

war, doing the damage to the enemy deep in his own territory. If the Axis had been adequately supplied with ammunition it would conceivably have done more of the same. The enemy supplies, except problems for him, which in turn, would help out air service.

¶ I am against extending this war . . . to any greater sphere of land mass of Asia, like Manchuria. . . The U.S. should confine our fighting to Korea, if possible, but with a victory, military victory.

## Moginot Line of the Air

In more than one U.S. newspaper last week, Columnists Joseph and Stewart Alsops offered their readers an intricate portrait of Dwight Eisenhower unable to sleep at night as he wrestled with a problem which might end in "the physical and final destruction of this republic." Ike's sleeplessness, according to the Alsops, was caused by worry as to whether his Administration should adopt the recommendations of Project Lincoln, a study of U.S. air defense carried out at Massachusetts Institute of Technology at the request of the armed services.

Though the Project Lincoln report was classified "secret," the Alsops devoted a series of three columns to an analysis of its conclusions. The MIT scientists, they said, had decided that within two years the U.S.S.R. would be able to deliver an atomic attack "large enough to cripple or even devastate this country. . ." At present the Alsops went on, U.S. defenses against such an attack were so inadequate that they "really amount to no air defense at all." To remedy this situation, the nation must follow the Project Lincoln blueprint. "An early warning net must be thrown around the almost inaccessible northern fringes of the hemisphere. . . All the parts [of the warning net] must automatically guide the defenders to the

attackers. . . Fighter air bases and guided missiles launching sites must be protected by balloons from the air frontier to the American industrial heartland." The estimated cost of such a program, said the Alsops, was \$7.6 billion to \$20 billion.

When other reporters began to check the Alsops story, however, the implication that Project Lincoln was the Government's prime concern collapsed like a punctured balloon. At a presidential press conference, Dwight Eisenhower openly remarked that he had never studied the report in detail. Other Administration spokesmen made it clear that Project Lincoln is only one of several air-defense studies, none of which is now under active consideration.

The fact was that, even if the U.S. had an extra \$20 billion to spend, most U.S. strategists would want to use the money to buy bombers rather than for a more elaborate air-warning and air-defense system. No matter how much money is spent, a complete defense of the U.S. against atomic attack cannot be constructed, and the best way to deal with the threat, according to most military men, is to be ready to hurt the enemy more than he can hurt the U.S. "A Maginot Line on the ground is bad enough," said one Air Force officer last week. "There isn't any line you can hold in the air."

## APPOINTMENTS

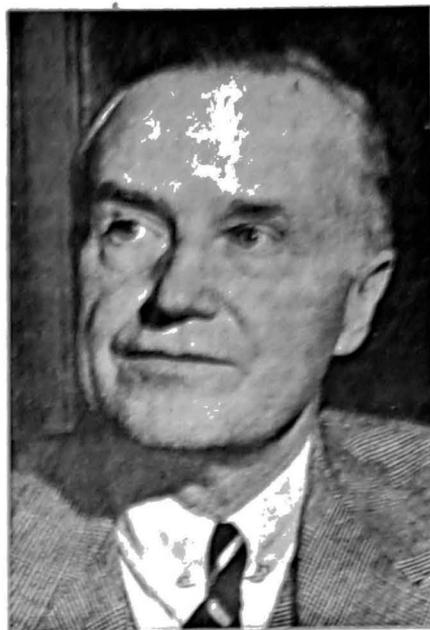
### Old & New Faces

Nominated or appointed last week to posts in the Eisenhower Administration:

¶ To be Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs: Walter S. (for Spencer) Robertson, 59, first-family Virginia investment banker and sometime China hand. A Democrat (who liked Ike in '52), Robertson went to work for the Government during World War II, served as chief of the Lend-Lease mission to Australia, then as embassy counselor and chargé d'affaires in China's wartime capital, Chungking. In 1946 he headed the truce enforcement commission set up by the Marshall mission. After Marshall's makeshift appeasement failed, Robertson quit the foreign service, went back to banking with the conviction that the Chinese Communists were "ruthless Marxists," and that the U.S. had "sold China down the river."

