

## RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT IN HUMAN RESOURCES

26 October 1955

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## RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT IN HUMAN RESOURCES

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GENERAL CALHOUN: Gentlemen: Our aim this morning is to explore some of the efforts being made by the services and in private agencies in the field of research and development in human resources. It is important to know not only where the problems are, but how they can be most effectively handled in an emergency.

Dr. Eli Ginzberg, as you have seen from his biography, has exercised his remarkable talents in this field over a very broad front. In addition to his regular duties as Professor of Economics at the Graduate School of Business, Columbia University, he finds time somehow to act as consultant to all the services on projects involving human resources. In addition to these activities, he directs the research activities of the National Manpower Council, set up by the President; and finds time to carry on a lecture program, such as he will do here this morning.

It is a privilege to welcome back Dr. Ginzberg.

DR. GINZBERG: I will first delineate the environment in which the Armed Forces' manpower policies have to be hammered out.

As I see it, a major error in the determination of both military and civilian manpower policy is that the focus is too narrow; frequently the strategic factors that determine the limits of what you can do are omitted. So I want to begin by sketching the major aspects of the environment which set the framework for policy determination.

Then I will select three problem areas of central concern to the Armed Forces--the problem of selection, the problem of career development, and the problem of manpower control--and try to bring to the surface what I think you are doing, as well as some of the limitations that I find in your approach. I will make some references to the civilian experience as I know it, to indicate to you that others have similar types of problems and that they, too, have found it difficult to work out correct answers.

Then in passing I want to suggest the role of research as an instrument, the major and almost the only instrument, that can get us on sounder ground with respect to these problem areas.

Finally, I will conclude with some emerging principles . Let us begin with the environment in which the manpower policy of the Armed Forces is hammered out. The first factor is the pool from which you get your manpower. Let us take a look at the extent to which certain very broad national considerations operate on that pool and thus set limits on what you can and cannot do.

I am constantly impressed with the failure of those responsible for manpower policy determination to consider properly our national democratic traditions, including problems of equity. They fail to understand what a democracy with a tradition like ours will and will not tolerate at various points in its history.

We cannot have a universal military training service act and then ignore what the word "universal" implies to the average citizen. In reference to this let me illustrate the significance of what I think is looming just beyond the horizon.

We are about to enter upon a period of one of the most rapid population increases in the history of the United States, surely in the modern history of the United States. Some of you may have seen the Bureau of Census' estimate that we may eventually have 330 million people in this country. I want to point out that we are only a year or two, three years at the most, away from a manpower pool which will be vastly in excess of the present requirements of the armed services. This will bring us squarely face to face with the concept of "partial compulsion." I submit that it will be impossible to operate a selective service system in which only every second or third man is taken into service. It is unthinkable in terms of our American democracy.

The armed services, therefore, must reexamine the fundamental principles of how they get their manpower. This is a problem of the limits of tolerance in a democracy for selective manpower call-ups. I will try to tie this down quite concretely and specifically in terms of the issues that loom just ahead.

To illustrate the errors that are easy to make: General Van Fleet, when he came back from Korea, quite correctly testified that it was very wasteful to keep rotating the troops every twelve months from the combat area; and he recommended lengthening their period of service in the line. From the point of view of his mission as a combat commander, I am sure he was right. Yet I would call this approach

an error, because from the viewpoint of the Nation, of which the Armed Forces are a part, it was inconceivable, at a time when the Army was suffering over 90 percent of the total casualties in Korea, to lengthen the tours of duty of those in the infantry. Such action would have still further increased the differences between the combat soldier and all others in the services, as well as those who were permitted to stay at home. Such action was absolutely unthinkable. The concept of equity that is embedded in our type of democracy has become the determining factor in military manpower policy determination.

