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## POSTWAR ORGANIZATION FOR NATIONAL SECURITY

2 September 1952

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POSTWAR ORGANIZATION FOR NATIONAL SECURITY

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**GENERAL GREELEY:** Admiral Hague, gentlemen: You will recall that Dr. Hunter, in his lectures on Thursday and Friday of last week, outlined for us the progressive development of economic mobilization for war in this country. He cited the experience we had had in three great conflicts, ending with the close of World War II. Such a background is essential, I think, to an understanding of present-day governmental operations in this highly complex field.

Our subject this morning, "Postwar Organization for National Security," is a logical extension of Dr. Hunter's talk. It will bring into focus the picture that we are most interested in, and that is the picture of today.

Our lecturer is no stranger to this platform, having spoken before the Industrial College last spring during the mobilization course. He is especially qualified to speak on today's subject by reason of his broad experience in Government and as an educator. He has been awarded degrees at the University of Wisconsin and Harvard University, and is presently serving as chairman of the Department of Political Science at Haverford College.

It is a great pleasure, Dr. Somers, to welcome you back to this platform. Dr. Somers.

**DR. SOMERS:** Thank you, General Greeley, Admiral Hague, gentlemen. It is a real privilege to be back at the Industrial College. It is a privilege because I always find it a stimulating experience to be with you. It is also a privilege because I am not always invited back to places where I have once been. You have been generous.

It is my purpose to review with you the major administrative and structural developments which have taken place since the end of World War II in the field of economic mobilization. You will observe that I am not so much interested in a recital of historical events as I am in pointing up the central issues, and particularly the central difficulties as I see them.

To be useful in this type of presentation, I think one must be critical, and there is some danger that the spirit of that criticism may be misunderstood. It reminds me of a story they tell in my wife's home town of Memphis, Tennessee, of a colored gentleman who was coming to the end of his days. In his last illness the local preacher was brought in, and he said, "Well, Jonathan, it's time for you to make

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your peace with the Lord and renounce the devil." Jonathan looked at him and said, "Well, I certainly want to make my peace with the Lord, but, as the renouncing the devil, I don't think I am in a position to antagonize anybody."

Although I will be critical, I want you to understand it does not mean that I feel I am wiser or more able than the people I criticize. These criticisms are retrospective. This is hindsight wisdom. At the time these things were going on, they were not recognized to be errors. I, too, was a part of those errors, both philosophically and in some of my activities.

Without doubt, the most important development since World War II was also the first. This was the passage of the National Security Act of 1947, after a bitter and acrimonious battle among the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force, each of which tended to identify the national interest and national security with its own independence and its own pre-eminence over other arms.

The act of 1947, as you will recall, created a National Military Establishment. It also created two other very important agencies: the National Security Council, and the National Security Resources Board. I shall talk about all three in order.

The National Military Establishment was, of necessity, a compromise. Feelings were running high in those days. Some of you may remember the battles of 1946. There was the Eberstadt Plan, Bob Patterson's Plan, a Budget Bureau Plan, and others. Proponents of each plan were vastly suspicious of all others. Like many compromises, it tended to eliminate most of the strong points of conflicting proposals and retain those things which all sides could agree upon, which are generally the weakest points. Therefore, the compromise was an extraordinarily poor one, in terms of working organization, and yet it represented progress because it was a step toward orderliness at a later stage, a stage not yet fully achieved but towards which we are clearly moving. Perhaps we had to pass through an unworkable stage to prove it unworkable, and thus be free to make progress. There is an old adage about things having to get worse in order to get better.

Now, why was it that the National Military Establishment organization was unworkable? You may recall that the head of the NME, the Secretary, was, in effect, suspended in limbo, appearing almost as supernumerary. He was not really the head of a department. There were three departments. They were virtually independent of the Secretary of the NME. The Secretaries of these independent departments, the Army, Navy, and Air Force, were not clearly or completely responsible to the NME Secretary. They could report directly to the President, and even to Congress. The Secretary of the NME was expected, but had inadequate authority, to coordinate the activities of the three arms.

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Since he did not control the bureaucracy underneath him, he lacked the normal institutional strength of a Cabinet officer. Yet he had no solid attachments above him. He was not a member of the Executive Office of the President. He was not part of the White House team. He was a rare official without political or bureaucratic props to support him in his job. The law said he could and should coordinate, but anybody with any experience in Government has learned that the law alone is not sufficient to render effective authority, if the institutional framework for authority is lacking.

Actually, the Secretaries for the Army, Navy, and Air Force were stronger in terms of real authority, because they controlled the great bureaucratic structures under them and were closer to the loyalties and self-interest of their organizations.

A second difficulty created by the NME was multiple and enduring. The National Security Act of 1947 designated the Joint Chiefs of Staff as military advisers to the President of the United States and, at the same time, military advisers to the Congress. This, I submit, is one of the sources, if not the major source, of the purely political difficulties in which the Joint Chiefs have found themselves enmeshed in the last few years.