¶ To be Governor of Guam: Ford Q. (for Quint) Elvidge, 60, Seattle lawyer. When Interior Secretary Douglas McKay asked him whether he would accept the governorship, Elvidge protested that he was not ready to "retire to a South Sea island and sit under a palm tree"; he agreed to take the job only after McKay assured him that it was "a tough assignment." What makes it tough is that the Navy and the civilian administrators are waging a cold war to decide who is going to run the island.

¶ To be Commissioner of Public Roads: Francis V. (for Victor) du Pont, 58, financier, Republican National Committee-



WALTER ROBERTSON  
Fed up with appeasement.

man. A member of the chemical clan (his father was T. Coleman du Pont), Du Pont served for 27 years (23 as chairman) in Delaware's State Highway Department, is given major credit for the state's A-1 road system.

## POLITICAL NOTES

### For President?

The presidential bug is no respecter of political party, reason or season. Last week, some three years before the next national political convention, Washington's political medicine men thought the bug had bitten these fellow townsmen.

Tennessee's Estes Kefauver, 49, who ran stronger than any other Democrat in the presidential primaries last year, never has stopped running, never has seen fit to kill off the spreading legend that Kefauver could have beaten Eisenhower.

Texas' Lyndon Johnson, 44, who last year drained the last ounce of publicity out of his thoroughgoing, watchdog committee on military affairs, as Senate minority leader in the 83rd Congress now shows a rare talent for keeping Northern Fair Dealers and Southern Democrats working harmoniously on his team.

Missouri's Stuart Symington, 41, Harry Truman's energetic Secretary of the Air Force, who won the Democratic nomination to the Senate last summer over Truman and Pendergast opposition, then won the election while Stevenson lost to Ike now is speaking out plainly for a strong U.S. defense policy. Symington has even picked his 1956 opponent: Joe McCarthy.

California's William F. Knowland, 44, who used California's power in the 1953 G.O.P. Convention to strengthen his own position with GOPoliticos, has since deftly gained complete control of federal patronage in California. In the Senate he has made his mark as a champion of a



JOSEPH ALSOP  
Worried by insomnia.

officials. This is the notion that a reporter cannot possibly reach the same rather obvious conclusions that government officials have reached unless the reporter has had illicit access to secret information. This delusion is even more widespread in Lyndon Johnson's Washington than in Truman's, Eisenhower's, or Kennedy's.

Our Truman era investigation occurred a few months after the Soviets exploded their first atomic bomb in September, 1949. This first atomic blast blew Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson's economy-in-defense policy halfway out of the water (the Korean aggression, in June, 1950, blew it entirely out of the water). Johnson and a couple of his cohorts on Capitol Hill were passing the word that the Soviet test was a fake, that it was not a true nuclear explosion at all.

When Senator Owen Brewster in a public speech echoed this nonsense, it occurred to us that there might be a column in the answer to the question, "How do we know that the Soviet test is not a fake?" My brother and I tried this question on several government sources, but we drew a blank—the subject was "sensitive," they said, and they clammed up. Then I had a bright idea. I called Georgetown University, asked for the head of the physics department (whom I had never laid eyes on), and asked him our question. He gave the answers which would be obvious to anyone with a working knowledge of nuclear physics: split nuclei in air samples, seismographic confirmation, and so on.

We published a column on the subject, which must have seemed very dull and technical to our readers. Unfortunately, the same question which had occurred to us had also occurred to President Truman. A paper had been prepared for him, and, as we learned later, it precisely paralleled the paper we had written—since physicists have a special language of their own, some phrases were actually identical.

Truman instantly concluded that we had purloined his Top Secret document, and he ordered the FBI into action. The FBI, finding no evidence of a government leak (there was, of course, no evidence to be found), adopted at last the desperate and unusual expedient of sending a couple of agents around to ask us how we got the story. The agents had obviously been carefully chosen—they were polite and intelligent young men, and one of them was even capable of discussing my brother's French furniture rather knowledgeably. But we did not tell them about the physics professor, and they left convinced, no doubt, that we had some still-open pipeline into the "secret places of the most high."

The episode in the Eisenhower era was even sillier. For some months, immediately after Eisenhower's re-election, and before the launching of the first Soviet Sputnik in 1957, a dispute raged within the Eisenhower administration about the U.S. missile effort. There was ample intelligence, based largely on a football-field-sized radar installation in Turkey, that the Soviets were testing very powerful missiles, capable of putting a satellite in orbit. The late Trevor Gardner, an Assistant Secretary of the Air Force, and one of the rather meager number of first-rate public servants of the Eisenhower era, was the chief protagonist of the view, strongly resisted in George Humphrey's Treasury Department, that a really major and expensive U.S. effort had to be made to match the Soviet effort.

