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This is an oral history interview with Dr. William Kaufmann, held in Washington, D.C., on July 14, 1986, at 2:p.m. The interview is being recorded on tape and a copy of the transcript will be sent to Dr. Kaufmann for his review. Representing the OSD Historical Office are Dr. Lawrence Kaplan and Dr. Maurice Matloff.

Matloff: As we indicated in our letter of April 9, 1986, we shall focus in this interview on some of the strategic events and issues with which you were associated or of which you may have knowledge, particularly during the Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon administrations. First, by way of background to your long and distinguished career as a national security specialist and strategic analyst, would you discuss the circumstances of your appointment at Rand and any previous education and experience relating to the fields of national security and strategy with which you later became identified.

Kaufmann: I really started off with a mixture of international relations and diplomatic history, and did all my degrees at Yale University. I think it was a year after I finished my PhD there that the Rand Corporation, which had just founded its social science division, approached a group at Yale headed by Ted Dunn, Bill Fox, and Bernard Brodie, and asked them to do a study on propaganda in the context of nuclear war. This ended up as a two-year project, starting in 1949, and I became associated with it from the outset and actually did a good deal of work on it. I went out to Rand in the summer of 1951 just when a group of us were getting kicked out of Yale and going to Princeton. I was very tempted at the

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time to go full time at Rand. I finally went to Princeton but kept in touch with Hans Speier and a few others there, and by that time Bernard Brodie had joined Rand. They asked me in 1955 if I would be interested in coming full time, and I said yes. So I went there really after the fall term at Princeton and was there from early 1956 until the summer of 1961, when it became so awkward to do work that was not directly Air Force-related, and particularly for Mr. McNamara, and still retain the Rand connection. I resigned from Rand then and went to MIT.

Matloff: Did you have any dealings with DoD before going to Rand?

Kaufmann: Not really. Largely because of Bernard Brodie, I had started lecturing probably as early as 1948 down at the Air Force's Maxwell Field, at what became the Air University, and I met a number of people there with whom I remained in touch, including the general who was the first SAC commander and who had been the Pacific Air Force Commander [General George Kenney]. My favorite was General Orvil Arson Anderson, who was retired by President Truman after making some rather astonishing statements about using nuclear weapons against the Soviet Union. I really don't recall any direct contacts until I went to Rand. I had some glancing ones, owing to some things I had written while I was at Princeton, but nothing other than the Rand connection.

Matloff: During the Eisenhower administrations, when you were at Rand, what were your relationships and what contacts did you develop with OSD or any other parts of DoD?

Kaufmann: My work at Rand was primarily for the Air Staff. I did a few things for the State Department, but I think it was almost exclusively Air Force.

Matloff: How about in the Kennedy administration, did your relationships both with Rand and DoD change?

Kaufmann: Yes. In the first instance, several of my closest colleagues at Rand, Charles Hitch, Alain Enthoven, and Henry Rowen, all went to work for McNamara in early 1961. Second, by that time I had been doing a lot of work for General Noel Parrish and then for the Chief of Staff, General White. My recollection is that General White agreed in December of 1960 that I would be allowed to brief Paul Nitze about the work I was doing. He also agreed that I could talk with OSD about these matters. Then I really began, largely at the request of either McNamara, or Enthoven, or Rowen, to do work directly in the Pentagon, although I was still at Rand.

Matloff: Was there any reason why you did not make the transition to full-time official service that so many of your colleagues at Rand did do, if I'm not getting too personal?

Kaufmann: No, not at all. I think I valued my independence such that I found it much more comfortable to work, as I then began doing, in Cambridge and what turned out to be spending three days a week at the Pentagon. I just found that, although a rather wearing arrangement, a more comfortable one than working full time.

Matloff: Is it fair to say that your access to the OSD policyholders was easier and more accessible after the Kennedy administration came in?

Kaufmann: As best I can recall, I had virtually no contact with OSD prior to the Kennedy administration. It was strictly Air Force, and it was really the last year I was at Rand. The work I was doing seemed to

be of such interest that I had marvelous access in the Air Force. Then General White took a very avuncular and personal interest, so, except for some difficulties with SAC, it was very exciting.

Matloff: Did the coming of the people from Rand into OSD in any way affect the kinds of problems on which you were working?

Kaufmann: Yes, very much so. I had had a long term interest, in fact, a far greater interest in conventional force planning than in the strategic force planning, but that was Rand's bread and butter, as it were. They at least thought of themselves as the cutting edge of the thinking in that area, so while I was at Rand essentially that was what I worked on. But once I had gone over this kind of work with McNamara and others in OSD, I think it was primarily Harry Rowen who got me involved in redrafting BNSP, if you recall that marvelous document. Ironically enough, I was actually very pleased myself. He had Dan Ellsberg drafting the sections that dealt with the strategic nuclear forces and I was dealing with the sections devoted to the conventional forces. So I really switched very substantially in April of 1961. Also, I immediately became involved in a study that Rowen, Colonel Ed Rowney, and one or two others were undertaking to try and assess for the nth time, I imagine, the Warsaw Pact/NATO conventional balance.

Matloff: Were there any changes once the Johnson administration came, and then later on, the Nixon administration? How did they affect your roles, functions, and relations with DoD, particularly OSD?

Kaufmann: I don't recall any changes as a result of the assassination or the advent of President Johnson. I think some of the esprit went

out of things, but in terms of relationships, I didn't detect any change. With the advent of the Nixon administration I was asked to leave. Actually, even though I was a close friend of Ivan Selin, who had replaced Alain Enthoven, my clearances were removed. In part, I suppose, at McNamara's request, I came to Brookings to set up this little defense analysis group in the summer of 1969. When I left that in the summer of 1970, Henry Kissinger asked me to do some work, along with a group at the NSC. So between 1970 and '73 I was a very active consultant with the NSC staff and with Jim Schlesinger, when he was at the then BoB and the Atomic Energy Commission. In 1973 I went with him part-time to CIA, then back to DoD, and became sort of a hand-me-down until I decided I got burnt out, in 1980.

Matloff: You mentioned some of the times you spent in Washington. How much time did you spend in Washington during the various administrations, other than the Kennedy period?

