

Eisenhower: Decision-making and Consensus in an Unfamiliar Context

A Monograph

by

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Abstract

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This monograph examines the process by which Dwight D. Eisenhower developed his administration's national security policy, and the lessons that it presents for planners. Eisenhower's experiences provide examples of modern design theory in action, particularly managing the interests of multiple stakeholders, building consensus, and confronting complex problems. The study begins by establishing Eisenhower's experience with planning, and provides the context for his development of national security strategy. The creation of a National Security Council, provided many of the foundational materials for Eisenhower's national security strategy. Project Solarium, a planning exercise directed by Eisenhower during the creation of his administration's national security policy, illustrates an approach to systematically design solutions to complex problems, and gain commitment from all participants.

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Acronyms

CARL	Combined Arms Research Library
CGSC	U.S. Army Command and General Staff College
SAMS	School of Advanced Military Studies
MMAS	Master of Military Art and Science
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NSC	National Security Council
SHAPE	Strategic Headquarters Allied Commander in Europe

Introduction

“It is about how to use experience, whether remote or recent, in the process of deciding what to do today about the prospect for tomorrow”

—Richard Neustadt and Ernest May, *Thinking in Time*

This monograph examines the process by which President Dwight D. Eisenhower developed his administration’s national security policy and assesses the lessons that it presents for planners today. Eisenhower’s actions provide examples of modern design theory in action, particularly confronting complex problems, managing the interests of multiple stakeholders, and building consensus. Eisenhower possessed several remarkable attributes, and many books exist that laud his military acumen and political skill. Time will be spent establishing Eisenhower’s experience with planning; however, this is not a substitute for those other works, or a summary biography on Eisenhower. The period occupied by Eisenhower’s Presidential Administration offers parallels with our time in that it exemplifies an era of dramatic change and uncertainty. One notable effort by Eisenhower’s predecessors, the creation of a National Security Council, provided the foundation for Eisenhower’s national security strategy development. Project Solarium, a planning exercise directed by Eisenhower during the creation of his administration’s national security policy, resulted in National Security Council memorandum 162/2.¹ It illustrates an approach to systematically design solutions to complex problems, and gain commitment from all participants. By assessing the effects of Eisenhower’s policy on the US, one may determine the accuracy and suitability of the resulting policy given the situation and its context.

Modern scholars argue that Eisenhower’s policy and decision-making mechanism produced comprehensive and successful strategy. Raymond Millen, a Security Sector Reform

¹ Hereafter referred to as NSC 162/2.

analyst and Army War College professor asserted, “[the] Eisenhower Presidency was unique in its approach to formulating national security policy and the only administration to publish a comprehensive basic national security policy.”² Andrew Goodpaster, the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe from 1969-1974, and participant in the Solarium Project, wrote, “[Eisenhower] developed the first coherent and sustainable cold war strategy suitable for basic conditions that would prevail during the following decades.”³ Michele Flournoy, former Undersecretary of Defense for Policy from 2009-2012, commended Eisenhower’s Solarium Project as “An example of a truly inclusive and integrated process of long-term strategic planning in the executive branch.”⁴ Eisenhower’s planning and decision-making process can educate a new generation of planners, and also illustrate an approach to planning that exemplifies ideas inherent in design theory.

Design, an approach suited for solution development to novel and unconventional problems, provides the practitioner with the tools to discern the actual problem. The recognition of multiple stakeholders, and the encouragement of rigorous debate are among the advantages of using design when confronting one-of-a-kind problems. Eisenhower’s process for the development of his national security policy in 1953 repeatedly illustrates the benefits of vigorous discourse using inclusive committees. The principles of design rest upon the insights of Bryan Lawson, Peter Senge, Horst Rittel and Melvin Webber. Lawson’s experience as an architect adds a unique perspective and a dose of reality to an understanding of stakeholders.

² Raymond Millen, "Eisenhower and US Grand Strategy," *Parameters* 44, no. 2 (Summer 2014): 56.

³ Robert R. Bowie and Richard H. Immerman, *Waging Peace: How Eisenhower Shaped an Enduring Cold War Strategy* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1998), 3.

⁴ Michele A. Flournoy and Shawn W. Brimley, "Strategic Planning for National Security: A New Project Solarium," *Joint Force Quarterly: JFQ*, no. 41 (Second, 2006): 82.

Bryan Lawson, the Dean of the Faculty of Architectural Studies at Sheffield University, affirms that part of the difficulty involved with designing, or planning, results from both the number and role of the participants. He describes four roles and their effects on the process of creation namely, designers, clients, users, and legislators. Designers occupy the position of thinker, creator, and problem solver. A client employs a designer to solve a problem. A user actually uses the plan, or the creation of the designer. Lastly, the legislator places constraints on the designer that affect both the process and product.⁵ While forming NSC 162/2 Eisenhower's administration faced internal and external constraints surrounding future financial costs, support from congress, and the fulfillment of campaign promises. As the number of participants in a design process increases, each with gaps in their understanding of an issue, the potential for incoherence and confusion also increases.

Peter Senge, author of *The Fifth Discipline* and lecturer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, recognizes the magnetism of confusion and proposes a method to overcome its attraction through dialog and discussion. One of his assumptions is that the collective mind can out think the individual mind, and that to harness collective cognitive power, individuals must interact. He calls this interaction discourse and divides it into two categories: dialog and discussion. Dialog encompasses the meandering, and brainstorming conversation that enables creative thinking. Senge describes dialog as "special conversations that begin to have a 'life of their own,' taking us in directions we could never have imagined or planned in advance."⁶ Discussion, on the other hand, entails rigorous examination of ideas from several perspectives, often appearing as a mild, sometimes not so mild, argument. Within the Eisenhower

⁵ Bryan Lawson, *How Designers Think: The Design Process Demystified* (Burlington, MA: Architectural Press, 2007), 83-89.

⁶ Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 2006), 166.

administration's National Security Council system the council vigorously discussed the policy recommendations from its supporting staff as a part of the policy formulation process. Both dialog and discussion ultimately contribute to the formulation of better ideas or plans, and are worth effort required to prevent the potential confusion by including others in the creative process.⁷

Discourse is particularly useful with complex, or ill-structured problems for which a design like process is suited. Design encompasses a theoretical approach to situations and problems with a continuous interplay between analysis, synthesis, and evaluation when the nature of a planning problem appears complex.⁸ The English word complex derives its meaning from a Latin root (plectere) representing ideas "not easily analyzed" and "to weave, braid, twine, and entwine."⁹ Discourse, as Senge describes it becomes an integral part of successful problem solving approaches when groups harness their collective intellect to develop solutions to complex problems.

Horst Rittel and Melvin Webber, both professors at the University of California, Berkeley, published an article in 1973 that describes the types of problems that confront

⁷ Ibid., 165-66.

⁸ David P. McHenry, "Battle Command: An Approach to Wickedness" (Command and General Staff College, School of Advanced Military Studies, 2009), 7; Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Pamphlet 525-5-500, *Commander's Appreciation and Campaign Design* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2008), 9; Bryan Lawson, *How Designers Think: The Design Process Demystified* (Burlington, MA: Architectural Press, 2007), 49. An ill-structured problem represents the most interactively complex, non-linear, and chaotic as designated in figure 1-1 of *Commander's Appreciation and Campaign Design*, in contrast with well-structured and medium-structured problems.

⁹ Complex, Dictionary.com, *Online Etymology Dictionary*, Douglas Harper, Historian, accessed February 05, 2015, <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/complex>.

planners.¹⁰ Rittel, a professor of the Science of Design, and Webber, a professor of City Planning, portrayed the kinds of “wicked problems” that confront planners as “inherently different from the problems that scientists and perhaps some classes of engineers deal with.”¹¹ Rittel and Webber’s definition of a wicked problem includes ten descriptive characteristics of these kinds of problems.¹² In light of these ideas, one begins to formulate questions about the utility of such theories. This description of a wicked problem fits the characteristics for the development of a containment strategy that the US needed in the decade following the World War II with the US in a rapidly changing role as the leader of the democratic world and the forerunner in nuclear weapons development. When confronted with wicked problems, a designer could choose an approach to seek the best solution using discourse while considering the narratives and constraints of diverse stakeholders. History provides examples of similar approaches to that described above. Eisenhower’s approach to the development of his national security policy provide such an example. Eisenhower encounters problems during his military career that required expertise outside the normal activities of an infantryman.

¹⁰ Horst W. J. Rittel and Melvin M. Webber, "Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning," *Policy Sciences* 4, no. 2 (1973).

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 160.

¹² Rittel and Webber’s characteristics of a wicked problem are: 1) There is no definitive formulation of a wicked problem; 2) Wicked problems have no stopping rule; 3) Solutions to wicked problems are not true-false, but good-or-bad; 4) There is no immediate and no ultimate test of a solution to a wicked problem; 5) Every solution to a wicked problem is a “one-shot operation”; because there is no opportunity to learn by trial-and-error, every attempt counts significantly; 6) Wicked problems do not have an enumerable (or exhaustively describable) set of potential solutions, nor is there a well-described set of permissible operations that may be incorporated into the plan; 7) Every wicked problem is essentially unique; 8) Every wicked problem can be considered a symptom of another problem; 9) The existence of a discrepancy representing a wicked problem can be explained in numerous ways; The choice of explanation determines the nature of the problem’s resolution; 10) The planner has no right to be wrong; *ibid.*, 161-66.

The sections that follow examine Eisenhower's past, the Cold War environment, the National Security Council system, and Project Solarium in greater depth. The study seeks guidance from history regarding the ideas of design theorists and its applicability for modern planning endeavors throughout each section. Section one analyzes Eisenhower's unique and unorthodox military career to establish his experience with international affairs and examples of his maturing approach to leadership and planning. The section focuses attention on his work at the Army's Industrial College, as the chief of staff for General Douglas MacArthur in the Philippines, as the Chief of War Plans Division for General George Marshall, and as the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Europe. Chronologically the last event brings the reader to the foundations of the Cold War, and the attempts of US policy makers to solidify the nation's new role as one of the two international superpowers.¹³

Section two shifts attention to the Cold War environment, and the conflict within the government over the best policy to contain the spread of communism, and the confusion caused by an unclear assessment of the problem. It follows President Harry S. Truman's attempt to establish a national security strategy using a policy creation mechanism that excluded the Defense Department. The solutions that the State Department advanced to solve the problems facing the Truman administration lacked coherence and swung from one characterization of the fundamental problem to another. Too late and lacking the experience to fully implement a systematic and inclusive system for policy creation, the task to create a consistent and suitable policy fell to Truman's successor, Dwight Eisenhower.

Section three transitions from Truman's creation of the National Security Council to Eisenhower's imposition of structure on the disorganized policy creating apparatus. His

¹³ David J. Rothkopf, *Running the World: The Inside Story of the National Security Council and the Architects of American Power* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2005), 33.

systematization of the National Security Council system, including the creation of the National Security Council Planning Board, established a mechanism to develop a coherent national security policy using an inclusive and discursive methodology.