I shared Gardner's view, and one day I dropped by the Pentagon to try out on him an idea I had for a column. (Most columnists pretest their column ideas in this way.) I had drafted a piece in which I quoted two wholly imaginary newspaper headlines: "SOVIETS CLAIM SUCCESSFUL LAUNCHING OF EARTH SATELLITES" and "U.S. RADAR CONFIRMS EXISTENCE OF EARTH SATELLITES." The idea was to suggest how disastrous to U.S. prestige it might be if the Soviets were the

first to orbit the earth. Gardner liked the idea—more than I realized at the time.

My brother was abroad, and some days later, when the flow of columns from him ceased, I filed the column with the imaginary headlines. My brother arrived home the day after the column was published. A homecoming weekend had been planned for him at the country house of the late Frank Wisner, then a Deputy Director of the CIA. Richard Bissell, also of the CIA, was to be another guest. Wisner and Bissell were close personal friends, and we never discussed their business with them. But on orders from on high, the homecoming weekend was canceled—it subsequently became known as “the lost weekend.” The reason, we learned much later, was that the President had been so enraged by the column with the imaginary headlines that he had ordered “an investigation to end all investigations.”

Trevor Gardner, it transpired, had liked my imaginary headlines so much that he had incorporated them, virtually without change, in a National Security Council paper arguing the case for a greatly increased U.S. missile effort. The President read the column and the NSC paper on the same day.

“Goddammit,” he was later quoted to us. “I don’t like the Alsop brothers reporting what’s in my NSC papers *after* I see them, but I’m damned if they can get away with quoting from my NSC papers *before* I see them.” It never occurred to him that the Alsops weren’t plagiarizing from the NSC—that the NSC was plagiarizing from the Alsops.

As these ridiculous episodes suggest, tension between the press and the President is no new thing under the sun. Even in the administration of John F. Kennedy, who genuinely liked reporters, the tension rose steadily and inexorably. Kennedy’s cancellation of his subscription to the *New York Herald Tribune*, one of the few really silly things he ever did, was an expression of the profound irritation, the sense of

being treated with gross unfairness, which all Presidents, from George Washington on, have felt toward the press, and with considerable reason.

As everybody knows by now, the tension between Lyndon B. Johnson and the press breaks all previous records. This is partly because Lyndon Johnson’s conception of what is properly secret goes far beyond that of his predecessors.

All the postwar Presidents have used the “Secret” stamp to conceal the inconvenient—to conceal, for example, information that would tend to throw doubt on the wisdom of the defense or foreign policies of the administration in power. But, at least in theory, the national security provided the *rationale* for government secrecy. There is no serious pretense that the secrecy which President Johnson imposes—or tries to impose—on the government is necessarily related to the national security.

Any accurate forecast of anything the President intends to do—an appointment he intends to make, a trip he is planning to take—throws the President into a rage. He will go to almost any lengths simply to prove the forecast inaccurate. Many trips have been canceled, and a dozen or more major government appointments rescinded, for the sole purpose of proving the reporters who predicted them wrong.

A case in point was a story Philip Potter of the *Baltimore Sun* wrote for his paper in 1965 about the prospects for aid to India. Potter accurately forecast the amount of aid the President intended to ask Congress to provide. The amount was generous, the need desperate, the story involved no conceivable consideration of national security, and it put the President in a good light. Moreover, Philip Potter, a reporter of rocklike integrity, was one of Lyndon Johnson’s few real remaining friends in the press corps. Despite all this, the President was so angry that he quite seriously considered canceling the whole Indian aid program, or at the least

to his own particular personal and political style, whatever may be written into law or shown on the organization charts.

Moreover, the life and death of the NSC perfectly exemplify the curious blooming-and-withering process which goes on constantly within the Washington bureaucracy. A new agency or organization will become bureaucratically and journalistically fashionable, blooming luxuriantly, putting out shoots in the form of subagencies and subordinate committees and committees-within-committees. It will then begin to die of its own weight, withering away into near-nothingness. But because government organisms, like old soldiers, never die, it will continue to exist indefinitely, in theory and on paper, wholly shorn of its former glory, a bureaucratic ghost.

