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ABSTRACT

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With his inauguration as President in January 1953, Dwight D. Eisenhower initiated a change in the nation's national military strategy which emphasized defense of the nation and containment of communist aggression through the threat of "massive retaliation" with nuclear weapons rather than by use of conventional military force. This policy resulted in a reordering of priorities in the Defense Department and a significant reduction in Army force structure and funding. General Matthew B. Ridgway, Eisenhower's Chief of Staff of the Army from 1953 to 1955, strongly opposed Eisenhower's "New Look" military structure and the strategy of massive retaliation. He thought that this strategy was militarily unsound and immoral. Ridgway preferred a more balanced warfighting strategy which would provide the Army with the capability to meet the nation's worldwide defense commitments at all levels of conflict. This study examines these two conflicting strategies in the historical context of the period. It also compares and contrasts the military experiences of Eisenhower and Ridgway to develop a possible explanation of why these two great military leaders had such divergent views on how best to defend the nation. The manner in which Ridgway, as a senior military leader, viewed and dealt with his opposition to the policies of his civilian leadership is also examined. Finally, the study draws an analogy between the situation faced by Ridgway and the Army in 1953 and 1954 with that which confronts the Army in 1989 and 1990.

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THE GENERAL AND THE PRESIDENT: A CONFLICT IN STRATEGIES

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

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U.S. Army War College
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17013
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THE GENERAL AND THE PRESIDENT:
A CONFLICT IN STRATEGY

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The title of this study may suggest an examination of the well publicized and reported conflict between General Douglas MacArthur, during his tenure as Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers in Japan and of the United Nations Forces in Korea during the Korean War, and President Harry S. Truman. Following the entry into the war of the Chinese Communist forces and their drive south from the Yalu River, General MacArthur publicly proclaimed strategies and concepts for winning the war which were in conflict with the stated national policy of the Truman Administration. MacArthur suggested "unleashing" the Nationalist Chinese forces on Formosa to invade mainland China and making strategic bombing strikes into Manchuria and China.¹ When MacArthur publicly criticized President Truman's policy of restraint, Truman had had enough. MacArthur was relieved of his command on 11 April 1951 and recalled to the United States.² He subsequently retired from military service, a hero in the eyes of much of the public.

While this conflict between MacArthur and Truman is a good example of the classic struggle between the political goals of the civilian leadership of a democratic nation and the operational "means and ends" of the military commander in the field, it is not the subject of this study. The conflict in strategy, which this paper addresses, is that which developed

between MacArthur's and Truman's successors. General Matthew B. Ridgway, who had been MacArthur's commander of ground forces in Korea, replaced MacArthur on 11 April 1951 upon MacArthur's relief from command. Ridgway subsequently became Chief of Staff of the Army in August 1953. He was appointed to that position by President Dwight D. Eisenhower who succeeded President Truman on 20 January 1953.

Ridgway had worked with and for Eisenhower previously. Both had been assigned to the War Plans Division of the War Department in 1941 and early 1942,³ and Ridgway served as a Division and Corps Commander under Eisenhower in the European Theater during World War II. The military assignments and war time experiences of these two men, one a general and one a former general, appeared to be similar. One would assume that their views on what constituted a sound national security strategy and what should be the proper military force structure to implement that strategy would also be similar. They were not.

One of Eisenhower's primary goals as president was to reduce and balance the federal budget. In President Truman's budget submission for fiscal year 1954, projected revenues were \$10 billion short of anticipated expenditures of \$80 billion.⁴ A balanced budget, at that time, was almost entirely dependent on cuts in the defense portion, which accounted for about 70 percent of the federal budget.⁵

In order to affect such economies, Eisenhower developed a new defense policy, coined the "New Look," which increased America's nuclear arsenal at the expense of conventional arms in

order to give "a bigger bang for the buck."⁶ Ridgway considered this policy illogical. He saw all out nuclear war the least likely future conflict. However, limited conflicts between the forces of democracy and the forces of Sino-Soviet communist expansionism were occurring and would continue. Ridgway felt that massive nuclear retaliation in response to limited acts of aggression was immoral and, politically, would not be implemented. Without a strong conventional force, capable of responding immediately to aggression, the US would not be able to contain Soviet or Chinese communist aggression.⁷

This is the basic conflict in strategy that this study will analyze. It began shortly after Ridgway assumed duties as Chief of Staff of the Army in 1953 as the Department of Defense worked on the revised budget for 1954. It continued through Ridgway's retirement in July 1955 as the New Look was implemented in the fiscal years 1955 and 1956 budgets.

This conflict in national strategic policy and in the role the Army should play in it did not end with General Ridgway's retirement. General Maxwell D. Taylor, Ridgway's replacement as Army Chief of Staff, continued to oppose the New Look and the strategy of Massive Retaliation with nuclear weapons, although he did so somewhat more subtly than had Ridgway. Taylor is credited with coining the term "flexible response" for a strategy which emphasized the more usable forms of military power, conventional forces and tactical nuclear weapons, over massive retaliation.⁸ Taylor persuasively presented this strategy in his book, The Uncertain Trumpet, written after his 1959 retirement from the Army. By 1960 the concept of massive retaliation had

been thoroughly discredited.⁹ However, this study is limited to the origins of this conflict in strategy as it developed between these two strong leaders, Ridgway and Eisenhower. The period examined is Ridgway's tenure as Chief of Staff of the Army, August 1953 to July 1955.

A secondary but related issue will also be examined, the responsibilities of the senior military leader in developing and articulating national security policy. Eisenhower and Ridgway had conflicting views on this subject as well.

Both issues have relevance to today's Army. In 1989, it appears as though budget constraints will once again have an impact on the mission, functions, and capabilities of the Army. This aspect will be addressed in the Conclusions chapter of this study.

It is difficult to understand how two men with apparently similar military backgrounds and experiences in war could have such differing views on national defense policy and the Army's role in it. It is true that Eisenhower, as president, had a much broader view of the nation's problems and more divergent responsibilities than did Ridgway as Chief of Staff of the Army and a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. But both of them had shared over 35 years in the "brotherhood of war." Chapter Two will compare and contrast their military experiences and will point out the differing nature of those experiences as an explanation for their different views on the use of nuclear weapons.

Chapter Three will examine in detail the specific aspects of

Eisenhower's New Look military, Ridgway's objections to it, his alternate concept, and how he dealt with the frustration of being forced to reduce the size of the Army and the scope of its mission to conform to a strategic concept he did not accept.

ENDNOTES

1. Richard H. Rovere and Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., The General and the President, p. 159.

2. Ibid., p. 267.

3. Stephen E. Ambrose, Eisenhower Volume One: Soldier, General of the Army, President-Elect, 1890-1952, p. 134.

4. Stephen E. Ambrose, Eisenhower Volume Two: The President, p. 33.

5. Douglas Kinnard, President Eisenhower and Strategy Management, p. 3.

6. Piers Brendon, Ike His Life and Times, p. 283.

7. Matthew B. Ridgway, Soldier: The Memoirs of Matthew B. Ridgway, pp. 318-319.

8. Bernard Brodie, War and Politics, p. 125.

9. A. J. Bacevich, The Pentomic Era, p. 129.

CHAPTER II

THE ADMINISTRATOR AND THE SOLDIER¹

There were distinct similarities in the military careers of Generals Eisenhower and Ridgway. There were also distinct differences in the nature of their military experiences. Each officer's view of the Army and of the role it should play in the development of national security policy of the United States was shaped by these experiences.

