary—as well as the Secretary for Air. In February, 1956, the Assistant Secretary was present at the appropriation hearings and Congressman George Mahon wanted to know how a business man had gone about learning his job. Sharp made this reply:

It is quite a task. For one thing, I think I have traveled a total of about 50,000 miles in a very concentrated effort to call on the contractors, on the air materiel area headquarters and on depots, to see exactly how they go about pricing things, to find out first hand from the people who actually do it and how it is done.

I made a trip to Europe to investigate the MDAP [Mutual De-

fense Assistance Pact] program . . . and to investigate our depots over there.

In addition to that you have to burn the midnight oil quite a lot. I spend a good many hours a day studying things I would normally know if I had been here longer. I attend a great many conferences. I am briefed a great deal on individual problems as they come up and given the background.¹¹

He also learned that it was seldom the "big things" which gave trouble, but the many "little things."¹²

One of the mysteries of Washington is the budget. The defense part was determined at a higher level than the Air Force (or Navy, as I found out while in a personnel planning section). The Defense Department then sliced the money in the proportions they felt were justified for each service. The Air Force or other branch must then fit its next fiscal year programs into its slice. The more stable costs, like pay and housing allowances, are not hard to determine but the allocation for other items becomes most difficult. Take for example procurement projects running over a period of years—missiles or bombers in blueprint. Furthermore, it is difficult to start and stop big projects. Speed up or slow down called for renegotiation of contracts; sometimes tooling or retooling. Instead of the older method of buying items that looked good then and stockpiling with possible early obsolescence, Sharp decided on a course of closer planning and of reducing of stockpiles. The Semi-annual Report of the Secretary of Defense to June 30, 1956 carried this announcement:

In November of 1955 the Air Force reoriented industrial mobilization planning to conform to changes in operational plans. In the place of the traditional view of a prolonged industrial buildup after a war begins, the Air Force substituted the concept of an industrial structure ready for war at all times.¹³

Sharp was thoroughly committed to the use of private industry, believing that "an efficient and progressive aircraft industry is the key to our airpower."¹⁴ Once he told a group at a Lockheed plant that the Air Force wished "to do everything in our power to keep the most efficient production underway and at the greatest possible capacity consistent with the Air Force overall program."¹⁵ The basic theory was that in case of a general war, "American industry would deliver every possible piece of critical equipment during the first 60 to 90 days. In the event of a local war, there would be a rapid acceleration in production of critical weapons."¹⁶ Therefore, in 1956 Sharp worked to stabilize and strengthen the aircraft industry. Stability was not enough—he demanded increased know-how.

On the other hand, the Government would continue to operate some very special projects and even set up new facilities for experimentation, but old plants would be used prior to new construction. For example, the missile for THOR was being made at the Douglas plant in Santa Monica, California, but the engines were being tested at a new site at Santa Susana, as no old facility was available for this work.¹⁷

In 1958 there were eighty government owned facilities. Only five were

idle. These last could be disposed of by the General Services Administration. Mr. Sharp also looked over available plants of other services to see if the Air Force could use any. He noted that the Army and Navy had several reserve plants and many expensive tools in storage. Part of this was due to the Korean War. However, a complex accounting system had worked against trading equipment between services. Money was involved. While one branch of the Armed Services was without money to buy, another Service might have a surplus of unused tools. It may seem strange to learn that often, if they could buy from a sister service, the Air Force might be charged more for tools than new ones could be bought for in open market. Congress also was unhappy at the inter-service buying and selling policies.¹⁸

Sharp deserved much credit for helping to bring about changes. The Army and Navy closed some installations and distributed the equipment. Now by using the Consolidated Machine Tool Index, set up with the assistance of the Defense Department, one service was able to use idle equipment of another without having to pay for it. The Army had planned to fight a war that might last five years, while the Air Force thought in terms of months or even weeks. All recognized it was costly to maintain large reserves and a partial compromise between the services was worked out. The maximum reserve in any class of supplies was set at 30 months.¹⁹

In 1956 Sharp obtained \$69 millions for new industrial equipment under a concept that the Air Force in order to achieve industrial readiness should keep most of its owned tools in use. The Air Force should also let industry know what new tools would be needed, along with replacements. As of June 30, 1956 there were 147,520 industrial items in the Air Force inventory 104,949 of which were in active use. At the same time in 1957 the inventory was 148,163 but the number in use had increased to 115,323. Then in 1958, with a new emphasis on missile production, the number of machine tools in use decreased as did the inventory. Many tools were now obsolete. On June 30, 1958 the inventory of industrial items was down to 101,843 while those in use had dropped to 74,135.²⁰

Other reforms initiated by the Assistant Secretary included tightening upon contracts by offering incentives to keep down costs. Formal advertising for bids had been called for by the Armed Services Procurement Act of 1947. However, in emergencies, like Korea, so-called "negotiated contracts" were used sometimes. In March 1956, Sharp, in answer to criticism of this practice, explained that the Air Force had enough "sound statistics" that they could estimate costs for the "learning curve" period while something new was being produced; the procedures were constantly reviewed and yardsticks were modernized "to further adapt them to the even more complicated weapons of the future."²¹ A study of air industry profits extending back to 1942 was declared to be in line with other industrial profits. The Air Force had decided to use formal advertising for almost every contract, but where complex weapons were being developed of secret nature, it seemed wise that the Secretary retain the "negotiated contract." For an example, use the B-52. No one really knew what it would cost and sometimes only one or two companies were ready to proceed.