Kaufmann: There had been an Executive Order issued early in the Kennedy administration, I don't remember the reason for it, which specified that a consultant could spend no more than 130 days, or something of that order, and remain a consultant. If he went over the 130 days, not only was he supposed to become a full-time employee, but he was supposed to forgo any other salaries that he might be earning. This could be waived by the departmental secretary, so I broke through that. McNamara waived it, but it caused me a great deal of embarrassment, because it triggered all kinds of investigations as to what I was doing at MIT and where the money for my MIT salary was coming from, and so on. So I tried

very hard not to do that, but with Schlesinger, again, I started going over the limit. I remember telling him one June that I was already over the 130 days and he then worked out with Doc Cooke some kind of a personal services contract, which always worried me a little bit, but which enabled me to do as many days as I could make available. I think the maximum was under Harold Brown; I think I got up to over 240 days. I was teaching full time at MIT at that time, and that's when I decided to quit.

Matloff: To focus on selected problems of national security in the Eisenhower administration, that monograph of yours on the requirements for deterrence back in 1954, which you had published by Princeton--what influenced you to produce that one?

Kaufmann: That really was an outgrowth of the work I had done for Rand in the late '40s and early '50s; in fact, when the immediate stimulation of the Dulles speech on massive retaliation led me to write the particular thing. I sent it to Hans Speier and Joe Goldsen at Rand and said, "You have first claim on this, if you're interested, and if there is any problem of classification, I'd like to know." They very coolly rejected it and said that it was not classified and to do what I wished with it.

Matloff: Was there any special reason why they did not want to publish it?

Kaufmann: I think at that time at Rand, not throughout the institution--there were many different views--the dominant view was: a) the United States and its allies were so inferior conventionally that that was not an issue worth spending much time on; and b) we not only had but could maintain a sufficient nuclear capability so that we didn't have to

worry about those things, and the Dulles speech, therefore, was not all that exceptional.

Matloff: Did the findings of that strategic bases study report of the Wohlstetter team at Rand have any influence on you and your thinking in connection with this monograph?

Kaufmann: No, I was not familiar with it at that time; in fact, I did not see the study nor did I become aware of it until I went out to Rand in 1956.

Matloff: Do you recall any official reaction to the monograph?

Kaufmann: Not directly. I was told a number of stories about reactions, but I honestly don't recall anybody calling me up or saying anything about it.

Matloff: How about one of your landmark studies, Military Policy and National Security, also put out at this time? What led you to compile this publication?

Kaufmann: Herb Bailey, who had then become the editor, and still is, of the Princeton Press, always had an interest in these kinds of issues, and Klaus Knorr, who was at Princeton at the time, also was interested. Roger ^{Hilsman} (he and Ed Rowney were both at Yale at the same time I was, in the late '40s), was interested. I can't remember how we came to decide to put this thing together.

Matloff: In what ways did it agree or disagree with strategic thinking in OSD?

Kaufmann: I didn't have a clue.

Matloff: Any official reaction?

Kaufmann: No, not that I was aware of. I was told, and maybe at some much later date Bill Elliot himself may have said that he was outraged by it in his consulting capacity. I got indications--there was a New York Times reporter who seemed to be very interested. He told me a couple of stories about Army reaction, but I don't recall any direct contacts at all.

Matloff: One more in the Eisenhower period--the Gaither Committee report in the fall of '57--the one on Deterrence and Survival in the Nuclear Age. What dealings or contacts did you have with the Gaither Committee? Were your views sought? Were you in any way a participant?

Kaufmann: My views were not sought; I was not a direct participant. But several of my colleagues at Rand were involved in one way or another--Herman Kahn, Andy Marshall, and several others. I had written a piece at Rand about nuclear sharing, which also was a very popular subject at Rand at the time. I was very much opposed to this, and Albert Wohlstetter had taken this up as a cause and he and I got very involved with a couple of members of the Commission in trying to persuade them that it was crazy to go ahead with a large-scale deployment of intermediate and medium-range Thors and Jupiters that were supposedly coming on line at that time.

Matloff: I came across that letter that you and he wrote to the committee. This was in opposition to the IRBMs being placed in Europe in 1958. Do you recall any response?

Kaufmann: There was one fellow at Rand, whose name escapes me, who I think was the principal person working in that area, and he subsequently

told me that they cut way back on the plan, but never gave me any indication that it had anything to do with what Albert and I may have said.

Matloff: The Gaither Committee had broadened its range of interests from the original question of civil defense to the larger strategic questions, particularly after Sputnik went up. The great debate was going on among the theorists at this time, not only about massive retaliation based on nuclear weapons, but the whole question of limited war and conventional buildup about which you already were writing. In what respect did your views and those of other Rand analysts accord with what the committee was coming up with in its findings? Did you agree or disagree?

Kaufmann: I probably don't have much of a recollection. I think my vague view is that, in general terms, since they stressed the vulnerability problem, I probably was in sympathy. I had no problem with the civil defense aspects, although I thought, with all my affection and admiration for Herman Kahn, that he was going a bit far in some of his notions, but that was characteristic of Herman.

Matloff: Did you perceive the necessity of any shift in your views, if any occurred, in the '60s and '70s in relation to the threat? What did you feel was the predominant threat facing the United States in the '50s? And was there any change in your thinking later? if so, why?

Kaufmann: There had been lots of changes. In a nutshell, I would say, first of all, the intelligence got a lot better. Especially, in my direct knowledge, by December 1960 we were really beginning to get much better data than we had received via the U-2, etc. I had not had access to

U-2 data, I was aware of it, but then I became very familiar with the other types of overhead data. That really did make a big difference.

Matloff: Did you at any time perceive any differences in your own thinking from that of the predominant view in OSD?

Kaufmann: Certainly in the '60s. I think it was really starting in '63. McNamara asked me to start keeping track of these various studies that he had commissioned on the ^{tactical} practical use of nuclear weapons, and there was this series, primarily Army studies, done under CJCS auspices. Then in 1964 Enthoven asked me to write what became the first Presidential Memorandum about those. That ran very counter to the prevailing views about the utility of those capabilities. So I certainly was at variance, not with McNamara, but the services were very unhappy.