Eisenhower was born in Denison, Texas, on 14 October 1890 and raised in Abilene, Kansas. His family was of Pennsylvania Dutch stock and followed the pacifist traditions of the River Brethren sect of the Mennonite Church. His grandfather, Jacob, adhering to his pacifist beliefs, did not serve in the Union forces during the Civil War.

Ridgway was born at Fortress Monroe on 3 March 1895, the son of a colonel of artillery. His early years were spent as a military dependent at various Army posts throughout the western and northeastern United States.

After finishing their high school studies, both Eisenhower and Ridgway were delayed in their initial attempts to gain admittance to a military academy. Ridgway did not score well enough on his first attempt at the admissions examination and spent an additional six months studying at a preparatory school before successfully retaking the examination. Eisenhower worked for two years in Abilene to help his brother, Edgar, pay his tuition at the University of Michigan. After being ignored by

his local senator in his request for a direct appointment to a military academy, Eisenhower studied and prepared for the competitive examination offered by the senator. He scored second place on the exam and was granted an appointment to the Military Academy at West Point.

Eisenhower began his plebe year at West Point in June 1911, and Ridgway entered the Academy in June 1913. Both were athletically inclined and interested in football. Both played football on the "Cullen Hall" team, a junior varsity team, during their plebe year. Eisenhower gained some notoriety as a fullback during his second year. Ridgway became assistant manager and then manager of the football team during his years at West Point. Both of their athletic "careers" were cut short by injuries. Eisenhower injured his knee and Ridgway his back. Neither injury inhibited their future military careers, although Eisenhower's knee injury precluded his assignment to the cavalry (his first choice) upon graduation. Even though they shared two years together at West Point and an active interest in the football team, it is interesting to note that neither mentions the other in their memoirs or biographies, written after their retirements, when commenting on their days at West Point.

Eisenhower's initial assignment upon graduation was to an infantry regiment in Texas. He served as a supply officer and training officer with the 19th and 57th Infantry Regiments at Fort Sam Houston between 1915 and 1917, training the new recruits for the expanding American Army that would fight in France in World War I. In 1918, he transferred to Fort Meade, Maryland, and subsequently to Camp Colt at Gettysberg, Pennsylvania. At

both locations, he organized and trained the newly formed American tank corps. He commanded Camp Colt, as a temporary major, and was in charge of training over 3,000 men in tank warfare. He was in the process of shipping out for France as commander of an armored unit when the Armistice was declared on 11 November 1918.

Ridgway also was initially assigned to an infantry regiment in Texas when he graduated from West Point in May of 1917. He served with the 3d Infantry Regiment on the Mexican border at Camp Eagle Pass. Due to the shortage of commissioned officers during the War, he was appointed a company commander and early in his career learned the challenges of leadership and command. He too wanted to be assigned to combat duty in France and requested overseas assignment from the War Department. Instead of France, he was assigned to West Point where he served for six years as a language instructor and as athletic director.

Both of these young officers were embarrassed and depressed by having missed the opportunity to serve in combat. At the time that his overseas orders were canceled in 1918, Eisenhower was reported to have commented to a fellow officer, "I suppose we'll spend the rest of our lives explaining why we didn't get into this war."² In his memoirs, Ridgway recorded his thoughts about missing duty in France. When informed of the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, he remembered thinking how glad he was that he was already slated for troop duty from his tour in the War Department.

Here at last was my chance to wipe out that blot on my record -- or rather fill in that blank on my record where

it said, "Combat service - None" -- a lack that had always made me vaguely uncomfortable in the presence of officers who had seen action in World War I.³

Another similarity in their careers was that both officers developed a mentorship relationship with a senior officer who would play an influential role in their career development. General Fox Conner served as mentor for Eisenhower during his formative years. Eisenhower was introduced to Conner by George Patton in 1920 at Fort Meade. Patton and Eisenhower were assigned there, and Conner was serving on General John J. Pershing's staff in Washington. Conner was impressed with Eisenhower. Subsequently, Conner commanded the 20th Infantry Brigade in the Panama Canal Zone and requested that Eisenhower be assigned as his executive officer. Eisenhower jumped at the opportunity and reported for duty in Panama in January 1922. Conner schooled Eisenhower in military history and theory during his assignment as Conner's XO. He assigned him books to read and questioned him on their content. During his three years in this assignment, Eisenhower also became adept at running a headquarters staff and writing field orders. Conner was instrumental in Eisenhower being selected to attend Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, from which Eisenhower graduated at the top of his class in 1926, and in his subsequent assignment to General Pershing's staff in Washington, D.C. Pershing was Chief of Staff of the Army. It was while working for Pershing that Eisenhower first met Colonel George C. Marshall, a man who would play such a major role in Eisenhower's later accomplishments.

Eisenhower remained in Washington from 1926 until 1935 except for a one year tour of duty in France. He attended the War College, which was in Washington at that time, from the summer of 1927 until June 1928. Upon his graduation, Pershing sent Eisenhower to France to revise a Battlefield Monuments Guide which Eisenhower had written for Pershing in 1926. When he returned in 1929, he was assigned to the Office of the Secretary of War where he worked on mobilization planning. This duty involved working closely with Congress and industrial leaders to develop plans for expanding the nation's economy and industrial base if necessary to prepare for a future war. Eisenhower's experiences in this duty exposed him to the world of business and politics. In 1930, General Douglas MacArthur was appointed Chief of Staff of the Army. In February 1933, Eisenhower transferred from the Office of the Secretary of War to become MacArthur's personal assistant. He remained on MacArthur's staff for the next seven years. He went on detached duty with MacArthur to the Philippines in 1935 when MacArthur was appointed as Military Advisor to the Philippine Commonwealth. Eisenhower returned to the United States in December 1939 and was assigned to Fort Lewis, Washington. On the eve of World War II, Eisenhower was a 50 year old Lieutenant Colonel with a lot of political and staff experience but very little command time or experience with troops.

Ridgway had also worked for MacArthur. During part of Ridgway's tenure at West Point, MacArthur was the Superintendent of the Military Academy. MacArthur's intense interest in sports brought him into frequent contact with Ridgway, the Academy's

athletic director. Ridgway left the Academy in 1924 to attend the Company Officers Course at the Infantry School at Fort Benning. He then was assigned to troop duties in Northern China under the command of Lieutenant Colonel George C. Marshall. After a year in China, he returned to Fort Sam Houston, Texas, where he commanded a company in the 9th Infantry Regiment.

But neither MacArthur nor Marshall was Ridgway's mentor. Ridgway considered General Frank McCoy to be his mentor, not so much because McCoy specifically helped Ridgway in his career but because of what he learned from watching and working with McCoy. Ridgway described McCoy as a brilliant individual and a fine gentleman. Based primarily on his knowledge of Spanish, Captain Ridgway was assigned as a member of a military and diplomatic team sent to war-torn Nicaragua in January 1929. The team comprised the American Electoral Commission, and General McCoy was the team chief and the Commissioner. The Commission worked with the Nicaraguan political factions to set up their government and to develop and conduct free elections. At the end of 1928, Ridgway returned to the 9th Infantry at Fort Sam Houston. However, General McCoy requested that Ridgway accompany him again to Latin American, this time with the Bolivian-Paraguayan Conciliation Commission. This duty lasted from March through September of 1929, and it added to Ridgway's understanding of the diplomatic nature of military affairs.