Secondly, let us consider the fast-moving technological and scientific progress and what that means from the point of view of manpower policy. In civilian life we have two very important balancing agents between men and machines. The first is the capital available to a company with which it can introduce new and radically changed processes and machines. And we have increasingly in modern America the trade union, which is able very successfully to influence the rate at which new machines are introduced.

Now, what is happening in the armed services in contrast? You have on the one hand a colossal research and development program, which is racing along under its own momentum, limited only by the funds that you can get from Congress, and, in my opinion, substantially uncorrelated and unintegrated with your manpower availabilities. This means, as far as I can see, that there is no effective balance at the moment between the rate at which new machines are coming into use and our ability to procure and train and retain the kinds of personnel that could make the most efficient use of the new machines. You have two separate orbits and very little contact between them. In this connection, I was impressed a couple of years ago to learn that in Korea the new signal equipment was not used in many instances, because the available manpower could cope much better with the World War II equipment, which was much easier to handle.

An experienced infantry officer recently wrote an editorial in "Armor," which stated that the Army is pricing itself out of combat, because its equipment is becoming so intricate and complex that it simply cannot get manpower resources in balance with it. That is a very important consideration from the point of view of broad planning in the Armed Forces. I think it has been a major area of neglect.

Let us take the third manpower problem, which I think you will concede has caused much grief and unhappiness in the past year. That is the problem of an effective reserve system.

One of the important things about manpower planning is that it never starts from scratch. Nations have a history. The armed services have their history. The civilian community has its history. What is the history of the Reserves and the National Guard in the United States? It is very simple. Americans by and large do not like to play soldiers. They do not consider it a favored activity. This means that the whole history of the National Guard and the Reserves is characterized by the fact that they have not been able to elicit any substantial participation on the part of the civilian community.

Now, let us consider that in the life time of a man the twenties are the period during which he is acquiring his skills. In more recent years it has also been the period in which he has acquired a wife and children. Women seem to subscribe to the philosophy of, "Let us have them and get them over with." This is a confusing trend, but I can tell you, as a matter of statistical fact, that we have the lowest age of marriage in the civilized world, and it keeps dropping. Half the women in the United States are married before they are twenty-one. Children are being born to very young parents.

So during the time when a young man is acquiring his skills and is deeply concerned about his family at that time the Reserve System wants to pull this man away from his home for two nights a week and for a fortnight's training in the summer. I submit that this will lead the services to a fight with most of the women in the United States.

I was inspecting Naval Reserve units in New York last year. I think we have a right to be proud of New York harbor. It is one of the great harbors of the world. But the Navy did not have a rowboat at its disposal for these units in one of the largest harbors of the world. Unless a Reserve System is flexible and imaginative, the armed services will have lots of trouble.

Earlier this year I had the opportunity of presenting to the President and the Cabinet on behalf of the Secretary of Labor an analysis of the work skills of the Nation. I had some charts that the Department of Defense prepared for me on this issue of, How do you really, in fact, not in theory, run a Reserve System? I used three cases to illustrate what happens to men who leave the Army and enter the Reserve.

Just one illustration: A youngster entered the Army from Massachusetts. At the time of induction he was an auto mechanic. In the Army he was assigned as an infantryman. After discharge, he took advantage of the G. I. Bill and became a chemical engineer. How does one handle him in a Reserve System? It is easier to get a lot of legislation through Congress than it is to develop an effective Reserve System based upon compulsion. Perhaps it would be better if the Reserves had fewer men and operated under an incentive system. Only a small part of the civilian population is interested in the military and these are the men who would make the best reservists. Over-reliance on compulsion is a constant error in the armed services' manpower policy.

Next we have the question of career service. It is true that in a field where the monetary incentives are very limited there is trouble first in attracting and second in holding, good people. That is true of the armed services, the teaching profession, the nursing profession, and many other fields. But I would say that the problem of an effective career service in the military goes way beyond raising the monetary incentives, important as they are.