You cannot be simultaneously and effectively responsible to two bosses, the quaint and fascinating history of the Corps of Engineers notwithstanding. The Joint Chiefs of Staff have, for example, found themselves in a position of being requested by Congress for information which, in terms of their relationship to the President they could not properly divulge. Had they been, as other portions of the executive branch, clearly and exclusively accountable to the President, the difficulty would be minimized, although it might not disappear. Being, however, accountable to Congress by law makes the situation administratively anomalous and potentially explosive. The fault does not lie with the Joint Chiefs, but with our legislature, which cannot resist the temptation to take over administrative functions for which it was not intended and which it cannot handle. Nonetheless, this dual role of the Joint Chiefs has in it the seeds of disaster. As you know their name has been dragged into political campaigns in excess of safety. The President of the United States is constitutionally the head of the administrative arm of the Government and he is the Commander in Chief. If his clear authority is diluted, we dilute our national military strength.

Similarly, the act, in formalizing the Joint Chiefs as direct advisers to the President gave the military a by-pass around the Secretary of the NME (and now the Secretary of Defense). The civilian authority of the Secretary over military questions has thus been called into question. Whether you feel that the Secretary should or should not have such authority, you may nonetheless agree that unclear or divided authority is disruptive.

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The National Security Act of 1947 did not work. We had very soon, earlier than you would normally expect, amendments--the broad amendments of 1949, which created the Department of Defense to replace the National Military Establishment. I have often wondered how it came about that we acted so quickly. Normally, improvements don't come this fast. The mere fact that an administrative arrangement is not working doesn't mean that it will be changed, as you well know. Influential people can establish vested interests in things that are not working.

I have often speculated that the immediate cause of this early action by Congress was the sacrifice of a human life. It was probably the unfortunate death of James Forrestal that dramatized an impossible situation into which he as first Secretary was thrown. Mr. Forrestal, as you know, was a highly sensitive good citizen, a man who tried, even under impossible circumstances, to meet vast responsibilities. What happened to him you all know, and I think that fact was known to every Member of Congress. A great citizen sacrificed himself in the attempt to make the impossible workable, and that was what gave impetus to changes in the law.

The corrections made by the amendments were important. They considerably improved upon the anomolous position of the Secretary. The new Secretary of Defense was set up as the head of the whole agency. Instead of having three independent departments, the new law established them as administrative departments. They were no longer Cabinet departments. The Departments of Army and Navy and Air Force became subordinate to the Secretary of the over-all department called the Department of Defense, which was not true before 1949.

Now at last, the Secretary of Defense had a direct legal line of control over the people below him. For the first time, he had a bureaucratic organization, structurally, to underpin him in his relations with Congress. Sources of power were given to him by subordinating the Secretaries below him. Thus, for the first time, in 1949, we had at least the general outlines of a plan for some type of over-all coordination.

Nothing was done about the difficulties created by the role of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The issues of military-civilian relations in the Department remain confused. The line of authority of the President is not as firm as it should be.

The second most important thing about the National Security Act of 1947 was creation of the National Security Council. The NSC may, in the long view of history, prove to be the more significant experiment. It brought into being something we lacked all through World War II.

There was nowhere in World War II any unit which could bring together strategic, production, and diplomatic (or political) considerations. The Joint Chiefs of Staff were the strategic heads. The head of the Office of War Manpower and Office of War Mobilization and Reconversion was in charge

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of production and economic affairs. The President appeared to be conducting political and diplomatic relations himself. In no one place in the Government did these three key factors become merged, except insofar as it may have been accomplished by informal arrangements. Justice Byrnes, as head of the OWMR, did manage to bring together the production group and the strategic group into meetings with the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Energetic and able men managed often to rise above the limitations of the lack of a structural mechanism to bring together the three interdependent key elements of war operations. The impression was widespread that the President should do it. But the President can't actually do that kind of a job on a day-to-day basis. He must be called upon to make a final decision; but not to carry on day-to-day coordination.

The NSC represented an attempt to correct that deficiency, by bringing into one council all these considerations: the production consideration, through the head of the National Security Resources Board (NSRB); the strategic side, through the Secretary of Defense; and the diplomatic end, through the Secretary of State. The President is chairman. It is an active Cabinet-level committee with a high-level secretariat. The day-to-day work of the group is to bring together and dovetail the planning and activities of the several governmental responsibilities that merge in issues of national security.

At present, everybody agrees that the National Security Council has represented great progress, offering a mechanism for facilitating a synthesis or coordination which never before existed. But together with the acknowledgment of progress, the question is widespread as to why the Council has not done as well nor as much as it could and should.

From the original conception of a small and compact council able to make rapid and authoritative decisions as recommendations, representing unified voices for the key elements in governmental responsibility, there has emerged a large and cumbersome committee wherein it is rarely clear which voice, if any, is authorized to speak for a particular sector of Government.

