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CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONSHIPS

Mr. Walter Millis

NOTICE

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Reviewed by: Colonel Tom W. Sills, USA

Date: 11 September 1959

INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE OF THE ARMED FORCES

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Reporter: Grace R. O'Toole

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2 September 1959

GENERAL HOUSEMAN: We are going to have a discussion of Civil-Military Relationships today. Civil-military relations have always been important to the civilian population and this subject is particularly important to you people here in this room. That relationship has been of growing importance since the founding days of the Republic. If you will remember, last week the subject was brought up about the dim view which our Founding Fathers took of the military, or at least of certain aspects of the military's operations.

Certainly lingering doubts about the military have been in the civilians' minds ever since. But, despite this, there has been an ever-increasing important role which the military has played, or at least there has been a growing impact which the military has had upon the civilian economy and the civilian government.

Our speaker today is particularly well qualified on this subject. He is a writer on the subject and has been interested in it for many, many years. He has written on a subject which is a pattern of growing interest in the country, in that writers of various types have been writing to an increasing degree on the subject of civil-military relationships.

Our speaker this morning was in the service in World War I. He functioned as a staff and editorial writer since that time in various newspapers, and he is an author of note. Three of the most well known

of his books are, "The Martial Spirit," "Arms and Men," and "Arms and the State."

Mr. Walter Millis, this morning's speaker, is currently with the Fund for the Republic, and he is studying the impact of government defense policies on individual freedoms and civil liberties.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce Mr. Millis here this morning. We are happy to have you with us, Mr. Millis.

MR. MILLIS: General Houseman, Gentlemen: I am afraid that what I am about to say will sound in the first place rather general to you because it is a rather general and vague subject, and in the second place, after what I have just heard, perhaps it will sound in part somewhat repetitious, because I also intended to start with the early attitude toward civil-military relationships.

I suppose there is not a military man in this room who has not been bone-bred in the belief that civilian supremacy over the military power is a fundamental principle of <sup>the</sup> American free society. There is not one of you, I imagine, who does not regard civilian supremacy as a basic element of the American Constitutional system which he is bound to uphold under his oath to defend the Constitution of the United States. I suspect that many of you have been perplexed, as many civilians have been perplexed, by the problem of applying the principle to the practical issues of defense in the modern context.

Granting that the power is always in command, where and how is the

line drawn? Where and how does the military responsibility begin and end? Anyone who reads over, for example, the testimony of the high military and civil officials before the so-called MacArthur hearings in 1951, will get, I think, a vivid sense of the discomforts and difficulties which these issues generate.

Many of these difficulties flow in part, I think, from a certain misunderstanding of the origins and early significance of the principle. It stems, like so many other of our Constitutional principles, at least, from the English civil wars of the 17th century. The English Bill of Rights, which was enacted in 1689, as a kind of final curtain on that unhappy period, declared that the raising or keeping of a standing army within the Kingdom in time of peace, unless it be with the consent of Parliament, was against law.

Nearly a century later, in another period of civil war, Thomas Jefferson incorporated this idea in the indictment which he flung against King George III in the Declaration of Independence. He said:

"He (the King) has kept among us in times of peace standing armies without the consent of our legislatures. He has effected to render the military independent of and superior to the civil power." At the same time--this was in June of 1776--Virginia was adopting her State Bill of Rights, which later supplied the principle model for the first 10 Amendments to the Federal Constitution. The Virginia Bill declared that standing armies in time of peace should be avoided as

dangerous to liberty, and that in all cases the military should be under strict subordination to and governed by the civil . Similar clauses were included in other State Constitutions and the principle, if not the precise phraseology, was in numerous ways written into the Constitution of 1789.

There is a certain ambiguity in these texts. Neither the civil nor the military power is defined. While in general they referred only to the exercise of the military power on home soil in time of peace, the supremacy which they declared was not so much that of the civilian over the soldier as that of the legislature over the executive. In 18th century Britain, as in most European countries at the time, the Chief Executive, the King, combined in his own person both the civil and the military leadership of the state. The armies and navies were his armies and navies, not those of the people. He was, himself, so to speak, both a civilian and a soldier.

In the political thought of the time, by which our own Constitution was shaped, no one ~~questioned~~ the virtually absolute authority of the King in foreign relations and in the conduct of war--subject only, of course, to the willingness of the legislature to grant him the necessary funds.