I think it is fair to say that there has been a growing tendency to regard a military career not as a true profession but as just a job in a big organization. I submit that if this continues, you will run into an even more serious problem of attracting and holding good people. A serious profession will interest many people because it has meaning and value for them within their total scheme of values. But when it becomes just a job, a man tries to get all the major emoluments that he can.

Another difficulty is presented by the small amount of control you have of your careers. When one of the most brilliant research captains in the Navy was promoted to Admiral only through the personal intercession of the Secretary of the Navy, it is an indication of the difficulty of assuming that competence will bring its automatic reward.

The next problem that I want to discuss in connection with the environment has to do with the lack of full understanding by the services of the role of the highly trained people who are now required by virtue of the increasing penetration of science and the advances in technology in the developing art of warfare. Historically the services operated under the assumption that, since they had a small

officer group, an officer had to be an all-around man. He was kept on a constant merry-go-round of assignments in the hope that from each assignment he would pick up some new experience. But now he cannot hope to become generally competent in all fields.

I had the pleasure of assisting General Bliss at the time he was Surgeon General of the Army to break through this historical pattern and get high rank, up to and including major general, for doctors of distinction in either professional or administrative work. Up to that point the Army had decided that the only way a man could progress from colonel to general in the Medical Department was by giving up his professional work in medicine and becoming an administrator.

And that is not the whole of the story. The problem really goes very deep. Mr. Pace, talking at the Sesquicentennial Celebration at West Point, brought home the fact that a balance was needed between junior officers who received broad training and older men who had to become specialists. He put forward a proposition--which I thought was reasonable--that one just had to accept the fact that by the time a man was a major he had to specialize from that point on, and the promotion system had to reflect that fact.

Here are my conclusions about the environment in which military manpower policy is determined: First, there is too little awareness of what I would call the limits of national manpower policy. It is never a problem solely of military need. Policy must be sensitive to the total problems of the country. As far as I can see, too little consideration is taken of the key elements embedded in our civilian traditions.

Second, there has been too little sensitizing of the military manpower planning to the serious impact of science and technology on the Armed Forces and therefore to new manpower requirements, particularly with reference to quality and skill.

And, thirdly, there still must be an imaginative reestablishment on a sound basis of a professional career in the armed services. Salaries must be adjusted. You ought to have better housing. But above all you must create a career for serious people who can be appealed to on the basis of serious work.

So much for part one--the environment. Let us look more closely at the three problem areas that I said I would select for detailed consideration--selection, career development, and manpower control.

As I see it, the prevailing doctrine among the services with respect to selection is, How can we get the best men? What are the best ways to train them, and the best ways to use them? Sometimes somebody thinks about ways to retain them. If anybody thinks there is any one best solution to these several manpower problems, he will soon learn differently. The best way to train men may not be the best way to insure that you retain them. The Air Force has begun to discover this, and I believe all the other services are also aware of these contradictions. That is the scramble for the most intelligent people is no solution to your long-run manpower problem.

Let me step back now and try to consider what the problems of selection really are.

The first is the decision to plan for the short run or the longer run, which rests on an answer to whether the armed services should place stress in a period like the present on practices geared for full mobilization. If you operate with only short-run emphasis, then you will fail to take into the services reasonable numbers of people with modest handicaps and you will get no practice in dealing with large segments of our national manpower. And in my opinion that means a major failure to get proper mobilization experience.

Second, in failing to take in many marginal people and failing to make an investment in them, you fail to strengthen the Nation's manpower resources for a time when you will need them.

The third point has to do with the fact that, after all, the total effective strength of the United States in a very real sense is a composite of the strength of each individual within the country. If you fail to make what could be a significant contribution across the board by reason of not inducting certain people, you fail to make the type of national contribution that you could make.