The whole process recalls the brief existence of Solomon Grundy:

Born on a Monday,  
Christened on Tuesday,  
Married on Wednesday,  
Took ill on Thursday,  
Worse on Friday,  
Died on Saturday,  
Buried on Sunday.  
This is the end  
Of Solomon Grundy.

The National Security Council was born in 1947, flourished until 1952, took ill with bureaucratic elephantiasis in 1952-60, got worse in 1960-62, died in 1963-68, but remains unburied.

The NSC was chiefly the brain child of the first Secretary of Defense, James Forrestal. Its mission, as defined by Congress in the National Security Act of 1947, was to "advise the President" on all matters "relating to national security."

Since every foreign policy decision above the level of how to decorate the consul's living room in Ougadougou relates to national security, this put the NSC right at the top of the bureaucratic heap. This was as Forrestal intended. He wanted foreign and defense policy to be made in an orderly, sensible way, for already in 1947 the tendency of each department and agency of the U.S. Government to have its own private foreign policy was becoming evident. Forrestal also wanted to make sure that the Defense Department and the military men had at least as decisive a say in major foreign policy decisions as the State Department and its professional Foreign Service Officers.

Thus in its original form the NSC was heavily weighted in favor of the Pentagon. The Secretary of State was a statutory member, so designated by Congress, but he was greatly outnumbered by denizens of the Defense Department—the Secretary of Defense and the Secretaries of each of the three services were statutory members of the NSC, while the Joint Chiefs of Staff were given access to the President as "advisers." Another Congressionally designated member of the NSC was the Chairman of the National Security Resources Board, a postwar collateral descendant of the War Resources Board.

In 1949 the balance was righted somewhat when Congress amended the National Security Act, and eliminated the three service Secretaries. That left the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense as coequal members of the NSC. And this in turn automatically made the NSC the supreme arbiter of policy, beneath the President himself. For as Bromley Smith, a self-effacing but highly perceptive long-time Secretary of the NSC, has said: "The relationship between State and Defense—that's the guts of the power equation in Washington. Everything else is subsidiary."

But, rather oddly, the Chairman of the NSRB also re-

mained a statutory member of the NSC, in theory coequal with the Secretaries of State and Defense, as his bureaucratic descendant does to this day. As will be seen, this is one reason why "the nation's highest policy-making body" is no longer the nation's highest policy-making body.

That is what it was in the Truman era. Except for a rather brief period of semiparalysis, when Secretary of State Dean Acheson and Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson were scarcely on speaking terms, the NSC functioned remarkably well as the essential instrument of decision-making. There was one area—Israel, with its sensitive domestic political implications—which Truman ruled out of bounds for the NSC. Otherwise, all the great key decisions of the Truman era, so remarkably productive in retrospect, were debated and shaped in the NSC. The Berlin blockade (the NSC's baptism of fire), the H-Bomb, the Korean War, and the NATO alliance were probably the four most important issues with which the NSC was "seized" in that period.

The NSC also produced in the Truman era the basic policy paper which for many years formed—and still forms in part—the philosophical basis of American foreign and defense policy. This was the famous "NSC-68"—the sixty-eighth NSC paper to be approved by President Truman. NSC-68 was the joint product of Acheson and Paul Nitze, currently Deputy Secretary of Defense, then chief of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff (immensely influential at the time, now still another bureaucratic vermiform appendix). NSC-68 called for a great and costly American effort to create Western "positions of strength" in order to right the world-power balance with the then monolithic Communist bloc. It was during this period also that the basic structure of the Western alliance, which remained intact until Charles de Gaulle wrecked it more than a decade later, was put together.

There were several reasons why the National Security Council was in those days so effective an instrument of decision-making. President Truman firmly kept the NSC in its place. Forrestal had originally planned to put the staff and the conference room in the Pentagon, but Truman would have none of this; room was found for the staff in the Executive Office Building next to the White House, and the meetings took place in the Cabinet Room. Truman also made it abundantly clear that the function of the NSC was strictly to "advise." The responsibility for final decision was his and his alone. "The buck stops here," read the plaque on his desk.