Section four analyzes the development of Eisenhower's basic national security policy finally approved at the end of October 1953. The analysis covers the competing concepts present among the leadership of the administration and the process through which Eisenhower established consensus. The narrative highlights events leading up from the inauguration through Project Solarium to the signing of NSC 162/2. Some attention is given to the differences of opinion between Eisenhower and his Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, and between Eisenhower and the Joint Chiefs of Staff to highlight the disagreement that existed among the administration's leaders before completing NSC 162/2.

Finally, the conclusion summarizes the historical event's potential lessons for modern planners. Ultimately the conclusions drawn from an example of design theory in historical context will present the reader with methods for the application of design, and a greater appreciation for history.

Eisenhower

“The idea that war could be studied systematically by historical observation, by the selection of successful forms of organization, and by the imitation of stratagems emerged in antiquity.”

—Azar Gat, *A History of Military Thought*

Dwight D. Eisenhower encountered wicked problems and developed solutions throughout his military career as a planner and a leader. Eisenhower’s education, guided by Brigadier General Fox Connor, was irreplaceable, and enabled his understanding of planning challenges, and put him ahead of his peers. His preferred approach to planning emerged because of his success and failure in the Army. A style of systematic and inclusive leadership emerged during the Second World War where Eisenhower’s approach sought consensus among allied partners before making decisions. Eisenhower’s resulting leadership, decision-making, and organizational management methodologies distinguish him as an exceptionally useful subject of study. His first lessons about the complexity of international affairs occurred in the jungles of Panama.

During World War I General John J. Pershing led the US Armed Forces with the help of two talented officers, George Marshall and Fox Connor. After the war Pershing became the Chief of Staff of the Army and both Marshall and Connor rose to positions of prominence in the military. Both influenced the life of Eisenhower, but Connor’s influence formed the foundation of Eisenhower’s military success. Fox Connor tutored Eisenhower in the complex nature of international politics and war, and he ensured that Eisenhower received all the education necessary to be a future leader in the US military when conflict arose.¹⁴ Connor, one of the

¹⁴ Perret, *Eisenhower*, 83; Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier, General of the Army, President-Elect, 1890-1952*, 1, 73. Fox Connor met Eisenhower while visiting Camp Meade in 1920, when Connor visited LTC George Patton at Camp Meade, the home of the Army’s armor forces at the time. Connor, one of the officers that served in the American Expeditionary Forces

officers that served in the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) Headquarters under General John J. Pershing, received credit for providing the intellectual rigor, along with General George Marshall, to the headquarters staff in Europe during the First World War.¹⁵ For two and a half years in Panama, Connor led Eisenhower through historical texts and “discussed wars past, present and future.”¹⁶ The discourse between Connor and Eisenhower sharpened Ike’s understanding of events, as Senge postulates.

Connor taught Eisenhower to question his conclusions, and get to the root of problems. When Eisenhower read a historical text, Connor forced him to “study it thoroughly and discuss with him the various alternatives available to a commander.”¹⁷ During these discussions, Connor informed Eisenhower’s understanding of the future problems embedded in past solutions when the two discussed the peace treaty which ended the first global war.

The Treaty of Versailles appeared as the culminating act of World War I, but Connor saw a future war in the making, and he helped his star pupil see it as well. Virginia Connor, Fox’s wife, later wrote “Fox had always felt that the Versailles peace treaty had been the perfect breeder of a new war that would take place in about twenty years. Gradually Ike became convinced that Fox was right.”¹⁸ This shows that from a very early point in Eisenhower’s career he became

(AEF) Headquarters under General John J. Pershing, received credit for providing the intellectual rigor, along with George Marshall, to the headquarters staff in Europe during the First World War. Eisenhower impressed Connor with his ideas about the employment of tanks in battle, and this unexpected meeting began a life-long friendship between the two. Later, Connor requested that Eisenhower serve on his staff while he commanded a brigade in Panama.

¹⁵ Geoffrey Perret, *Eisenhower*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: Random House, 1999), 83; Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier, General of the Army, President-Elect, 1890-1952*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 73.

¹⁶ *Eisenhower: Soldier, General of the Army, President-Elect, 1890-1952*, 1, 77.

¹⁷ Carlo D’Este, *Eisenhower: A Soldier’s Life* (New York, NY: Henry Holt, 2002), 168.

¹⁸ Virginia Connor, *What Father Forbad* (Philadelphia, PA: Dorrance, 1951), 120.

inclined to thoroughly examine situations through discourse, and that he began to consider the future effects of problem solutions. When Connor felt that Eisenhower's education reached a transition point, Connor facilitated a temporary branch transfer for Eisenhower from the Infantry branch to the adjutant corps in order to attend the Command and General Staff School.¹⁹ At the time Command and General Staff School and the War College were the only graduate school-equivalent options for officers in the army, and an opportunity to attend these institutions went to only the most promising officers.

Under Connor's tutelage from 1921-1924, Ike surpassed his peers and embarked on a career of planning. Eisenhower graduated at the top of his class in Command and General Staff School, though his academic performance at the United States Military Academy would not have predicted such an achievement.²⁰ In 1927, Connor facilitated Eisenhower's assignment to the American Battlefield Monuments Commission directed by General Pershing, former Chief of Staff of the Army from 1921-1924.²¹ Pershing was so impressed with Eisenhower's work on the

¹⁹ Cole C. Kingseed, "Eisenhower's Prewar Anonymity: Myth or Reality?" *Parameters* (Autumn, 1991): 90; Wukovits, John and Wesley K. Clark, *Eisenhower*, (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillian, 2006), 39. Eisenhower ran afoul of the chief of infantry Major General Frank L. Sheets, Chief of Infantry, when he began publishing articles on the use of armored vehicles around 1919. Eisenhower needed to attend the Infantry Advanced School at Fort Benning before attending Command and General Staff School, and Sheets blocked his request after he returned from Panama.

²⁰ Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier and President*, Signature Series (Newtown, CT: American Political Biography Press, 2007), 41.

²¹ Perret, *Eisenhower*, 98; D'Este, *Eisenhower: A Soldier's Life*, 185. Pershing wanted to mark the battlefields where the US Soldiers participated in World War I, and to create a guidebook for US visitors to Europe so that they could easily visit the sites of past combat. Pershing personally approved Eisenhower's nomination to the commission. Eisenhower intensely studied the battles of World War I to produce this guidebook, and performed so well that after graduating from the War College Pershing sent him to Paris for a year to walk the terrain and personally visit the sites about which he wrote to produce a revised version of the guidebook.

commission that he had him review parts of his memoirs and offer suggestions.²² After completing work on the Commission, Eisenhower attended the War College, and graduated at the top of his class again. His performance at military schools owes much to his relationship with Connor.

His assignments after the War College provided a supplemental education in planning and organizational design. Dwight created industrial-mobilization plans, designed a national defense plan for the Philippines, and created several allied military staff organizations. The first of Eisenhower non-traditional military assignments plunged him into the industrial apparatus of the US, which he later called the “military-industrial complex.”²³

Eisenhower studied industry on a national scale at the fledgling Army Industrial College beginning in 1929, and successfully prepared the very first national Industrial Mobilization Plan.²⁴ At the time the Army Industrial College was subordinate to the War Department, and many War College graduates served in the War Department in one capacity or another following their schooling. Eisenhower found himself at the industrial college as part of his War Department assignment, not as a student. At the time, Brigadier General George Van Moseley, the officer in charge of the supply system for the Allied Expeditionary Forces during the First World War, recently finished establishing the college. Stephen Ambrose, a noted historian, asserted that Ike “up to 1930...knew little about American industry, its problems, capacities, or organization. Now

²² Perret, *Eisenhower*, 98; D'Este, *Eisenhower: A Soldier's Life*, 186-87.

²³ Ben Baack and Edward Ray, "The Political Economy of the Origins of the Military-Industrial Complex in the United States," *The Journal of Economic History* 45, no. 2 (1985): 396.

²⁴ Perret, *Eisenhower*, 106; Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier, General of the Army, President-Elect, 1890-1952*, 1, 91. Stephen Ambrose's two volume biography on Eisenhower is recognized as the most thorough and scholarly work on the life and career of Dwight Eisenhower.

he was in daily working contact with some of its great captains.”²⁵ From 1929 to 1931, Eisenhower gained a depth of knowledge about the military industrial complex that few military officers at any rank possessed at that time through study and discourse. Eisenhower and his co-workers spent months gathering information, conversing with industrialists, and visiting factories to develop a plan for the government to mobilize the nation’s industry when the world became engaged in another war. Historian Kerry E. Irish commented, “Eisenhower’s work in these years provided him with detailed information and deep experience regarding industrial production for war and first-hand knowledge of leading Army officers, important businessmen, and government officials.”²⁶ He developed expertise in the language of industry and in the key issues regarding defense mobilization.

Eisenhower spent his last several months at the industrial college preparing a response to the Congressional War Policies Commission chaired by the Secretary of War, Patrick J. Hurley. Hurley requested that MacArthur, then Chief of Staff of the Army, present the Industrial Mobilization Plan to the commission. MacArthur tasked Moseley with the requirement, and Moseley selected his most capable assistant, Eisenhower, to lead the effort.²⁷ The industrial college’s work culminated in 1930 with the publication of the *Industrial Mobilization Plan - 1930*.²⁸ Even though MacArthur briefed congress about the plan, Moseley and Eisenhower supplied the intellectual and creative effort.

²⁵ *Eisenhower: Soldier, General of the Army, President-Elect, 1890-1952*, 1, 92.

²⁶ Kerry E. Irish, "Apt Pupil: Dwight Eisenhower and the 1930 Industrial Mobilization Plan," *The Journal of Military History* 70, no. 1 (2006): 2.

²⁷ Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier, General of the Army, President-Elect, 1890-1952*, 1, 91.

²⁸ Irish, "Apt Pupil: Dwight Eisenhower and the 1930 Industrial Mobilization Plan," 34; R. Elberton Smith, *The Army and Economic Mobilization, United States Army in World War II: The War Department* (Washington DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1959), 74.

Working with MacArthur changed the course of Eisenhower's career, as much as his mentorship from Connor and Pershing. MacArthur felt so pleased with Eisenhower's work on the mobilization plan that he arranged for Eisenhower to become his personal military assistant while he served in Washington, and later as chief of staff of his headquarters in the Philippines.²⁹ Manuel Quezon, the proposed future president of the Philippine nation, had great respect for MacArthur. After MacArthur's service as Chief of Staff of the Army ended in 1934, Quezon suggested to President Franklin Roosevelt that MacArthur become the Philippine Military Advisor in preparation for the 1946 discharge of the Philippine Commonwealth from US control, and MacArthur chose Eisenhower to become his chief of staff.³⁰ While in Manila, Eisenhower designed the plans for the creation of a Philippine Army, and its mobilization.