In 1958 an improvement in formal advertising was made by the so-called "two-step" process. First, interested companies would submit technical data without prices for a contemplated product. Second, after the evaluation of the data, those concerns which had submitted satisfactory proposals were allowed to bid under normal procedures. The contract was then awarded the lowest bidder. The purpose was to reduce the chance of procuring an inferior product and to continue the use of formal advertising and bidding.²²

Mr. Sharp had authority over approval or disapproval of a contract. He now pushed the "incentive" feature in contracts expecting thereby to encourage contractors to reduce costs below their estimates in order to get higher profits. To guard against too high profits, the Air Force established measurement criteria on costs of finished items. Based upon these data, maximum profits were set. The Air Force wanted better equipment at lower costs over the long run. However, Sharp recognized the incentive clauses required new contracts to be renegotiated each year and while the early incentive to reduce cost was substantial, it would fail to produce results after a few years.²³

Mr. Sharp entered his duties at a time when the peacetime Air Force reached its maximum strength of 137 wings. From this point until 1959, when he resigned as Assistant Secretary, the size of the Air Force decreased. By 1959 the strength had decreased to 104 manned bomber wings and one missile wing. The major emphasis shifted to quality rather than quantity. Also the emphasis on types of weapon systems was changing. Missiles were assuming more importance in the retaliatory structure of the Air Force, and the proportion of missiles to manned aircraft increased during this period. It was also during this period that the last B-47 bomber was delivered to the Air Force. This occurred in February 1957. The B-52 was to be the main manned bomber and it became operational in 1956 and was being delivered at the rate of 15 per month.²⁴

In the Annual Report of the Secretary of Defense for the period July 1, 1958 to June 30, 1959, the Air Force stated that this was a period of dramatic change. The Air Force said that missiles were assuming a much more important role. Missiles would complement and replace current weapons, and the trend would continue in the future. However, it was felt that there would always be a need for manned weapon systems. This was because the "judgment and reasoning ability of man have always been required to assure complete accomplishment of the Air Force mission regardless of the sophistication of the equipment. Man and his powers of decision and his ability to reason will continue to be decisive in space."²⁵ In this same report, signed by Mr. Sharp, the Air Force felt that it was the most effective single deterrent force in the nation.

The Air Force continued to increase the percentage of missiles procured. In fiscal year 1959 money for procurement of missiles and aircraft was divided 22 per cent for missiles and 38 per cent for aircraft of the 60 per cent allotted to these systems. This was an increase in favor of missiles over fiscal year 1958. It was Mr. Sharp's responsibility to implement higher decisions though it can be assumed that he contributed to the mak-

ing of them; he was in complete agreement with the balanced force concept for the future.²⁶

One of the most interesting threads that is woven into Mr. Sharp's job, and one that was very close to the problems of industrial planning, contracting, and procurement, was that of small business. This appears to have been a major concern of his. Much of the answer for this interest lies in the fact that Mr. Sharp had been connected with small business most of his adult life. As a small businessman he had been in competition with big business. He had an appreciation of what small business could do. He felt that small business was much more efficient than large business and in certain fields could produce much more economically than the large concerns because small business was much more flexible and not as bureaucratic as big business.

Mr. Sharp felt that it was more economical and more justifiable to spread the wealth as much as possible. This fits very well into the concept of a ready industry, and would help to spread work over a larger geographical area, and to more efficient organizations. Mr. Sharp cited the case of a large contractor which was making an item for eight or nine hundred dollars. The Air Force forced this company to go outside for this part and the company was able to get it for \$125.00. Mr. Sharp put it this way.

To maintain production in depth in the weapon industry, we are re-emphasizing and strengthening our make-or-buy procedures. This, in effect, subjects the primes [prime contractors] to close screening by the Air Force of work which is performed in plant versus that work which is placed with outside sources by the prime contractor.²⁷

However, it must be kept in mind that Mr. Sharp knew perfectly well that there were some items which small businesses could not make, such as the B-52. Also, it was these large items that took most of the Air Force's procurement dollars, as much as 85 per cent. Therefore, it may appear that small business was not getting a very large share of these procurement dollars. This is true. But during Mr. Sharp's tour as Assistant Secretary they did get an increased portion of the remainder. Mr. Sharp was satisfied with the efforts of the Air Force to give small business more of its money and he kept close watch on progress in this direction.²⁸

In fiscal year 1956, small business had an opportunity to bid on items worth \$1.06 billion and actually received contracts valued at \$686 million. The \$1.06 billion represented 12.8 per cent of the total spent on procurement for the year and the \$686 million was 8.3 per cent of the total procurement and 65 per cent of the \$1.06 billion. In 1957 these figures climbed to \$1.79 billion out of \$8.26 billion or 21.6 per cent as compared to 15 per cent in 1953. During fiscal year 1958 there were more than 2,700 concerns working under Air Force contracts, and 1,751 were classified as small businesses. These small businesses received 17.2 per cent of the prime contracts to the sum of \$757 million and at the same time prime contractors subcontracted 20 per cent of their Air Force business

to small business. The total amount received by small concerns in fiscal year 1958 was \$2.5 billion.²⁹