By statute, the Director for Mutual Security is now a member. The diplomatic, or foreign affairs, voice in the committee is now shared between him and the Secretary of State. By invitation of the President, the head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff sits in the committee. Who speaks for the military, he or the Secretary of Defense? Sharing the voice for the economic and domestic consideration are the Secretary of the Treasury, the Director of Defense Mobilization, and the Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers as well as the Chairman of the National Security Resources Board.

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Beyond this, there is a lack of adequate machinery for ascertaining that decisions reached in the NSC actually reach down effectively into the operations of the several departments. The theory is that the members of the Council, being heads of departments, are responsible for and can see to it that appropriate implementation is actually taken. But experience raises some doubt about the certainty of such a development.

The NSC is served by an able secretariat. It also has a senior staff, made up of second level personnel of the key departments, who are to do the spade work for the Council. They do not appear to furnish adequate means for assuring active follow-up of the decisions of the Council.

But, despite all justified criticism, the fact remains that the NSC has been rendering an enormously valuable service and is a great addition to the administrative and organizational arrangements for coordinating policy in American Government.

The NSC was originally not part of the Executive Office of the President. It was more or less an adjunct of the defense establishment. The Hoover Commission recommended that it and the NSRB be made a part of the Executive Office of the President. This was done through Presidential reorganizational authority in 1949.

The NSRB was another creation of the National Security Act of 1947. It was to do long-range and continuous planning during peacetime to prepare the Nation for adequate mobilization of its economic resources. It would be difficult to think of an agency in which more errors were made, structurally, than in the creation and early development of the NSRB. Some have been corrected, mostly too little and too late.

The first mistake was that authority was placed in the Board as a whole, rather than in its Chairman. It had eight members. They were to make decisions. Any of you who have had experience with boards or committees know that they are not designed for decision making or action. Boards are useful for advice or counsel, not for action. If you want to pretend you have an organization but don't really want anything to happen, you set up a group of five or seven. When several people have joint responsibility, nobody has real responsibility. That is a basic tenet of administration.

In August 1949, however, all authority was transferred from the Board to its Chairman, as recommended by the Hoover Commission, and a framework for a working mechanism was created. The first Chairman was Mr. Arthur Hill. He recognized very early that, if a planning organization was to be of any account, it had to be tied up with operations at some point; it should be tied up with the people who are responsible for doing things. So Mr. Hill, probably because of his previous association with Secretary Forrestal, located his organization in the Pentagon.

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The moment the NSRB moved into the Pentagon it became identified, rightly or wrongly, as an arm of the Department of Defense. It therefore had a role which appeared essentially no different from that of the Munitions Board, which had a similar function within the Department of Defense. In theory, the NSRB was supposed to be a higher level agency to coordinate the Department of Defense with other departments of the Government. It couldn't be that, while located in the Pentagon, appearing to all the rest of the Government as an arm of the Pentagon.

This error was corrected before Mr. Hill departed. The NSRB was moved over into the Executive Office Building, and that physical change made a great difference, for the symbols of Government are important in the role an agency can perform. Up to that point, at least, there is little record of achievement for the NSRB.

When Mr. Hill resigned, the President proposed Mr. Mon Wallgren as successor, but the Senate refused to confirm the appointment. Thus, the NSRB went without a Chairman for almost a full year. Mr. John Steelman, Assistant to the President, was Acting Chairman, but he had, of course, many other functions as Assistant to the President, and could not give this job more than two or three hours a week. So the agency practically ran without any head, without any Chairman.

A critically long period of time passed before Stuart Symington, former civilian head of the Air Forces, was chosen Chairman of the NSRB. This, unfortunately, was not very long before the Korean War started, and Mr. Symington, an extremely able man, was unable to do much about the NSRB before the Korean War spelled the doom of the agency, for reasons I will indicate later.

To be fair in appraising the pre-Korean record of the NSRB, one must recognize that its assignment was extraordinarily difficult, to a large extent because it was vague, because it had no apparent operational features, because the agency was not attached to any body with operational responsibilities. To be a "planner," pure and simple, is a difficult and frequently anomolous role. At best, it would have been a challenge for the NSRB to define its own frame of reference. What was it to plan for? What kind of conflict? Where? Since planning to keep on earth must be periodically tested, or attached to action, how was this to be arranged?

Yet, given these formidable obstacles, one must yet conclude that the NSRB interpreted its role precisely in the ineffectual manner which had given planning such ill repute in Government. A great deal of time was devoted to drawing organizational charts regarding the structure of Government during the next war. Since the functions and responsibilities during the indeterminate time of the next war were never spelled out, and probably could not be, the charts were at best descriptions of an improved governmental organization for the war we had already concluded, World War II.

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Another time-consuming exercise, which went by the name of planning, was the preparation of "dummy-orders" or "dummy-contracts." These were given to industrial firms with the indication that they were to be held ready for M-day, when they would in fact be the industrial production assignments. I suppose everybody involved knew that this was an exercise in unreality, yet it seemed pleasing to the parties.