From 1935 until 1939, Eisenhower's assignment to create and plan the employment of a Philippine army, proved difficult because of disagreement among the various participants. Here Lawson's discussion about the differing roles of participants in the design process enhances one's understanding of the difficulty of the situation. Quezon, the 'legislator' and MacArthur, the 'client' saw things differently, and these differences challenged Eisenhower, 'the designer' to implement a solution that met MacArthur's expectations and the financial constraints of Quezon. D'Este commented, "Eisenhower was already well versed in Philippine problems from his service under MacArthur in Washington. However, confronting the real-world problems of forming and training an army from scratch was another matter altogether."³¹

²⁹ Dwight D. Eisenhower, *At Ease: Stories I Tell to Friends* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967), 213, 19.

³⁰ Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier, General of the Army, President-Elect, 1890-1952*, 1, 101; Eisenhower, *At Ease: Stories I Tell to Friends*, 219.

³¹ D'Este, *Eisenhower: A Soldier's Life*, 239.

MacArthur disagreed with Quezon over the minimal cost for the development of his army, and Eisenhower observed the resulting stalemate. It quickly became apparent that their disagreement would prevent the creation of a coherent plan. Unlike his experience with the US industrialists, the development of the Philippine plan did not include Quezon until too late. Eisenhower had engaged in an exclusive planning process, and struggled to reconcile the competing views for a defense plan between Quezon and MacArthur. For much of his early time in the Philippines, Eisenhower received his planning guidance from MacArthur who interpreted Quezon's requests. Only later did Eisenhower communicate directly with Quezon. As a result Eisenhower and his colleagues designed several detailed plans with artillery, planes, torpedo boats, engineering equipment, and trucks. However, Quezon felt that the Philippines could not afford such an extensive army.³²

The Philippine defense and mobilization plan amounted to little in the end, far from what either Eisenhower or MacArthur anticipated. Ike expressed exasperation to MacArthur after surveying their product saying "we have no officer corps...we have no comprehensive supply system."³³ Eisenhower's efforts produced a few thousand trained Philippine reservists, but he felt that he failed to produce a sound army or even a suitable defense plan. MacArthur and Eisenhower ultimately established one hundred and twenty-eight training sites for Philippine reservists, but meeting MacArthur's earlier goal of thirty Philippine divisions by 1946 proved impossible without support from Quezon. This experience tempered Eisenhower's future planning with a greater understanding of the tension between legislator and client.³⁴ Following his experiences in the Philippines, Eisenhower gained more experience planning beginning at

³² Perret, *Eisenhower*, 127, 31.

³³ *Ibid.*, 126.

³⁴ Lawson, *How Designers Think: The Design Process Demystified*, 58-62.

the earliest stages of the US involvement in World War II as the designer of the structures for Allied commands.³⁵

General George C. Marshall, the next Chief of Staff of the Army, called Ike to Washington D.C. after an unexpected vacancy opened in the War Department's War Plans Division in 1941.³⁶ Marshall embodied a systematic organizer, and felt strongly about the unity of command. He influenced Eisenhower to adopt similar systematic organizational techniques. In the US War Plans Division, later called the Operations Division, Marshall assigned Eisenhower to draft the first memorandum that outlined the powers and limitations of a unified allied commander with authority over all coalition forces in a specified area.³⁷ Marshall prioritized the benefits of organizational efficiency gained by a unified command structure over the potential intellectual power of a committee command, but he structured his organizations so that they would not lose the benefits of discourse.³⁸ Eisenhower learned this through experience as he subsequently designed the three different allied command systems and organizations of World War II: the American, British, Dutch and Australian command; in the South West Pacific Area; the unified command for Operation Torch; and lastly the unified command for Operation Overlord. His position as commander of both Operation Torch and Overlord likely provided him with a differing perspective from which to mature his view about the value of a unified command.

³⁵ Perret, *Eisenhower*, 145.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change, 1953-1956: The White House Years* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1963), 114; Bowie and Immerman, *Waging Peace: How Eisenhower Shaped an Enduring Cold War Strategy*, ii. War Plans Division became the Operations Division in February of 1942 as part of Marshall's effort to centralize planning to manage the service through World War II.

³⁸ Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: The War Years: I*, ed. Alfred D. Chandler, et al. (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970), xx-xxi.

When Eisenhower drafted the first organizational policy for the American, British, Dutch and Australian command, he placed seven restrictions on its commander. The arranged structure was first published in a committee meeting between the Allied commanders in Washington, DC in January, 1942. His purpose for “rigid restrictions was to convince the members of the conference that no real risk would be involved to the interests of any of the Associated powers.”³⁹ In a meeting with the Combined Chiefs of Staff on May 28, 1942, only five months later, Eisenhower’s perspective already showed signs of change in his comment, “a single command was essential and that committee command could not conduct a major battle.”⁴⁰

In his proposal to the Combined Chiefs of Staff for the staff organization leading up to Operation Torch, Eisenhower removed such limitations for the Allied Commander-in-Chief.⁴¹ In late 1943, Eisenhower’s evolving view on supreme command authority materialized in a memorandum for Lord Louis Mountbatten, the senior British General initially under consideration for command of Operation Overlord by the Combined Chiefs of Staff. In the memorandum, Eisenhower states, “an Allied Commander-in Chief should be directed to set up his own organization and submit a list of commanders to the Combined Chiefs of Staff that he desires as his principal subordinates.”⁴² He also commented “all communications to the Combined Chiefs of Staff must pass through you and no one else must be allowed to send communications to that Body.”⁴³ Eisenhower’s view regarding unity of command solidified while serving as Supreme Allied Commander.

³⁹ Ibid., 26, 28-30.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 321.

⁴¹ Ibid., 444-46.

⁴² *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: The War Years: III*, ed. Alfred D. Chandler, et al. (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970), 1420.

⁴³ Ibid., 1421.

Eisenhower's leadership style maximized the benefits of organizational interdependency and diversity of perspective while minimizing the potential for conflict.⁴⁴ His decision-making style grew into one of his most distinguishing characteristics and facilitated his success as a coalition leader. Carlo D'Este, World War II historian and a specialist on Eisenhower described Ike's style of inclusive decision making that he employed during the Second World War:

. . . Eisenhower was a deeply resolute professional soldier. It was not his method to act in a high-handed or arbitrary manner . . . which in fact, was Eisenhower's strength as the commander of a multi-national force. His method of leadership was to seek the views of those concerned, to accept argument and criticism but to stand firm once he had made up his mind on a course of action.⁴⁵

Not only did Eisenhower strive for consensus among those he led, but he also encouraged and respected the value of a dissenting opinion.⁴⁶

Over more than one and a half years starting January 1942, his initial draft of the structure for the ABDA command, to September 1943, in his memorandum to Mountbatten, Eisenhower's understanding of inclusive and systematic decision making and the necessary structure of a coalition command structure matured into the same style that Ike used during the development of his national security strategy. At this point in Eisenhower's career, he understood that solutions to contemporary problems at international level could become the seeds of tomorrow's problems and that one needed the foresight to anticipate future outcomes due to his interaction with Connor. He also possessed an inclination to encourage dialog and discussion to create the best plans from working with Moseley and the industrialists. While serving under MacArthur in the Philippines, Eisenhower learned through his failure regarding the debilitating

⁴⁴ John P. Kotter, *Power and Influence* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1985), 28.

⁴⁵ Carlo D'Este, *Decision in Normandy*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: Dutton, 1983), 51.

⁴⁶ Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: The War Years: V*, ed. Alfred D. Chandler, et al. (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970), 40-41.

effects of a stalemate among stakeholders, which can become exacerbated through exclusion from the planning process. Subsequently, He learned the complexities of international operations and plans from the perspective of a chief of the War Plans Division, and the requisite leadership style and structure, as the Supreme Allied Commander of Operation Torch.

Eisenhower's education, leadership style, and understanding of inclusive and systematic decision making, consensus building and the development of successful planning solutions occurred as a result of his service in the military. Ike's career exposed him to some of the most astute and capable military and political leaders of the time, which shaped his understanding of politics and military operations, and advanced his career. These experiences prepared Eisenhower to resolve policy disputes among the competing US stakeholders within the context of the Cold War where the US occupied a new position at the top of the democratic world militarily and economically, and the intentions of the developing Soviet Union were difficult to discern.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Hastings Lionel Ismay, *NATO, the First Five Years, 1949-1954* (Paris, France 1954), 35. Carlo D. Este's *Decision in Normandy*, Lord Lionel Ismay's *North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, the biographies on Eisenhower written by Stephen Ambrose, and Geoffrey Perret provide general coverage of other events that display Eisenhower's development as a leader and planner. These cover Eisenhower's influential roles as the commander of Operation Overlord, his work as Chief of Staff of the Army, and commander of Strategic Headquarters Allied Powers in Europe (SHAPE).

Cold War Policy and International Environment

“War is probable—unless by positive and well-directed efforts we fend it off.”

—John Foster Dulles, *War or Peace*

The polarization of the world following World War II pushed the US into a global leadership position that demanded an efficiently run and organized system of government policy creation to produce a coherent government national security policy. World War II’s devastation of the powerful nations of England, France and Germany in Western Europe weakened their economies and limited their ability to project power, leaving the US as the world’s most powerful democratic nation to confront communist expansion.⁴⁸ Immediately after the war, Truman’s implemented some reforms to make the government more efficient, but he could not order Franklin Roosevelt’s chaotic system overnight. Eisenhower inherited a number of policies from the Truman Administration that seemed unsustainable and inconsistent, which he needed to resolve to successfully manage the rising Cold War.⁴⁹ Under the Truman Administration, much internal conflict resulted from Truman’s heavy reliance on the Department of State’s Policy Planning Staff to lead the government’s approach to military and foreign policy formulation because the Department of Defense’s initiatives always seemed to be tied to extravagant defense

⁴⁸ Gaddis, John L. *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1947* (New, York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1972), 6.