The principle of civilian supremacy seems to have meant only that the executive should not use his undoubted military power to override his civil obligations in domestic affairs to the legislature or the people whom he theoretically represented. The principle was aimed at the

executive, whether King or President, rather than at military men as a class or any supposed military interest. As such, it seems to me, it is hardly more than an interesting anachronism today. There has never risen the slightest possibility of a President using troops to turn Congress into the streets. Our usually very small peacetime standing armies have never presented the slightest menace to the liberties of the people. The supremacy of the civil power over the military power in peacetime domestic affairs has never been remotely challenged.

What has happened, however, has been a steady expansion of military factors, military problems, military considerations in all our affairs. Those standing armies which Virginia thought should be avoided have become unavoidable, inescapable, and one of the most massive elements in our civilian economy and polity. With this development has gone an extension of admitted war powers, not only of the President but of the Congress as well.

The relationships between the civil and military elements of policy and between the civilian and military policy-makers have become increasingly complex and intricate.

Lincoln, primarily because it was a civil rather than a foreign war which he was compelled to fight, and a war on a scale unprecedented in our previous history, made great extensions of the Presidential war powers into areas which would otherwise have been Constitutionally barred to him. His first expansion of the Army without Congressional

authorization; his suspension of the writ of habeas corpus; his security measures, including imprisonment on suspicion, and searches and seizures without warrant; his establishment of martial law; even the Emancipation Proclamation, which was a deprivation of property without due process, would all have been un-Constitutional had Lincoln not claimed what he called the broader powers conferred by that document. Congress and the courts agreed. These were military or war powers. The measures adopted under them were taken often on military advice and were carried out by military force. Yet Lincoln and the supporting Congress were all civilians. Did this represent an abdication of civilian supremacy? Or was it a confirmation of it?

The best answer, I believe, is that it was neither. The old concept of civilian supremacy was simply inapplicable to increasingly difficult conditions which the authors of the Constitution never contemplated. In later years it was to grow less and less applicable with the rise of the highly integrated, highly armed, modern, military industrial state.

To Americans, this was not immediately apparent. Lincoln's expansion of the war powers, and similar expansions by later Presidents, was more palatable because of the inveterate American conviction that peace is the normal condition of international life and war only a transient aberration. Once the Armistice is signed, everybody is demobilized and goes home, Constitutional guarantees are all restored in full force, liberty revives, and business is resumed as usual.

Not until after the Second World War did the fallacies in this concept really begin to appear to Americans. Yet we should have been warned by the late-19th-century history of militarism and the military in Continental Europe and Japan. With the rise abroad of the mobilizable mass army, sustained by conscription, expensively weaponed, and elaborately staffed, and the similar rise of the steel-and-steam navies, kept always in virtually complete readiness, with their long building lead time, requiring constant calculation as to possible future emergencies, military considerations were assuming an importance in peacetime policy beyond anything known half a century before, say. They were dominant in both foreign and budgetary policy; they were important in domestic social policy, since the military systems more and more rested on a popular mass basis. The war was not over with the signing of the Armistice; that marked only the beginning of the next potential war; and only expert military knowledge could be expected to grasp the diplomatic, budgetary, and domestic requirements which preparation for the next war entailed.

In countries like Germany and Japan the army and navy ministers, who as ministers represented the responsible civil power in the state, were required to be serving generals and admirals. The pressure of the military high commands to secure appropriations commensurate with their military responsibilities and to direct foreign and social policy into courses which they believed would conduce to the security

and strength of the nation which it was their duty to defend tended to make the military establishments into independent political forces. The "Army," which, of course, meant the higher officer corps rather than the troops, tended to become a power in politics, much as labor-- which again means the labor high command--or industry--which means the high industrial managers--are powers in our own politics.

Such developments ~~abroad~~ ~~we~~ were misunderstood by Americans at that time. It seemed to them like militarism running mad, as Colonel House, I think, put it, when he visited Europe in 1914. It seemed a flagrant and dangerous violation of the principle of civilian supremacy. Actually, it had little relation to the 18th century fears of standing armies as menaces to the liberties of the people. Civilian supremacy was of minor significance in a situation in which the civilian heads of the state were as much concerned over military victory or defeat as were the men in uniform. Many then incensed have sought to blame the catastrophe of 1914 on a hypertrophy of militarism which might have been averted had the civilians in Austria, Russia, or Germany exercised as firm a control over their military men as did the civilian government in the United States.

But I think this is pretty largely an illusion. The disaster was, doubtless, due to a hypertrophy of militarism, but the civilians were often just as militaristic as the military. If all the continental war ministers had been civilians, there might have been a few more brakes

applied along the way, but one doubts whether the ultimate wreck would have been any less complete.