One of Mr. Sharp's primary responsibilities was that of civilian aviation. It was his job as Assistant Secretary to ascertain that in the event of war there was an efficient and adequate civilian reserve fleet to augment the Military Air Transport Service (MATS) operated by the Air Force. In January, February, and March of 1958 MATS came under fire from Congress. Hearings were held on MATS and as its came under Mr. Sharp's jurisdiction, he was the Department of Defense's chief witness, and had to conduct and coordinate that Department's testimony. The basic questions were whether or not MATS was too large and whether or not more of MATS business should be turned over to the civil airlines.³⁰

At the outset of the hearings, Mr. Sharp made it very clear "that a strong, well-trained and fully responsive military airlift force is an absolutely essential element of our defense posture." He felt that this had to be a force in being, "which when augmented by civil air transport resources, are qualitatively and quantitatively capable of providing the airlift support required for successful implementation of war plans approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff."³¹ The plan was for MATS to provide airlift for the initial 48 hours of an emergency with the Civil Reserve Air Fleet (CRAF) providing assistance after this time. This 48 hour period would give CRAF an opportunity to become fully organized and assembled. In fiscal year 1958 CRAF consisted of 362 4-engine aircraft. Because of the 48 hours delay before CRAF would become effective, Mr. Sharp thought that to reduce MATS would weaken national defenses. On the contrary he thought it would be more "reasonable to assert that MATS peacetime operations must continue at the present rate, or go higher."³²

It is natural that the longer Mr. Sharp remained in Washington with the Air Force that his pride in this service should increase. He likened the Air Force to a business concern, the biggest in the United States, but with a less tangible product. This was "the assurance that one can continue to live in and enjoy the privileges of this great nation."³³ In other words, security. The Air Force touched almost every aspect of American life with its bases, research facilities, and dealings with industry. In addition, much contact with foreign nations was maintained through overseas bases.

Though Mr. Sharp was proud of the job the Air Force was doing, he was equally aware that there were shortcomings in its operation. He recognized that the Air Force was not without criticism, and that it was always seeking constructive criticism. For this reason he felt that Congressional hearings were helpful because they might uncover weaknesses of the Air Force. But at the same time he felt that progress was being made toward better management of the Air Force.

We have isolated the areas that require top level attention. Control in the other areas has been decentralized to the lowest level at which effective action can be provided. This to me is the essence of good management. With the able assistance of your committee, and the others interested in the progress of the Air

Force, the situation will continue to improve. The professional management of the Air Force, both civilian and military, is without any question one of the finest, most dedicated groups I have ever been privileged to work with. If you will bear with them should they make minor mistakes because of the fearful complexity of their task, I think you can rest assured that they will produce an effective force to defend our land at a reasonable cost to our people.³⁴

This statement sums up Mr. Sharp's opinion of the Air Force and of the job this service was doing for the country.

On January 28, 1959 the *New York Times* carried the announcement that Mr. Sharp has resigned as Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Materiel. This had been hinted at as early as October 28, 1958. His resignation was to be effective on January 31, 1959. His successor was reported to be Philip B. Taylor of Upper Montclair, New Jersey. Mr. Sharp gave his reasons for resigning as home, friends, and business. He stated, "My job with the Air Force has been very rewarding. But it has also been very wearing and confining. I came to Washington with the idea that it would only be for two years. I think it is time I gave someone else a chance to enjoy the pleasures of a very fine job."

President Eisenhower paid him this tribute in a letter:

The attention you have given to the civil aviation industry and small business and your many other contributions in the procurement field should be a source of great satisfaction to you as well as they are to me. Providing an adequate military airlift is an item of utmost importance to our national security. Your contribution toward achieving this goal is noteworthy.³⁵

Mr. Sharp was not destined to remain long in Houston among his friends and with his business. On June 30, 1959, only five months after his resignation, it was reported that Mr. Sharp would succeed Malcolm A. MacIntyre as Under Secretary of the Air Force. A formal announcement was expected in a few days. On July 9 the formal announcement came. Mr. MacIntyre was resigning effective July 31, and the President had nominated Mr. Sharp to replace him.

The primary reason for Mr. Sharp's return to government service was because Mr. MacIntyre had resigned on short notice and there was not enough time to cast around for an experienced replacement. As Mr. Sharp was experienced in the Department of the Air Force, Mr. James Douglas, Secretary of the Air Force, prevailed upon him to take the position of Under Secretary. Mr. Sharp had no apparent qualms about returning to Washington, but rather felt it was his duty to do so.