Matloff: Did you and McNamara share the same view of the threat, or were there any differences?

Kaufmann: No, I don't really think so. I think prior to '61 I certainly shared the view, not about "the missile gap," which was a Senator Symington misnomer, but that the Soviet Union would or could have the capability by the early '60s to deploy something on the order of 200 ICBMs, and given the concentration of the SAC bomber forces, this could result in a very devastating attack. I guess the other area in which I came to disagree with him--and even there I'm not quite sure whether it was a disagreement-- McNamara always tended to think in terms of his five-year programs. He would be talking about the out-year. I became convinced in 1961, and as late as 1963, that whereas we had worried about the great vulnerability of the U.S. forces in the late '50s, the shoe was totally on the other

foot in that period, and that really, while I did not have high confidence in the ballistic missiles at that time, I don't think Bob ever wanted to face up to that situation. It was tricky, and even somebody like Paul Nitze would not get interested for more than 15 or 20 minutes because of the trickiness of it. I think probably that was the one brief period when the United States, in the strategic nuclear realm, at least, had probably the greatest advantage ever. I might just mention that I took leave from Rand in 1959-60 and actually went back to Yale, at President Griswold's request, on a visiting professorship, but I actually spent most of the year reading SAC history. I think Tommy Power and I up to that time were the only two people who had actually read through all of these back histories. That is when I first got to know Al Goldberg. I became very interested in that history and took exhaustive notes which may either have been destroyed or still exist somewhere out at Rand. I was struck then by how poor, really, the U.S. capability had been back in the late 40s, and that that monopoly period was not all that impressive.

Matloff: When Schlesinger was SecDef, did he look at the threat any differently from the way McNamara did--in a different period, different decade?

Kaufmann: I would say, not really. I mean, I think he thought that McNamara's rhetoric had done a certain amount of damage and that this sort of white lie kept being told about mutual assured destruction, which was a force planning algorithm that had nothing to do with the SIOP or anything of that sort. I think Jim wanted to get away from all that, but his general sense about the utility or lack of utility of nuclear weapons

and the importance of conventional buildup was very similar to McNamara's. Before he officially became SecDef in 1973, a big NATO meeting was coming up, and Nixon and Henry [Kissinger] didn't want Bill Clements to go over and represent the United States as acting SecDef, so they made Jim a special ambassador, since he hadn't been confirmed. I drafted the speech that he gave, which infuriated Andy Goodpaster, but was essentially a replay of all the stuff I had written for McNamara in the '60s, and he took to it very readily. In fact, in some ways he was more forceful in trying to get the allies to implement the recommendations than McNamara had been.

Matloff: In your attitude toward nuclear weapons, strategic and tactical, in terms of buildup, use, and control--did you favor the use of nuclear weapons at all? if so, under what circumstances?

Kaufmann: I would have favored the use, under some conditions, which I should come back to, but I quickly became convinced--and I think this was as true with President Eisenhower as it was with his successors--that they weren't about to touch those things. I am confident that President Eisenhower was willing to make major concessions over Berlin rather than push that confrontation very far, and actually the U-2 incident probably saved him from making those concessions. So I just came to feel that realistically, whatever the potential utility of nuclear weapons might be, their use just wasn't in the cards. That has very strongly influenced me ever since. I am not aware, at least of the President [Eisenhower]--this is an arbitrary dividing line--in his second term having the slightest intention of using nuclear weapons, except in response to their use by somebody else.

Matloff: Including tactical nuclear, along with the strategic?

Kaufmann: Absolutely. In the work I did for General White, and then followed up on that in 1961, it became very clear, whether I was talking with Acheson, Nitze, or McNamara, or whomever, that their eyes might light up for 10 or 15 minutes, and then they would think, "Oh, my God, no. There are too many risks, too many uncertainties."

Matloff: I take it, then, these views of yours were reaching the top OSD level?

Kaufmann: Oh yes; I'm not sure about McNamara, but certainly Hitch, Enthoven, Rowen, Nitze, Acheson, were all familiar with these views, and I don't think I ever made any bones about them to Schlesinger.

Matloff: What was the impact of the Korean War, both on official thinking and your own thinking? In what ways did you agree, and possibly other theorists at Rand as well, with official and national security policy in the wake of that conflict? This is also the period when Kissinger and Osgood, along with yourself, were working on limited war aspects of the nuclear age. How did you see the Korean War influencing strategy?

Kaufmann: I'm really speculating, I don't remember all that well, and I don't have any record, so I may be inventing some views here. I guess my feeling, I think, was first, that the United States, despite the dragging out of the thing after 1951, came out of it rather well. Second, it was a rather clear demonstration that neither I nor anybody else, except the people who ran that war, invented a limited war. That was a harbinger of how things might develop in the future and a further indication about this enormous reluctance to use nuclear weapons,

although I wasn't fully persuaded on that score until the early '60s.

Matloff: Do you recall any differences that you had with the writings of Kissinger and Osgood in this period?

Kaufmann: I wrote a review of Henry's book on Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy, for which Henry never forgave me. I was the second recipient of a standard single-spaced six-page letter; Paul Nitze was the first to get one. P

Matloff: Was this primarily over the use of tactical nuclear weapons in Europe?

Kaufmann: I just thought it was a poor piece of analysis. It was bad history. I also think that it was excessively influenced by General Gavin's views about the possibilities and didn't take into account the risks of nuclear escalation.

Matloff: In the McNamara administration, with the change from the massive retaliation notion to flexible response—did you get involved in official discussions of this concept or become a strong advocate of it?

Kaufmann: Yes.

Matloff: When?

Kaufmann: There was really a series of studies at Rand, some of them probably done before I ever got there in 1956. They were always searching around for ways other than counter-city attacks, trying to think about these forces. So this was really a continuous process and a number of people were involved. It was really almost by a series of accidents in 1959 and 1960, while I was on leave at Yale, that I got directly involved

and ended up running this rather peculiar study. It is alleged to have been influential in changing McNamara's views and changing the approach to the SIOP, which I regard as the real test.

Matloff: On what intelligence estimates did you base your estimates of enemy missile production, and where were you getting them from—in connection with the counter-force briefing that you were doing?