The NSRB would bring people in from various industries, say, for example, from the lamp shade industry. They would be greeted and told:

"Gentlemen, we are planning for mobilization. We are concerned about what to do with your industry. We are only bureaucrats; we don't know much about your business. You know it best, and we would like you to do something for your country. Will you give us three days of your time, so that we may draw up plans on how best to use your industry in our plans for mobilization?"

The NSRB would provide secretarial and other services, and the businessmen would spend three or four days in Washington, deciding how their industry would be handled by Government during mobilization, a very amiable preoccupation. If out of this came a picture showing the lamp shade industry as the one basic essential industry for war mobilization, it was not entirely surprising. If anything usable came out of these many sessions it has been a well kept secret.

In these early days, the NSRB appeared to have an excessive concern with public relations. This was a sign of uncertainty about its assignment and the practicability of its activities. Under such circumstances, you worry about public relations. If you are doing something meaningful, public relations tend to take care of themselves; people are impressed with what you are doing. When you are playing games of make-believe, you have to impress people with what it is you think you are doing that you are not doing.

This was not necessary. There was a real job to be done. Nations do have to think and plan ahead for emergencies; the function is not make-believe. But it is a job requiring more imagination than ordinary day-to-day activities of government agencies. For planning to be meaningful, it must be recognized as a necessary stage within an action program not something detached and set off in limbo; it is not pure research. Unless made a part of the machinery of decision-making and action-taking, planning will always, and probably rightly, suffer the fate that the old National Resources Planning Board did when Congress eliminated it in 1943, or the fate of the NSRB when, in effect, its job was taken over by the Office of Defense Mobilization (ODM) in December 1950.

When the Korean hostilities broke, in the summer of 1950, plans were put to the test. When mobilization legislation was being drafted in the

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White House rather hurriedly on a well-remembered Sunday afternoon, the NSRB was called in. They had a plan, a draft of a legislative act, carefully filed. But virtually nothing in the legislative draft they produced could be used. It appeared drawn up for a different kind of emergency. They had apparently been planning for World War II again. This is a common failing of planning. Plans are made for the familiar event; the challenge of planning for the completely new type of contingency goes unmet. Korea was something which had not happened before. So when the Defense Production Act of 1950 was drawn up, the NSRB drafts had to be discarded as irrelevant.

There is an old story of a young fellow at college who had trouble with stuttering. He went to a teacher for help in overcoming the stutter. The teacher told him to say over and over again, "Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers," until he could say it without a stutter. It was very difficult for the lad, but he worked on it for over a year. One day he came in triumphantly and proudly recited without a mistake: "Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers." Then his jaw dropped and he said sadly: "But you know, I can't work it into my conversation anywhere."

That appears to be the fate of most planning. The work is earnest and arduous. But when the event occurs, the plans "can't be worked into the conversation."

I am probably overdrawing the picture in my desire to call attention to mistakes which should not be repeated. The NSRB did, of course, include some record of achievement. A reservoir of collected data and research proved very useful to the Defense Production Administration (DPA) and the ODM. The NSRB's personnel served as a most important basic pool of staff for the new defense agencies which had to recruit overnight people already oriented in problems of mobilization.

The Defense Production Act of 1950 was, on the whole, a well-drawn organizational plan. Most important, the structure was left flexible. It gave the President authority, but didn't draw an organizational chart for him. By and large it left the details of agency organization to the decision of the President, to be adjusted as needed. There was one exception to that plan, the Economic Stabilization Agency (ESA). The ESA, as such, was written right into the act. This was an attempt by Congress to see to it that wage and price controls would be coordinated and be under one authority. Well, they were not coordinated in practice, as you know, and the organizational restriction created by Congress proved ill adapted for Congress' objectives. It again demonstrates the need for Congress' leaving administration to the executive branch.

The basic administrative decision made by the President was the important one. That is, to keep functions, as far as possible, within the regular structure of government institutions, instead of building up additional structure for defense mobilization.

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First, there was the National Production Authority. That was put into the Department of Commerce. There was the Defense Manpower Administration, which went in the Department of Labor. The over-all coordinating job was given to Mr. Symington as head of the NSRB. The Department of the Interior was given a part of the job. The principle of utilizing the existing structure has since been departed from, to some extent, but it still remains the distinguishing characteristic, organizationally, of this defense effort as against the effort of World War II.

The most spectacular thing that happened after the President set up the structure was the long hiatus of inactivity. From the time the act passed until December 1950, when things began to move, it was almost impossible to fill jobs. The job of Economic Stabilizer was offered to a long list of people before Alan Valentine finally accepted. Almost all types of jobs went begging. It was extremely difficult to get the kind of people needed from industry or from academic life to enter Government. Many of them had been in Government, had given up 5 years from their business recently, and they didn't want to come back so soon again.