Nor did Americans realize that, as the United States was driven to a position of power and vulnerability, more like that occupied by France or Germany or Russia in 1914, its devotion to the principle of civilian supremacy would not save it from many of the developments which seemed to us, in the Europe of half a century ago, to be militarism run mad. We have had no generals or admirals serving as war ministers, and the Army has never become, with us, the kind of political force which it was in Germany or Japan, and which it quite recently has showed itself to be in France.

But we also have the popular conscript Army. We have the enormously expensive weapon systems, with their long lead times and heavy pressure on the national budget. We have a military industry accounting for a substantial fraction of the national product, the military significance of labor and social policy, a secret security police, and the civilians' necessity for seeking military advice on diplomatic, fiscal, and political issues of many kinds.

Despite its strict subjection to the civilian Congress and civilian administrators, there are times when the "Air Force," for example, with its associated industrial and scientific complexes, seems not far from exercising the sort of power, at least, enjoyed by the German great general staff in its halcyon days. And I can only add my own hope

that it is not preparing just the sort of catastrophe to which Germany and the world were brought by the Schlieffen plan.

We are in no danger of usurpation of the civil state. We are, perhaps, in some danger that military considerations, of which one would expect that professional military men would be particularly conscious-- though civilians, in fact, often outdo them in this--should so far distort the national policies that undue cost to the civil ends of the state would result. We have not, at any rate, arrived as yet at an ideal solution to the problem of how to accord to both the military and the nonmilitary factors in our national life their just due.

The defense of the state is, of course, paramount, but a policy devoted to defense, security, and nothing but security, under the most extreme possibilities, is not only stultifying but self-defeating in the end. The state exists not only to defend itself but to assure its member citizens as full and free a life as possible. A policy devoted to only these latter ends may also be self-defeating. It may imperil the adequacy of the defense and, in losing the state, lose everything.

As soldiers, you are professionally bound to provide for the defense. As a nonmilitary man, I suppose my highest professional commitment is to do what I can to encourage a free and full life for my fellow citizens. At times this may create certain tensions between us, but I believe that each respects and, to some extent, shares the other's point of view. There is less of tension than a feeling on both sides of each making his

own proper contribution to a common end, and I suggest that this common end can more accurately be reached through making some real adjustment in the forms of civil-military relationships. A redrawing of the organization charts, or something of that kind, seems to me rather absurd.

Even in times of active war, and to a much greater degree in times like the present of non-war, it seems to me impossible to draw any sharp lines between strictly military and strictly political considerations. I can't accept Professor Samuel Huntington's argument in "The Soldier and the State," for a return to a strict military professionalism, aloof from the political problems of the statesman. It seems to me that attempts to maintain such distinctions have frequently been unwise.

In the closing days of the Second War, General Eisenhower's reluctance to allow political considerations to affect his purely military judgment--and I think one should always add the failure of his civilian superiors to authorize or ask him to do so--contributed to most of our subsequent difficulties in Germany. The political leader, on the other hand, must, of course, constantly take military considerations into account. And, while in our system the civil powers exemplified in the President and in Congress always have the final word, the civilian policy-makers must be responsive to military advice and may often be condemned for failure to follow it. The military adviser, in short, has

a political function, whether he aspires to it or not. The political leader has a military function which he must have the competence to discharge. Pressure on a civilian President who refuses, for larger policy reasons, to take professional military advice can become severe. Here, as in other relationships of life, too rigid a separation between the professional adviser and the nonprofessional policy-maker can tend only toward making the one who is the adviser in theory the dictator in fact.

In the various postwar reorganizations of the military establishment and the Defense Department, a great deal of lip service was paid to the principle of civilian supremacy, reaching its high point, I think, in the provision that no military man could be appointed Secretary of Defense unless he had been at least 10 years out of active service. The irrelevance of this was demonstrated ironically by the fact that within a couple of years the provision had to be suspended to permit the nomination of General Marshall, ~~an appointment made~~ and accepted with no visible damage to civilian supremacy then or thereafter.

Seldom, in all these reorganizations, did anyone define just what was meant by civilian supremacy, or just what effect the reassertion of the principle was expected to have upon the development of national policy. It was a kind of shibboleth which, I believe, did more to conceal than to expose the real problem. The problem was never to subordinate military considerations, still less military men, to nonmilitary

considerations. It was to give those considerations and the men presumed to be most expert in them their proper place in the formulation of overall national policy.

The foundation element in the National Security Act of 1947 was the desire to unite the civil policy-makers of the State Department with the military policy-makers of the military establishment, the latter including not only its uniformed heads but the civilian heads--the secretaries and the assistant secretaries, whose role was so often that of spokesmen for the Chiefs of Staff. The need for introducing at least this degree of military plan into civil policy-making had been felt strongly in the days before Pearl Harbor, when there began that informal association of the Secretaries of State, War, and Navy which was to develop during the war into the State, War, and Navy Committee, with its subordinate groups and subcommittees.