Kaufmann: I was getting them both from individuals at Rand, probably Andy Marshall and Joe Loftus, who had better access than I did, and also from ^{AFCIN} ~~Arbin~~-(†), once they got interested.

Matloff: You were probably aware of General Noel Parrish's picking up the briefing very eagerly.

Kaufmann: Noel had a great deal to do with getting it started.

Matloff: What about SAC's reaction?

Kaufmann: General White was very concerned about this issue. He had commissioned one very large study at Rand that was both a strategy and force structure analysis, and it caused an enormous amount of dissension within Rand. General White, whom I greatly admired, kept being troubled by this, and while I was at Yale in late '59 I got a request from George Tanham, who was then the Rand-Washington representative, to respond to a letter that General White had written about maybe we should go and give up on ICBMs and just go for Polaris, which was a rather astonishing letter coming from the Air Force Chief of Staff. I wrote a letter in response to that which George had circulated. In early 1960 Noel Parrish was very troubled about the direction in which things were going and believed that the existing SIOP and the attitude on the

part of both SAC and the plans people were playing right into the hands of the Army and the Navy, who were arguing very much in the minimum deterrence matter. Noel was searching around for ways to deal with this problem and again George Tanham put him in touch with me. It was really Noel who stimulated me to undertake this work, in which I was very fortunate to have two first-rate people who already were playing around with some aspects--David McGarvey and Frank Trinkl. It was a fortuitous set of circumstances which led to this work.

Matloff: Who in Defense urged you to brief McNamara after he took office, involving the counter-force doctrine, the briefing that you already developed in Rand by 1960?

Kaufmann: To the best of my recollection, it was a combination of Charlie Hitch, Alain Enthoven, and a fellow named Marve^{is} Stern. Marve was in DDR&E, where Alain had been working before the change of administration.

Matloff: To refresh your memory, this briefing was given on February 10, 1961. Do you recall McNamara's reaction to it?

Kaufmann: First of all, before it, he had said, "Give me something in writing; I hate to be briefed." This thing had been such a hurly-burly that I had never had a chance to sit down and write anything. Instead I had accumulated an enormous stack--50 or 60--hand-drawn briefing charts, and he finally agreed that there was nothing to read; he would listen to the briefing. This was like a coral island; it had built up as I rushed back and forth between Santa Monica and Washington. It usually was something I had to go through step by step. First of all, I found out that

with McNamara I was suddenly flipping the charts very rapidly, because I didn't have to explain things very much to him, and I got through the briefing in much less time than was customary. Then we must have sat around for about an hour afterwards, primarily Enthoven, Stern, McNamara, and myself, and talked about how we were going to implement all this. He seemed, as far as I could tell, to react very favorably.

Matloff: How about your view on counter-insurgency planning during the McNamara period? Were you drawn in on any of the official studies and discussions in any way, relating especially to Vietnam or elsewhere?

Kaufmann: In 1963, Joe Kraft had come to McNamara or Adam Yarmolinsky, saying that he wanted to do a book on McNamara, and Adam and several others decided that Joe was not the right person to do it. They asked me if I would do it, so actually between June and November or December of '63 I took leave and went off the payroll to do this thing, which I suspected was sort of an advance publication for McNamara's run at the vice presidency in the '64 campaign. Among other things, Harper and Row was very enthusiastic about this until the assassination, and then I think they would have dropped the whole thing if they hadn't signed a contract. At any rate, when I had finished with all that, I got called by Harry Rowen, saying to come on down. I said that the only purpose for which I would come back down was if I could do some work on Vietnam. So for about three months, I was running out of ISA a sort of combined interview program with returning officers and some analyses and writings for McNamara, John McNaughton, and Bill Bundy. Then in May or June of '64 I was told to stop and go back to Europe or something else. My

impression is that McNamara-Paul Nitze more or less confirmed this to me--had struck a deal with the Chiefs whereby his people would stay out of operations and they would not fight him as much as they had in the past on the force planning and programming. My work was seen as getting much too much into operations.

Matloff: What are your views of Secretary McNamara as a strategist? How much background did he have in strategic theory, and what had he read on it before he became Secretary of Defense?

Kaufmann: He had been a Lieutenant Colonel in the Air Force, working on statistical control during World War II. I think he had very little, if any, exposure to it. I believe the one book he sat down and read was Hitch and McKean's book on The Economics of Defense in the Nuclear Age. To my knowledge, beyond that he really had no background, but, frankly, he was the fastest learner that I had ever encountered. He would be very open-minded until he had mastered a subject, and then it was very difficult to influence him.

Matloff: Did he follow the debate that was going on among the theorists once he got the benefit of the position? Was he interested in the writings of the theorists at Rand or elsewhere?

Kaufmann: I never got that impression; I don't think he had the time. You'd have to ask people such as Henry Glass, Alain Enthoven, or Harry Rowen, who would talk to him about some of these issues. I actually have seen more of him since he left that office than while he was in it.

Matloff: How about in connection with those speeches in 1962, the Ann Arbor speech and the one before that, the Athens speech on NATO? I gather you had a hand in those. Did he discuss the counter-force

doctrine in connection with those speeches? What part did you play in the drafting of them?

Kaufmann: To be very candid, I always avoided trying to get guidance, and for the most part was lucky in that respect, because if you asked them what they wanted they would sit down and list ten totally disparate subjects that you couldn't possibly work into a coherent speech. Yet you felt terribly obligated to try and do it, since they said they were interested in those things. I made it a flat rule not to get any guidance, if I could avoid it. In that case, my best recollection is that Harry Rowen said that McNamara would go to a different agency for a speech, depending on the subject matter--ISA was always the home of the NATO speech. He had to deliver this speech at Athens, and Harry said, "What do you think he should say?" I drafted something and McNamara liked it. As far as I know, he and Kennedy were the only two people who liked it.

Matloff: What do you regard as the significance of those speeches?

Kaufmann: I was very much against giving the Ann Arbor speech, and only worked on it to some degree because Adam Yarmolinsky asked me to, and because in so many of these committee jobs they were rapidly reducing it to gibberish. It was meant to be a sanitized version of the Athens speech.