Mr. Sharp hardly had time to get acquainted with his new duties when another shift occurred. Deputy Secretary of Defense Donald A. Quarles died suddenly in November 1959. Also a change in Defense Secretaries took place with Thomas S. Gates succeeding Neil H. McElroy. The most likely candidate for the Deputy Secretary position was Mr. Douglas. If this came about then Mr. Sharp would be the logical choice for Secretary

of the Air Force. On December 10, 1959 it was announced that Mr. Douglas would be Deputy Secretary of Defense and Mr. Sharp would be Secretary of the Air Force. He was sworn in the next day.³⁶

The tasks confronting Mr. Sharp as Secretary of the Air Force were to be more encompassing and much more Air Force wide than those he had as Assistant Secretary. He was to deal more with overall policy, and general Air Force programs and concepts than before. But this is not to assume that the problems and tasks that he had been concerned with previously were forgotten. Many of the same threads that had been broken by his short absence were picked up again. In addition, by virtue of his position of increased importance, additional tasks were performed. It would be best to pick up and complete the threads that ran through the years that he was Assistant Secretary before going into other aspects of his job as Secretary.

The Air Force continued to reduce the number of machine tools in its possession. By June 1960 there were 77,000 valued at \$928 million compared to 88,900 valued at \$1.09 billion a year before. It is significant that the number in use remained virtually steady at 65,000. This reduction was part of the effort to reduce "spiraling costs due to technological changes and frequent changes in requirements."³⁷

As indicated previously, Mr. Sharp was never completely satisfied with contracting procedures even though he had made efforts to get more incentive clauses into contracts. The dollar value of contracts let during the period when Mr. Sharp was Secretary remained fairly stable; \$9.65 billion in fiscal year 1960 as compared to the nine year average of \$9.42 billion. More emphasis was being placed on missiles than before. A good example of Mr. Sharp's dissatisfaction with contracting is the controversial SKYBOLT missile. The program was started on a hush-hush basis. The Martin Company received approximately \$7 million to fire 13 missiles in a 12 month period to test the missile's feasibility. No guidance system was to be included in the original tests. Martin fired 11 missiles well within the allotted time and felt that no further firings were required as they had learned all that was necessary. However, Martin decided to go ahead and fire the last two SKYBOLTs at satellites to see how close they could come. They apparently came very close. When Martin had completed their tests they turned back \$2 million to the Air Force. Now in accordance with the system of source selection for final production, the prime contract was let to the concern with the largest engineering department; Douglas Aircraft. Mr. Sharp expressed concern that the contract had not been let to the company that had proved it had the team to do the job.³⁸

As it turned out, Douglas was spending about \$10 million a month on SKYBOLT with an engineering department of 3500 (100 at Martin) and they were not producing any missiles. Mr. Sharp felt this was wrong because SKYBOLT was being lost because it got out of hand. He felt that the missile was of importance because it would prolong the useful life of bombers on hand; the B-52, and the British V-bombers.³⁹

Mr. Sharp was not sure what the solution should be, but he proposed a possible solution:

You might have two or three contractors carry on the development of the project, in its early stages, to some point in the development and then decide which one had done the best job, and the cheapest job, and looked like he was the best contractor. Then pick him to carry on the final development and the production. You'd really have some competition in the system. Now our competition is paper competition.⁴⁰

In the Annual Report of the Secretary of the Air Force for fiscal year 1960 (July 1, 1959 to June 30, 1960) Mr. Sharp stated that plans instituted five years previously were bearing fruit in actual weapon systems, "bringing us considerably closer to our military goal of maximum security against nuclear missile aggression."⁴¹ The ATLAS missile had been declared operational, TITAN was well into the development stage and would be operational in 1961, and the MINUTEMAN was one year ahead of schedule and would become operational in 1963. The Air Force was striving to do three things: (1) to maintain a combat force that could withstand an attack and mount a retaliatory force capable of destroying any aggressor; (2) to do everything possible to develop weapons; and (3) to help in any other way to contribute to the defense of the free world. However, Mr. Sharp was quick to point out that though the Air Force was strong it had by no means attained full strength. There was always room for improvement and the biggest problem was to determine what future weapons were to be invested in. Money was the most important factor in this determination, and Mr. Sharp felt that success in putting the money available in the right places would determine the effectiveness of the Air Force in the future. Mr. Sharp had stressed before that quality not quantity was the important thing in the Air Force. This test of quality applied to personnel as well. Constant reductions in the strength of Air Force personnel were taking place: 840,435 to 814,752 between July 1, 1959 and June 30, 1960. Therefore, with a decreasing manpower force Mr. Sharp felt that the quality of this manpower had to improve and was being improved. It is interesting to note that Mr. Sharp felt there were still too many people in the Air Force. The size of the Air Force in 1960 was the same as in 1952. There were 96 wings; 93 manned and 3 missile. But the quality had improved.⁴²

During appropriation hearings in 1960, Mr. Sharp stressed the point that the \$17,737,000,000 requested for the Air Force for the coming year, though a large amount, did not provide for everything that possibly was needed by the Air Force. On the other hand he felt a strong balance had been provided in the Air Force programs. Again he stressed the fact that change was evident in the Air Force. Missiles were playing a more important role in the inventory and would become more important in the future. Mr. Sharp could not foresee the time when the manned aircraft would not be necessary. He concluded his statement at the hearings with a statement that clearly indicates his idea of the structure of the Air Force in the future.