⁴⁹ Nitze, Paul H. *Nuclear Weapons and Korean War* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1950); Fraser Harbutt, "American Challenge, Soviet Response: The Beginning of the Cold War, February-May, 1946," *Political Science Quarterly* 96, no. 4 (Winter, 1981-1982): 636-38. Fraser Harbutt argued that the Soviet Union’s recognition of the US and not Britain as their major adversary following the Second World War, intentional pursuit of unilateral policies by the US and the Soviet Union and the consolidation of each sides influence and allies all contributed to the beginning of the Cold War. Use of conventional forces in the conflict between the US and the Soviet Union was notably absent. Some historians speculate that clashes between conventional forces would automatically escalate into nuclear war, which both sides deemed suicidal.

expenditures.⁵⁰ Internal disputes over military and economic policy between Truman and his policy advisors nullified the National Security Council's attempts to create a unified strategy.⁵¹ The novel international environment that emerged after World War II challenged Truman's policy solutions and provided an unsustainable strategy for national security.⁵²

Truman reorganized the Department of State, and then relied almost exclusively on its Policy Planning Staff to formulate the guiding architecture for national foreign and military policy. Truman's replaced James F. Byrnes as the US Secretary of State with George Marshall in January of 1947 to focus its efforts and guide international diplomacy. Wilson Miscamble, a Cold War historian, described the State Department during Byrnes' tenure as "a most unimpressive agency in formulating and developing policy."⁵³ Marshall corrected this situation by forming the Department of State Policy Planning Staff, and selected George Kennan to be its first director.⁵⁴ Kennan, a career Foreign Service Officer, served as a deputy to the US Ambassador in Moscow under Ambassador Charles E. Bohlen (1933-37), and again under Ambassador Averill Harriman and Ambassador Walter Bedell Smith (1944-46). These men considered Kennan to be the

⁵⁰ George F. Kennan, *Memoirs, 1925-1950* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1967), 286-88; Graham H. Stuart, *The Department of State: A History of Its Organization, Procedure, and Personnel* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1949), 427-32. George Kennan described James Byrnes ad hoc negotiation with Russia in his memoirs as one of the motives for his notably telegram.

⁵¹ Douglas Brinkley, *Dean Acheson: The Cold War Years, 1953-1971* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 16-17.

⁵² Bowie and Immerman, *Waging Peace: How Eisenhower Shaped an Enduring Cold War Strategy*, 11.

⁵³ Wilson D. Miscamble, *George F. Kennan and the Making of American Foreign Policy, 1947-1950* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 4.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 9-11. Forrestal regularly met with Kennan after reading his 1946 telegram to discuss international relations with the Soviets, and Walter Bedell Smith supervised Kennan in the US Embassy in Moscow before Kennan returned to the US. Kennan's performance and grasp on the communist ideology impressed both men.

penultimate Soviet expert.⁵⁵ Kennan's expertise and Marshall's impeccable character unduly influenced Truman's choice of national strategy.

The ideas of George Kennan provided the foundation for Truman's initial strategy of containment. At the time Kennan firmly believed, based on his experience working in the US Embassy in Moscow, that the Soviets would not commit to a war that would endanger the internal security of Russia. He concluded that the threat of nuclear weapons would therefore be sufficient to prevent open hostilities between the US and the Soviet Union.⁵⁶ His proposed a strategy of containment allowed an environment conducive to peaceful negotiations to avoid a military standoff between the two global powers.⁵⁷

Kennan's intellectual efforts led to the creation of National Security Council memorandum 20/4 (NSC 20/4), which Truman approved in November 1948. NSC 20/4 directed government efforts to contain Soviet expansion using whatever means necessary short of triggering a war, but without crippling the US economy.⁵⁸ To those in the Department of Defense, fearful of a large conventional communist military, NSC 20/4 relied solely on the deterrent power of the US nuclear monopoly without adequately increasing conventional military forces.⁵⁹

Truman's deeply negative feelings about the use of nuclear weapons, and his determination to maintain tight controls on defense spending created a strategic paradox. All subsequent defense planning by the Department of Defense, assumed that the Soviet Union would

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 15-24.

⁵⁷ Gregg Herken, "The Great Foreign Policy Debate," *American Heritage* 37, no. 3 (April/May 1986): 11.

⁵⁸ Foreign Relations of the United States, "National Security Affairs, Volume I," (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1950), 609-69.

⁵⁹ Townsend Hoopes and Douglas Brinkley, *Driven Patriot: The Life and Times of James Forrestal* (New York, NY: Knopf, 1992), 405.

begin a military confrontation with the western democratic nations by an invasion of Western Europe.⁶⁰ The Defense Department's exclusion from the formulation of the containment strategy caused confusion and anxiety among government officials. Even after the Soviets blocked all traffic into Berlin in 1948, Truman only requested an 8.5% increase in defense spending from 1948 to 1949 for the entire the Defense Department.⁶¹ Forrestal, the Secretary of Defense in 1948, thought that this action by the Soviets proved the necessity for greater defense spending, and the confirmation of his predictions about Russian intentions, but Truman's decisions dismayed him.

Though reliance on the deterrent and retaliatory power of nuclear weapons formed the cornerstone of containment, Truman showed tremendous aversion to using nuclear weapons. When Truman discussed military options with the Joint Chiefs of Staff for a Soviet invasion of Western Europe, their responses shocked him. Truman wanted a range of options other than nuclear war from which he could select to retard a Soviet advance, but none existed. He demanded the development of other options. However, the options later proposed by the State Department and the Department of Defense required increasing the defense department budget drastically to support a larger conventional military forces. This seemed equally outrageous to the President.⁶² Truman's hesitance to employ nuclear weapons and his resistance to increase defense spending made the strategy of containment perplexing. This contradictory policy forced the

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Townsend Hoopes and Douglas Brinkley, *Driven Patriot: The Life and Times of James Forrestal* (New York, NY: Knopf, 1992), 365, 415. Truman requested funding from congress totaling \$9.8 billion in 1948 and \$13 billion in 1949 from a total budget of \$37 billion.

⁶² Bowie and Immerman, *Waging Peace: How Eisenhower Shaped an Enduring Cold War Strategy*, 13.

Department of Defense and the Department of State to reevaluate the containment strategy. The Policy Planning Staff again led the effort, but this time under different leadership.

Marshall and Kennan left the State Department at nearly the same time causing the State Department to lose policy planning continuity and Soviet cultural expertise, substantively altering government perceptions of the Soviet Union. Even though Secretaries of State, Marshall and Acheson, and Policy Planning Staff Directors, Kennan and Nitze, held one another in high esteem, their perceptions of the Soviet Union and their subsequent recommendations to mitigate its global influence differed greatly. Kennan's appraisal of the Soviet leaders, and their intentions as the director of the Policy Planning Staff combined with his notoriety from the 1946 'long telegram' persuaded the majority of government politicians of the danger of the Soviet Union. However, his view was much more sophisticated than Nitze's understanding, and it called for the creation of a political environment which invited dialog with them. On the other hand, Nitze, a career businessman turned statesman, gravitated toward a more realist view of the Soviets, which aligned more closely with the Defense Department's position. The alternate views on the Soviets incited conflict throughout the government. Dean Acheson replaced Marshall as Secretary of State in January 1949, and Paul H. Nitze replaced Kennan as the Policy Planning Staff's director in late 1949.⁶³

Nitze, a student of the realist school of international relations, believed that Soviet leaders would go to war when the benefits exceeded the costs, thereby aligning more with Forrestal's, opinion regarding the inevitability of war.⁶⁴ Conflict over Soviet intentions proved to be a

⁶³ Miscamble, *George F. Kennan and the Making of American Foreign Policy, 1947–1950*, 292.

⁶⁴ Paul H. Nitze, *On the Road to a More Stable Peace: February 20, 1985* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1985). Similar to James Forrestal, Paul Nitze worked for the investment firm Dillon Read and Company where he gained employment after graduating from

continual source of contention throughout the remainder of Truman's presidency. Nitze's Policy Planning Staff drafted NSC 68, which called for steady increases in the strength of all military forces through 1952 at a cost of about \$40 to \$50 billion a year, a 22.5% increase from the defense budget in 1951 to 1952.⁶⁵ Truman initially dismissed the recommendations of NSC 68, but could not resist Department of Defense pressures for its adoption after the North Korean invasion in 1950. By December 1950, Truman had endorsed NSC 68, declared a national emergency, and requested supplemental appropriations for increases in defense spending from Congress.⁶⁶ Adopting NSC 68 in September of 1950 forced the the government to expand its nuclear arsenal, match the Soviet conventional military, develop the militaries of the remaining countries in the free world (predominantly in Europe), and conduct actions to weaken the grip of Soviet communism.⁶⁷ More than a year later in 1951, Bohlen, the Department of State's representative on the National Security Council and a a former US Ambassador to Russia, saw a draft of the reevaluation of national security objectives in NSC 114, one of the series of

Harvard University. He served in various government positions beginning in 1941 including: Financial Director of the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, Director of Foreign Procurement and Development for the Foreign Economic Administration, Vice Chairman of the US Strategic Bombing Survey, and Deputy to the Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs before becoming Deputy Director, and later Director of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff in 1949.

⁶⁵ Foreign Relations of the United States, "FRUS, National Security Affairs 1950," 525. In 1951 the government spent \$29.2 billion in defense spending and in 1952 spending shot up to \$51.7 billion.

⁶⁶ Bowie and Immerman, *Waging Peace: How Eisenhower Shaped an Enduring Cold War Strategy*, 23.

⁶⁷ Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), 255-319; Bowie and Immerman, *Waging Peace: How Eisenhower Shaped an Enduring Cold War Strategy*, 16; David Alan Rosenberg, "The Origins of Overkill: Nuclear Weapons and American Strategy, 1945-19060," *International Security* 7, no. 4 (Spring, 1983): 12-25.

reassessments of the national security objectives outlined in NSC 68, and he wrote a letter to Nitze expressing concern about the characterization of the Soviet Union saying

I find my habitual dilemma in regard to the series...the part dealing with analysis of the Soviet Union, its political policies and intentions, which I see perpetuated in NSC 114. I feel very strongly that unless we arrive at a correct estimate of the phenomena of the Soviet Union, how it operates, etc., we will never be able to act most effectively.⁶⁸

The characterization of Soviet intentions in NSC 68, and all other strategy documents under Nitze, diverged from NSC 20/4's estimation of eventual US victory through internal Soviet decay. It also drastically increased the risk of direct military conflict.

The Truman Administration abandoned its hopes of balancing the budget in its efforts to rebuild the Army and restrain communist advancement. The advent of the Korean War highlighted the vulnerabilities of a national security policy based solely on nuclear deterrence and a token conventional military force. The North Korean exploitation of this weakness convinced President Truman and his administration that the United States needed to increase atomic military capabilities to deter war and, "to provide reasonable assurance in the event of war, it could survive the initial blow and go on to the eventual attainment of its objectives."⁶⁹ The cost of the 'greatly increased' capabilities pushed the Department of Defense budget over \$40 billion annually.⁷⁰

In 1951, Eisenhower was commander of Strategic Headquarters Allied Powers in Europe (SHAPE). He thought that the scale of rearmament expected of the US and allied forces requested in NSC 68 would cause tremendous damage to the economies of the participating nations. At the beginning of 1951, he estimated that a plan for the defense of Europe would demand fifty to sixty

⁶⁸ Foreign Relations of the United States, "National Security Affairs; Foreign Economic Policy, Volume I," (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1951), 213.

⁶⁹ Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change, 1953-1956: The White House Years*, 97.