Matloff: Were you opposed to the substance?

Kaufmann: As Tom Schelling later said to me, and I think he was probably right, we tried to put too much into the Athens speech; there were too many messages and too many audiences we were trying to reach. Nonetheless, it was a top secret speech at Athens, and there are a lot of things you can say on that basis that you're just crazy to say publicly, particularly

the comments about the national nuclear deterrents of the British and the French. I just thought it was crazy.

Matloff: In rereading the Ann Arbor speech, it seems odd in retrospect for a speech given to a university audience.

Kaufmann: Yes. To this day, I don't really know who decided to give that; I was really shocked when I was told.

Matloff: Can you shed any light on the evolution of McNamara's strategic thinking? You wrote the book The McNamara Strategy in 1963. Did you see any development at all on how his views were going over the years? That's a long period to be Secretary of Defense.

Kaufmann: It looks as though Weinberger will break the record. In any event, this is all very retrospective. A lot of people have asked me about this. I really think that Bob, from the outset, was undergoing a struggle between his heart and his head. On the one side, he had this deep abhorrence of nuclear weapons, to my view, a very understandable attitude. On the other side, I think he recognized that as Secretary of Defense he had an enormous responsibility to the country and the President not to lock them into one of these single, gigantic, and totally destructive kind of plans, which was essentially what the SIOP had turned into, although there were [REDACTED] So, I think he was very sympathetic to the notion that he should try and introduce some degree of flexibility.

I am still a great admirer of his, and I think it is a reflection of this internal struggle within Bob McNamara himself.

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I think he felt having options and trying to limit damage was a very reasonable thing and that neither the services nor the Secretary of Defense should lock the President of the country into a single rigid war plan. I don't think he had any problem with that and he never changed on that. The SIOP remained consistent throughout his tenure. From the very outset I remember his asking me, "Where's the lid that I can put on this?"--a "how much is enough" type of question. The Air Force really pressed, once it recognized that this was not going to be to its disadvantage, which some of the senior Air Force officers had worried about initially. Some of the numbers which were getting thrown around for Minuteman missiles were fantastic. McNamara really rebelled against that kind of pressure, and at some point along the line, I think it was '64, but it may have been earlier, he began to get religion on arms control. My personal recollection is that this started in the spring of 1964, but it may have come earlier. John McNaughton, who was very close to McNamara, had that responsibility. I think this combination of things decided him that one way or another he was going to put a lid on these forces, and I think that's what led to this white lie of the mutual assured destruction business and the notion that you would plan. If you look at the numbers very carefully, you would realize that he was having his cake and eating it too, and that he talked OSD 3.3(b)(5) mutual assured destruction [REDACTED] as the ostensible basis for calculating the force. But then, if you look further, you notice that each leg of the triad was to be able to deliver the [REDACTED] and if you look

more carefully at the [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] People, at least in OSD, were perfectly happy to play this game, and it wasn't until Schlesinger in '73 rebelled against it as a planning device, that it got thrown out the window.

Matloff: In regard to the essential contribution McNamara made to strategic concepts, how revolutionary would you say they were, and what were they? What was his strategic legacy?

Kaufmann: I think by far the biggest part of his legacy was in the institutional area, but managerial rather than conceptual. I think all of that was coming, but he hastened it. It was evolutionary; after all, Eisenhower didn't throw out the conventional forces. They weren't in very great shape, but they were still there and he was pumping money into the National Guard and the Reserve, which was at its all time peak, I think.

Matloff: A few weeks ago he made some comments about what the intellectual foundations were in the Department of Defense when he came. He talked about strategy and he felt he had to almost start from scratch finally to get what he envisaged. He may not be a very good historian, because there were some foundations there, but maybe not in the areas in which he had been well versed.

Kaufmann: As with any new administration, there was the strong desire to show how different you were from your predecessors.

Matloff: Would you like to add to what you said before about why you wrote the book The McNamara Strategy? What led you to do this? Were you recycling many of your own words in the process?

Kaufmann: Adam and I had an argument when he began seeing the draft because he felt that I was not quoting McNamara enough. I went back and did word counts to demonstrate that at least fifty percent of the book consisted of speeches or extracts from testimony, or elsewhere. It is true, I am sure, that a lot of the stuff that I had written for him got into the book in one way or another. I was a great admirer of his, and I still am. Those were, at least '61 and '63, exciting times, and I had a strong sense, probably spurious, of accomplishment, and felt that I really owed him a debt. I still feel that way. I was perfectly willing to do that.

Matloff: Were you as enthusiastic about the McNamara strategy after 1964 as before?

Kaufmann: It became a little bit of a tug of war. I think it was in 1966 that he asked me to write for him a series of lectures that would lay out the strategy, and I did. He obviously was not happy with just paying no attention to mutual assured destruction and talking about options on the nuclear side. I don't know if he had any problem with the parts on the conventional forces. He turned the matter over to Henry Glass, who then wrote what amounted to a book out of the original sixty pages or so of handwritten lectures, and then they disappeared. I kept writing the NATO speeches, and he kept giving those. I think it was in '66 or '67 that Ivan Selin and I had talked about the extent to which the original options in SIOF II were any longer appropriate and to what extent they should be refined. Ivan went and talked to him about it, as I recall. McNamara seemed perfectly amenable in principle, but

indicated that he no longer had the political capital to take on that fight, given all of the other struggles that he was engaged in. I think Mort Halperin and I tried to persuade him on no first use at that time, and he wasn't buying that then, for understandable reasons. I was, I thought, at the time more opposed to ABM deployments than I thought he was, but it turned out that that was not the case.

Matloff: Talking about your book, The McNamara Strategy, if you were to put out another edition, would you change anything in it in the light of what's happened since?

Kaufmann: I never really looked back at it. I'm sure that there are things I would change.

Kaplan: Marvin Stern identifies you as the father of the counter-force no-cities; I wonder if that's a paternity you'd still want to accept?

Kaufmann: I wouldn't accept it as accurate, to begin with, in the sense that there were a lot of people involved. It didn't spring full-blown out of my head, by any matter of means. As far as leaving aside the question of paternity, I still feel very strongly that we should have these options.