In conclusion, I believe I can characterize this budget as one which provides for reasonable progress in the continuing transition from a manned aircraft force to a mixed manned and missile force; permits a reasonable degree of modernization of the

manned aircraft portion of that force; affords an acceptable level of research and development toward the weapon and support systems of the future; and provides for maintenance, operation, and training of today's force in being at a minimum acceptable level.⁴³

An increased percentage of Air Force business was going to small business even though the dollar value decreased. In fiscal year 1960 small business received \$864 million as compared to \$920 million in fiscal year 1959. However, the percentage increased from 8.5 to 9%. The reduction was caused by a total reduction in procurement of \$1.2 billion. The percentage of Air Force business going to small concerns was well above the nine year average of 7.5 per cent.⁴⁴

As Secretary of the Air Force Mr. Sharp became involved in matters dealing with more policy and with problems that would have a great deal to do with the future structure of the Air Force. One of these was the B-70 program. During fiscal year 1961 the Air Force was faced with the problem of deciding whether or not to put \$456 million into developing the B-70. A choice had to be made between the B-70, an offensive weapon, and the F-108, a defensive weapon. This was necessitated by the budget. Both weapons could not be included in the Air Force budget. There was disagreement within the Air Force itself on which program should be continued. The Weapons Board wanted both, but preferred the F-108. The Air Force Policy Council wanted both also, but preferred the B-70. This left the final decision up to Mr. Sharp and General Thomas D. White, Chief of Staff of the Air Force. General White lost a lot of sleep in deciding on the B-70. Mr. Sharp was not as convinced as the Chief of Staff in the beginning. However, he came to look upon the B-70 as the right choice. "I finally came around to the conclusion, that in the first place, that we needed our atomic deterrents more than we needed the defensive capabilities of the F-108."⁴⁵

Also he felt that one more generation of manned bombers was necessary because he did not feel that missiles had been developed far enough to be relied upon as the only deterrent weapon. In addition, just by going ahead with the B-70 would pose a problem to the enemy and would possibly force him to spend valuable time and money devising and constructing a defense. This, Mr. Sharp thought, would take effort away from some other project that might prove more harmful to the United States than building a defense against the B-70. He felt in 1963 that the B-70 should be continued, but he frankly admitted he was not sure at what level of annual expense. He was not able to determine this while he was Secretary of the Air Force.⁴⁶

The whole issue was brought to light because the Air Force was asking for less than previously for the B-70. Congressman Carl Vinson strongly supported this program and he thought that by reducing funds for the B-70 it would "increase the threat to our own survival." General White stated that the decision to cut funds had not been made by the Air Force. This indicates that the decision had been made at a higher level. In October 1960 the Air Force received an additional \$100 million for the B-70

from Congress and a target date for an operational squadron was set for 1966.⁴⁷

Most of us remember the furor over the so-called missile gap. Mr. Sharp became actively involved in this controversy. His part began when he and General White, at a briefing of the Senate Armed Services Committee on January 26, 1960, "sought to allay fears of the 'missile gap' by stressing the 'prime threat' of Soviet bombers now."⁴⁸ They felt that due to the attention being paid to the increasing Soviet missile threat that the Russian aircraft strength was being overlooked. They were not attempting to say that there was not a missile threat, but rather a mixed missile and bomber threat. Based on 1959 intelligence estimates the Soviets were out-producing the United States three to one in missiles. This was the missile gap.

No one disagreed with the fact that there was a gap in missiles number for number. But what Mr. Sharp wanted to make clear was that there was no "deterrent gap." There is a difference. Missiles mean, simply, missiles. Deterrent means all of the offensive weapons in the arsenal; SAC bombers, carrier based bombers, and missiles. He said at the time that the Air Force was getting as many missiles as it needed for a well balanced program, and added that intelligence estimates had indicated that the Russians were not making missiles as fast as previously thought. However, he felt that the United States should push ahead in its missile production, and stated that increased success was being had with the ATLAS. The President had given the missile program first priority.⁴⁹

In 1963 Mr. Sharp maintained that this gap never existed in terms of overall deterrence. He felt that no one really knew how many missiles the Soviets were producing. Even if the number was large the Soviets would have had to make a great many to destroy the United States retaliatory capability, and he felt that they did not have the strength to do it at that time; neither do they have it now.⁵⁰

All of this harks back to Mr. Sharp's basic idea of a balanced deterrent force. He was not at all receptive to the idea of putting all of the emphasis on missiles to the detriment of manned bombers. This was the reason why Mr. Sharp wanted the B-70 program to continue. He was worried by the thought that if the United States invested entirely in missiles, and the Russians developed an anti-missile missile, the American deterrent force would be impotent. He stated that missiles fly a predetermined track to targets, whereas a bomber does not have to do this. In addition they can go in at low levels thereby avoiding many defenses. Maintaining a balanced deterrent force was to Mr. Sharp the best policy for the United States to follow at present, and he did not believe that the Soviet strategic capability would equal that of the United States at any time in the future.⁵¹