I was glad to see Secretary Burgess finally move to revise the regulations which stipulated that if a youngster once broke a window with a ball and showed up on a police blotter, he was thereby rendered unsuited for the armed services, Of all the nonsensical rules about

juvenile delinquency, this is the worst. And yet it is a rule that all three of the armed services have followed for a long time-- that anybody who had committed any kind of minor infraction during adolescence that brought him into relation with the police became nonusable. Not only was the action of the armed services serious because such men were precluded from participating in military service, but stigmatizing them as nonsuitable for military service meant compounding the likelihood of turning them from juvenile delinquents into adult delinquents and a real menace to society.

Military service is not only a responsibility but a privilege. To deny a man that privilege on obviously unsound grounds is a major challenge to the services. So I am glad that Secretary Burgess has corrected that.

The next problem area is military selection. Let me try to show you what I think can be learned from civilian life.

All large corporations that I know have a program for developing executive personnel. They try to find the right people. Who are the right people? They define the right people in terms of specific backgrounds and qualities--so many years of college, and so forth. They pick their potential executives from a preferred group. Very soon they find that a lot of these people who have been taken on for development do not work very hard.

I said to a vice president in charge of personnel of a large corporation who was picking men solely from the Ivy League colleges; "What can you expect from these youngsters who were brought up in well-off homes? They go around with young ladies who were brought up in equally well-off homes, who believe that the weekend starts on Friday afternoon and sometimes ends at Monday noon. How do you expect these youngster to take their work seriously?"

You read in the newspapers about the so-called--and I mean so-called--great shortage of engineers. I am reminded of what happened when I looked at an Army requisition in 1951 which said the Army needed an additional 800 engineers. We went over that requisition. It turned out that of that 800, all that were needed were 792 technicians and about eight engineers. This is what goes on in civilian industry too. If Company A is trying to capture as many engineers as possible, Company B will not be left behind. It is

going after engineers too. In that way you get a fantastic swelling of requirements.

Now, what is becoming of this kind of personnel? Many young engineers work at engineering for a relatively few years. So what industry is really saying is, "We expect to get our best management out of engineering-trained people." Many who graduate from engineering schools do not stay in engineering very long, because the conditions of work are not satisfactory. Yet industry has gotten the bright idea that it would like more and more good engineers. The same holds true for the services. I remember a discussion with a senior officer whom I challenged about expanding Reserve units at engineering and technical schools. I warned that the services would find it hard to get these graduates because of the interest of civilian industry in them. His answer was, "If these men are good for civilian industry, they are good for us."

A further illustration of what might be called the need for self-critical and enlightened policies can be found in the South. By seeking to maintain the segregated employment pattern and consistently refusing to deal with the fact that well-trained Negroes are leaving the South, the South is suffering from a serious skilled manpower shortage. If it continues its discriminatory practices, it will insure continued difficulties for itself.

I could continue and give many other illustrations of the basic problems in the area of selection. We need seriously to begin to study the logistics of manpower; What are the yields in terms of the performance--not presumed performance, but actual performance--of different classes of manpower, recognizing that you never have enough of any preferred type of manpower. In this way we can discover the proper cutoff points.

There is a point in the scale below which you do not want to accept people, because you will lose. The cost of using them will be greater than the returns you will ultimately get. But this is a problem that neither the armed services nor civilian industry really fully understands. We really do not know much about the relationship of men with mental abilities below average from the viewpoint of whether they are on balance a net asset. It is not a question of whether you have a few more percent of Group IV's. It is a question actually of studying the distribution in terms of an accounting system--with regard to the inflow, the cost, and the returns.

Now, you can always justify your prejudices about selection if you pay no attention to utilization. The major manpower study that we are carrying on at Columbia has to do with the ineffective soldier in World War II. We have seen that when a group of boys from backwoods farms who had never been even in a market town were drafted, then tested and evaluated and run around for the first two weeks with no cushion at all in the complex environment of the Army, then sent to a unit getting ready for early shipment, they were overwhelmed. Naturally many failed. They did. Most people would fail under that kind of situation.