In the unification debates of 1946, the major disputes, of course, were over the new relationships to be established among the three armed services, but all the conflicting plans agreed that close association of the civil with the military arms of foreign policy was an essential. While the State Department was in the result to gain a certain authority in military affairs that it had not before possessed, the more significant consequence, I think, was to give the military departments an even greater authority over the traditional operations of State.

An arresting example of this was the sudden reversal of American

policy announced by Secretary Acheson when, in September 1950, he demanded the rearmament of West Germany. The moment was unpropitious, politically, both at home and abroad, and the results were in fact to be unhappy. But the Joint Chiefs of Staff had made German rearmament a condition, on purely military grounds, of their support for a massive American commitment to NATO forces in Europe, and, although German rearmament was contrary to the Secretary of State's own policy, and he doubted whether military considerations really necessitated so rigid a condition, he was obliged to accept the JCS view.

This was a very definite promotion of military authority in the councils of civil power. I am not saying that it was wrong. My own feeling is that it was more or less inevitable, given the complex nature of the military problems which the civil policy-makers were forced to take into consideration. But it shows that the closer association of State with Defense hardly redounded to civil supremacy.

If a primary objective of the reorganization measures was to give military considerations a greater weight in civil policy-making, the second objective was certainly to give civilian fiscal and economic considerations a greater weight in military budget-making. The Security Act of 1947 paid a great deal of attention to civilianizing--if I may use such a word--military economics. Such devices as the now defunct National Security Resources Board, the Munitions Board, and the Research and

Development Board were either created or taken over from wartime practice in the hope of rationalizing the military demands upon the civil economy for manpower, resources, and money. Improved accounting systems, supervised by civilians and patterned on the experiences of big industry, were developed for the military department, while the civil agencies of the Treasury and the Bureau of the Budget were brought into more formal and regularized relations with military budget-making.

But all this, it seems to me, did not so much expand civil power over the military power. Rather, it yoked them. It was not a declaration of dominance, in my mind; it was more like a marriage. And, as with most marriages, it left the two partners to fight it out on their own terms and to arrive at their own compromises as best they could.

The Security Act of 1947 disappointed the hopes of its authors, and, as you are well aware, it has been subject to much tinkering ever since. The details of the many changes are less relevant for our present purposes, it seems to me, than the general tendencies which they seem to point to. What seems to be most striking is the decline of its central institution, the National Security Council. NSC--I admit I realize that some may question the statement that NSC is in decline--it perhaps is a personal judgment, but I think maybe I can support it from the record--reflected in its origins the familiar idea that, if you assemble around one table representatives of all the conflicting policies and interests--the

military and the civilian, the economizers and the spenders, the strategists of limited war, and the strategists of atomic terror--at regular periods and supply them with enough staffs and experts to do their work for them, you will distill from the process a pure flow of perfectly blended policy in which all views are justly represented and reconciled--as in a sort of electronic calculator.

I don't think the idea has worked out very well, nor is it likely to. NSC undoubtedly has a function in overall policy formulation, but it seems to me a limited one, and I think that in the future, as was the case in the past, overall national policy will increasingly be made by strong individuals--in the President, let's say, in the Congress, in the Defense Department, or in State--rather than by an elaboration of committee systems. The best calculating machines are still no substitute for brains and force in policy-making.

A second general tendency has been the increase of civilian appointees, drawn largely from big business, through the upper and middle levels of military administration. Control has been increasingly centralized in the civilian Secretary of Defense--a far more powerful figure than the coordinator, as he was set up in 1947--who has been surrounded in turn by a legion of subordinate secretaries and assistant secretaries. In a way, perhaps, this is natural. In times of non-war, problems of administration, as contrasted with those of strategy, always bulk larger than in times of war; and this is particularly true with the highly technical

industrialized warfare of today.

Presumably the civilian trained in business management is likely to be more adept in such matters than the soldier, trained primarily to fight--although, of course, one of the interesting developments of our times is represented by the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, right here--the necessity for the soldier to become a good, trained business administrator. Although you might expect the military career, certainly the past military career, to produce less satisfactory administrators, I am not sure that the military career as it is followed today is far behind the industrial career in leading to that result. In fact, I suppose that the greatest military administrator from Samuel Pepys down to Wilfred McNeil have been civilians.