⁷⁰ Foreign Relations of the United States, "FRUS, National Security Affairs 1950," 213.

divisions.⁷¹ By mid year, declining European industrial output and increasing deficits triggered a study to determine economically sustainable levels of defense spending in which Averell Harriman, a former Ambassador to Russia, led the team.⁷² When Harriman's team finalized the report, US military leaders, including Forrestal, deemed its recommendation to match the growth of defense forces with the growth of the various European national economies as risky and the proposed force estimates inadequate. Eisenhower held an opposing view. In his journal, he commented "I'm astounded and appalled at the size and scope of plans the staff sees as necessary to maintain our security position now and in the future. The cost is terrific. We'll be merely tilting at windmills unless we can develop something more in line with financial possibilities."⁷³ Ike felt that containing the expansion of communism should be done while also maintaining a democratic way of life.

For the remainder of his time in the Oval Office, Truman directed the National Security Council to reassess the national security objectives two more times, resulting in NSC reports 135 and 141. NSC 135/3 dictated additional resources for US continental defense and larger allocations of resources for the non-communist countries in the Middle East and Far East. NSC 141, signed only a few days before Eisenhower's inauguration, concluded that areas outside of the US would not achieve adequate levels of defense against the Soviet threat through 1955, even with available US support.⁷⁴ Even on their last day in the White House, the staff supporting

⁷¹ "National Security Affairs; Foreign Economic Policy, Volume I," 127-57; Bowie and Immerman, *Waging Peace: How Eisenhower Shaped an Enduring Cold War Strategy*, 25.

⁷² Bowie and Immerman, *Waging Peace: How Eisenhower Shaped an Enduring Cold War Strategy*, 26.

⁷³ Smith, Jean Edward, *Eisenhower: In War and Peace*, 461.

⁷⁴ Bowie and Immerman, *Waging Peace: How Eisenhower Shaped an Enduring Cold War Strategy*, 136; Foreign Relations of the United States, "National Security Affairs 1952-1954, Volume II," (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1953), 209-22.

Truman believed that the country needed to dedicate more resources for its defense.⁷⁵ The contention regarding the characterization of the Soviet Union inherent in Soviet-US policy, and requests for continuing increases in defense spending caused heated debates throughout the Presidential campaigns of 1952.

By late 1952, the power and control of the Democratic Party declined, due to scandals and issues with military leaders. Part of the Republican Party desired to pursue a national strategy of isolationism and only maintain a military retaliatory capacity.⁷⁶ Eisenhower commented that he “came to realize that these representatives of the people were sharply divided in their attitude toward the Republic’s role in world affairs.”⁷⁷ This situation led Eisenhower to abandon his political neutrality and run for President as a Republican in 1952. He chose to do so in part because of the disorganized and exclusive form of management in the previous Democratic administrations and because he did not believe that isolationist attitudes would bring the US out of the nuclear age in position of advantage.⁷⁸ America’s selection of Eisenhower as Truman’s successor placed the responsibility to finish organizing a policy making apparatus and building consensus among the government on Eisenhower’s shoulders.

The sudden global dominance of the US and the Soviet Union after World War II forced the US into a leading role on the international stage. Truman, Marshall, Kennan, Nitze and others attempted to establish clear national security policy, but failed to produce a supported and unified approach. Truman’s legacy to Eisenhower encompassed a number of policies about national

⁷⁵ "FRUS, National Security Affairs 1952-1954," 126-27.

⁷⁶ Bowie and Immerman, *Waging Peace: How Eisenhower Shaped an Enduring Cold War Strategy*, 41.

⁷⁷ Richard Halworth Rovere, *The Eisenhower Years: Affairs of State* (New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1956), 3.

⁷⁸ Bowie and Immerman, *Waging Peace: How Eisenhower Shaped an Enduring Cold War Strategy*, 3.

security that Eisenhower needed to clarify. The unresolved differences between the military, the State Department, and the Office of the President under Truman created an unsustainable national security policy.⁷⁹ Truman's efforts to systematize national security decision making offered a point of departure for Eisenhower's National Security Council system.

⁷⁹ Brinkley, *Dean Acheson: The Cold War Years, 1953-1971*, 16-17.

Eisenhower's National Security Council

“The Council’s statutory duties include a duty to assess and appraise the objectives, commitments, and risks of the United States in relation to its actual and potential power.”

—Robert Cutler, *No Time for Rest*

President Eisenhower established an inclusive and systematic decision-making process to establish consensus among his administration regarding the unfamiliar and novel challenges that characterized the early Cold War. His system built upon the National Security Council structure formed under Truman. Unlike Truman, Eisenhower regularly used the National Security Council as his primary policy creating instrument to engender broad collective support for his policies throughout the government. Though Truman initiated defense reform, Eisenhower finished the restructuring and claimed the resulting dividend during his administration’s policy formation activities by decreasing the percentage of defense expenditures compared to the US gross national product (GDP) from its high of 14.6% of GDP in 1953, when he took office, to 10.4% of GDP only three years later in 1956 with an actual \$9.8 billion decrease in defense spending.⁸⁰

President Truman began the reorganization of the national security system, which coordinated the efforts of national level departments through a National Security Council with the National Security Act of 1947.⁸¹ Truman’s motivation to reform the defense apparatus of the United States stemmed, in great part, from his lack of involvement in foreign affairs as Vice President of the United States under Franklin D. Roosevelt. Truman, as Roosevelt’s Vice President, believed that the Roosevelt’s administrative disorder and secretive negotiations

⁸⁰ Chantrill, Christopher, “US Government Spending,” accessed April 19, 2015, http://www.usgovernmentpending.com/year_spending_1950-1956USbn_16bs2n#usgs302.

⁸¹ Alfred D. Sander, "Truman and the National Security Council: 1945-1947," *The Journal of American History* 59, no. 2 (September, 1972): 387.

prevented the creation of an efficient and unified strategy for foreign policy and national defense.⁸² Roosevelt's unexpected death provided Truman with the opportunity to carry out the much-needed reform.⁸³ Truman recalled, "One of the strongest convictions, which I brought to the office of President, was that the antiquated defense setup of the United States had to be reorganized quickly as a step toward insuring our future safety and preserving peace."⁸⁴ Truman turned to the Department of War and the Department of the Navy for recommendations about national defense reorganization. Ultimately, he chose the Department of the Navy's plan.

The National Security Act of 1947 exhibited the ideas of the James Forrestal, Secretary of the Navy, and Ferdinand Eberstadt, former Chairman of the Army and Navy Munitions Board and an investment banker.⁸⁵ Eberstadt supplied Forrestal with a plan that incorporated an advisory body into the US government system that used systematic procedures and an inclusive government council called the National Security Council to coordinate government efforts. Eberstadt described the National Security Council as a

permanent vehicle for maintaining the active, close and continuous contact between the departments and agencies of our government responsible, respectively, for our foreign and military policies and their implementation ... charged with the duty (1) of formulating and coordinating over-all policies in the political and military fields, (2) of assessing and appraising our foreign objectives, commitments and risks, and (3) of

⁸² David J. Rothkopf, *Running the World: The Inside Story of the National Security Council and the Architects of American Power* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2005), 37.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 37, 53.

⁸⁴ Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs by Harry S. Truman*, vol. 2, *Years of Trial and Hope* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1956), 46.

⁸⁵ Hoopes and Brinkley, *Driven Patriot: The Life and Times of James Forrestal*, 23-24, 57-62, 66. Eberstadt met Forrestal while working at the *Daily Princetonian* newspaper offices at Princeton University. A graduate of Princeton University, and Columbia Law School, Eberstadt gained his military experience while serving in a cavalry unit from New York in his early adulthood. He also worked with Forrestal at the Dean and Read investment firm, and later provided continued legal support to the firm for a number of years. Eberstadt worked in the private sector until 1941 when Forrestal asked him for help to solve a problem with the Munitions Board, and later became its chair.

keeping these in balance with military power, in being and potential. It would be a policy-forming and advisory, not an executive body.⁸⁶

Despite the work of Eberstadt, Forrestal, and Truman, the National Security Council met infrequently after its formation, and Truman never took full advantage of the National Security Council as envisioned by Eberstadt. As a result, the structure for an inclusive and systematic decision-making process existed but needed organized direction to realize its full potential.⁸⁷

Eisenhower believed in the importance of organization and systemization. He thought that a general lack of organization slowed and inhibited good decision-making. Ike often repeated a mantra about organization that he recorded in his book *Mandate for Change*

Organization cannot make a genius out of an incompetent...On the other hand, disorganization can scarcely fail to result in inefficiency...Therefore organization helps the responsible individual make the necessary decision, and helps assure that it is satisfactorily carried out.⁸⁸

As president, Eisenhower organized the systems in the White House to efficiently “gather and organize facts” and “arrange the findings of experts in a logical fashion.”⁸⁹ Eisenhower’s method of organizing the National Security Council required the appointment of a full time National Security Advisor, Robert Cutler, something Truman never had.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Ferdinand Eberstadt, "Postwar Organization for National Security," in *Fateful Decisions: Inside the National Security Council*, ed. Karl F. Inderfurth and Loch K. Johnson (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2004), 20.

⁸⁷ Rothkopf, *Running the World: The Inside Story of the National Security Council and the Architects of American Power*, 59.

⁸⁸ Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change, 1953-1956: The White House Years*, 114.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ Robert Cutler, *No Time for Rest* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1966). Robert Cutler, a lawyer educated at Harvard, worked for Secretary of War Henry Stimson, and General Marshall during World War II before working for Eisenhower as the President of the United States. On March 22, 1953 Robert Cutler was appointed as the first Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs.

Dwight Eisenhower used his experience and Robert Cutler's careful study of National Security Council operations to organize the National Security Council process to function as one of his primary advisory instruments during his Presidency.⁹¹ Eisenhower knew that he needed to regularly participate in National Security Council meetings, unlike Truman whose rare attendance diminished the council's utility.⁹² Eisenhower's organization of his National Security Council enabled the National Security Council mechanism to systematically plan, deliberate, and implement policy decisions. Cutler recounted, "The Council's statutory function is to integrate the manifold aspects of national security, to the end that security policies recommended to the President shall be both representative and fused rather than compartmentalized and several."⁹³ Cutler created the organization and meeting structure for Eisenhower's National Security Council in accordance with specific guidance that he received from the President.⁹⁴

Using Lawson's terms again, Eisenhower served as the client and Cutler the designer of the memorandum that described the procedures and functions of the administration's National Security Council in March of 1953.⁹⁵ Cutler initially captured Eisenhower's guidance regarding the function and operation of his National Security Council in seven general guidelines, and later

⁹¹ Foreign Relations of the United States, "FRUS, National Security Affairs 1952-1954," 245-57.

⁹² Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 296.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 293.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 295.