But the brothers and cousins of these same boys in a different kind of situation--either at a replacement training center or a quarter-master training center, where the youngsters had an opportunity to catch their breath--were able to get over the initial hurdles and begin to perform satisfactorily. This is another way of saying that you can prove any selection principle if you consider only selection and nothing more. Actually, selection and utilization must always be considered together. It seems to me that the armed services have gone too far in stressing the importance of selecting only people who score well on mental tests. You do need able people for many jobs. There is a shortage of brainpower. But a very large number of jobs require only a basic intellectual capacity. The real problem has to do with motivation and management. The two key points are whether you know how to deal with a person so that you can determine his capacities and then help him utilize them fully.

So the whole emphasis on selection, in my opinion, is an evasion. It is a lazy man's belief that manpower problems can be solved by selection. There is no such possibility. At best it is a minor part, never a major part, of the manpower story.

Let us take a look at career development. At the end of the war the armed services initiated a program by which a man would move ahead constantly and develop his potential, so that finally the services would have only fully trained officers. That would be nice if we lived in an ideal world. But, as I see it, at each stage when a man is ready for reassignment, the real factors which will determine what happens to him will be the availability of positions open at his grade in the proper location. Those are the realities of the system. There is a fundamental conflict between the ideals and the realities of the plan. An officer has had a tour of duty. He has a certain grade. He is due to come home, so the key question is what jobs are open at home.

It seems, therefore, that there has been overplanning in the career development system.

But I want to raise even more fundamental questions about it. Does it make sense to plan for everybody in the same general manner? I question it. Do all people have to follow the same path? I question it.

I question also the tremendous emphasis that has been put on extended formal schooling. I believe--and here I have some confirmation in that the President has emphasized the same point--that the Armed Forces have gone somewhat overboard on formal schooling. There is a time and a place for pulling people out of their assignments and restimulating them through formal schooling. But if people read solid fare regularly--not just "Time," "Life," and "Harper's" and the daily newspapers--we would have less need for formal schooling for adults. A man would continue to grow under his own momentum.

Thirdly, and very important as far as I am concerned, are the tremendous losses that come about as the result of a system that pushes people around. The big problem of manpower in a democracy has to do with self-selection. Some people like to go to school; some do not like to go to school. Some people want to go to Alaska; some do not want to go to Alaska. Now, if you have a system which does not give reasonable consideration to the desires of the individual, you only compound your difficulties. The man who wants to go to college is sent to Alaska, and the man who wants to go to Alaska is sent to college. You have compounded your difficulties, and you certainly are not going to get the best out of your people.

The whole thing has been overstructured, in my opinion. I wrote a book, based on a round table, that was recently published. The book is called "What Makes an Executive." An article based on it appeared in "Nation's Business" for the month of June, and is very well done. The former Secretary of the Army was a member of the round table that participated in writing the book. It was composed primarily of important captains of industry. In considering the executive development problems in their companies they felt that they had placed too much emphasis on formal instruction. They also believed that there was too little evaluation and self-selection going on. Many of the problems that I have identified within the armed services they identified within industry.

With regard to research I would say that we ought to learn how people develop through their job assignments. We do not know enough about that. Mr. Milton, the Assistant Secretary of the Army, has initiated some explorations from an analysis of their assignments of how people move to the top. I think it is very important.

Thirdly, we are only beginning to learn how to improve our diagnostic skills--to try to find out how high people are both capable of and interested in going. I was at du Pont last week. They had gained the same impression as many other people I have talked with--that there are a large number of senior executives who do not want to move all the way to the top. It is a very interesting phenomenon. It is by no means easy to understand. It apparently has to do with the nature of the work, not with the nature of the rewards.

Now, the last point is about manpower controls. I am impressed with the fact that there has been a tremendous elaboration of instruments of control in the armed services. In modesty I will say that I had something to do with developing the first measuring instrument during World War II, which was known as a workload study. By now we have instruments whose nature we do not even fully understand.