Upon completion of his Latin American duties, Ridgway attended the advanced course -- the field officers course -- at Fort Benning. Here, he again came under General Marshall's

influence. Marshall was Assistant Commandant of the Infantry School at that time. Ridgway thought that, under Marshall's leadership, the Infantry School had been made into one of the finest and most thorough advanced military courses in the world. Ridgway graduated from the course at the top of his class, and he remained at the School as an instructor. From the Infantry School, Ridgway was again assigned to troop duty, this time with the 33d Infantry in the Panama Canal Zone. In the Spring of 1932, he was transferred to the Philippines where he served as technical adviser on military matters to the Governor General of the Philippines, Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., with whom Ridgway developed a warm friendship which lasted until Roosevelt died of a heart attack on the beach at Normandy in 1944.

Ridgway returned to the United States in 1933 and attended a two year course of studies at Fort Leavenworth. He then was assigned to work for his old mentor, General Frank McCoy, who was Commanding General of the Second Army and 6th Corps Area, headquartered in Chicago. McCoy appointed Ridgway as his G-3 in charge of operations and training. In the spring of 1936, Ridgway planned and executed a major field maneuver in the midwest which involved four Divisions. It was an extremely successful operation. In 1937, Ridgway continued his military studies as a student at the War College. Upon graduation in 1938, he was assigned as G-3 of Fourth Army in San Francisco where he developed plans and conducted exercises for the defense of the west coast. In July 1939, Ridgway was reassigned to the War Plans Division of the War Department in Washington. General Marshall, who had just been designated as Chief of Staff, was his

boss.

Eisenhower, upon his return from the Philippines in December of 1939, finally did get duty back with troops. He was initially a regimental executive officer and then Division G-3 in the 3d Division at Fort Lewis. He was promoted to Colonel in March of 1941 and appointed as Chief of Staff of IX Army at Fort Lewis. Based upon a request from Lieutenant General Walter Krueger, commander of Third Army at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, Eisenhower was reassigned to be Krueger's Chief of Staff in July 1941. In that position, Eisenhower planned and conducted a massive Third Army maneuver and war game exercise which was extremely successful and well publicized. He was promoted to Brigadier General while still on the maneuver and before his return to Fort Sam Houston. But everyone now wanted "Ike." Marshall transferred him to Washington, D.C., to the War Plans Division in December 1941.

Eisenhower and Ridgway must have crossed paths, briefly, in the War Plans Division. In January 1942, Ridgway was appointed Deputy Commanding General of the 82d Infantry Division which was commanded by General Omar Bradley. With this appointment came promotion to Brigadier General. In June 1942, Bradley was transferred to train and command another division, and Ridgway became the commanding general of the 82d Division. He also took on the task of training this unit in a new mission, airborne operations, and converting it into the Army's first airborne division. During that same month, June 1942, Marshall transferred Eisenhower from his job as Chief of

War Plans Division, in the War Department, to England and appointed him as the commander of US Forces in the European Theater of Operations. He was in charge of the build up of US forces in England for the eventual invasion of the European continent.

This is the point in the chronology of Eisenhower's and Ridgway's careers where most people familiar with World War II history can relate the subsequent accomplishments of these two great leaders. But their accomplishments were grounded in the more than 25 years of experiences they both had had in the Army. Those experiences were as different as were the nature of their subsequent accomplishments. True, they had served in similar locations (Texas, Panama, the Philippines, and Washington, D.C.) and attended Command and Staff College and the War College (although Eisenhower bypassed the Infantry School courses that taught small unit leadership and tactics). Eisenhower served primarily in staff positions, and he developed a skill and affinity for getting the job done at that level. Working for such dominant personalities as Pershing and MacArthur at the highest levels of the Army, he learned the art of using power as well as compromise to accomplish his assigned tasks. He must have also learned patience in dealing with the ego and extraordinary personality of MacArthur. This lesson served him well in managing the eccentricities of Field Marshal Bernard L. Montgomery in Africa, Italy, and Europe.

From MacArthur and Marshall, it appears he learned the lesson of surrounding himself with outstanding subordinates. When Eisenhower transferred from the Mediterranean Theater to

London in December 1943 to take command of the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces and of Operation Overload, he was accused of stripping the Mediterranean Theater Headquarters of all its skilled and experienced staff officers and commanders whom he took with him to form the new command.⁴ In contrast, when Ridgway was notified on 22 December 1950 that he was to proceed immediately to Korea to take command of Eighth Army to replace General Johnny Walker who had been killed in a jeep accident, Ridgway was asked what officers he wanted to take with him. His reply was, "I'll go this one alone. It's Christmas, and even a bachelor will have made plans."⁵

While Ridgway's career assignments included responsible operational staff positions and politically sensitive jobs, such as in Latin America and the Philippines, he had extensive experience in leading troops. He was a company commander twice. Eisenhower never commanded a company. Ridgway served with troops in China, Panama, and Texas. Ridgway's hands-on, dynamic, soldier-leading skills were well grounded in his early career and would be further demonstrated in his various commands as a general officer.

Ridgway served under Eisenhower as a division and corps commander in the European Theater. Eisenhower, as supreme commander of allied forces, commanded Operation Torch, the allied landing in North Africa on 8 November 1942. He commanded this operation from a bunker on Gibraltar. He then directed allied operations in North Africa, Sicily, and Italy until being withdrawn from the Mediterranean Theater in December 1943.

Ridgway disembarked at Casablanca on 10 May 1943 with his 82d Airborne Division. The Division made the first night airborne drop into a combat zone in history on 10 July 1943 in the attack on Sicily. Ridgway did not parachute in but came across the beach the next morning. He led his Division in successful combat operations in Sicily and Italy. The division was withdrawn to England in order to participate in the Normandy invasion. It parachuted into France just beyond Utah Beach during the night of 5 June 1944. Ridgway jumped in with his Division this time. His unit captured Ste. Mere Eglise, the first French city to be liberated. The 82d achieved its primary objectives but sustained 46 percent casualties in the operation.⁶ Eisenhower later appointed Ridgway as commander of XVIII Airborne Corps. During the remainder of the war in Europe, 22 divisions served under his command at one time or another.⁷ The forces commanded by Ridgway fought in the Ardennes, crossed the Rhine, fought their way through the Ruhr pocket, crossed the Elbe, and finally made contact with Soviet forces just as the war in Europe ended. "In all these operations, Ridgway's forces performed gallantly and well; their commander was always in the forward positions when the going got tough."⁸

On 24 March 1944, Ridgway received a non-incapacitating wound from a grenade splinter in his right shoulder during a fire fight with a German patrol after he crossed the Rhine.⁹ This incident was one of many examples of Ridgway's habit of being where the action was, where the troops he was leading could see him.

Following the victory in World War II, Eisenhower returned

to the United States to serve as Chief of Staff of the Army from 20 November 1945 until 7 February 1948. He then retired from active service and became President of Columbia University. At the end of 1949, President Truman recalled him from retirement and appointed him as the first commander of the forces of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). He served as Supreme Allied Commander of NATO forces from 1 January 1950 until 1 June 1952, when he returned to the States to begin his campaign for President of the United States. He was elected in November 1952 and inaugurated on 20 January 1953.

