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15 December 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: Dr. Kissinger

Pursuant to our conversation by phone a week ago, I have prepared memoranda on the following four subjects:

- 1 - Security Affairs Staff Responsibilities Under President Eisenhower
- 2 - Organization and Procedures for the Conduct of National Security Affairs
- 3 - Priority List of Security Projects
- 4 - Defense Organization and Management Procedures

They are presented herewith for consideration, and as a basis for further discussion.



A. J. GOODPASTER
General, United States Army

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12 December 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: Dr. Kissinger

SUBJECT: Security Affairs Staff Responsibilities Under
President Eisenhower.

1. This note undertakes, in response to your request, to describe the organization of security affairs staff responsibilities under President Eisenhower as they existed at the close of his administration. While it is not complete (being produced only from memory) it does, I believe, cover the main essentials.

2. In broadest terms, international and security operations of a current nature involving the action of the President fell to me. National security policy and planning, plus security operations at the interdepartmental rather than the Presidential level, fell to the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs. Obviously, the division was not so clear-cut as these words suggest. Moreover, each of us had other duties extending outside these areas. For these and other reasons, the requirement existed for the closest kind of coordination -- intimate, informal and constant -- together with the fullest cross-flow of information between the two of us. I believe we can fairly say that we met this requirement.

3. In more specific detail, my duties in this capacity involved handling the flow of matters that came to the President from the departments and agencies primarily concerned with security and international activities, operations and programs -- and that went from the President to these same departments and agencies (State, Defense, CIA and AEC, OCDM and its predecessors, MSA and its predecessors, USIA, the Arms Control group, as well as BOB international and defense divisions, the President's Science Advisory Board on security-related matters, plus ad hoc groups from time to time). These "actions" took many forms -- memoranda submitted to the President to provide him information or to request his approval of a proposal or program, or to ask his guidance; oral or written direction from the President, or from me on his behalf; a note sent by me to the departments and agencies regarding an action, decision, or request of the President, frequently in the form of a request to give thought to a certain problem and provide him with views; etc.

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These actions were of varying degrees of formality -- some, such as authorizations to expend nuclear weapons in tests, were in a meticulous, legal format, while others were no more than ideas or suggestions for consideration. One of the most important duties I performed -- as did the Special Assistant -- was to set up meetings in the President's office to take up "specific" problems, bringing in all of the principal officers of government having a material interest in the matter. A large proportion of the most vital items of the government's business in our respective field was handled in this way. Normally, there would be some kind of document that would record the decision taken, and provide a greater or lesser amount of supporting discussion.

4. I carried no title which quite corresponded to the function just described -- which was my principal duty. As Staff Secretary, I was responsible for the flow of all material, the domestic as well as the "international/security," from the Executive Branch to and from the President. However, I handled the material of a domestic nature in a manner separate and distinct from that just described, insofar as my personal participation was concerned. Within my office, I had an assistant who performed essentially the full Staff Secretariat function for domestic matters -- enabling me to limit my role to one of overall supervision, and, in general, to avoid getting into the specifics of these matters. With certain limited exceptions, international/security affairs were not a primary or direct concern of other elements of the President's staff. I also had responsibility as Staff Secretary for the administrative management of the White House Office and for related service and support activities. In the additional capacity of Defense Liaison Officer I had a little extra responsibility for seeing that defense and military service matters were handled with the President. In addition -- and I consider this very important -- as a part of my "international and security" duties I spent a brief period with the President every day giving him an intelligence "up-date," and obtaining his reaction or his comment -- which frequently took the form of a request to obtain further information, to have the matter looked into by a particular department or agency, or to have specific action taken, or explored. Out of this there came a continuing flow of intelligence-stimulated action and reaction between the President and his chief subordinates. (He also had a regular, more comprehensive intelligence report from the Director of Central Intelligence at the weekly NSC meetings). The "operations" of the CIA with which I was concerned for the President were those on which his specific

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action was involved. Often times, these would be taken up with him by the Director of Central Intelligence, with myself and frequently the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs in attendance. In all of this work, the duties which I had involved those of an office executive and those of a substantive adviser and analyst, in varying combinations.