The first fundamental problem that must be met from the point of view of manpower control is that in order to plan the control of manpower you must first know the various types of personnel that you have available. There is the military, male and female. There are the civilians. There is indigenous personnel. There are consultants. There are all kinds of people. It is very difficult to deal effectively with, even to plan for, the many orders of personnel that are available.

Next, there is no manner of checking properly on the efficiency with which the personnel job is done, which means that there is no real incentive for anybody in the field to do the best job possible. Why should he? He knows that if he develops some good personnel, he is going to have them taken away from him. That means he will have a tendency to protect himself by overstaffing. After all, there are sensible people out in the field. They have lived through one, two, three periods when as a reward for having done a good job in economizing on personnel, instead of being rewarded, they got hurt. Now, I know that Mr. Pace, when he was Secretary of the Army, tried to get some evaluation of how an officer handled his people reflected on the efficiency report. This has still not been effectively done.

Thirdly, I do not think you can do an efficient personnel job in the field without an entirely different allocation of responsibilities than now exists. As long as the field is held with such tight reins as now, there is no possibility for imaginative experimentation on utilization. Why should a person in the field not follow the book? Why do anything else? There has to be a fundamental restudy and re-appraisal of the relationship between headquarters and the field.

Now, interestingly enough, the civilian picture is bad too. I lectured recently at Princeton, where I addressed personnel officials from fifty large corporations. They did not know either as much as they should have about this question of their manpower resources. Take women and Negroes. The large corporations do not know at this stage how to handle such resources efficiently. Although there are twenty million women working out of the sixty-six million in the labor force, industry has not learned to utilize woman-power effectively. During all these years when arguments have been going on about engineer shortages, there have been insufficient attempts made to reallocate work between engineers and technicians and others. It has been my observation that there has been much more talk about shortages than imagination expended in improving on how work could be better performed.

So I would say that research should help us to advance toward a better use of continuing varying types and qualities of personnel. There is a tremendous need to establish really effective budgeting of personnel, with proper controls so that a man will know that when he does a good job, he gets rewarded, and when he does a bad job, he gets penalized for it.

Finally, there is a tremendous need for experimentation on utilization.

I referred to some important new emerging principles. Colonel Lincoln, in his book "Economies of National Security," pointed out that in the personnel planning for World War II nobody gave a thought to the manpower problem. We had just gone through a big depression; so the problem then was not one of the supply of manpower. Tightness of supply is a new problem, both in military and civilian life, and we are not going to get all of the answers very quickly. Moreover I believe that the crucial problems are of a qualitative nature, resulting from the acceleration of technology, with its higher and higher demand for people of skill and talent.

Now, I would say there are five emerging principles:

One, we should move away from our belief that gadgets, in the form of tests, improved communication, and so on, are the crux of the manpower problem. Gadgets may have meaning, but only after the substantive aspects of the problem have been analyzed, appraised and brought under control.

Next, it is important to remember that people cannot be studied in the abstract. They work and live only in structured organizations. So the proper approach to manpower must include a simultaneous examination of the organization's structure. That means that the work assignment in a structure with decentralized responsibility is crucial.

Thirdly, the development of manpower is a risk-taking process. If you do not make an investment, if you do not take risks, you are not going to develop anybody, because people grow only by having responsibility, only by failing as well as succeeding. That means that as long as the organization--and this has particular reference to the armed services--restricts responsibility of men down the line, they cannot grow up. So you have to decide how much you are willing to budget in this sense for manpower development.

Fourth, the integrity of the leadership with respect to the day-by-day practices is what really counts. That means that, when you run into issues the way they are dealt with will get reflected to the people throughout the organization. In this connection I have been very much upset by the Department of Defense policy of handing out discharges to men because of behavior that they were involved in prior to being taken into the service. This violates a hundred and fifty years of armed service tradition.