The thing didn't have the tone of a national emergency, somehow. If you recall, it was the time when the President was complaining regularly that he couldn't get people. He was suggesting to Congress that it raise the salary level. Salaries had little to do with the kind of people he was after. They were not primarily concerned about salary.

Mr. Symington was coordinator of the defense effort, in his role as head of the NSRB, appointed by Executive order of the President. He was a very good choice, in my opinion. He is an extremely able and intelligent man, with the right background of experience. I think you can test that from the things he did before and after. It is difficult to test him in his NSRB days. He looks like a failure there, but, I feel sure, anybody would. He did very well with the Air Force; he was a very successful businessman, head of the Emerson Radio Company. After that he was given the difficult and dramatic job of cleaning up the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC). He did amazingly well at that. And he has done a tremendous job politically, in his campaign for senator from Missouri. I predict he will be elected and that he will be a good senator. At the NSRB, Symington was doomed before he started. He was doomed through no fault of his own. People wanted new blood on this job. Mr. Symington was a familiar figure in the Government, too familiar to provide the necessary symbol of emergency. He was known as a bureaucrat. Although he had been a successful businessman, he had been in the Government almost 4 years by then. In the eyes of Congress, that's more than enough time to transform a competent businessman into a power-happy bureaucrat.

Mr. Symington was smart enough to recognize his problem at the NSRB when he came on the job. He inherited a staff of 350 people there. He knew this was too many and his problem was, in part, "How do you get rid

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of these guys?" That is a very difficult thing to do in Government, but eventually he did get rid of many. This sounds as if I am saying they were bad people. That is not the point at all. This was simply an impossible cumbersome number of people to do a difficult coordination job. It had resulted from NSRB's previous misconception of its own job.

Given time, Mr. Symington might have found a way out successfully. But there was not time. Something dramatic was needed to symbolize "national emergency." It was proposed that somebody like Charles Wilson, head of General Electric, a great industrialist, would have to be brought down. The original plan, when the President called Mr. Wilson, was to have him head a production agency under the coordinator, something resembling the War Production Board of World War II, which is the DPA in this war.

The Bureau of the Budget sent a man to New York to discuss it with Mr. Wilson. He would have none of that proposal. He was going to be boss. Since he appeared indispensable, he got his own terms. When Wilson arrived, Symington's job as coordinator was ended. However, he got more encomiums when he left than people in Washington usually get. He had not failed. He never had a chance.

Mr. Wilson brought a contribution to the defense effort which very few other men could have brought. He was the type of symbol to alter public psychology. The President needed him to arouse the people to a sense that there was a national emergency. The fact that Charlie Wilson would resign from his job as head of General Electric was significant. He didn't take a leave of absence; he resigned; and the public took notice. The President, as he announced Mr. Wilson's appointment, declared a national state of emergency. His arrival gave the emergency a ring of reality it had not had before.

Mr. Wilson made possible the necessary cooperation of the business community, which had been acting suspicious and aloof. When Charlie Wilson, a good Republican, came down to work with the Administration, it became "respectable" for other businessmen to do so.

That was his second great contribution. Necessary personnel became available, people like Eric Johnston, who came in to head the ESA because Mr. Wilson asked him to do so.

With Mr. Wilson came the creation of the ODM as a new structure to coordinate industrial mobilization. The NSRB staff moved out, most of the personnel going into the new defense agencies. Mr. Symington stayed on for a short period at the request of the President before he moved on to the RFC job. The NSRB is now under a new Chairman, Jack Gorrie. Congress has cut its funds sharply, and it is now in a very quiescent state.

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The creation of the National Production Authority conformed to the principle of having mobilization jobs done by existing agencies. But the fact was that somebody had to do a higher level coordination job, and there was no place for it to be done, short of the ODM, which did not want that kind of big job. Mr. Wilson wanted to keep that organization small and confined to top-policy matters so he created the DPA, originally under Manly Fleischmann, to do the coordinating job, thus again breaking away from the general principle of using the regular agencies of Government.

When Mr. Wilson resigned, in the spring of 1952, the job was again thrown to John Steelman as acting head. Mr. Steelman is filling in again, giving perhaps 2 hours a day, since he is still primarily responsible for the job of Assistant to the President.

Throughout the mobilization agencies, one of the great problems has been the great turnover of personnel. Every agency has had a parade of head men by now. The ESA started out with Alan Valentine. He went swiftly--in 3 months. Eric Johnston lasted about a year. Roger Putman is over there now. He has told me he tried to resign twice, but told the President he would stay at least until after election.

The Office of Price Stabilization (OPS) has had Mike DiSalle, Ellis Arnall, and now Tighe Woods. The Wage Stabilization Board has the same problem. It has 18 members, and there is nobody there who was there in the beginning.