⁹⁵ William B. Pickett, *George F. Kennan and the Origins of Eisenhower's New Look: An Oral History of Project Solarium*, Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 11; Fred I. Greenstein and Richard H. Immerman, "Effective National Security Advising: Recovering the Eisenhower Legacy," *Political Science Quarterly* 115, no. 3 (Fall, 2000): 342.

formalized the National Security Council procedures after completing an extensive report.⁹⁶ He divided his report into nine sections, which comprehensively addressed the purpose and process of the council from the statutory functions to a summary of principal recommendations for its operation. Among those recommendations Cutler advised Eisenhower to “appoint on his White House staff a ‘Special Assistant for National Security Affairs’, who would insure that the President’s views as to policy-planning are carried out, would act as executive officer at Council Meetings, and would preside over the Planning Board.”⁹⁷ Eisenhower personally assigned Cutler to that role. Cutler’s direction of the Planning Board, and Eisenhower’s continual engagement ensured that the council provided advice about the issues that the President considered important.

Eisenhower used the National Security Council as an advisory body in accordance with his National Security Council system. Eisenhower approved the agenda for weekly National Security Council meetings, and Cutler directed the efforts of the National Security Council Planning Board in the preparation of reports regarding the agenda items for the upcoming meetings. The reports provided a summary of important issues, and highlighted the existing differences of opinion surrounding those issues. The Planning Board sent their reports to the

⁹⁶ A summary of Forrestal’s seven guidelines are: 1) The integration of the recommendations of qualified advisors is a priceless ingredient in policy formulation; 2) To prepare sound security policy recommendations, the National Security Council Planning Board must be made up of highly qualified representatives from the departments and agencies with the rank of Assistant Secretary, or its equivalent; 3) Continuous planning accustoms the planners to working together and thinking about hard problems, and enables them to arrive more surely at a reasonable plan or policy; 4) The Council should be a corporate body made up of officers advising the President in their own right and not simply as heads of the respective departments; 5) A uniform and customary procedure should set the pattern for Council meetings; 6) Eisenhower wished for wider representation of Government interests as the Council and Planning Board tables than was statutorily provided; 7) The President originally considered using a few nongovernmental consultants to participate regularly in Council meetings. For the fully detailed guidelines see Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 296-98.

⁹⁷ Foreign Relations of the United States, "FRUS, National Security Affairs 1952-1954," 254.

members of National Security Council in advance to ensure that the Council read them carefully. Eisenhower told his National Security Council members, “You Council members ... simply do not have enough time to do what needs to be done in thinking out the best decisions regarding the national security. Someone must therefore do much of this thinking for you.”⁹⁸ The Planning Board thought for the Council, they conducted the necessary analysis, while the Council discussed their findings. By reading the reports of the Planning Board, the National Security Council members gained a shared understanding, and could then discuss the advantages and disadvantages of different policy approaches for the most advantageous policy to advance US interests.

The meetings of the National Security Council brought about consensus among the members of the Eisenhower administration. In the meetings, the members of the National Security Council vigorously debated various approaches to these matters until reaching a consensus while Eisenhower assumed a presiding role, and Cutler directed the activities of the meeting. During each session, the National Security Council Executive Secretary or his Deputy recorded the main points of discussion and the consensus reached by the group. At the end of the meeting, the Executive Secretary read this notes to the group to ensure accuracy. After the meeting, Cutler, and the Executive Secretary drafted policy memoranda based on the notes from the meeting, which Eisenhower would approve, or suggest revisions and then approve. If the group could not reach a consensus, the issue moved to the agenda for a subsequent meeting, and the process started again.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Bowie and Immerman, *Waging Peace: How Eisenhower Shaped an Enduring Cold War Strategy*, 91.

⁹⁹ For the comprehensive list see Foreign Relations of the United States, "FRUS, National Security Affairs 1952-1954," 254-57.

Two of the greatest distinctions between the Truman and Eisenhower National Security Councils lay in the Planning Board and Eisenhower's presence in the meetings. The Planning Board supplied the intellectual effort and spent the time to dialog, to use the words of Senge, and explore the range of available options and the differences in alternate solutions. Cutler desired that "the policy-planning function should be exercised through the [National Security] Council itself, composed of the highest security advisers of the President, and through a Planning Board, composed of top-flight personnel to be appointed by the President from the departments and agencies."¹⁰⁰ Eisenhower consistently attended National Security Council meetings for his first one hundred and fifteen weeks in office, and missed only a few of the remaining two hundred and fifty-one meetings.¹⁰¹ Again using Senge's terminology, the National Security Council discussed the proposals of the Planning Board, which examined and debated the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches to determine what was best for the nation. Eisenhower headed the meetings and encouraged its participants to vigorously debate the proposed policies to distil the essence of the problems that they sought to solve.¹⁰² General Andrew Goodpaster reminisced that "the meetings would bring together all who shared significant responsibilities in the matter. The purpose was examination of the particular issue with 'each in the presence of all' and with the understanding that there should be 'no non-concurrence through silence.'"¹⁰³ The synthetic solutions from National Security Council meetings resulted from the combined ideas of experienced policy makers after viewing an issue from multiple perspectives. The character of

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 254.

¹⁰¹ Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 300; Rothkopf, *Running the World: The Inside Story of the National Security Council and the Architects of American Power*, 66.

¹⁰² Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 297.

¹⁰³ Bowie and Immerman, *Waging Peace: How Eisenhower Shaped an Enduring Cold War Strategy*, vii.

Eisenhower's National Security Council, its organization, its inclusive nature, its system, the careful selection of its members and staff, and its structure established an environment that enabled a fusion of the best policy ideas to achieve consensus among the administration thereby producing coherent national security policies.

In this manner, President Eisenhower founded an inclusive and systematic decision-making process as President to establish consensus among his administration regarding the unfamiliar and novel challenges that faced the nation in the 1950s. Truman's desire for institutional reform set the conditions for the addition of the National Security Council to the structure of the national government. The National Security Act of 1947 used the system proposed by the Navy's Eberstadt Report. Eisenhower, brought decades of experience leading high-level staffs to the White House and refined Truman's National Security Council structure to form a useful advisory and policy creating body. Once Eisenhower implemented his plan and his National Security Council began functioning in an efficient manner, the National Security Council started working through the necessary policy changes required to formulate a new basic national security policy.

Project Solarium

“[D]on’t talk about decisive action until all the facts are laid out cold and hard...Against such a background the NSC would be qualified to come to a decision.”

—Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953

Project Solarium represents the most remarkable part of Eisenhower’s development of his basic national security policy. His use of the National Security Council mechanism demonstrates his systematic decision making process and his proclivity to establish consensus among competing stakeholders in unfamiliar contexts. The process to revise national security policy started before Eisenhower took office, but could make no headway until his administration examined and summarized existing policy. The “Great Equation” of balancing military strength and fiscal reality needed immediate attention, but the death of Joseph Stalin in March 1953 delayed development of that policy.¹⁰⁴

In late 1952, even before he assumed office, Eisenhower consulted with his cabinet members regarding needed changes in national security policy.¹⁰⁵ In early February, Cutler’s Planning Board sent key documents to the National Security Council members including summaries of Truman’s policies established in NSC 20/4, NSC 68/2, NSC 135/3, and NSC 141.¹⁰⁶ More important, the board sent a list of questions raised by its review of these policies to provide a basis for discussion in future NSC meetings.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Bowie and Immerman, *Waging Peace: How Eisenhower Shaped an Enduring Cold War Strategy*, 97.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 85; Foreign Relations of the United States, "FRUS, National Security Affairs 1952-1954," 236-37.

¹⁰⁶ In July 1948, the NSC produced a report, NSC 20 that addressed James Forrestal’s request for a comprehensive statement of national security policy, and identified required levels of military preparedness for the contemporary world situation. The National Security Council produced NSC 68 in response to President Truman’s request in January 1950 for a re-examination

Review of the policies from the Truman administration in early 1953, informed the NSC's first deliberations regarding the existing security policy. Their first official effort to modify Truman policy occurred during the creation of NSC 149, *Basic National Security Policies and Programs in Relation to Their Costs*.¹⁰⁸ Eisenhower, and Secretary George Humphrey, his Secretary of the Treasury, believed that Federal deficit spending weakened the nation, and would destroy it if not slowed. NSC 149 sought to establish policy and request cuts in the budgets of fiscal year 1954 and 1955. However, Charles Wilson, the Secretary of Defense, claimed that the proposed cuts exposed the country to imprudent risk. Eisenhower's military associates from his time as General of the Army and the unofficial Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General J. Lawton Collins, and General Omar Bradley, presented the most stubborn opposition to reductions in defense spending.¹⁰⁹

The cognitive tension illustrated in the discussion surrounding NSC 149 exemplifies the continuing disagreement over national security policies.¹¹⁰ Eisenhower knew that attempts to reduce the budget to a satisfactory level by eliminating excess and duplication would prove

of national objectives in peacetime and in war. The Senior Staff of the National Security Council created NSC 135 to reappraise national security objectives and programs in October 1951. NSC 141 reported the findings of the reexamination of the adequacy of the current US security programs by the Secretary of Defense, Secretary of State, and the Director of Mutual Security on January 1953.

¹⁰⁷ Foreign Relations of the United States, "FRUS, National Security Affairs 1952-1954," 223-31.

¹⁰⁸ Meena Bose, *Shaping and Signaling Presidential Policy: The National Security Decision Making of Eisenhower and Kennedy* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1998), 28.

¹⁰⁹ Foreign Relations of the United States, "FRUS, National Security Affairs 1952-1954," 281-82.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 307-16.

insufficient.¹¹¹ In March and April of 1953, the National Security Council received recommendations from civilian consultants regarding reductions in defense spending in conjunction with their deliberations for NSC 149 that cited Truman's timetable for military growth as the largest culprit of unsustainable spending in the near term.¹¹² The Truman administration based NSC 68's increasing military readiness timetables on the assumption that by a fixed date in 1954, the "year of maximum danger," Soviet nuclear stockpiles would reach a sufficient level to make a nuclear strike against the US catastrophic.¹¹³ NSC 149 proposed to initially reduce defense spending by "floating" the date of maximum danger and extending the period required to reach the forecasted levels of defense needed to survive such an attack.¹¹⁴

In light of these proposals for reductions in defense spending and delaying increased levels of national defense, General J. Lawton Collins, then Chief of Staff of the Army, commented that such reductions "would give rise to equally serious political and diplomatic difficulties," and every other member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff replied similarly.¹¹⁵ Eisenhower retorted, "Perhaps the Council should have a report as to whether national bankruptcy or national destruction would get us first."¹¹⁶ With the comments of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Eisenhower and his NSC debated the recommended changes for another three meetings before he finally approving NSC 149 with a floating date. In addition to the disagreement regarding defense expenditures, the council also argued over US policy concerning the Soviet Union, before all

¹¹¹ Bowie and Immerman, *Waging Peace: How Eisenhower Shaped an Enduring Cold War Strategy*, 97.