Ridgway remained in Europe after the war as commander of the Mediterranean Theater of Operations. In January 1946, he was transferred to London as Eisenhower's representative on the Military Committee of the United Nations. His other pre-Korean War assignments were: Chairman, Inter-American Defense Board (1946-1948); Commander in Chief, Caribbean Command (1948-1949); and, in October 1949, Deputy Chief of Staff for Administration and Training, Headquarters, Department of the Army.¹⁰

Although Ridgway's leadership and the combat successes of his commands in Europe were renowned, his most demanding challenge faced him when he arrived in Korea on 26 December 1950. The Eighth Army, which he assumed command of, had been beaten and driven back through North Korea by the Chinese Communist Forces. It was a demoralized organization. Its soldiers didn't know why they were in Korea or what they were fighting for. Ridgway told them why they were fighting and, more importantly, he taught them how to fight this war. He applied the tactical and operational

lessons he had learned over more than three decades of training in and practicing the art of war. He motivated and led this Army just as he had his company, his division, and his corps, by caring for his soldiers and by setting an example of courage for them to follow. "In 1951, after six months of being battered, the Eighth Army in Korea rose from its own ashes of despair....no man who saw Lieutenant General Matt Ridgway in operation doubts the sometime greatness of men."¹¹ "Under General Ridgway's hammering, the Eighth Army took the offensive within thirty days. After 25 January it never really again lost the initiative."¹² "Ridgway had no great interest in real estate. He did not strike for cities and towns, but to kill Chinese."¹³

Ridgway accomplished his mission and restored the South Korean boundary to its prewar position of the 38th Parallel. After he replaced MacArthur in Japan as Supreme Commander, he managed the ebb and flow of the battles around that line and initiated the truce negotiations. He was not driven, as had been MacArthur, with the idea of pushing the communist forces out of the Korean Peninsula. While Ridgway was confident that the U.N. Forces could accomplish this, he also realized the tremendous number of allied soldiers that would pay for this victory with their lives. He did not think such a victory was worth the cost.¹⁴

Prior to the signing of the truce agreement in Korea, President Truman called upon Ridgway to assume a new and different challenge. In May 1952, Truman appointed Ridgway to succeed Eisenhower as Supreme Commander, Allied Powers in Europe. While Eisenhower had formed and began to develop this NATO

defensive force, Ridgway expanded and solidified it. When Ridgway took command in June 1952, it consisted of 12 battle worthy divisions. At the end of his tour 13 months later, NATO forces were made up of some eighty divisions, active and reserve.¹⁵

Ridgway returned to the United States in July 1953 to assume the highest Army post, Chief of Staff of the Army, appointed to that position by the recently elected President Eisenhower.

Thus the stage was now set for that major conflict in strategy between these two great leaders which will be discussed in the next chapter. But the foundation for this conflict had already been laid in the past military experiences of these men. Ridgway's experiences, particularly in combat in Europe and Korea, gave him a deep appreciation for the soldier on the ground and the need for ground forces. It was not naval artillery or air bombardment in Korea that drove the communists back. It was the foot soldier fighting from one hill to the next. But Eisenhower had not shared these experiences. He never commanded a company, a brigade, a division, or a corps, either in peace or in combat. He went from a career of staff assignments to the commander of allied armies involved in massive invasions and campaigns. His perspective was different than that of Ridgway's, but it was the right perspective for the job he was assigned to in Europe. "Although never a battlefield commander, Ike was nevertheless a great general, perhaps the best of his century. His breadth of view and strategic vision were unmatched."¹⁶

ENDNOTES

1. The facts and data on the comparative chronologies of Eisenhower's and Ridgway's lives and military careers were extracted from Stephen E. Ambrose's biography, Eisenhower Volume One: Soldier, General of the Army, President-Elect, 1890-1952, and from Ridgway's Soldier: The Memoirs of Matthew B. Ridgway, respectively, unless otherwise noted.

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3. Matthew B. Ridgway, Soldier: The Memoirs of Matthew B. Ridgway, p. 49.

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5. Robert C. Alberts, "Profile of a Soldier: Matthew B. Ridgway," American Heritage, February 1976, p. 77.

6. Richard F. Haynes, "Ridgway, Matthew Bunker," in Dictionary of American Military Biography, ed. by Roger J. Spiller, p. 911.

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11. T. R. Fehrenbach, This Kind of War: A Study of Unpreparedness, p. 438.

12. Ibid., p. 440.

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CHAPTER III

STRATEGIES IN CONFLICT

General Eisenhower won a decisive victory in the presidential election of 1952. He had campaigned on "a violent anti-Communist platform that denounced Truman's policy of containment and called instead for the liberation of Communist-enslaved countries." But this rhetoric did not match his subsequent deeds. "In practice, Ike's policy was also containment, which was shown immediately in Korea, where he negotiated a cease-fire and armistice with the Chinese without liberating North Korea, much less China." Eisenhower was a fiscal conservative, and he believed that war or an all-out arms race would bankrupt the United States.¹

Somewhere along the way, in his military career, it appears that Eisenhower's views had changed. In 1934, while serving as personal assistant to then Chief of Staff MacArthur, he witnessed the impact President Franklin D. Roosevelt's "New Deal" had on the Army. "The Army was the one place the Roosevelt Administration was determined to economize." The Army trained with World War I equipment and only had twelve post-World War I tanks in service. "MacArthur begged for more, he pleaded, he cajoled, he threatened, he had momentous fights with Roosevelt, but he got nowhere." "For Eisenhower, MacArthur's persistent and vigorous advocacy of what he knew was right was an object lesson, a lesson that was driven home six years later,...as (the Army) went into World War II with inferior equipment, inadequate

training, and severe manpower shortages."²

As Chief of Staff of the Army from December 1945 through February 1948, Eisenhower presided over the first half of the five-year postwar demobilization that once again took place in the United States military. Army combat strength decreased from 89 divisions in 1945 to 10 in fiscal year 1950.³ While serving in his various military and diplomatic assignments during this period, Ridgway was "horrified to watch the headlong rush of the American people and Congress to cut back their armed forces and dismantle their arms industry -- a development, he feels, that General Eisenhower, as Army Chief of Staff, seemed to endorse or at least to accept without noticeable public protest."⁴

This perception may have been a result of Eisenhower's management style as Chief of Staff. As he had done in the European Theater, he selected very capable subordinates. He then practiced decentralization granting them his complete confidence and a large measure of independent authority. "This technique enabled Ike to devote his time, much more than Marshall had done, to tours, public appearances and speeches."⁵

Later, as the first Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), Eisenhower had to counter the European NATO nations' reluctance to build European military ground strength. The Europeans were discouraged by the size of the Russian forces facing them, 175 divisions. They couldn't see the rational in trying to build up counterbalancing forces when it would be so expensive to do so and if the Americans were going to use atomic bombs in a conflict anyway. Eisenhower attempted to build the confidence of the European leaders. "(He) thought that sufficient

conventional strength could be built and that it was both mad and immoral to rely upon the atomic bomb."⁶

These anomalies among Eisenhower's positions on military strength posture and his military experiences throughout his career are difficult to explain, particularly in view of the policies he subsequently instituted as president. An explanation may lie in the nature of his military service. As a war time leader, he commanded the largest coalition army ever assembled. Factors that contributed to his success were his ability to arrive at compromises with his allies and to avoid extravagant and risky courses of action. As an accomplished staff officer, particularly when working for such dominant personalities as Pershing and MacArthur, Eisenhower had to adjust to and support his bosses' positions and objectives.