What effect this intertwining of the civilian with the military personnel down through the military administrative system has had on military policy or on the balancing of military with civilian considerations in national policy would be hard to say. I would certainly have had to have tramped the corridors of the Pentagon for many more years than I have in fact to be entitled to any kind of opinion on that subject. To me it seems that the Department of Defense remains the Department of Defense whether it is staffed by civilians or soldiers. The outlook and goals of civilian administrators do not, so far as I can see, differ significantly from those of the men in uniform. This describes a development within the Department of Defense.

A third and rather different tendency has been the increasing interconnection between the Department of Defense, as such, and outside departments, civil agencies in government, and civilian institutions of industry, science, and education. If this began, as I have suggested, in the need which created the old State, War, and Navy Committee, it has gone vastly farther and in many different directions since then. Representatives of the State Department and the Budget Bureau sit on many joint boards and committees with representatives, in uniform or out of it, of Defense.

When the original Atomic Energy Act was adopted, there was much debate over maintaining civilian supremacy in this vital area, and the AEC, of course, was set up as an all-civilian operation in which the military establishment was given only a peripheral and advisory part. This, however, did not prevent the AEC from developing as primarily an arm of American <sup>military</sup> policy. And, while there probably have been some real advantages in keeping it out of the Department of Defense, the subsequent history certainly represents no triumph in dividing military from civil considerations in the development of atomic energy.

This interconnection of our military with our political and civilian institutions is seen in many other forms--in the scientific research and advisory committees in which civilian scientists bring an important non-military influence to bear on the formulation of military policy; in the technical experts of many kinds, sometimes in uniform and sometimes not,

who are essential to defense policy, but whose approach is essentially civilian rather than military; in the somewhat complicated relationships between the military and the universities, which Defense employs both as research centers and as civilian sources of officer personnel. There are, again, the industrial laboratories and design centers engaged on military work, as well as the much debated subject of the influence of the big defense industries on military procurement policies.

One might mention the study organizations, of which the Rand Corporation is the best known, in which civilian scholars do high-level thinking under military contract, with one foot in each camp, so to speak; suspect to the civilian world because of their military connections, and, for all I know, suspect to the military world because of their civilian independence. They are a bridge between the civilian and the military attitudes, but they are also in some degree a confusion of them.

Many other phenomena of this kind will occur to you. One which I think is very important is the relatively close association between the American press and the military. Undoubtedly, to men in uniform the press often appears simply in the guise of a critic; but criticism is also of value, and I think the knowledge which the American press has developed, especially, of course, the corps of Washington correspondents who are responsible for the Pentagon, of military factors is an important part in interpreting the military man's attitude toward the civilian, and also, perhaps, an important part in interpreting the civilian's attitude

toward the military man.

I was just reading a very interesting account of the rise of the DeGaulle government in France. One of the very interesting points that the author makes is that the French Army came to feel itself completely isolated, or largely isolated, from the body of the French people. It regarded itself as a force inside a hostile environment and allowed no information to pass one way or the other, or very little. It stressed censorship, and so on. It gave out no news and regarded the press as simply a gang of critics. The fact that such a situation has not arisen in this country--although of course the press can be critical, but it can be equally critical of civilian military policies such as those found in Congress--I think is an important part of the actual running civil-military relations with which we deal.

There is another interesting phenomenon, too, that sometimes is overlooked. I think that we should not forget the extent to which professional military men have been trained in a great many disciplines in civilian graduate schools, and therefore must bring a significantly civilian flavor to many attitudes of the so-called military mind. The military mind is something in which I have never taken much stock. I can't deny that the rather specialized career of a professional soldier or airman or naval officer is likely to produce somewhat different attitudes, somewhat different approaches, to public affairs than the almost equally specialized career of a professional lawyer or a professional

doctor. The military man is perhaps more secluded from the civilian influences that impinge constantly on the lawyer or the doctor than the other two are, but that the result is any essential difference in the fabric of the minds or the basic attitudes of the two men seems to me very dubious. Certainly I have not encountered what I could call the military mind in my own experience; and every time the subject comes up I am likely to think of an old line from one of G. K. Chesterton's books. This is a book about the anarchists. The anarchists had to disguise themselves, and one anarchist decided that he would disguise himself as a major, and he went around muttering, under his breath, "Blood; blood! The weak must perish!" To his great astonishment, they saw through him at once. It turned out that the real major didn't act that way at all. So when I hear about the military mind I wonder whether military men really have it.