Kaplan: General LeMay had a very different view of counter-force. He looked upon it, it seemed, as if it were some kind of subversive activity to destroy the Air Force's mission.

Kaufmann: At least when he was Vice Chief of Staff, and I encountered him on a number of occasions before the change of administrations, he

was very sympathetic. First I thought that he wasn't, but then I realized that he was having trouble hearing. In fact, he appointed me, with a bunch of generals, to a rather weird commission about the future. I thought I had joined it at LeMay's instigation in order to talk about these issues, but they wanted to talk about space-based systems and all that sort of stuff. So I was kind of a mouse in the corner for a series of these meetings. LeMay was sympathetic. There were some Air Staff people at that time who had struck what they thought was a very favorable deal based on the NESC studies, and they were afraid that all of this was going to undermine the deal that they had struck in the NESC arena. This, as far as I could tell, was the area where Eisenhower really made the big force structure decisions, once you get that briefing and the details, which he went into far more than most people recognized.

Matloff: Did you have any qualms during the McNamara era about the role that systems analysis was playing in connection with strategy, or did you feel that this was a constructive step forward? Some military were getting heartburn.

Kaufmann: Yes, figuratively speaking, there was blood all over the floor. I thought about this a great deal in retrospect, and there were a number of individuals, and I may have been counted among them, who really got under the skin of senior ^{service} ~~senior~~ officers. I fully understand that. It could have been handled with a great deal more tact and diplomacy than it was. McNamara, Enthoven, and some of the others were not noted for their diplomatic behavior. I think Charlie Hitch was probably much more of a father figure in all of this, and Charlie and I were the

oldest ones of the bunch who were heavily involved. Enthoven and Rowan were around 30, and they were bringing in these kids, particularly when they started getting the Harvard Business School types. But I still think it was a ^{healthy} healthy thing, and, in fact, I think a lot of this current effort at reorganization is mistaken. They're so busy trying to correct for what they regard as Weinberger's failures that they're forgetting about the longer term institutional implications of what they are doing.

Matloff: In doing some background reading in connection with this interview, I came across a quote from Lawrence Freedman, in his book about The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy. He says, "Under McNamara the focal point for innovation in strategic concepts shifted back to the Pentagon (though to the civilian rather than the military officers), and away from the universities and institutes." Would you go along with that?

Kaufmann: No. I think that what is really not understood in a lot of this literature that has been written about strategy, or whatever you want to call it, is that just about every one of the ideas, that I am aware of, that has had any influence on the way we've planned the forces or allocated the resources has originated in the military. I'd say that is almost always bound to be the case, anyway. There are a couple of hundred thousand people to whom that is their daily bread and butter, and they do the thinking, certainly they did in my years at Rand. That holds true for the no-cities or any of this other stuff.

Matloff: Do you apply this to counter-force doctrine and limited war?

Kaufmann: Absolutely, yes. Sometimes the ideas might occur spontaneously in several different quarters. I became especially aware of this

after reading the SAC histories and seeing so many things that people at Rand would allege that they had invented, and here they were being talked about several years beforehand. For example, I distinctly remember LeMay's being very aware about the vulnerability of the overseas bases as early as 1949. I think because the military tend to be under wraps--I don't say they've invented everything--they don't get nearly the credit (if credit is at issue) that they deserve in a lot of this stuff.

Matloff: This raises the very interesting question of to what degree the strategic concepts emerging from Rand in the McNamara era became official doctrine and policy. How much of this was thinking originating in the unofficial fields incorporated in what became official doctrine? Was it any different from what was being generated within OSD or joint strategic planning levels?

Kaufmann: It might be individuals who might not be getting a hearing, but the best Rand studies, in my view, would usually start where the Air Force had had to do something, or needed to do something, and had come up with perhaps a back of the envelope, crude, hasty solution to the problem. The first big service that Rand would render would be not to throw that solution out the window but rather to refine it. Then, maybe, as you worked on refining these ideas and dealing with "the programmed solution," you might begin to get ideas either on how to fine tune it or maybe even to do variations, and every once in a while maybe a radical departure. Most of the good work, I thought, always started that way. It was usually, say, an Air Force idea, working with counterforce. It was General Kenney that I was trying to think of. He and

I talked counter-force in 1948, and I distinctly remember his saying to me, "Of course we'd do that, except there isn't anything to hit."

After all, that was Air Force doctrine dating back to World War II.

You do the air superiority battle and then you do the war production.

Matloff: How would you compare McNamara with Schlesinger as strategists, both as to concepts and style, from your perspective?

Kaufmann: I really think there was not that sharp a difference between the two. I think that there has been enormous continuity, as I mentioned, for at least 25 years, and I don't even think there has been that big a break since 1981, despite a lot of rhetoric to the contrary. I was much closer to Schlesinger because of personal friendship than to McNamara, and so I saw much more of him and his thinking on a whole range of issues. It would be hard for me to make a really sharp distinction between the two. I think Jim was much less interested in the cost benefit analysis, even though in many ways he was equally well trained, if not better trained, than McNamara. I think that he was much better at working with the Chiefs, and he very much took the view that it didn't do any good to order them to do things, if there were no incentives for them to accept the order. Therefore one tried to look for deals.

Matloff: Could you estimate what he contributed to the strategic field? I think in your writings you point to the multiple options approach of McNamara. What would you say about Schlesinger?

Kaufmann: I think equally; I think Jim deserves very great credit first, for trying to restore, and to some degree succeeding in restoring, a very downtrodden officer corps in that difficult time. Second, I

think he did a more persuasive job of trying to bring the allies along on the conventional buildup in that very short period, and he put a lot of time into that. Third, he did strike good deals with General Abrams. Not with the Navy--he never could work a satisfactory deal with the Navy, I'm not sure anybody can. He did with the Air Force, on the F-16. He had a very good working relationship with Abrams. It was a big loss to him when Abrams died. He also had a good working relationship with Leber in Germany. Those relationships were much better than with Henry in the White House, where they were disastrous.

Matloff: He was also working, of course, in a different era, the era of detente, SALT talks, which may have conditioned some of his thinking and activities, different from McNamara's period.