Lack of conviction also is involved in the leadership problem. I remember Owen D. Young saying that one of our worst troubles in large organizations was failing to get rid of people after ten years when management knew that they were not going to make the grade. Companies hesitated to do it, out of fear of hurting the person. They therefore hurt both the person and the organization. So you have the whole question of integrity of leadership up and down the line.

Finally, I would make a plea for research, which is simply another way of saying that unless leadership is modest about what it knows about people, unless it is willing to admit that it can learn something,

and unless it has a willingness to use what it learns, obviously it will be forced to continue to live with its self-assurances, its prejudices, and its biases.

Interestingly enough, everybody who has gotten to the top in an organization thinks there is one thing he knows well, and that is all about people. This is essentially the core of why he has gotten there. I would say therefore that it is very difficult for you to make place for research in the manpower field, for, if every boss is in his own mind a genius on this subject, why bother about research?

Now, I will end the way I ended at West Point, by saying that the problem is really not so much what one says as how one acts.

COLONEL BARRETT: Gentlemen, Dr. Ginzberg is ready for your questions.

QUESTION: Sir, by what means would you propose to make the Reserve System attractive? Certainly not by money alone?

DR. GINZBERG: I would begin by trying to identify what approaches I thought would surely fail. The present approach, of trying to do too much, looks to me to be in for serious trouble. I would like to work with that part of the population that would be interested in being in the Reserve. There is a part of the population that is interested in keeping in active contact with the military. I would concentrate on them.

One of the greatest weaknesses at the present time is that when you finally get people in, in many instances you really do not have an effective training program for them. On the training front I would explore additional advantages having to do with short tours of duty on shipboard or even overseas. There are some young men who would be attracted by that. It simply means that the general principle holds. I would try to figure out who is interested in what, and encourage the services to concentrate on solidifying groups that would give them the greatest strength. I would try to do everything possible to handle the rest on a paper assignment basis. I think you must move toward the most skeletonized Reserve structure that is practicable.

QUESTION: You spoke about there being too much emphasis on formalized training. I had quite a different idea. I thought they

should get more training than they are now getting. I wonder if you care to elaborate somewhat on precisely what you mean.

DR. GINZBERG: I was referring to formalized classroom instruction as the main instrument of training. I believe the best training that exists is training that comes as part of a man's assignment. A man grows up by being given a job to do, by giving him an opportunity to do it, by being held to account for doing it, and by being given some help by his superiors when he needs it, but not by being overly supported by them. That is, all other devices for growth are secondary to the basic one of challenging assignments. I believe we have failed both in industry and the armed services to realize the importance of the assignment system for growth. We have gone back and have redefined training in too formal a sense.

QUESTION: To follow along that line of reasoning on this, and to bring out the other half of the career development picture, let me ask you this: I was under the impression that you were less than well impressed with the present career development program. I am wondering what you would recommend in changing that program or those programs.

DR. GINZBERG: You have every right to try to force me to get down to concrete and specific instances. By way of prelude I ought to say that I am not as close to the details as I should like to be.

The first objection I have to the career development program as I have seen it is that there is too big a gap between the ambiguousness of the planning and its effective carry-through. That is, I think it is always better to get a closer match between what is desired and what can be accomplished, because you only create frustration and unhappiness when you promise more than you can deliver. So my first proposition is that I think you try to deliver too much on paper.

My second proposition is that I think you are going on the assumption that everybody ought to be developed, and that major effort should be made to develop everybody close to a theoretical maximum. This presupposes that the organization or the armed services can do a development job by simply determining that they want to do it. This is a misconception, in my opinion, because the key to development is the individual. A lot of people do not want to be developed. That is true of the armed services, it is true of du Pont, and it is true of Columbia University. That is, we can exaggerate the numbers of people who are willing to put forth serious effort and who will have the energy level, the goals, and the desire to develop themselves to a maximum.