Closely connected with the problem of the structure of the United States deterrent force was the proposal by General Thomas Powers, Commander of the Strategic Air Command (SAC), for a full time airborne alert of SAC in February 1960. The proposal was to keep a substantial number of SAC bombers in the air 24 hours a day as a precaution against

surprise attack. What part of SAC this was to consist of or consists of today is not known as this is classified information. Mr. Sharp agreed with General Powers's proposal in principle. The difference was that the Commander of SAC wanted planes in the air while Mr. Sharp wanted to prepare for an airborne alert should the necessity arise. Mr. Sharp wanted to set aside a reserve of spare parts in case a full-blown airborne alert should become necessary. This was already in progress—the setting aside of spare parts. Also an airborne alert would require additional personnel and plans had been initiated to provide these. But all of this would cost more money. Mr. Sharp said that the only way to avoid increased spending was to reduce the size of the Air Force but retain quality, and he wanted to make it clear that any additional stockpiling of spare parts would be expensive. While he was willing to prepare for an airborne alert he did not want to implement it until it became an absolute necessity because of the expense. He would rather spend budget dollars on other projects at the time. Further he felt the time would pass when an airborne alert would be necessary because of the increased number of missiles that would be introduced into the United States retaliatory force. Also just the threat of an airborne alert without announcing the size of it "is in itself a pretty good-sized deterrent."⁵² The first Ballistic Missile Early Warning System was due to become operational in September 1960, and Mr. Sharp stated that this would alleviate to some degree the problem of having SAC destroyed on the ground by better early warning. This would decrease the necessity of an airborne alert.⁵³

As missiles began to assume a more important role in the Air Force inventory it became important to get them located in sites. In late 1959 or early 1960 the idea of putting the MINUTEMAN on mobile trains had been advanced. This appealed to Mr. Sharp. He felt that mobility would make the missiles much more difficult to find and hit as they would be constantly moving. A mobile MINUTEMAN, a mobile POLARIS, and the airborne alert would prove difficult targets and in case of surprise attack it would be possible to have a larger retaliatory force. However, he had this additional thought. If the United States made its deterrent force too difficult to find and hit the enemy might decide to put all of his missiles on our population centers. Mr. Sharp felt that the POLARIS was an expensive way to get mobility, but had the advantage of getting such strategic targets out of the country. Again the Russians might be willing to sustain the POLARIS, as they were almost impossible targets, to reach targets in the United States.⁵⁴ There were some MINUTEMAN trains planned and even tested but they were dropped in 1962 in favor of hard sites.

Probably one of the most disagreeable controversies that Mr. Sharp got involved in was that in February 1960 over one of the Air Force's training manuals. This was Air Reserve Center Training Manual, Student Text, NR 45-0050, Vol. 7. In this manual certain religious organizations were said to have been infiltrated by Communists. As a result the National Council of Churches protested. Congress held hearings, the manual was withdrawn, and Mr. Sharp himself had an investigation started. He further initiated safeguards against any recurrence of the episode. Mr. Sharp held to this position: "I feel that this sort of accusa-

tion was not necessary, from an Air Force standpoint, to warn its people that they must look in all organizations for Communist infiltration. I think that the Air Force should not enter into the controversy as to whether or not a particular organization or group is infiltrated by Communism." He later termed the episode as "perfectly ridiculous."⁵⁵

As Secretary of the Air Force Mr. Sharp was called upon to make more speeches and public appearances than he was as an Assistant Secretary. Covering one such trip will suffice as an example. On June 8, 1960 he made the graduation address at the United States Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs, Colorado. In his address Mr. Sharp summed up his basic idea on the force structure of the Air Force:

We are changing our force structure, our procurement, our priorities and our personnel skills to accommodate an ever-increasing number of missile units. We are establishing vast new missile bases and closing manned bases.

While we do not know the optimum ration between missiles and manned aircraft in our forces of the future, each system has its advantages and each can perform essential functions that others cannot. Thus, we are certain that we will have both type weapons in our inventory as far into the future as we can see.⁵⁶

He admonished the Class of 1960 never to "allow the narrow view of apparent service interest to blind you to your basic duty—to cooperate with the other services and all departments of Government, to the end that we will have in this nation an adequate total defense force to achieve our national goals."

In January 1961 with the coming of the Kennedy administration Mr. Sharp left the post of Secretary of the Air Force. He was replaced by Mr. Eugene Zukert who had been an Assistant Secretary of the Air Force from 1947 to 1952, and, incidentally, was also a Naval officer during World War II.⁵⁷

CONCLUSION

Mr. Sharp went to Washington to serve. For four and one-half years he worked exclusively for the United States government. During this time he sacrificed his business and his financial interests to perform a duty for his country. He gave of his time, energy, and experience. Though he did not always have success in his endeavors, he did contribute.

When speaking of the programs and progress of the Air Force, he almost always used the plural "we," not the singular "I." He did not try to answer questions to which he did not know the answers, but deferred them to more qualified persons. These qualified persons were generally military officers who were specialists in a particular field. In Congressional hearings Mr. Sharp never allowed one of his Air Force officers to be harassed, but would step in himself and defend a position or take the blame.

The words of other men do not always convey a true picture of how well a man has performed. But men who have worked with individuals or have seen them in action are able to form fairly accurate judgments of their ability and performance.