Kaufmann: It was a very strange period, with the first year or so when you weren't quite sure when or whether you had a President.

Matloff: Did you want to say any more on the strategy field? There are any number of questions, I'm sure, which Larry Kaplan will have for you as time goes on. About the weapons and technological issues--I gather that you did not go along with the belief that there was such a thing as the missile gap.

Kaufmann: Not as such, but I certainly went along with the view that, given what I knew about Soviet factory and force base, and given the test shots that they had run, the Sputnik, etc., there appeared to be no insuperable obstacles to their deploying in the range of 200 or so ICBMs in the period '57 to '61; given also that SAC then, if I remember correctly, was concentrated on about 46 bases. That meant that they

could allocate more than three missiles per base. That looked pretty awful.

Matloff: Did you get in on the demise of the so-called missile gap?

Kaufmann: Yes, I was privy to the numbers as they began to emerge. My recollection is that the hard numbers began to show up around December '60, but maybe earlier. I certainly became aware of them. I don't recall ever talking to McNamara about them; but particularly to Rowen and over at the White House to Mac Bundy, Carl Kaysen, and so on.

Matloff: On the question of weapons and technological issues, did you get involved in the problem of advocating nuclear superiority, parity, or sufficiency vis-a-vis the Russians? Did you ever have any discussions with Secretary of Defense McNamara or Schlesinger on this score?

Kaufmann: I really don't remember, in the sense of saying, "We've got to have this," and, as you have to do with McNamara, Schlesinger, and Harold Brown, you have to get down to numbers. I don't remember that kind of discussion. I remember discussions with McNamara of how this year would we talk about U.S. superiority, especially as Soviet launcher strength grew. I was, and remained, of the view that this crazy business is about targets, and unless you go really crazy in developing target lists, there are just so many targets. After that, whether you've got more weapons than the enemy has is not a terribly interesting issue.

Matloff: The McNamara period was marked by controversies over a number of issues: the ABM system, the TFX fighter bomber, the Skybolt, the nuclear carriers, the B-70s. Were you drawn in on any of those debates, say between the manned bomber versus missiles?

Kaufmann: No, not in any great detail.

Matloff: How about on the question of reorganizing the reserves and merging them with the National Guard, another issue of the McNamara period?

Kaufmann: I don't recall that.

Matloff: Did you have strong feelings about the volunteer force versus the draft? Were you pulled in on any of those discussions over the years?

Goocham

Kaufmann: I used to talk with Bill ~~Soren~~-(?) about it a lot, but not in any policy sense.

Matloff: In the same area of weapons and technological questions, did you feel that Defense strategy and doctrine in this whole era, covering three decades, 50s-70s, were keeping pace with the changes in technology? Were ideas and weapons going at the same pace or not? Did you discuss your feelings with any of the Secretaries?

Kaufmann: Yes, probably more with Harold Brown than any of the others. If anything, I think probably the ideas have moved faster than the technology. I think a typical example is the so-called air-land battle, deep strike, or whatever is the current fad. People talk as though we haven't had that. I don't know why they think we've been buying F-15s and F-16s and putting a variety of ordnance on them. But, that aside, a number of my friends talk as though these latest joint tactical systems are just around the corner. One of the things I have learned from this experience is that nothing is ever just around the corner. Jim Schlesinger was always very cautious and conservative on that score.

One of the reasons that he insisted on [REDACTED] on the Minuteman III warhead was because he just didn't believe that operationally you could get the accuracies that were alleged to be feasible with the Minuteman III. I think a lot of these gadgets will come to fruition. They could have gotten even DIVAD one of these years to work as it was supposed to work, after a big bundle of money. The only time I can really think of, certainly in my own experience, where there was a coincidence between an idea and a technology, was MIRV. To the best of my recollection, MIRVs were first developed not as ABM penetrators, but as a way of cheapening the cost of hard target kill. One of the issues I was always running into in '59-'61 was the so-called "empty hole" problem. All these holes were going to be empty; you were not going to know which ones were full; you couldn't afford to shoot at all of them. In fact, nobody even thought of that solution at first. Therefore, you could never solve which holes you could shoot at. I came up with the idea of shooting at all of them, and not caring, if we could make it cheap enough. Then somebody came up, I imagine quite independently, with MIRVs, and said, "Here's the solution."

Matloff: From your perspective, what did you think was the impact of interservice competition on official programs in R&D and also on strategic concepts being advanced by the services? Was there a connection?

Kaufmann: Not in the '60s. I got drawn into some of the controversies. A friend of mine, Bill Burke, an Air Force colonel working in ISA who had been the SAC operator of the U-2s in the '50s, and I went and tried to tell a bunch of Air Force generals to soften the demands they were

making because we both feared that if they didn't, McNamara would do what indeed he did do, which was at least to adopt a different rhetoric and put a lid on it.

Matloff: Were you drawn in on the question of roles and missions of the services?

Kaufmann: No, not really. I tried to persuade McNamara once, just to see what would happen, to cancel all DoD directives and then make them come back to him and say which ones they really had to have, as a test to find out how much of this stuff is necessary. It came up in connection with ICBM site locations.

Matloff: What was his reaction?

Kaufmann: I can't even remember, but I know nothing happened. The competition was in bounds, like everything else. I think in the main it is healthy. I don't think that you would solve a thing by abolishing the services, because it's the same basis, whether it's the submariners versus brown-shoe types, or tankers versus artillery--all of those kinds of pressures.

Matloff: Was Schlesinger any more successful or less successful in dealing with these interservice rivalries than McNamara?

Kaufmann: Probably. I had no experience with Laird, but whether it was Schlesinger, or Rumsfeld, or Brown, they had the inheritance, as it were, of what McNamara had tried to do in the '60s. So in many ways the relationships were very different in the '70s.

Matloff: A question coming out of a discussion I had with Wohlstetter was about his notion that McNamara's first two years were the most creative.

After that the problems grew and became more and more involved with the Vietnam War.