But now there were no bosses. Eisenhower was the President. He was the Commander-In-Chief of the military establishment. There was no one above him for whom he had to develop a compromise. Of course, he had to work with congress, and he would have to answer for his actions to the American people in four more years. But they were not going to give him guidelines or develop parameters for his job. They wanted a leader. It was now up to Eisenhower, possibly for the first time in his career, to develop and implement his own concepts, his own national military strategy. And he did.

THE NEW LOOK

In December 1952, while returning from a post-election trip to Korea, which fulfilled one of his campaign promises,

Eisenhower stopped at Wake Island. For three days, he met there with a number of his key designated cabinet appointees and advisers to work out prospective foreign and domestic policy for his new administration. The major problem they faced was the federal budget. Truman's 1954 budget of \$80 billion was projected to be \$10 billion in deficit. Eisenhower's goal was to balance the budget before his term of office ended. The Department of Defense -- the biggest spender -- was the only place that substantial savings could be made. These facts led them to two conclusions:

(F)irst, that the Korean War must be brought to an end; and second, that the nation had to find some way of defending its vital interests at a lower cost. Dulles argued -- and Eisenhower agree -- that America could not afford to implement the containment policy by stationing armies at every spot the Communists might probe all around the world. Instead, the United States should concentrate on deterring attack by maintaining a retaliatory power capable of striking back at the source of aggression. That meant nuclear weapons and the means of delivering them had to be expanded and improved, at the expense of conventional forces.⁷

When later commenting on the basic guidelines he considered in forming a security policy as he took over the office of President, Eisenhower wrote that one of them "was that national security could not be measured in terms of military strength alone. The relationship, for example, between military and economic strength is intimate and indivisible."⁸

In explaining the impact of this policy on the military force structure, Eisenhower, writing in 1963, did not relate the policy to its impact on the Army, Navy, or Air Force. Rather, he described the five types of modern combat forces that made up our

defense forces: They were:

(1) Nuclear retaliatory or strike forces, the bulk of which consisted of the Air Force's Strategic Air Command.

(2) Forces deployed overseas. These were ground and tactical air forces stationed primarily in Europe and the Far East.

(3) Forces to keep the sea lanes open in the event of emergency. These were Navy and Marine forces deployed in the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans.

(4) Forces to protect the United States from air attack. These consisted of Army and Air Force air defense units assigned in the United States.

(5) Reserve Forces, which were made up of active forces of all services maintained in a training status in the US.⁹

Eisenhower defined his "New Look" military force structure as a reallocation of resources among these five combat forces and their related missions with greater emphasis placed on the deterrent and destructive power of improved nuclear weapons, better means of delivery, and effective air defense units. Other active combat units would be maintained and modernized but with decreases in numerical strength. Supporting reserve forces were given a lower priority. The result of this reallocation was an increase in the Air Force with the bulk of the reductions taking place primarily in the Army and secondarily in the Navy.

Eisenhower points out that this change in strategic emphasis came at a time when the administration was exerting every effort to cut costs of government everywhere and that, therefore, the two

separate efforts came to be associated in many minds.¹⁰

* It sounds like the old question of which came first the chicken or the egg. Whether the strategy was driven by economics or the monetary savings were merely a by-product of the change in strategy, the result was the same. The United States had a drastically new national military strategy -- massive retaliation -- and the Army was going to pay the cost for this strategy by deep cuts in its strength and its budget. The New Look military's massive retaliation strategy was a strategy of nuclear deterrence. It promised the Soviet Union and its Communist surrogates that the United States would respond to aggression by striking instantly "by means and at places of our own choosing."¹¹

The value of a deterrent is in the "eye of the beholder." The enemy must believe or, at least, be uncertain as to whether or not you will employ your destructive force against him for his specific aggression. Deterrence is a strategy of risks. Eisenhower made a conscious decision to reduce the US capability to fight limited, conventional combat or wars based upon the risk that the threat of massive retaliation with atomic weapons would prevent such wars from being initiated. The benefit for this risk was reduced budget deficits and increased economic growth. He understood that the economic power of a nation was equally as important as its military power. The question was would Eisenhower unleash the atomic weapons to stop aggression or was his strategy merely a bluff. It is clear that he intended to respond massively if there was a general attack against the West.¹² But what about varying degrees of "brush fire" wars

around the world in areas of US interest? That was the question the Army wanted answered.

A WARFIGHTING STRATEGY

General Ridgway was confronted with the New Look military structure, the related strategy of massive retaliation, and their impact on the Army shortly after he assumed duties as Army Chief of Staff. In the late fall of 1953, the staff of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) prepared and coordinated a paper entitled "Military Strategy and Posture (JCS 2101/111)" which proposed the first steps in the "reallocation" of forces and funds called for under the New Look. The issue paper proposed a 195,000 man reduction in Army strength by the end of FY 1955, bringing the Service's strength level down from 1.5 million to 1.305 million. Ridgway viewed this reduction as a sound means of correcting the Army's over extension and faulty overseas deployment at that time. But he could not accept the post-FY 1955 further significant reductions in Army strength which the paper also recommended. The uncertainty of world conditions and the expanding Communist threat did not support such action. He felt it would greatly decrease US security.¹³

Ridgway opined that the JCS, led by Admiral Arthur W. Radford whom Eisenhower had appointed to replace General Omar Bradley as Chairman of the JCS, had come to this force structure conclusion based upon funds available rather than on the basis of an analysis of the forces required to meet a clearly defined mission.¹⁴ Ridgway clearly stated his positions in a memorandum to Secretary of the Army Robert T. Stevens who

agreed with Ridgway and immediately forwarded it to Secretary of Defense Charles E. Wilson. Wilson directed the reductions to be implemented.¹⁵

But this was only the beginning. Pressure to make further cuts in military force structure and budgets continued throughout Ridgway's tenure as Chief of Staff until his retirement on 30 June 1955. None of the Service Chiefs supported reductions in their budgets or forces, but Wilson and Radford were pushed by Eisenhower to implement his policy, and they did. With the vast majority of these reductions occurring within the Army, the other Service Chiefs were reluctant to argue too strongly against the new policy and its impact on the Army lest their Service be targeted to absorb the necessary reductions. The result was that votes on these resource and force structure issues among the Joint Chiefs of Staff were usually a 4 to 1 split vote, with Ridgway in the dissent. This was despite Wilson's and Radford's efforts to secure unanimous agreement.

The need for greater economic savings caused the Eisenhower Administration to accelerate rather than delay defense expenditure cuts, despite Ridgway's protests. Army manpower decreased from 1.5 million in December 1953 to 1 million by June 1955. The Army's FY 1953 budget of \$16.2 million was reduced to \$8.8 million in FY 1955. During the same periods, the other Services fared much better. The Navy/Marine strength was reduced from 1 million to 870,000 with a budget reduction of \$11.2 million to \$9.7 million. The Air Force increased its manpower from 950,000 to 970,000 and its budget from \$15.6 million to \$16.4 million.¹⁶ As these figures indicate, very

little of the defense resources were "reallocated" compared to the total force reductions.