Even so, Truman believed strongly in the NSC and used it regularly. "I don't know how all the other Presidents got on without the NSC," he remarked toward the end of his Presidency.

In those days, moreover, a lot of very able men were involved in the making of foreign policy. After the Korean aggression proved Louis Johnson's policy of unilateral disarmament in the name of economy disastrously wrong, Johnson was fired, and Acheson worked well together with Robert Lovett, who replaced Johnson as Secretary of Defense. Aside from Acheson and Lovett, Truman benefited from the brilliant talents of such men as Forrestal, George Marshall, John McCloy, Averell Harriman, George Kennan, Charles Bohlen, Paul Nitze, and Richard Bissell. Never since—not even in the Kennedy era—have so many men of superlative ability advised the President on foreign and defense policy.

There was another reason as well why the NSC in those days worked well: the fact that its Executive Secretary was a now forgotten Missourian called Sidney Souers. Souers, a pleasant, very shrewd man with an anonymous sort of face and a wispy mustache, was very close to Truman, whom he

in many ways resembled, and whom he briefed every morning on the affairs of the world and the NSC. He was that *rara avis*, a perfect staff man, uninterested in building empires or making decisions of high policy, but capable of seeing that the necessary decisions were made, and made intelligently.

Souers grasped the essential fact about a mechanism like the NSC, the fact that the more it expands the less useful it becomes. In the early fifties he returned to work after a brief absence to find that Truman had virtually ceased to go to NSC meetings, because more and more people were attending the meetings. There were twenty-nine people in attendance on one recent occasion, the President complained—the NSC had become “nothing but a town meeting.”

Souers persuaded the President to issue an order limiting the attendance to “the top guys only”—the heads of agencies and departments invited to attend, and no one else. “Unless you keep just the top guys who really make policy,” Souers told Truman, “the thing will fall apart.” Truman issued the order, and the NSC ceased to be “nothing but a town meeting.”

During the eight Eisenhower years, the NSC bloomed luxuriantly, and it was also during those years that it began to die of bureaucratic elephantiasis. President Eisenhower, like Truman, was a believer in staff systems, but his kind of staff was the top-heavy kind produced by the U.S. Army, whose staff system is the most elaborate and the most overpopulated of any army's in the world.

The NSC in the Eisenhower years became a sort of American Politburo, to be whispered about with awe. This was partly because the President used the NSC machinery in arriving at virtually all major policy decisions, so that the NSC really was “the nation's highest policy-making body.” It was also during this period that the cult of secrecy-for-the-sake-of-secrecy reached its finest flower. The secrecy cult

was fostered particularly by Robert Cutler, Executive Secretary of the NSC. Cutler, an amiable Bostonian, adored Eisenhower and also adored secrecy the way small boys do. Secrecy combined with real power exerts a magnetic attraction on the bureaucracy, and attendance at NSC meetings became the essential status symbol for the rising bureaucrat.

At some meetings in the late Eisenhower period, as many as sixty officials from a dozen agencies would be stuffed like ambitious sardines into the Cabinet Room of the White House. Inevitably, the NSC spawned offshoots in the form of parallel interdepartmental committees, down into the lower reaches of the bureaucracy. The two most important of these offshoots were the Planning Board, which was supposed to draft decisions for NSC approval, and the Operations Coordinating Board, which was supposed to “implement” the decisions of the NSC, once they were taken.

Thus the NSC apparatus grew—and grew. The Souers rule—“the top guys only”—was long forgotten. When President Kennedy inherited the NSC machinery, Eisenhower version, he was appalled by what seemed to him a monstrously cumbersome way of arriving at decisions. The overpopulation of the NSC meetings was a continual irritant.

“What does that fellow come to NSC meetings for?” he would ask of some middle-level bureaucrat who attended all the meetings but never opened his mouth. Curiously, Kennedy never fully understood the magnetic attraction which surrounds the Presidency like the “divinity that doth hedge a king”; or the crucial importance to a rising bureaucrat of being able to remark casually to his envious lesser colleagues: “As the President said at the NSC meeting last Thursday . . .”

Kennedy dispensed with the Planning Board and the Operations Coordinating Board, and he installed in Souers' old job McGeorge Bundy, a brilliant and aggressive man who