Kaufmann: I think that is probably true. I don't think that that is unusual. You have a certain stock of ideas and they get bought or they don't get bought. It certainly is true that while McNamara was fantastic about budgeting his time so he would cover an extraordinary range of issues, nonetheless the war obviously ate him up in a number of ways, intellectually and emotionally. I do think the first two or three years were certainly the most exciting ones, and I think that was because of this effort to introduce a set of, if not new, at least evolutionary thought.

Matloff: On the question of area problems and crises, let's start with NATO, a subject very close to Larry Kaplan's heart. To what extent did you get involved with NATO policy, buildup, and strategy; for example, the adoption of the doctrine of flexible response?

Kaufmann: Very much so.

Matloff: Were NATO strategy and policy, in your view, realistic in the '50s, '60s, or '70s--the whole period? and what did you see as the major problems?

Kaufmann: What I think I learned then and since is, first, that we way exaggerated the threat. In part, I think it's an overstatement of Soviet capabilities. There's a tendency to treat the so-called NSWP divisions as though they were just the same as the Soviet divisions, and yet there is obviously something puzzling there. There is a tendency to treat category 3 divisions as though they were category 1 divisions.

Then, I think, related to that is this whole business of exaggerating the speed with which the Warsaw Pact can pull together and organize a really coherent attack. I think that is one part of the problem. Second, I really think that, whatever the declaratory value of talking about first use, it is unrealistic as policy. It has its negative effects in that it confuses commanders as to what they should do, how they should train, what they should do in a crisis, and so on. I don't think this means getting rid of those capabilities, but that it means trying to fix them up. Third, there are a number of ways in which you could get a much higher confidence in conventional defense in central Europe than is now the case, or that anybody seems to believe is feasible. Those are views that I have held for some time.

Matloff: In your work for the official community, when you came in as a consultant, were you drawn in on these problems?

Kaufmann: Yes.

Kaplan: You mentioned that you were opposed to nuclear sharing. Would you regard the MLF as an example of nuclear sharing, or a charade, or what?

Kaufmann: It had to be either a charade or real nuclear sharing, and I was very opposed to it, as was McNamara, to the best of my knowledge. He used to make fun of it in front of Rusk at the pre-NATO meetings that used to be held. He sort of went along with it finally, when he thought Kennedy was somehow or other committed to it. Harry Rowen and I at first suggested to him what came to be the NPG as a substitute for the MLF. The minute that it became clear that Erhard and LBJ didn't really give a damn about MLF, he pounced on that thing.

Kaplan: Who was the major supporter of the MLF? I've been trying to pin this down for a long time.

Kaufmann: To the best of my knowledge, it was Henry Owen, an old friend, and Bob Bowie.

Matloff: State Department?

Kaufmann: Yes, and remarkably skillful.

Kaplan: Within the military?

Kaufmann: Another old friend of mine, Admiral John "Squidge" Lee became, I believe, a devotee of it, but I don't think Squidge ever really had the kind of vested interest in it that Bowie and Owen did. Jerry Smith became very devoted to it, and Walt Rostow, but I don't think they were originals in the way that Bowie and Owen were.

Matloff: Did you think that military integration in the alliance had gone as far as it could?

Kaufmann: Yes, probably. I would have liked to keep the French in, but I thought there were other ways of handling the interoperability problem, as it got to be known, than by trying to integrate the units.

Matloff: How about your impressions of the attitudes of both McNamara and Schlesinger toward the alliance, and also your own views, if I may ask you for them. Did they regard this as a permanent American military commitment?

Kaufmann: I think Schlesinger probably more than McNamara.

Matloff: Did he see the American military role in it as permanent?

Kaufmann: Yes, I think so; but Bob, undoubtedly influenced in part by the war, wanted to minimize the overseas deployment of U.S. forces and

saw that locking in four to five divisions made it difficult to lay your hands on them for other purposes.

Kaplan: Does that mean there was some sympathy for, say, the Mansfield resolution, the withdrawal of troops?

Kaufmann: That was after McNamara's time. Schlesinger fought Mansfield very fiercely. I was his front man. We were able to demonstrate, at least to our own satisfaction, and I've been a strong believer in this, that we could show a strong military need for the forces deployed in Europe. When Mansfield and Symington asked, "Why not a battalion instead of a division?" or whatever, we said, "No, look, here's the situation where the five divisions really pay off militarily. If you men want to fiddle around with the politics of this, it's on your heads." There was a very strong military justification.

Matloff: How did you, and do you, see the future of the alliance? Some have called it a forum, others a fortress, others an instrument of detente. All these are possibilities.

Kaufmann: I saw it then and I still see it as basically a military alliance, and I always worry about loading too many other things on it. We had a laboratory associated with MIT, the Draper Lab, which was the great guidance laboratory in the world. During our time of troubles in the '60s some idiot decided to convert it into an urban development laboratory with people working on gyroscopes, accelerometers, and such things, and suddenly becoming urban developers. I argued that they had already done what they could about urban development, they could blow up cities, and it was just an absurdity. I think a lot of what people keep trying

to load on to NATO is silly. It is a military alliance and I think it stands or falls as a military alliance.

Matloff: It covers a definite geographic area. How about suggestions to extend it globally?

Kaufmann: I think that is unrealistic. There is just so much you can ask the allies to do. It's very hard for us, I think, to remember that they are relatively small countries, for the most part.

Matloff: Do you think that, on the whole, they were pulling their weight in this period?

Kaufmann: Nobody knows, but again, I don't think they've done all that badly. When you have 14 nations and 14 overheads, it's an expensive way to do business. But that is inevitable. I think that the United States is responsible for a lot of the things for which we criticize them. We have coddled them in a number of ways, and have done things that are now very difficult to undo, especially on the nuclear side. I think that we misled them in a number of ways. I wish that they would do more. I don't think that it has to be a great deal more. We tried in '67--McNamara asked me to do the first draft of what became 14/3, and it was meant to be, and was, a very strong declaration on the paramountcy of conventional defense. But by the time that the French had left and the alliance had sandpapered away at it, it was the funny direct/indirect thing that Squidge Lee became the Sherpa for.

Matloff: We will come back and maybe wind up in an hour or so.

Kaufmann: I still like to think of myself as a historian.

Matloff: It is rare that we meet someone who is both an adviser and a historian.