Ridgway's resistance to the New Look and the strategy of massive retaliation was not only based upon his feeling that he was being called upon to tear down, rather than build up, the Army.¹⁷ He was not merely being parochial, although Eisenhower accused him of this.¹⁸ Ridgway sincerely believed that the nation would be incapable of fighting the battles against Communist aggression and defending our national interests with the inadequate ground forces left by the New Look or by relying solely on massive atomic response.

Ridgway's views were based upon his military and diplomatic experiences. Concerning his assignment as military adviser to the United Nations where he dealt with the Russians in trying to develop a postwar peace formula, he said, "and from that experience I had learned one bitter lesson -- that in the world today there can be no peace that is not based on strength."¹⁹ In considering the situation that existed at the beginning of the Korean War, he reflected :

To me the lessons of that conflict were clear -- that hope of peace rests solidly on strength for war....(Korea) shattered...the dreamy eyed delusion which possessed the minds of many then -- that the threat of nuclear weapons alone could keep the peace and...the nebulous faith that war, even a little war, could be won by air and naval power alone.²⁰

Ridgway believed that placing primary reliance on atomic weapons would put our foreign policy in a strait jacket. He saw that in future wars there might be a common refusal to use atomic

weapons. Total dependence on nuclear weapons would leave the US incapable of dealing with emergency situations by more conventional means.²¹

He also objected to a policy of massive retaliation "by means and at places of our own choosing" because he felt it was morally as well as militarily wrong. "It is repugnant to the ideals of a Christian nation," he said. "It is not compatible with what should be the basic aim of the United States in war, which is to win a just and durable peace."²²

When officially asked, Ridgway clearly stated his opposition to Radford, Wilson, Eisenhower and Congress. Word of this conflict in strategy reached the press and caused some consternation for Eisenhower with the opposition in Congress and with the media. After his retirement, Ridgway published his strong opposition to massive retaliation and to the Administration's method of structuring military forces based upon economic and political reasons rather than military requirements and strategy and of pressuring military leaders to agree that this was sound policy.

Ridgway won support for his position. After reading Ridgway's 21 January 1956 article in the Saturday Evening Post, the noted British military strategist, B.H. Liddell Hart, wrote to Ridgway. He said that he had read and agreed with the article and that a re-examination of current military strategy had "led me increasingly to the conclusion that the 'great deterrent' of the hydrogen bomb is not a safe substitute for strength on the ground."²³

But the New Look continued through the decade of the fifties

and Eisenhower's second term as President, which he won by a landslide. However, the resistance led by Ridgway and continued by General Taylor during his four years as Army Chief of Staff, combined with the Soviet Union's increased capability for massive nuclear attack, lead to the demise of massive retaliation as a dominant national strategy with the beginning of the Kennedy Administration.

THE RESULT

This conflict in strategy between Eisenhower and Ridgway was, in reality, a conflict between a deterrent strategy and a warfighting strategy. They were never on the same "wave length", and this just increased each other's frustration. Eisenhower wanted to avoid participation in any type of future war, and his policy of massive retaliation allowed him to do that. He understood the horrifying effects of an all-out nuclear war. He was not likely to use nuclear weapons unless the Soviet Union attacked the United States with them, and it did not have that capability during most of his term of office. By keeping military forces at reduced levels, the opportunity to intervene in limited, nonnuclear conflicts was reduced.²⁴

In the meantime, Ridgway, being the soldier that he was, was trying to figure out how he could fight and win any or all types of conflict that the United States might be faced with, including nuclear war. For, even after a nuclear attack on the enemy, ground forces would still be required to occupy his territory and control his people and resources.

Eisenhower's strategy seemed to work, at least during

the period of his Presidency. During the 1950s, the country's economy was revitalized, and the nation prospered. There were brush fire conflicts and crises to which, if we had had adequate military forces, we could have and may have committed them: Indochina (Vietnam); Quemoy and Matsu; the Hungarian revolt; Castro's rise to power in Cuba; Communism in Guatemala; and the Berlin crisis of 1958. While Ridgway wanted a strong, capable Army, he was not in favor of adventurism. He strongly argued against Radford and Secretary of State John Forster Dulles in regard to committing US forces into Indochina to support the French or against China in defense of the islands of Quemoy and Matsu.²⁵ Eisenhower agreed with Ridgway.

While Eisenhower may have followed a policy of nonintervention in situations where use of nuclear weapons were inappropriate, this does not mean he surrendered to Communist subversion around the world. In addition to saber rattling with the threat of massive retaliation, Eisenhower's strategy, as stated in National Security Council (NSC) document 162/2, relied on propaganda, diplomatic, political, economic, and covert measures to assist countries threatened by Communism.²⁶ The use of covert measures and the Central Intelligence Agency came to be a dominant, and at times very successful, aspect of this strategy.

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14. Ibid.
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17. Matthew B. Ridgway, Soldier: The Memoirs of Matthew B. Ridgway, p. 293.
18. John Mason Brown, Through These Men, p. 85.
19. Matthew B. Ridgway, "My Battles in War and Peace" Saturday Evening Post, 21 January 1956, p. 18.

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23. Letter to General Matthew B. Ridgway from B. H. Liddell Hart, 7 March 1956, "The Papers of Matthew B. Ridgway" Box 41.
24. A. J. Bacevich, The Pentomic Era, p. 31.
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CHAPTER IV

THE MILITARY LEADER AND DISSENT

The conflict between General MacArthur and President Truman, referred to at the beginning of this study, is a clear example of the exercise of the supremacy of civilian authority over military authority in determining national policy. MacArthur was not expressing an alternative military option to his commander-in-chief. He was trying to change national policy, and he violated specific instructions in this attempt.

The conflict in strategy between Ridgway and the Eisenhower Administration was not similar to the MacArthur example. Ridgway fully understood the point the noted military strategist, Carl von Clausewitz, was making when he wrote:

The only question...is whether...the political point of view should give way to the purely military (if a purely military point of view is conceivable at all)....Subordinating the political point of view to the military would be absurd, for it is policy that creates war. Policy is the guiding intelligence and war only the instrument, not vice versa. No other possibility exists, then, than to subordinate the military point of view to the political.¹

Ridgway's problem was that he did not think that he was being given a clear "political point of view," that is, national policy objectives upon which he could base realistic military requirements. He summed up this problem in a Memorandum for Record containing the guidance he gave to Major General G. H. Davidson, whom he had appointed to represent the Army on a JCS adhoc committee to work on force structure issues:

This leads me to the broad basis of what military policies of the United States Government should be. We in the Defense Department are living in a vacuum created by the absence of basic national policy. The soldier should never have to state what the policy should be. He should stand in his role of saying to the statesmen: what is it you want. The statesman should say: this is what we want -- what are the military requirements for the reasonable assurance of the attainment of such objectives? We are capable of stating requirements to meet stated objectives. I have been pressing for enunciation (sic) of those policies. The Defense Department has not seen fit to put that up to the agencies of the United States Government which are competent and capable of doing it. Mr. Wilson is now asking the JCS to come up with its statement of what they think the policy should be. I told Mr. Wilson, as I told my own service chief, Mr. Stevens, that I think that is in reverse of what it should be.²

Eisenhower was revising national policy through force structure and budget reductions in the Department of Defense and through a realignment of priorities within the remaining military organizations. From Ridgway's point of view, Army missions were not being changed or reduced to coincide with the Army's reduced capabilities. The threat had not diminished. In fact, it was growing. To counter this threat, the United States has sought and signed agreements with allies around the world. "For purposes of the common defense, it has entered into numerous commitments, some vague and some specific, to take action, to deploy forces, or to provide material support" to over forty nations.³

The fact that our military forces were inadequate in strength and in their positioning to meet these commitments

did not mean that political leaders would refrain from committing them. The lessons of the military's unpreparedness at the beginning of the Korean war were fresh in Ridgway's mind. He knew that it would be the soldier on the ground who would pay the price for this unpreparedness.