These are just a few highlights in the organizational chronology of mobilization. In the few minutes I have left I want to talk about a few outstanding issues, as I see them. The first is one with which I think you are basically concerned in this course. That is planning. I have said some things which could give the impression that I am "anti-planning." This is not true. Planning is, of course, an indispensable function. You and I do it all the time, only we don't call it by so elegant a name. Living is planning. You go to lunch about 12:30 every day--you will today, if I stop talking in time to permit it. That's a plan, but you don't call it that. You know, in general, what you are going to do tomorrow and the next day. You don't call it a plan. It is a plan, because it is looking ahead. This is what we call operational planning; that is, planning tied in as a first step and as part of our responsible actions, thinking which is part of operating activity, looking ahead to performance in relation to problems already posed for us.

What people normally called planning is not this. They are talking about the long-range future. What do we do next year. What is ahead in the next 5 years, 10 years? That is what the NSRB was talking about. The basic difficulty is that they are no longer talking about a situation in which the problem is known. The planning involves not only determination of answers for action but determining what the problems themselves will be

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and in what context they will be found. The frames of action reference are not easily at hand.

The great mistakes lie in the fact that people undertake long-range planning in the same way they plan for tomorrow. For tomorrow you can draw up a blueprint. If you are going to battle tomorrow, you can make a blueprint, give each man an assignment. You can't do that for something years ahead, for you have no clear idea of the changed environment. If you try to draw blueprints, you waste your time, for you will not be facing the real problems of the future. Similarly, if you draw organization charts for years ahead, you are wasting time.

You can't proceed now on the idea that the next military problem is going to be like Korea; just as the assumption that World War II was going to be refought was futile. Planning for the future involves not the manner of meeting known problems, but the meeting of unknown problems, problems different from anything known before. That was the NSRB's mistake. It was the mistake of the Munitions Board. If you want to embarrass any of these organizations, ask them to let you look at something done a year ago in the way of organization charts.

What I am suggesting is not that they did a poor job in finding answers. They were simply answering the wrong questions.

To have any confidence in the relationship of short-range plans to long-range plans, planning must be tied into operations. A state of mind detached from responsibility for doing something is useless for intelligent planning. Planning becomes abstracted, a utopian affair. Effective planning is a continuous logical development of what you are already doing. If it is turned over to people who are not tied into operations, you get irresponsible planning. The NSRB never achieved a great deal largely because it was detached from those who were responsible, from those who were responsible for performance.

Let me illustrate with two examples of unanticipated problems, in both of which I was involved. In World War II it was decided that manpower was to be segregated from production problems, and be run by the War Manpower Commission. Manpower would be secured by an allocation system. But manpower cannot be segregated entirely from other problems. There was a great shortage of men to work in foundries. It was dirty, ugly work, low paid work, and nobody wanted it. It was a question of how to solve the problem.

Justice Byrnes was head of the OWMR at that time. He wrote to Paul McNutt and asked him what he could do about getting some foundry workers. McNutt said, in effect, "I will be able to resolve this problem if you will get the War Labor Board to allow higher wages for foundry workers." The War Labor Board said, "We'll allow higher wages if you will get OPA to raise prices for foundry articles, so that the wages can be absorbed." This was questioned by the OPA. They said, "If you will

get the Secretary of State to bring in some Jamaicans to do the work and get the Manpower Commission to take care of them, it will solve the problem." The War Production Board was told it would have to give priority to foundry materials as against other materials. Every one of these proposals cut across organizational functions and agencies. Each of these proposals to solve a manpower problem conflicted with the policy of some other agency which had a different kind of responsibility.

This year Congress passed the Armed Forces Reserve Act of 1951. It tries to establish uniform Reserve policy for all the armed forces. Presumably, the armed forces should have responsibility for the Reserves. But, if we have universal military service, almost everybody under the age of 30 is going to be in the Reserve. If the armed forces alone can determine which Reserves are going to be called back for service, it will be taking over the Selective Service System job which is supposed to determine what people should stay in industry and what people go into the army. Yet the latter question did not enter into consideration of the legislation.

The boxes on an organization chart rarely deal with these real-life problems. Most significant issues cut across all the boxes. Neat, aloof planning, which does not grow out of the problem-facing experience, is bound to be as abstract as the boxes on the chart.

The biggest issue today is, How should we go about planning? Our mobilization must be organized. This is a tremendous problem if you assume, as I do, that it is not a short-range problem. If we think it is, we will be in the same old trouble again. We always assume when a war is over that we are through then. When Korea is over there will be people who say, "Bring everybody back, and reduce the army to a stand-by Reserve!"

But if mobilization is a long-range affair, irrespective of any Korean truce, if it is a fact that we have to be in a continuous state of mobilization, for the foreseeable future, then we must make some basic decisions on how to handle mobilization. Are we to deal with mobilization operations and planning as emergency enterprises, to be handled by emergency agencies? Or are they to be built into the regular Government as long-range basic functions?

If we don't continue the special agencies, it is very difficult to sustain a sense of emergency, a sense of importance, in the public mind. It is difficult to recruit the kind of people we need. The important men dislike becoming subordinates in old-line agencies. One of the important arguments for establishing new agencies is that new top-level posts are essential to attract top personnel.