Well, there are other trends in civil-military relationships running back much farther than the National Security Act which might also be noted. For instance, the Congressional power to declare war, which was so highly cherished at the beginning of the Republic, and which is so often cited today, has never, it seems to me, amounted to a great deal. The civil power of Congress has rarely decided the issue of peace or war. In fact, if not in form, the normal case has been that the President makes the war, or the policies that render it inevitable, while the Congress merely confirms the existence of a state of war

after the decision has become irreversible. Again, the Congressional power of the purse, supposedly the final control over military policy, has, it seems to me, been greatly weakened, if not almost eviscerated. Any of you who has to appear before an appropriations committee to justify the military estimates may doubt such a statement. However, I think if you look at it, you will see that while Congress does go over the estimates with a fine-tooth comb and does find minor wastes or items to object to, it really can have very little effect on the overall, broad picture of our military spending policy.

I think it is true to say that in general the Presidency, balancing the pleas of the military advisers against the demands of fiscal policy, establishes the size, structure, and cost of the Armed Forces. The appropriations committees do very little to modify this basic determination. They can introduce minor changes in the plan, but the plan itself, it seems to me, is almost impervious to serious Congressional review.

Such are some of the visible trends in civil-military relationships today. They suggest what I said at the beginning. The problem, if there is a problem, is not one of readjusting the power relationships between military men, or agencies, and civilian men, or agencies. It is one of discovering how the civil and military factors in all national policy can be best brought into sound adjustment.

I think there are military men who are unduly impressed by the military factor who overvalue the role of military force in international

affairs and fail to see that there are severe limitations on what can and cannot be accomplished by it. But civilian politicians and editors fall into such errors quite as often as the soldiers. It seems to me, for example, that the late Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, was a good deal more militaristic in his approach to international relations than the ex-5-star General, Dwight Eisenhower, or the grenade-carrying ex-paratrooper, Matthew Ridgeway. This is not to disparage any of these high-minded men. It is to say that you can't tell much about a man's wisdom or the nature of the influence he will bring upon high policy by the kind of clothes he wears, or even by whether he got his first degree from West Point or from the University of Chicago.

The question of civil-military relationships seems to me rather empty. The question of how our instruments of policy formulation can best balance the civil and military considerations which all policy must always bear in mind is not empty. The solutions we have so far found for it seem to me a good deal less than ideal. In particular it seems to me that we are too much involved in the committee and staff systems and in the wars which these must inevitably produce between rival policies and points of view in conflicting interests. We tend too much, I think, to trade originality, imagination, and leadership for the comforts of compromise solutions that too often merely register the lowest common denominator of irreconcilable policies.

But I am not sure that in the highly intricate and complex modern

age these are remediable defects or that one can operate as intricate a social, political, military machine as we have developed in any better way. I certainly have no reform program of my own. I do not advocate still another redrafting of all the organization charts. All I can adjust is the old remedy, so easy to propose, so difficult to apply, of more wisdom, more thought, a better education for all of us--soldiers and civilians alike--in the basic forces which in fact will determine our national destiny and the fate of our civilization.

COLONEL SMYSER: Gentlemen, Mr. Millis is ready for your questions.

QUESTION: Since the 1947 Reorganization Act, we have noticed a tremendous growth in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, from the limit of about 400 to many thousands. I personally haven't noticed any diminution in the individual services of civilian organization--that is, the Secretaries of Army, Navy, and Air Force. It seems to me that this represents a great dilution in the expertness of the military advice that gets up to the head man in Defense. Can you speak about that, please, on the chances of an atrophy of the middle layer?

MR. MILLIS: Of course, criticisms have been often heard of this great proliferation of civilian administrators at the top. How far that dilutes the advice that comes from the uniformed personnel I am not in a position to say. It seems to me that the administrators very often take

the advice of the uniformed personnel in matters of policy and perhaps not in matters of administration.

There again, to know just how this thing works, I think one would have to have a much more intimate knowledge of the interior of the Pentagon than I am ever going to have.

It is often criticized on the grounds of cost and on the grounds of the inefficiency of the inexperienced civilian who comes in and serves a year or two and then goes out and is succeeded by another inexperienced civilian. I know it is often criticized on those grounds and it is criticized on the grounds of a confusion of different military policies in that they don't refine the policies of the various services or the various points of view. It is often criticized on those grounds, and as far as I know it is criticized justly.

But just to what extent it dilutes the military advice that gets into the body of national policy is a question that I am not competent to discuss.

QUESTION: Sir, you are the second one to mention that the National Security Council is on the wane so far as effectiveness goes. It would appear that, even if the National Security Council is nothing more than a forum for an exchange of civil-military information and briefings, it would serve its purpose and be effective.