Ridgway stated his objections and concerns to his civilian leadership, Secretary of the Army Stevens and Secretary of Defense Wilson, and within the JCS. Thus, he was surprised and shocked when he read in Eisenhower's 1954 State of the Union message that "The defense program recommended for 1955...is based on a new military program unanimously recommended by the Joint Chiefs of Staff."⁴

Later in 1954, when the Congress was considering the Quemoy-Matsu issue, Ridgway was called to testify before the House Armed Services Committee. He expressed his opposition to military action to protect these islands.⁵ He also took the opportunity to "again denounce Eisenhower's New Look. Ridgway said that because of the New Look, the Army was just too small to defend Formosa. Eisenhower was so angry that he told Dulles over the telephone that the time had come to fire Ridgway."⁶ Dulles cautioned him against any precipitous action, and Eisenhower agreed.

Eisenhower's and Ridgway's perceptions of how a senior military leader should respond to guidance or direction, with which he did not agree, differed. Eisenhower's later description of Admiral Radford indicates his view. Radford, who had been Commander of the Pacific Fleet, was interviewed by Wilson and Eisenhower in Hawaii, during Eisenhower's return

from his December 1952 trip to Korea, to determine if Radford was qualified for JCS. After conferring with Radford, Eisenhower "...concluded that he could be extremely useful in Washington. He was, as it turned out, that rare combination -- a man of tough convictions who would refuse to remain set in his ways. Faced with new facts, he would time and again modify his views to fit them."⁷

The favorable attributes Eisenhower saw in Radford may be considered a lack of conviction by others. But to Eisenhower, whose past skill at problem solving through compromise was one of his strengths, Radford was a man with whom he could work.

Ridgway's view of the role of the senior military leader in relationship to his civilian superiors is contained in two of the nine precepts he has developed for use as a guide for future senior military leaders. One is that civilian control of the military establishment is fundamental and unchallengeable in our society and must remain so. The second is that:

Civilian authorities must scrupulously respect the integrity and intellectual honesty of the officer corps. If the military adviser's unrestricted advice is solicited, he should give a fearless and forthright expression of honest, objective, professional opinion. He should neither be expected nor required to give public endorsement to courses of military action against which he has previously recommended. Once the decision has been made and announced by proper civilian authorities, he should give his full support to its execution. He should not be blamed for policy decisions made not by the military but by duly elected or lawfully appointed civilian authorities acting in accord with our constitutional procedures.⁸

Ridgway also thought that his advice on what the Army needed to serve the national interest "...should have no reference to the impact my recommendation might have on the nation's economy, on domestic politics, nor on administration policy at any particular time."⁹

WILSON'S ROLE

Charles E. Wilson was chosen by Eisenhower for Secretary of Defense because of his record for efficiency in managing the nation's largest corporation.¹⁰ Wilson was president of General Motors Corporation. Eisenhower had not personally known Wilson before he selected him. Wilson was the source of the famous remark, "What's good for the country is good for General Motors, and vice versa," which was so easily twisted and used against the administration by the Democrats.¹¹

Ridgway did not like Wilson and considered him rude in his dealings with Ridgway and other senior Defense officials. He felt that Wilson came from General Motors with a firm preconception that something was very wrong with the armed forces, particularly the Army, and that he would have to take steps to straighten it out.¹²

In his writings, Ridgway does not portray Eisenhower as his opponent or adversary in the "conflict in strategy" that developed under the New Look. This may be due to the respect Ridgway had for Eisenhower as his former commanding general and as his commander-in-chief and president. Ridgway directed his battles to maintain the Army as a fighting force, adequate to

meet its commitments, at Wilson. He saw Wilson as the source of the decisions that were tearing down the Army.

But Wilson was just an implementor of Eisenhower's policies. It is clear that the New Look military structure and the policy of massive retaliation was totally Eisenhower's concept and driven by him. At a November 1954 Cabinet meeting, following Democratic victories in the Congressional elections, he discussed administration policies. On the specific issue of armed forces manpower, Eisenhower said, "I have directed a cutting back this year -- and more next year -- so as to allow us to concentrate on those things which can deter the Russians. This is a judgment of my own, made after long, long study."¹³

Later, when writing about his New Look policy, Eisenhower said, "I saw no sense in wasting manpower in costly small wars that could not achieve decisive results under the political and military circumstances then existing....I pointed out that we would not try to maintain the conventional power to police the whole world..."¹⁴

According to one commentator, "Much of the time Eisenhower treated Wilson neither as a deputy nor as a delegate, but rather as little more than an expediter of detailed presidential instructions."¹⁵ In October 1955, Wilson reported to Eisenhower that the JCS said they were "bleeding" and that the next round of planned military cuts would leave Americans virtually defenseless. "Eisenhower said he wanted reductions, that Wilson should get on it, that the President could not be expected to decide where each little cut could be made. Eisenhower told Wilson to 'get tough'."¹⁶

RETIREMENT

Once the final decisions were made and an Army of reduced strength was inevitable, Ridgway did the best he could to organize and train the Army to be able to fight and survive. Additional tactical nuclear weapons were developed and fielded. Plans were developed to reorganize Army units under the concept of the Pentomic Division, a smaller division capable of operating in dispersed elements on the atomic battlefield.¹⁷

General Matthew B. Ridgway, Chief of Staff of the Army, retired from active duty on 1 July 1955. At the time, some felt that his opposition to the New Look brought him into official disfavor and led to his retirement.¹⁸ Ridgway was neither offered nor sought the customary two year extension of his tour of duty as Chief of Staff. While he admits that his retirement may have been accepted by his superiors with a sense of relief, he makes it clear in his writings that he and his wife had previously decided that he would retire when he reached sixty years of age, while he still had the health and vigor to consider some challenging civilian pursuit.¹⁹

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CHAPTER V
CONCLUSIONS
HISTORY IS PROLOGUE

Eisenhower's policy of defending the nation through the threatened use of massive retaliation with nuclear weapons, to the exclusion of less drastic military capabilities, passed into history as an announced national policy along with the Eisenhower administration. Civilian as well as military leaders realized it was not a workable strategy in the ever changing world environment. Also, as we learned more about the horrifying effects of nuclear explosions, the policy of massive retaliation became repugnant to the American psyche.