If this is a long-range problem, how long can we keep referring to it as an emergency? At what point is the cry, "Wolf," going to prove ineffective? Will it go on for 15 years? In a sense, we hope it will. The alternative may be actual war. If we build this mobilization structure into our Government, how should it be done?

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Can we have, for example, a price agency like the OPS put on a permanent basis? If not, what is the alternative? Most people think the OPS is superfluous now. It is difficult to keep something when people are prejudiced against it, and the need is not apparent. But the situation is fluid. The need for price controls may again become dramatic at a moment's notice. And agencies cannot be destroyed and rebuilt overnight.

The second large problem relates to our whole structure of Government. I hope in your thinking about these problems you are not doing the things we used to do when I was a student of economic mobilization some years ago. We made the mistake of intellectually segregating this problem from the rest of the Government. We regarded it as a special kind of problem. It is not.

If partial mobilization is going to be part of our normal life from now on, or for any substantial time to come, to understand that fact is to look at the totality of the government structure. Is it properly adapted for this kind of circumstance? Most people think it is not. Was the Constitution set up for this kind of situation? The Constitution was written for a government with different kinds of responsibility than the present. The doctrine of separation of powers was devised to keep government from acting too fast and too often at a time when not acting was safer. The philosophy of the American Constitution is taken to be: the less government the better. But how does this fit a continuous mobilization responsibility? Such restrictions could prove exceedingly serious in foreign affairs, where survival may be dependent on the ability to act fast. Today there is no over-all focus in our Government. There is bitter conflict between two major branches, the executive and the legislative. There is absence of administrative control on the part of the President himself. There is a real question as to whether this situation can continue, whether it is feasible in a world faced with continuous emergency.

In conclusion I want to say one thing, I always stress problems. I think it is important to do this rather than to congratulate ourselves. I probably sound more pessimistic than I feel. Wars are won, not by being perfect, but by being better than the enemy so that you can win even with a handicap.

We have our handicaps, and I think we have suggested what they are in our discussion of organization for mobilization. But we struggled forward to victory the last time. And I am sure, if need be, we can do it again.

COLONEL BARNES: I am sure Dr. Somers' talk has stimulated an active discussion. Who has the first question or comment?

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QUESTION: Doctor, I am curious about why you think Mr. Wilson was not appropriate as a defense mobilizer.

DR. SOMERS: I depends upon how you use the word "appropriate." Under all the circumstances of December 1950, he or a person very much like him, was probably the only practical possibility to overcome the immediate hurdles facing the mobilization program, for reasons I have already indicated. In that sense, his appointment was most appropriate. On the other hand, it was clear that after these hurdles were surmounted, Mr. Wilson's experience would not be appropriate for the job at hand and that he was unlikely to survive in it successfully.

The job of heading up the national mobilization effort is frequently mistakenly assumed to be a production job, for which a production expert would be most suitable. This is not the case. William Knudsen was something of a production genius, yet he failed in his mobilization job in World War II, for reasons which are recited in Eliot Janeway's book "The Struggle for Survival" (1951). These reasons apply also to Mr. Wilson's career. On the other hand, Bernard Baruch was successful in World War I. He is not a production man; he is a financier. Justice Byrnes was highly successful in World War II. He is a politician.

The job is primarily political in the higher and better sense of that word, a job of persuading people to do things, through effective coordination and constructive compromise. It is a job of winning consent, enthusiasm, public understanding, and public support. The making of high-level decision, and making them effective, in a democratic government is quite different from organizing a production line in a factory. In the Government, effective authority has to be rewon each working day; it does not automatically inhere in a title or position. Mr. Wilson was accustomed to full authority. When he gave an order to General Electric, he could expect it to be followed without prior or subsequent negotiation and manipulation. Mr. Wilson in three experiences in the Federal Government demonstrated that the forceful, direct action methods which had won him fame and honor in industry were not suitable for the high political-administrative posts he held in the Government. He was not experienced and not adroit in the play of political forces which are inescapable parts of the strategy of high-level government administration.

Closely related is the fact that the job of defense mobilizer requires the support and cooperation of the entire community. He must be a man acceptable to industry, to labor, to farmers, and to politicians. If any of the major interest groups feel that he is opposed to their interests, no amount of legal authority will be adequate to win their cooperation. A mobilization effort will not be successful with only part of the community behind it.

Choosing Charles Wilson had in it an element of what might be contained in the selection of John L. Lewis. Mr. Wilson was unacceptable to labor people, just as Lewis would have outraged industry. Shortly after Mr. Wilson took office, he had a dramatic run-in with labor. They

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walked out of all official posts in the emergency agencies. You may feel labor was all wrong and Wilson entirely innocent, since he had hardly yet taken any action to offend anybody. But that is beside the point. Labor was suspicious of Mr. Wilson. They were not in a mood to cooperate with him. Since he was not acceptable to one very large and important sector of the community, trouble was inevitable.