¹¹² Foreign Relations of the United States, "FRUS, National Security Affairs 1952-1954," 281-86.

¹¹³ "National Security Affairs; Foreign Economic Policy, Volume I," 112-16.

¹¹⁴ "FRUS, National Security Affairs 1952-1954," 281-86.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 258-64.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 260.

planning ceased temporarily in the response to Stalin's unexpected death and the change in Soviet leadership.

In March 5, 1953, Joseph Stalin, General secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, died, and it thrust the US policy makers into an unanticipated situation. The potential for improved relations with the Soviet Union bloomed. Eisenhower later said

The new leadership in Russia, no matter how strong its links with the Stalin era, was not completely bound to blind obedience to the ways of a dead man. The future was theirs to make. Consequently, a major preoccupation of my mind through most of 1953 was the development of approaches to the Soviet leaders that might be at least a start toward the birth of mutual trust founded in cooperative effort.¹¹⁷

Despite their efforts, the actions of Eisenhower and his government received no peaceful overtures from the new Soviet leadership. Additionally, several key international organizations and governments that played central roles in the Cold War, the United Nations (UN) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), remained unpredictable and brought added ambiguity to the challenges of the time.

In April 1953, the views of the NSC regarding the best strategy to address communist expansion, particularly those of J. Foster Dulles, remained disparate.¹¹⁸ Dulles proposed an aggressive strategy similar to other Republicans at the time. He called for a "political offense" to reduce Soviet control over its satellite countries and "massive retaliation" against any Soviet military action toward the nations of the recognized free world.¹¹⁹ In opposition to Dulles, Eisenhower thought that the idea of massive retaliation contained serious flaws, particularly if the

¹¹⁷ Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change, 1953-1956: The White House Years*, 144.

¹¹⁸ Bose, *National Security Decision Making of Eisenhower and Kennedy*, 21-22.

¹¹⁹ John Foster Dulles, "A Policy of Boldness: The Republican's Foreign Affairs Expert Shows That Neither Arms nor Money Alone--but Only Wise, Patient Planning--Can Win Peace " *LIFE* 32, no. 20 (May, 1952): 152.

Soviets used covert or subversive means to spread communism. A policy of massive retaliation would constrain US action against such activities. Along this line he asked Dulles,

What should we do if Soviet political aggression, as in Czechoslovakia, successively chips away exposed portions of the free world? So far as our reasoning in the economic situation is concerned, such an eventuality would be just as bad for us as if the area had been captured by force. To my mind, this is the case where the theory of “retaliation” falls down.¹²⁰

Eisenhower intended to pull Dulles away from supporting a retaliatory policy because Dulles’ recommendations held tremendous weight with the NSC and Eisenhower valued his input.¹²¹

Eisenhower needed an event or activity to resolve the disagreement regarding the assessment of likely Soviet actions to accurately forecast military expenditures and to establish consensus about the long-term US-Soviet policy approach among the members of his NSC.

The early efforts by the Planning Board and NSC to reduce military spending served more to collectively educate the members of the NSC, rather than attempt to revise basic national security policy. Of this period, Robert Bowie, the Director of the State Department’s Policy Planning Staff commented, “the ground was now cleared for a systematic effort to elaborate a comprehensive national strategy by developing answers to the basic questions posed by Cutler’s memorandum to the NSC at the start of the Eisenhower presidency.”¹²²

The heart of Eisenhower’s systematic approach to devise his own national security policy began in May of 1953 at the residence of J. Foster Dulles where Cutler; Allen Dulles, Chief of the Central Intelligence Agency; and W. Beddell Smith discussed alternative approaches to US-Soviet strategy on a relaxed Sunday evening. There Foster Dulles persuasively argued for a

¹²⁰ Robert A. Divine, *Eisenhower and the Cold War* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1981), 14.

¹²¹ Bowie and Immerman, *Waging Peace: How Eisenhower Shaped an Enduring Cold War Strategy*, 55.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 123.

complete renovation of Truman's national security policy as he spoke to the group. His words were so compelling that Smith told Foster Dulles that he needed to repeat the discussion with the President. Four days later in the White House Solarium, Dulles repeated his previous reasoning for a more bold resistance to Soviet expansion, to which Eisenhower disagreed. The following argument formed the basis of a planning exercise to debate the three approaches in what became Project Solarium.¹²³

Project Solarium became the transition point in Eisenhower's development of successful Cold War policy that addressed the contextual complexity and competing national strategies driven by Eisenhower's desire for consensus among the members of his national security council. Dulles argued for an overhaul of Truman's basic national security policy. Eisenhower took this opportunity to settle the dissent among the members of his NSC. In a memorandum from May 9, 1953, he designated a committee, comprised of Smith, Allen Dulles, and Cutler. The committee selected individuals for three analytical teams, later called Task Forces, and a panel. The total Task Force participants numbered twenty-one, and contained the most astute and knowledgeable individuals in the country about the Soviet Union, defense planning, and national budget constraints.¹²⁴ Kennan later discussed that "they were drawn from different parts of the government, and some were outsiders."¹²⁵ Thus, Eisenhower used a systematically inclusive process to examine alternative approaches that incorporated those from the military, and a multitude of government agencies with ties to both parties.

¹²³ Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 308-09.

¹²⁴ Valur Ingimundarson, "Containing the Offensive: The "Chief of the Cold War" and the Eisenhower Administration's German Policy," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 27, no. 3 (1997): 480; Millen, "Eisenhower and US Grand Strategy," 37.

¹²⁵ Pickett, *George F. Kennan and the Origins of Eisenhower's New Look: An Oral History of Project Solarium*, 18.

The group that met with Eisenhower in the White House solarium devised the rough outline of the approaches and later the panel refined them for the Task Forces. The approach of the first Task Force mirrored much of Truman's early doctrine of containment. The first approach assumed that the Soviet Union would eventually collapse as a result of its internal corruption and that the US would deter war through the threat of nuclear war, where the next two approaches encouraged binding statements that would force the US into a global war if the specified conditions were met. The second Task Force approach encompassed drawing a line around all the nations whose fall to communism from overt Soviet interference would commit the US to war with the Soviet Union, similar to massive retaliation. The final Task Force approach represented an aggressive policy, which would deliberately induce weakness in communist regimes through subversion and "roll back" the spread of communism.¹²⁶

Eisenhower indicated that each of the teams "would work up its Alternative in the same spirit that an advocate works up a case for court presentation."¹²⁷ Eisenhower intended the teams to present a comprehensive look of

all the factors that would go into planning a major campaign: forces needed; costs in manpower, dollars, casualties, world relations; intelligence estimates; time-tables; tactics in every other part of the world while actions were being taken in a specific area; relations with the UN and our Allies; disposition of an area after gaining a victory therein; influencing world opinion; Congressional action required; etc.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Foreign Relations of the United States, "FRUS, National Security Affairs 1952-1954," 323-26; Millen, "Eisenhower and US Grand Strategy," 38.

¹²⁷ Foreign Relations of the United States, "FRUS, National Security Affairs 1952-1954," 324.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 323.

The panel, chaired by General James Doolittle, nominated Kennan, Major General James McCormack, and Admiral R. L. Connolly to lead Task Forces A, B and C, respectively.¹²⁹

Beginning in June, the Task Forces worked at the War College buildings in Washington, DC, located in the buildings now occupied by the National Defense University. The panel provided each Task Force with specific instructions that Eisenhower approved before they arrived. Each Task Force worked everyday from 8:00am until midnight organizing and synthesizing their thoughts to produce a collective idea until the conclusion of the exercise.¹³⁰ On June 26, 1953, the Task Forces met in Plenary Session when each Task Force expressed their views and findings to that point to one another.¹³¹ In July 16, 1953, Six weeks after the exercise began, Eisenhower, the National Security Council and a few others gathered in the White House to hear the final presentations.¹³²

The Task Forces presented their material in a basement room of the White House, and consensus among the administration finally materialized. The task force presentations solidified the NSC's understanding of the economic, military, and diplomatic requirements and implications for these three distinct approaches. The impact of their presentations and matching reports produced consensus regarding the most suitable national security strategy.

George Kennan, the original architect of Truman's containment policy elaborated on Task Force A's research and conclusions. Kennan's major departure from the language of NSC

¹²⁹ Pickett, *George F. Kennan and the Origins of Eisenhower's New Look: An Oral History of Project Solarium*. Doolittle earned Eisenhower's trust while working very closely with him on matters of security policy during the establishment of Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers in Europe (SHAPE).

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 18, 24.

¹³¹ Foreign Relations of the United States, "FRUS, National Security Affairs 1952-1954," 388-93.

¹³² Bose, *National Security Decision Making of Eisenhower and Kennedy*, 13; Foreign Relations of the United States, "FRUS, National Security Affairs 1952-1954," 387-88.

68 indicated that war with the Soviet Union was not inevitable or probable. In the contemporary circumstances, the US position remained more favorable than that of the Soviet Union and its satellite states.¹³³ During Task Force B's presentation by McCormack, he proposed that the US create an artificial border around the Soviet Union, and threaten general war in the event of communist breaches. This laid the moral foundation for nuclear retaliation against Soviet expansion. Task Force B's most enticing argument claimed that the threat of retaliation required lower military expenditures, than Task Force A or C's proposal and actually represented a change from Truman's policy.¹³⁴ This idea did not garner support when compared to containment and rollback, though well presented. Three individuals presented Task Force C's approach, Admiral Richard Connolly, General Limnitzer, and General Goodpaster. They determined that no actual date of maximum danger existed, and that action to induce roll back entailed significant amounts of political and covert action.¹³⁵ The great risk of provoking war embodied Task Force C's most significant controversial effect. At the conclusion of the presentations, Eisenhower spoke, and thoughtfully expounded on the range of problems that the national security policy needed to address. During his summary, the participants saw the inevitable impossibility of Task Force C's approach.

Project Solarium produced a summary report from all the task force presentations with features of each approach to restart NSC deliberation about a basic national security policy. Goodpaster obtained records of each team's oral and written reports. He asserted that because of Project Solarium, Eisenhower "had the best work of these three groups on which he could draw,

¹³³ Bose, *National Security Decision Making of Eisenhower and Kennedy*, 31.

¹³⁴ Foreign Relations of the United States, "FRUS, National Security Affairs 1952-1954," 390.

¹³⁵ Pickett, *George F. Kennan and the Origins of Eisenhower's New Look: An Oral History of Project Solarium*, 24.

really, to put behind him the rhetoric of rollback which had been part of that electoral campaign.”¹³⁶ Bowie commented, “no president before or after Eisenhower, however, ever received such a systematic and focused briefing on the threats facing the nation’s security and the possible strategies for coping with them.”¹³⁷ Eisenhower requested a summary of the separate task force reports to form the basis for a new national security policy.