MR. MILLIS: I think the original purpose of it was--or at least the authors of the Act expected--that it would do more than it has actually

been able to do. I did say that I think it does have a function in the formulation of policy. I don't think it is a useless instrument. It does have a certain coordinating effect; but as a machine to generate policy, to decide it, I don't think it amounts to very much. I don't think that type of organization can generate the sort of uniform overall policy for which we all yearn so much and which never shows up.

QUESTION: The NSC seems to be made up of men who already each hold a big office. I fail personally to see that they couldn't accomplish as much by meeting for lunch once a week, or once a month, or twice a month, as they do by having a formal council setup which again simply means that these men, each with a high title, have another hat which they probably delegate to some subordinate and an executive director.

MR. MILLIS: Yes, sir. I think you are slightly in error in saying it is made up of men each of whom holds a high office. It is made up of them, but it is also very importantly made up of its own staff, so far as I can see. Naturally, since all of their papers are Top Secret, it is difficult for an outsider to know exactly how the thing operates. But apparently the real work is done by this staff, the Policy Planning Board of the National Security Council. There are two boards, as a matter of fact. There is the Policy Planning staff, which is made up generally of people on the Assistant Secretary level, and there is the Operations Coordination Board--I think that is the name of it. The

Policy Planning staff generates the policies--or is supposed to, or considers them--and submits them to the NSC itself, whereas the Operations Coordination Board has the function of seeing that the policies, once signed by the President, are then carried out.

The NSC is thus quite a lot more than the top Secretaries who compose its membership. Also, it co-ops a certain number of people outside its statutory membership, of course--advisers, people of special competence in special fields, who come into it. It is very much more than just these 3, 4, or 5 Secretaries sitting down with the President and the Vice President.

I understand the Joint Chiefs of Staff has to be considered as very much more than four high officers. There's a great deal more than that in the JCS, if I understand the situation correctly.

QUESTION: Could you expand on your comment concerning your concern over the influence of the Air Force in national functions?

MR. MILLIS: Well, I realized when I said that that I was sticking my neck out. It does seem to me that the extreme deterrent policy--perhaps it is the only policy that you can use--can be likened to the policy of the Schlieffen plan, which was that, if war came, Germany would have to take care of the possibility of a war being fought on two fronts--France and Russia--and that, therefore, if any war came, the Schlieffen plan set everything up to fight that kind of war. It set it up in such a way that the German defense forces could not fight the war

against Russia alone or against France alone. They had to fight against both, and invited the disaster.

In somewhat the same way, it seems to me that the Air Force extreme emphasis on strategic mass population-bombing--that is, the mass-destruction bombing with the big weapons--has created a situation in which that is the only kind of war which we can now fight, and any kind of war is going to produce it.

It really seems to me that the kind of war which the Air Force is now designed to fight is a war that is just impossible. Either it will come, in which case the whole of our civilization will be blown up, or it won't come, in which case a lot of this stuff is not really sound.

**QUESTION:** You said, sir, that you didn't agree with Dr. Huntington's thesis that the proper relationship between military and civilian people is for the military to return to professionalism. I agree with you, but I did think that in his book he pointed out very well that one of the problems has been the abdication of the political-civil side of establishing policy, particularly at the end of the last war, but he thought that the political or civil side of policy-making could be enhanced if the military were strictly professional. How would you propose to be sure that the political and civil goals of the Nation are properly thought of and considered, particularly in times of war?

**MR. MILLIS:** Of course in time of war the uniformed professional has a much larger field of competence than he does in times of peace--

many decisions are such that only he can really make, and he must make them, whereas in times of peace the politician, the political officer, has large fields of decision which the soldier is really not competent to enter.

My feeling is that to try to divide the two, as I gather Huntington would like to do, to make this rigid compartmentation between the man in charge of politics and the man in charge of war, is quite impossible, because there are so many political civil considerations mixed up in all forms of peacetime military policy and even in many forms of wartime military policy. I cited the example of General Eisenhower.

I think in that case that it was not General Eisenhower's fault so much as it was the fault of his civil superiors in not realizing the political importance of his military decisions and in not requiring him to take the political consequences of his decisions into consideration. I think it was much more a defect on the part of the civil authorities who were superior to General Eisenhower than it was on the part of General Eisenhower. But anyway, I think the results were unfortunate.

QUESTION: You mentioned the AEC as a new era of civilian control. It appears we are moving into another one in space. We are organized with both military leadership and civilian leadership. I wonder if you would comment on this apparent duplication now and on what type of leadership you feel we need here.

MR. MILLIS: I'd like to ask you: Are there any important military

considerations in the exploration of space?

STUDENT: Yes, I feel there are, sir.