5. The Special Assistant for National Security Affairs was responsible for the formulation of national security policies and the conduct of national security planning. In the Eisenhower administration these functions were carried out almost exclusively within the NSC framework, insofar as the top level activity of the Executive Branch was concerned. He also managed the NSC structure and gave broad supervision to the conduct of security affairs at the interdepartmental level through the OCB mechanism. As the manager of the NSC structure, he was concerned with the functioning of its various subcommittees. In addition, through the 5412 group he and other top officials at the undersecretary level reviewed CIA operational activities not handled directly with the President. He was the President's representative on the Committee of Principals, concerned with Disarmament matters. He of course consulted repeatedly and in great detail with the President on all of this. In addition, where approved policy did not exist as guidance for the OCB, for the 5412 group or for other agencies, he would initiate its operation.

6. His main responsibility in all of this, I would say, was to further the development of a comprehensive, thoroughly deliberated, and well-expressed body of explicit policy guidance which, with supporting analyses, covered all major areas of US security affairs. He was responsible for keeping it dynamic and at the same time coherent, constantly reaching out for new formulations and new sources of thought. As previously indicated, he as I would set up meetings with the President of the principal officers of the Government on matters that fell within his field. We would talk by phone, and easily decide who should do the "setting up" on any particular item.

7. One minor anomaly deserves note. It has to do with "foreign policy." Much of what State terms foreign policy consists of a mixture of operations and policy, in the terms I have been using in this memorandum. Where the matter raised a substantive question of international security policy, I normally passed it to

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the Special Assistant for International Security Affairs to handle or return to me as he decided. Where it fell within NSC policy, and particularly where it was a specific action of an operational nature (a message or letter conveying the President's views to a foreign head of government or Chief of State; an invitation to pay a visit or a reply to an invitation; etc.) I would tend to handle it with the President.

8. The Special Assistant "ran" the NSC meeting each week, in the sense that he prepared the agenda (approved by the President), introduced each item, summed up the position taken at the meeting, and finally, after the meeting was over, presented a statement on the matter to the President for a decision. In addition, the Special Assistant presided over the Planning Board, which at that time met twice a week, as I recall, and which prepared essentially all the NSC papers that came before the council. He also established major study groups and study projects such as the Von Neumann Group and the Gaither Panel. Prior to the formation of the OCB he either presided over, or attended and coordinated the work of, the Psychological Strategy Board. In addition to managing the work of the NSC, he was a senior substantive adviser to the President, particularly on the overall tone and tenor of U.S. action in the security field, and on the main lines and directions of effort to be followed over a considerable period by the U.S. in providing for its security.

9. Neither the Special Assistant nor I had direct dealing with the press. We had a minimum of exposure to the public. The rule I set for myself was to handle the President's information the same way I handled his official funds. We provided information to the President's Press Secretary and he obtained a good deal directly from the State Department -- much of it in connection with the meeting we had with the President each week just prior to the Presidential Press Conference. It was the President himself, of course, whose role with the press was primary on matters in this field.

10. If I were to choose the single procedure (other than constant and friendly coordination) that was of the greatest importance in the work of the Special Assistant and myself it would be our practice of bringing the principal officers of Government into the President's office on specific important questions involving security matters, so that each in the presence of all had the

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opportunity -- and the obligation -- to express his views and to hear the President's decision, thereafter going out to carry it out faithfully unless he wished to ask that the matter be brought up again for reconsideration. Where possible, appropriate preparation for the meeting was made in advance. In every case the relevant facts were assembled to the best extent possible.

11. While the foregoing pattern is by no means the only solution that can be imagined or developed, it does represent the product of some eight years of experience and development, and it does, I believe, provide useful elements for a mechanism capable of dynamic yet coherent action.



A. J. GOODPASTER
General, United States Army

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