General Orval R. Cook, USAF (Retired), President of the Aircraft Industries Association, 1957-1961, said:

Mr. Sharp is a very conscientious man. He believes that he owes a duty of service to his country, and he has tried to render service to the best of his ability. He has a high sense of integrity—higher, in my opinion, than others I have known in the positions he occupied. I found him very cooperative; not easily ruffled; and much better informed on many subjects than he was generally given credit for. He was a good listener, and did not do much to let the person he was listening to know how much he (Sharp) knew about the subject being discussed. He is articulate, but his ability in this respect is about average. He gives a first impression of being serious-minded, and is, to a degree. I have found that he has an excellent sense of humor, however, and enjoys a humorous situation or circumstance as well as most of the extroverts.⁵⁸

Senator Stuart Symington stated that "Secretary Sharp was known to be a man of integrity and ability—and made a fine record in the high positions he held in the Executive Branch of the Government."⁵⁹

Representative Carl Vinson has made it a matter of policy not to give appraisals of past or present government officials. Mr. Vinson does say that "any comments I might make as to Mr. Sharp's performance of duty would, I assure you, be complimentary."⁶⁰ What starts out to be no comment is, in fact, very complimentary to Mr. Sharp.

Senator Richard B. Russell stated, "In his appearances before the Committee [Armed Services], Mr. Sharp impressed me as being well informed and as having the ability to articulate his views clearly. I think the performance of his duties reflects credit upon him personally and resulted in progress by the Air Force."⁶¹

FOOTNOTES

¹U. S. Congress, Senate Committee on Armed Services, *Hearings, Nomination of Dudley C. Sharp*, 84th Congr., 1st Sess., 1955, 1-2; Robert C. Cotner, *James Stephen Hogg* (Austin: 1959), picture before 295; 520ff. and personal interviews with Mrs. Walter B. Sharp.

²*Ibid.*

³Senate Committee on Armed Services, *Hearings, Nomination of Dudley Sharp*, 4.

⁴*New York Times*, July 12, 1955, 14.

⁵Senate Committee on Armed Services, *Hearings, Nomination of Dudley Sharp*, 4.

⁶*Houston Post*, July 21, 1955, Sec. 4, 8.

⁷*New York Times*, July 13, 1955, 37; Senate Committee on Armed Services, *Sharp*, 3.

⁸*Ibid.*

⁹*Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁰Peyton Cook's interview with Dudley Sharp in Houston, December 20, 1962.

¹¹U. S. Congress, House Committee on Appropriations, *Hearings, Department of the Air Force Appropriations for 1957*, 84th Cong., 2d Sess., 1956, 91.

¹²U. S. Congress, House Committee on Appropriations, *Hearings, Department of the Air Force Appropriations for 1959*, 85th Cong., 2d Sess., 1958, 430.

¹³U. S. Department of Defence, *Semiannual Report of Secretary of Defense, and Semiannual Reports of Secretary of Army, Secretary of Navy, Secretary of Air Force; Jan. 1-June 30, 1956, 1957, 302*; House Committee on Appropriations, *Hearings, Department of the Air Force Appropriations for 1957*, 1956, 68.

¹⁴U. S. Department of Defense, *Semiannual Report . . . Jan. 1-June 30, 1956*, 302; House Committee on the Armed Services, *Hearings, Aircraft Production Costs and Profits*, 1956, 2820.

¹⁵*Army, Navy, Air Force Journal*, November 26, 1955, 34.

¹⁶Department of Defense, *Semiannual Report . . . Jan. 1-June 30, 1956*, p. 302.

¹⁷U. S. Congress, House Committee on Armed Services, *Hearings, Utilization of Government-owned Plants and Facilities*, 85th Cong., 2d Sess., 1958, 1145-7.

¹⁸Cook's interview with Dudley Sharp, December 20, 1962.

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰Department of Defense, *Semiannual Report . . . Jan. 1-June 30, 1956*, 302; *Semiannual Report . . . Jan. 1-June 30, 1957*, 1958, 341; *Semiannual Report . . . Jan. 1-June 30, 1958*, 1959, 343-4.

²¹House Committee on Armed Services, *Hearings, Aircraft Production Costs and Profits*, 1956, 2922-3.

²²Department of Defense, *Semiannual Report . . . Jan. 1-June 30, 1956*, 303; *Semiannual Report . . . Jan. 1-June 30, 1958*, 343; House Committee on Armed Services, *Hearings, Aircraft Production Costs and Profits*, 1956, 2889.

²³*ANAF Journal*, September 27, 1958, 26; Interview with Dudley C. Sharp, December 20, 1962.

²⁴Department of Defense, *Semiannual Report . . . Jan. 1-June 30, 1956*, 303-4; *Semiannual Report . . . Jan. 1-June 30, 1957*, 343-4; *Semiannual Report . . . Jan. 1-June 30, 1958*, 333; *Annual Report of the Secretary of Defense . . . July 1, 1958 to June 30, 1959, 1960*, 290.

²⁵*Ibid.*, 287-8; 361.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 288; 343.

²⁷House Committee on Armed Services, *Hearings, Utilization of Government-owned Plants and Facilities*, 1958, 1146; Interview with Dudley C. Sharp, December 20, 1962.