MR. MILLIS: You feel there are. Are they such that they could be removed from the scientific and civilian exploratory efforts?

That's another one of my ~~bets~~ <sup>bet</sup> noirs, let's say--this whole idea of the exploration of space being an important military consideration. Of course in the long run things may be discovered in this that will be useful militarily, but it seems to me that space is now primarily a civilian objective, trenching on the military only in that it has to use the military development of rocketry and so on in order to get its probes out there.

QUESTION: Sir, a great many of the countries in the world today that we are dealing with have a military philosophy with regard to their governments; unlike ourselves. I think that there has been quite a tendency on the part of the State Department, up and down--those in the lower echelons and those in the higher echelons--generally a feeling that they run the political aspects and that the military people apply themselves to the military aspects. However, I agree with you that experience has shown that in a number of these countries their leaders feel more at ease talking sometimes to our military representatives than they do talking to our political representatives. Would you care to comment on the feasibility perhaps of amalgamating the echelons perhaps throughout the State Department with the military?

MR. MILLIS: I don't quite know what you have in mind, sir. Of course the whole tendency of the Security Act was to bring about an amalgamation of the Department of State and the Department of Defense, to bring them into a close association so that each would be aware of the other and of what the other was doing, and each would cooperate with the other. Of course the old system of military attachés in the embassies is one of very long standing. The State Department's embassies now have their attachés. There's a connection on that level. There is the connection within the NSC, and there is the connection within these various committees. I would not suppose that it would be desirable or necessary to carry it any farther than it has gone now. Maybe I don't quite understand your suggestion.

STUDENT: I would like to elaborate a little further by saying that oftentimes we have recommendations, yes, coming from our attachés, and in many cases they are never reconciled until they reach, for instance, the National Security Council; and even there they let the State Department worry about things of a political nature. I was thinking of better contact and better working relationships from, say, the attaché in the field up through the top echelons in both State and the Department of Defense.

MR. MILLIS: You mean something in the nature of making the attaché responsible simultaneously to the Secretary of State and to the Department of Defense?

STUDENT: No, sir. We have what we call foreign desks that are interested in one particular country or region. We have them in both Defense and State. I was thinking about closer contact, liaison, working relationships, or assignments in country or region, and so forth, up and down, through the echelons.

MR. MILLIS: Well, I am afraid that I really have no comment to make on that, because it is a matter of an administrative practice that again I am not sufficiently familiar with, or with the actual situation, enough to have a valid opinion/<sup>on</sup> whether it could be carried farther than it has gone already or not.

QUESTION: During the last two weeks we have heard the Government of the United States referred to periodically as government by consensus, with the provision that, once all the information is available and is discussed and handled through the proper channels, proper decisions are likely to be made. Also recently we have heard discussions about military men taking public issue with certain major defense and foreign policies. Would you care to comment on the extent to which a senior military officer might go if he is personally convinced that a certain defense or foreign policy is contrary to the best interests of the United States?

MR. MILLIS: If it is a settled policy stated by the President or by the President's civil representatives, I don't see how the high military man can take direct issue with it. Of course that rule obtains in the

question of military appropriations, where the military officer cannot attack, or oppose, at any rate, the budget recommendations that come from the President.

Let's say that I think the retired officer has every right to express any views he feels on the wisdom of policy. A serving officer, it seems to me, is under certain restraints since he is a member of the administration. What actually happens very often is not that the high officers say these things--sometimes they do, but usually what they say and what they think is completely in accord with the general policy of the Administration. What happens is that the junior officers or other sources leak the view to the public or get it out in various different ways, rather than having the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, let's say, make a public statement.

**QUESTION:** It seems to me that the policy for preparing the Air Force to fight this type of war you mention was a national policy generally supported by the civilians. I wonder if you would care to comment on what better alternatives we have.

**MR. MILLIS:** I really must beg off that one, because I think it is opening an entirely new and different subject. I certainly agree with you that the policy is supported by the civilians. I don't mean to say that it is some invention of uniformed flying officers that is not generally accepted by the country. It is a policy which is generally accepted by the civilians. I think that some alternatives are open here. I think it

is not so much what is actually done or what is actually constructed in the way of rockets and missiles as the way in which rockets and missiles are applied to the current international scene or the way in which our foreign policy should make use of these things that apparently we have to have.

That, as I say, I think goes into quite a different field and it would take me a long time to clarify my somewhat foggy ideas on the subject.

COLONEL SMYSER. I am afraid our time is about up. Mr. Millis, I thank you very much for a very interesting presentation. All of us here at the Industrial College appreciate your visit.

MR. MILLIS: Thank you, sir.