As I pointed out in detail in my book, "Presidential Agency," the effectiveness of the defense mobilizer rests ultimately in the authority of the President. It must be visible to all concerned that he has the full confidence and support of the President, that when he speaks, he speaks for the President. Mr. Wilson was not very close to the President, and it was clear that it was entirely possible to appeal over his head to the President--and win. This is an almost impossible handicap for a man in the top coordination post.

Many additional factors to the same effect could be cited, all showing that Mr. Wilson's ultimate departure was quite predictable. But, despite them all, let us not overlook the points I made earlier, that Mr. Wilson made an enormous contribution by accepting the defense mobilization job when he did, that he filled a great void which needed filling at that time, and that for the immediate situation his great assets were more important than his deficiencies. Given the context of time and place, he was a good selection.

QUESTION: To carry that on, Doctor, you mentioned we had quite a turnover for those various government agencies. Do you have a similar explanation that might fit in any way this rapid turnover of some of these individuals, or is there a key that would lead to the resignations of the majority? Would you care to comment as to why we had such a large turnover, and what we have to do to keep people in these jobs? You say money is no object. What do we have to do to keep them in the jobs?

DR. SOMERS: That's a very important question. If one attempted to answer it thoroughly, he would have to do into the roots of the whole public service structure here as compared, for example, with the structure in Great Britain, where they have little turnover.

The people we have been discussing in respect to turnover do not belong to a corps of civil servants; they are not public career people. They are people who had no desire or incentive to make a career of their jobs or of public administration generally. They had careers elsewhere and had to be persuaded away from their regular employments. Frequently, it involved a real sacrifice. For many, it was the second time within a few years.

The problem is obviously simpler when a war is in actual progress. But when the crisis is neither conspicuous nor dramatic, the same factors which made it difficult to persuade outsiders to come to Washington to take on a difficult assignment makes it difficult to keep them.

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In addition to such basic difficulties, there is the unnecessary fact that men in public life increasingly face the risk of character defamation. Many men who have served Government in recent years have found that it meant exposure to personal accusation. A businessman who finds that acceptance of public responsibility carries with it suspicion regarding all his previous associations and accusations that he is a "Socialist" or "He's sold out to the New Deal" may decide that his patriotism does not warrant such indignity and he may throw in the sponge.

Even Charles Wilson and Eric Johnston were accused by some prominent business journals of having become tools of the Fair Deal, although both are good Republicans and were simply serving their country when they were needed, and not the Democratic Party.

"McCarthyism," which is the extreme version of this type of thing has discouraged academicians as well as businessmen from accepting government posts or remaining long at them. Why should they carry the gratuitous burden of defending their character and honesty on top of the necessary burdens of office, when they have other perfectly good jobs?

Government administrators in conspicuous posts are constant targets and fair game. Congress makes them the victims of its constant rivalry with the President. Businessmen who feel injured by an unfavorable administrative decision are ready to accuse them of corrupt motivation. Nobody honors them!

The reasons for all these things lie deep in the fundamental structure of American Government, but this is too large a subject for adequate discussion here.

QUESTION: In connection with your points regarding planning, planning for the future, we agree with you that planning is frustrating at best, unrealistic in most respects. But where is our point of no return on planning? How far should that be limited in the structure below the national level? In other words, would you expand on your concepts of planning?

DR. SOMERS: I am glad you raised that point. I was afraid that I might have left the impression that I am opposed to all planning, which would be regrettable. I am opposed to much that has gone on under the name of planning. As I said, man cannot live without some planning. One has to have some idea where he is going tomorrow and the next day to be able to project ahead. In that sense, planning is and must be a vital force in our lives.

My criticism is that the type of planning I was discussing has not been a vital force, has been disassociated from action and real life, and thus has not really deserved the name of planning. To be meaningful, planning must be closely tied to action and responsibility for action.

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The realistic anticipation of tomorrow must be part of the decisions we made for today. A decision for today automatically involves some kind of look ahead to future actions.

That is why I insist that planning agencies set off by themselves detached from the decision-making process and from action programs are inevitably in some sort of limbo--at best intellectual or academic exercises. And while they may create knowledge and ideas which have long-range educational value, they do not substitute for operational planning, which is a sorely needed and too little employed tool of administration and policy.

Planning must be as active and lively an affair as operations. Plans affect every day's operations, and in turn, operations should cause daily reappraisal and adjustment of plans. For both to be at their best they must be closely interwoven and interdependent in organizational structure and in actual practice.

Despite the familiar and correct arguments that the planner needs time and quiet for reflection and analysis, I would claim that his planning becomes progressively less meaningful if he is wholly detached from the seat of action and responsibility.

COLONEL BARNES: I certainly want to thank you on behalf of the faculty, the Commandant, and the students, for a very stimulating, educational, and entertaining talk. Thank you very, very much.

DR. SOMERS: Thank you.

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