But massive retaliation was America's first nuclear deterrent strategy. Nuclear deterrence has remained the underpinning of the country's national security policy since the 1950s. We have given it different names over the years -- Mutual Assured Destruction, Flexible Response, Nuclear Warfighting -- and our concepts for employing nuclear weapons have changed along with technology. However, "massive retaliation" has continued to be an underlying baseline of all these strategies. That is, if the nation is attacked and its survival threatened, we would retaliate massively against the attacker. That is the real deterrent.

The attractiveness of "defense-on-the-cheap" which atomic bombs and massive retaliation provided for the Eisenhower administration does not exist today. The exponential cost increases that have occurred since the 1950s in atomic and

nuclear bombs and warheads and in the means for delivering them -- aircraft carriers, submarines, bombers, and complete missile systems -- belie the "more bang for the buck" adage.

While technology and world conditions have changed significantly between 1953 and 1989, there are also a number of similarities in the situation faced by the administration of President George P. Bush compared to the fledgling Eisenhower administration. There may also be similarities in the impact on the Army of Chief of Staff General Carl E. Vuono as that which was experienced by Ridgway's Army.

Eisenhower's massive retaliation policy and New Look military were driven by economic requirements. He wanted to balance the federal budget, and he did. The \$10 billion deficit of Truman's projected fiscal year 1954 budget that confronted Eisenhower is dwarfed by the hundreds of billions of dollars deficit that President Bush must whittle down. The call to reduce the federal budget deficit comes from all quarters of the nation: conservatives and liberals, business and labor. The "conventional wisdom" also appears to have concluded that the bulk of any reductions in the federal budget must come from defense spending. Much of the funding for social programs that have survived the Reagan years is locked into entitlement programs that would be difficult to reduce. And if we are to have the "gentler and kinder" nation that President Bush has promised, social programs may require increased funding.

Proponents of defense cuts point to the defense buildup of the last eight years as a reason why defense should now absorb

any necessary budget reductions. But how did the Army fare during those years? The Army reaped the smallest share of defense dollars (\$481 billion) compared to the Air Force (\$619 billion) and the Navy (\$632 billion).¹ Retired Army Chief of Staff, General Edward "Shy" Meyer pointed out that:

The Army's (sic) sucked hind tit on modernization. Instead, the money went to strategic programs and to building a larger Navy, at the expense of ground forces....So from a national point of view, I think that unwillingness to seriously address priorities between the services...means we have not gotten all of our money's worth out of the buildup.²

So we are again faced with the problem which Ridgway confronted in his battles with Wilson, the allocation of reduced defense resources among the Services without reduced national commitments or Army missions. The Army continues to have to deal with the problem that the other Services can claim a strategic (meaning nontactical nuclear) mission while the Army provides soldiers to engage in unglamorous ground combat. The tremendous expense of new strategic weapons systems will put a further squeeze on the Army's share of the defense budget. The Midgetman missile system, if selected by Bush, will cost from \$35 to \$45 billion. The Stealth (B-2) bomber program is estimated at \$57 billion, and the Trident II submarine program will cost about \$55 billion.³

President Bush's selection for Deputy Secretary of Defense creates a foreboding analogy for the Army to the Ridgway-Wilson years. Donald Jesse Atwood, the designee for this job, comes from the position of vice chairman at General Motors Corporation and was reportedly selected for his excellent

management skills.⁴ The Army has learned that "management," just like "efficiency," usually means reduced budgets. Atwood's skill was supposed to complement the presumed lack of management skill of Secretary of Defense designee John Tower. In discussing the defense budget, Tower reportedly said that "he hopes to save money in military spending by stressing systems that use fewer people."⁵ While Tower did not become Secretary of Defense, his remarks may reflect the thoughts of the new administration.

In addition to these budgetary pressures on the Army, the Soviet Union's proposals, not yet matched by deeds, to reduce Russian troop strength in Europe and its apparent efforts to reduce East-West tensions may further detract from the Army's goal of maintaining a viable, responsive fighting force. Already, prominent Americans, as well as many ordinary citizens, are calling for reductions in overseas troop deployments. Since the Army has the majority of and most visible forces overseas, this translates into a withdrawal of Army forces. Once withdrawn to the United States, the budgetary pressures will most assuredly result in the deactivation of these forces. The Army's Budget Estimate for fiscal year 1990 points out that the size of the active Army is currently the smallest (772,000) it has been since the buildup during the Korean War and that its structure is the absolute minimum needed for national security.⁶

So what is the answer for the Army? Chief of Staff General Carl E. Vuono has determined that the solution lies in justifying the Army as a strategic force. In a recently published article in Armed Forces Journal International, he clearly defines the Army's role as a strategic force. He points out the essential

nature of ground forces for national security, both for their deterrent and warfighting capabilities.⁷ In a related letter sent to Army leaders, he stressed the importance of understanding and explaining to our citizens and government officials the Army's contribution to national security.⁸

There is a sense of deja vu here. On 29 June 1955, two days before General Ridgway's retirement from his duties as Chief of Staff and from the Army, the Army published Department of the Army Pamphlet No. 21-70. Its title was "The Role of the Army." The last paragraph summed up the message of the pamphlet and concluded, "Consequently, the United States Army, strategically mobile, capable of winning land battles and controlling land areas, is the final and decisive element of United States military power."⁹

We hope General Vuono is more successful than was General Ridgway in retaining Army force structure.

We also hope that our nation and our national leaders never have to relearn the lessons of the Korean War which T.R. Fehrenbach describes in the following two excerpts from his book, This Kind of War: A Study of Unpreparedness. If they do, it will be the "Proud Legions" of the United States Army that will pay the price for those lessons.

In July 1950, one news commentator rather plaintively remarked that warfare had not changed so much, after all. For some reason, ground troops still seemed to be necessary, in spite of the atom bomb. And oddly and unfortunately, to this gentleman, man still seemed to be an important ingredient in battle. Troops were getting killed, in pain and fury and dust and filth. What had happened to the widely heralded pushbutton

warfare where skilled, immaculate technicians who had never suffered the misery and ignominy of basic training blew each other to kingdom come like gentlemen?

Americans in 1950 rediscovered something that since Hiroshima they had forgotten: you may fly over a land forever; you may bomb it, atomize it, pulverize it and wipe it clean of life -- but if you desire to defend it, protect it, and keep it for civilization, you must do this on the ground, the way the Roman legions did, by putting your young men into the mud.¹⁰

ENDNOTES

1. James Kitfield, "Reagan's Army: What the Buildup Brought," Army Times (Springfield), 5 December 1988, p. 16.

2. Ibid.

3. "Maybe Dukakis Has a Point," Army Times, 10 October 1988, p. 27.

4. Doron P. Levin, "Manager for Pentagon," New York Times, 26 January 1989, p. D23.

5. "Tower Pledges to Stress Cuts in Personnel," Patriot News (Harrisburg), 26 December 1988, p. A3.

6. "US Army Budget Estimate for Fiscal Year 1990," Preface to the Executive Summary, p. 1.

7. Carl E. Vuono, "The United States Army Is A Strategic Force," Armed Forces Journal International, February 1989, p. 60.

8. Carl E. Vuono, US Army Chief of Staff, letter to Army leaders, 3 February 1989, p. 1.

9. US Department of the Army, Department of the Army Pamphlet No. 21-70: The Role of the Army, p. 16.

10. T. R. Fehrenbach, This Kind of War: A Study of Unpreparedness, p. 427.

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