The Planning Board synthesized the reports from each Task Force, and drafted a recommended policy statement, Eisenhower’s Basic National Security Policy, for the NSC to consider during the next few months. The Task Forces turned in the written products from Project Solarium by July 22, 1953, and Cutler presented the Planning Board synopsis on July 30, 1953. At the late July meeting, several of the NSC members presented questions regarding the conclusions of the report, and collectively decided that it should serve as a point of departure for the actual policy creation.¹³⁸ From July through September, the Planning Board refined the ideas from Project Solarium and finally submitted a draft policy to the NSC members on 18 September. The final discourse regarded the characterization of the threat to the US. Did the threat exist only as the basic hostility of the Soviet Union or was it the “external threat of Soviet Power” and an “internal threat of weakening our economy and changing our way of life[?]”¹³⁹ Over the next three weeks, the NSC resolved their remaining differences and haggled over phrasing in the policy, but on October 30, 1953, NSC 162/2 superseded NSC 153 and became the nation’s basic national security policy, having gained consensual support from all members of the NSC. Kennan

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Foreign Relations of the United States, "FRUS, National Security Affairs 1952-1954," 353.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 435.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 463-64, 514-34.

recalled, “the new administration was in accord with what finally came out.”¹⁴⁰ As intended by Eisenhower, Project Solarium enabled the NSC’s resolution of disagreement on a security policy approach.

Project Solarium illustrates a systematic process that thoroughly examined the challenges surrounding national-level policy creation during a time of great uncertainty. Eisenhower used three task forces to present competing hypotheses, after providing them with the time, brain-power and informational resources to produce the very best arguments in favor of the assigned approach. The inclusive participant selection brought individuals with extensive diplomatic, military, and economic experience. None of the participants understood the implications of all their decisions, no one knew how Soviet leaders intended to use their growing nuclear stockpiles. Uncertainty and novelty characterized the domestic and international environments during this period. Through this process, a coherent national security policy resulted, but more importantly, the disparate views of Eisenhower’s administration coalesced into a single unified strategy. This exercise demonstrates the utility of design principles. Eisenhower proposed a solution to a complex problem by using dialog and discussion with various stakeholders. Not only was the group able to agree on the nature of the problem, but they were also able to agree on the recommended solution. The development of NSC 162/2 demonstrates Eisenhower’s systematic decision-making process and its penchant for forming consensus among competing stakeholders. Project Solarium and Eisenhower’s National Security Council mechanism also contains propositions for staff planning and organization on a more general level.

¹⁴⁰ Pickett, *George F. Kennan and the Origins of Eisenhower's New Look: An Oral History of Project Solarium*, 19.

Conclusion

“[T]here is a recurring temptation to feel that some spectacular and costly action could become the miraculous solution to all current difficulties.”

—Dwight D. Eisenhower, *1961*

Eisenhower’s efforts to develop a coherent national security strategy provide lessons applicable to military planners today. Examination of the process that Eisenhower used to develop his basic national security policy illustrates the benefits of an inclusive systematic decision making process, a planning methodology that establishes consensus among competing stakeholders, and the development of strategy in a novel and unfamiliar context. These same principles are espoused in the writings of Lawson, Senge, Rittel and Webber considered as design, team building and planning theorists. The creation of NSC 162/2 was remarkable in that it proposed a successful strategy to manage the wicked problems of a revolutionary minded Soviet Union and US economic growth.

Until the last National Security Council meeting, members of the Council discoursed about the nature of the problem facing the US. Was it an aggressive Soviet Union or both the Soviet Union and a forecasted economic reduction with current spending levels?¹⁴¹ In Lawson’s material, one finds support for this occurrence. He wrote, “both problem and solution become clearer as the process goes on” and “design is a process in which problem and solution emerge together.”¹⁴² It appears that in the last National Security Council meeting before the signing of NSC 162/2, a clear picture of the problem and solution emerged together. Another noteworthy observation about the development of NSC 162/2 is the use of iterative dialog and discussion.

¹⁴¹ Foreign Relations of the United States, "FRUS, National Security Affairs 1952-1954," 514-34.

¹⁴² Lawson, *How Designers Think: The Design Process Demystified*, 124, 48.

Cutler's National Security Council Planning Board began the process to revise Truman's policy by producing a memorandum to summarize Truman's policies, and then it supplied the Council with arguments for the reduction of defense spending before Project Solarium's conception.¹⁴³ Once the Planning Board and the Council became fully aware of the issues, the Solarium Project Task Forces presented the various approaches to the Council and Eisenhower for decision. However, Eisenhower started the process over again and the Planning Board took the Task Force reports to instruct the Council before another round of discussion. This embodies Eisenhower's decision style. He later said

I have been forced to make decisions, some of them of a critical character, for a good many years. And I know of only one way in which you can be sure you've done your best to make a wise decision. That is to get all of the people who have partial and definable responsibility in this particular field, whatever it be. Get them with their different viewpoints in front of you, and listen to them debate. I do not believe in bringing them in one at a time, and therefore being more impressed by the most recent one you hear than the earlier ones. You must get courageous men, men of strong views, and let them debate and argue with each other. You listen, and you see if there's anything been brought up, an idea that changes your own view or enriches your view or adds to it.¹⁴⁴

Even Eisenhower, with all of his experience with novel military problems felt that the iterative process of Planning Board input to Council meetings could do more to illuminate the administration's understanding of the full range of issues at stake. The complex character of the problem defied easy and rapid attempts for its solution.

Creation of a new and coherent national security policy is exactly the kind of problem that Rittel and Webber described as "wicked."¹⁴⁵ The new roles for the US and the Soviet Union after World War II, and the beginning of the nuclear age, posed enormous challenges for the US

¹⁴³ Foreign Relations of the United States, "FRUS, National Security Affairs 1952-1954," 223-31, 307-16.

¹⁴⁴ Fred I. Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency: Eisenhower as Leader* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1982), 246-47.

¹⁴⁵ Rittel and Webber, "Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning," 160.

policy makers. The expansion of communism in Eastern Europe, the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, and Kennan's "long telegram" seemed to set the stage for an inevitable confrontation between the US and the Soviet Union.¹⁴⁶ A 'nuclear only' strategy left the US vulnerable to large conventional militaries if nuclear weapons were considered too powerful and unsuited for the conflict. Attempts to match the militaries of the communist nations could strain the US economy to the point of collapse, or worse create a militarized state within the US. So novel were these problems that disagreement existed within the government and within the major parties.

Competing views can aid in the problem-solving process. The National Security Council played an irreplaceable role in the production of NSC 162/2, and it sprang from controversy. David Rothkopf, Chief Executive Officer of an international advisory group based in Washington, DC, commented, "As is only fitting, the most significant effort to produce coordination and greater efficiency among major U.S. government agencies during the past sixty years itself was born of a bureaucratic rivalry, advanced through another, and created new ones."¹⁴⁷ The Democrats under Truman embraced the challenge of matching the Soviet military.¹⁴⁸ Senator Robert Taft proposed a policy of retaliation and a reduction of US involvement in foreign affairs, and J. Foster Dulles felt attracted to parts of his strategy.¹⁴⁹ Eisenhower faced a truly daunting and unfamiliar task with clear allusions to future problems.

¹⁴⁶ S. Nelson Drew, *NSC-68: Forging the Strategy of Containment* (Washington, DC: National Defense University, 1994), 8.

¹⁴⁷ Rothkopf, *Running the World: The Inside Story of the National Security Council and the Architects of American Power*, 52.

¹⁴⁸ Foreign Relations of the United States, "FRUS, National Security Affairs 1950," 213.

¹⁴⁹ Bowie and Immerman, *Waging Peace: How Eisenhower Shaped an Enduring Cold War Strategy*, 71; Dulles, "A Policy of Boldness: The Republican's Foreign Affairs Expert Shows That Neither Arms nor Money Alone--but Only Wise, Patient Planning--Can Win Peace," 152.

These deductions relate specifically to Eisenhower's system and design theory, but one could also draw general lessons from this study like the influences of mentors and broadening assignments, planning expectations for large planning efforts, and examples of meeting preparation.

Lessons regarding the influence of mentors and broadening opportunities occur frequently in Eisenhower's past. Eisenhower's level of interaction with the Army's senior leaders is remarkable. He worked very closely with influential leaders like Connor and Moseley and three Chiefs of Staff of the Army; Pershing, MacArthur and Marshall; before succeeding Marshall in 1945. All affected Eisenhower's intellectual development and career progression. He served in unusual assignments that gave him irreplaceable experience with World War I history, industry, presentations to Congressional Committees and foreign defense planning.¹⁵⁰ Many of these opportunities provided Eisenhower with a sense of scope, and the time required to affect change on such a large scale.

It takes time to understand complex issues, and form policy solutions. From the time that Eisenhower formed his cabinet and first discussed a new national security policy aboard the *Helena* until he signed NSC 162/2 eleven months passed.¹⁵¹ Even the intense staff work of Project Solarium took six weeks with a team solely focused on advocating for an approach, which others developed with detailed instructions before the exercise. That was after the members of the National Security Council, and the Task Force participants lived with the problem for years and possessed knowledge of its history. Without spending time working through challenges, rash and

¹⁵⁰ See the section on Eisenhower for more specifics, pages seven through sixteen.

¹⁵¹ Eisenhower selected his cabinet and planned a conference aboard the *Helena*, a cruise ship, while returning from South Korea in late November through early December 1952. Eisenhower signed NSC 162/2 on October 30, 1953.

poor decisions often result.¹⁵² Even if a group or team dedicates the proper time for discussion and problem solving, the organization of the team makes a difference.

The National Security Council system that Eisenhower set up was remarkable. It enabled the Council members to attend each National Security Council meeting with informed views regarding a multitude of topics. The Planning Board used written reports, of unspecified length, to communicate with Council members with adequate detail to explain the points of contention between available policy approaches, not three to five PowerPoint slides. This contrasts significantly with sixteen line Executive Summaries and one-page White Papers.

An examination of Eisenhower's process for the development of his basic national security policy demonstrates the applicability of design theory in the planning processes, and provides a historical example of the iterations and changes that one should expect in such an endeavor. Developing a basic national security strategy, particularly among parochial government leaders, required all the considerable experience and skill that Eisenhower possessed. The National Security Council system, with the preparation of the Planning Board, played a vital role in the entire process. As tedious as deliberating over agenda items and pursuing consensus may seem, Eisenhower's involvement in the process proved decisive. Eisenhower's education, leadership style, and understanding of inclusive and systematic decision making, consensus building and the development of successful planning solutions occurred as a result.

¹⁵² Richard E. Neustadt and Ernest R. May, *Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision-Makers* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1986). In the study of historical decisions found in *Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision-Makers*, Richard Neustadt and Ernest May, occasional Presidential political advisors and full-time professors at Harvard University, present anecdotes about the positive use of history for decision-making, one being, "a little thought can help." Their insights suggest that individuals and groups that achieve some degree of success spend time on the issue at hand among other things.

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