²⁸*Ibid.*

²⁹House Committee on Appropriations, *Hearings, Department of the Air Force Appropriations for 1959, 1958*, 479-80; Department of Defense, *Semiannual Report . . . Jan. 1-June 30, 1956*, 306; *Semiannual Report . . . Jan. 1-June 30, 1957*, 343; *Semiannual Report . . . Jan. 1-June 30, 1958*, 332.

³⁰U. S. Congress, House Committee on Government Operations, *Hearings, Military Air Transportation*, 85th Cong., 2d Sess., 1958, 1.

³¹U. S. Congress, House Committee on Armed Services, *Hearings, Investigation of National Defense, Phase II*, 85 Cong., 2d Sess., 1958, 3.

³²House Committee on Government Operations, *Hearings, Military Air Transportation*, 1958, 500; House Committee on Armed Services, *Hearings, Investigation of National Defense, Phase II*, 1958, 4, 4, 6, 10.

³³*ANAF Journal*, September 27, 1958, 27.

³⁴House Committee on Appropriations, *Hearings, Department of the Air Force Appropriations for 1957, 1956*, 144; Interview with Dudley C. Sharp, December 20, 1962; House Committee on Appropriations, *Hearings, Department of the Air Force Appropriations for 1958, 1957*, 105.

³⁵*Houston Post*, January 28, 1959, 6.

³⁶*ANAF Journal*, November 28, 1959, 12; January 19, 1960, 11; *New York Times*, December 11, 1959, 17; December 12, 1959, 2.

³⁷U. S. Department of Defense, *Annual Report of the Secretary of Defense . . . July 1, 1959 to June 30, 1960*, 1961, 315.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 369; Interview with Dudley C. Sharp, December 20, 1962.

³⁹*Ibid.*

⁴⁰*Ibid.*

⁴¹Department of Defense, *Annual Report of the Secretary of Defense, July 1, 1959 to June 30, 1960*, 1961, 315.

⁴²U. S. Congress, Senate Committee on Appropriations, *Hearings, Department of Defense Appropriations for 1961*, 86 Cong., 2d Sess., 1960, Part I, H.R. 11998, 185-6; Department of Defense, *Annual Report of the Secretary of Defense, July 1, 1959 to June 30, 1960*, 1961, 314; 317; 319-331, 389-90; Interview with Dudley C. Sharp, December 20, 1962.

⁴³*Senate Committee on Appropriations, Hearings, Department of Defense Appropriations for 1961*, 1960, H.R. 11998, 184-5; 197.

⁴⁴Department of Defense, *Annual Report of the Secretary of Defense, July 1, 1959 to June 30, 1960*, 1961, 369.

⁴⁵*ANAF Journal*, February 13, 1960, 12; Interview with Dudley C. Sharp, December 20, 1962.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*

⁴⁷U. S. Congress, House Committee on Appropriations, *Hearings, Department of Defense Appropriations for 1961*, 86th Cong., 2d Sess., 1960, Part 2, 322; *ANAF Journal*, October 1, 1960, 9.

⁴⁸*New York Times*, January 27, 1960, 13.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 1; 13; 21.

⁵⁰Interview with Dudley C. Sharp, December 20, 1962.

⁵¹*Ibid.*; *ANAF Journal*, September 24, 1960, 19; House Committee on Appropriations, *Hearings, Department of Defense Appropriations for 1961*, 1960, Part 2, 219-20; 251.

⁵²*New York Times*, February 4, 1960, 1; *ANAF Journal*, January 30, 1960, 26; Senate Committee on Appropriations, *Hearings, Department of Defense, Appropriations for 1961*, 1960, Part I, H. R. 11998, 187; 200; Interview with Dudley C. Sharp, December 20, 1962.

⁵³House Committee on Appropriations, *Hearings, Department of Defense Appropriations for 1961*, 1960, Part 2, 273; *New York Times*, February 4, 1960, 13.

⁵⁴House Committee on Appropriations, *Hearings, Department of Defense Appropriations for 1961*, 1960, Part 2, 230-1; Interview with Dudley C. Sharp, December 20, 1962.

⁵⁵U. S. Congress, House Committee on Un-American Activities, *Hearings, Issues Presented by Air Reserve Center Training Manual*, 86th Cong., 2d Sess., 1960, 1294-5; 1299; U. S. Congress, House Committee on Armed Services, *Hearings, Air Force Manuals*, 86th Cong., 2d Sess., 1960, No. 60, 5828; *New York Times*, February 18, 1960, 1; *ANAF Journal*, March 19, 1960, 11.

⁵⁶*ANAF Journal*, June 11, 1960, 28.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, December 31, 1960, 10.

⁵⁸Personal letter from General Orval R. Cook, USAF (Retired) to Peyton E. Cook, October 16, 1962.

⁵⁹Senator Stuart Symington, Member, Senate Committee on Armed Services, Washington, D. C. to Peyton Cook, December 8, 1962.

⁶⁰Representative Carl Vinson, Chairman, House Committee on Armed Services, Washington, D. C. to Peyton Cook, December 18, 1962.

⁶¹Senator Richard B. Russell, Chairman, Senate Committee on Armed Services, Winder, Ga., to Peyton Cook, December 16, 1962.