So I would try to get somewhat more selective in the sense of offering opportunities to people--and this is important--permitting them to do some self-selection. To be picked up and sent to school for ten months or a year under orders from somebody who is working in the Bureau of Personnel does not make much sense to me from a development point of view.

I would like to see the situation where you put a notice on the bulletin board saying: "We have a place open in Alaska. Only those with the grade of captain can qualify. The man selected will be in full charge of the base. Who wants to go?"

Next, I would try to put together difficult assignments and big responsibilities, and say, "Who wants to take this on?" I am a big believer in self-selection. These are some of the lines along which I would like to move. I believe we should make a much more critical appraisal of the instruments now used to develop people, including formal schooling.

QUESTION: You mentioned that the inflow of information on the performance of people in their assignments would reveal a lot of things that people do not know about the use of manpower. Would you explain what you mean?

DR. GINZBERG: Let me say that I think the basic problem, the large-scale manpower problem, in the armed services is concerned with taking hundreds and thousands of people and using them profitably from a broad accounting point of view. It is not too much of a problem of estimating what the individual requires, as it is to try to evaluate how the services should act. Take people with a mental grade IV. If you vary the training period by two weeks, give them two weeks additional, and then assign them, and follow through, you may find that the additional cost paid off. It is only analysis in terms of some of these large-scale accounting approaches that will begin to tell you something about the cutoff point on cost. That is a type of study that is almost unknown.

QUESTION: Dr. Ginzberg, I am interested in your thesis that some people want to play soldier, some want to play aviator, and what-not. What place would you start selecting people? Just as they enter high school, or in college?

DR. GINZBERG: I will try to take that in two stabs. I think part of the trouble with the armed services and large-scale industry is

that they forget that this is an open society, and that an essential ingredient is the individual's freedom of choice about work.

I had a session with Secretary Burgess and his senior staff some weeks ago in which the proposition came up that the armed services are suffering from a lack of communication, from not getting their story across. My very brief comment was: "Impossible. You have in the armed services the most efficient communication system in the world, because you have men living with you for about three or four years. What you mean is that what they communicate when they are in, and especially when they get out, is not what you would want them to communicate."

Now, I use that by way of introduction, to say that your big problem is what you do during the initial exposure of a recruit. I would always try to get a man to take the first step about his career, because when you get a person to commit himself, you are better off. If he goes into something on his own volition, he is more likely to stay there than if he is pushed in. It is a great advantage. That is why we do not have even more divorces than at present. Just think if our parents told us whom to marry. As soon as you have committed yourself to something, it operates as a restraint against backing out of it.

Now, that means that you ought to try to watch during a man's initial period of exposure whether he shows some liking and understanding for what you are doing. You ought to pay some special attention to such men.

I would say the problem is to discriminate more sharply than you have between men who are antagonistic, who are not going to be interested in a military career one hour longer than they have to; a second group whose behavior will depend on a lot of things, including the state of the labor market; and a third group, that we were just discussing, who are interested in, who like, military life.

I would say the big challenge is to distinguish among these three, and then try to find out what you can do to encourage further those who are initially somewhat attracted to the service. That is the way I would move on this problem.

QUESTION: In connection with your pessimism in regard to getting personnel for the Reserves in the Armed Forces, I wonder if you could give me your perspective with which you view this in this complex

monetary world. I think back on the way in which this has been handled during the War of 1812 in the Navy. I think of Lincoln's problems in selecting officers for the Army of the Potomac, or any of the historical manpower problems in the Reserves in the thirties as compared with the way we are doing it today. I think we are doing it better. So I ask you this: If we are not doing so well, where in the history of the world and in what country has military manpower been handled best?

DR. GINZBERG: I am not as pessimistic as I sounded. I talked that way because I felt that my job was to come down here and make sure you did not get too complacent. My own reflections on World War II were that we won not necessarily because we were more efficient than our enemies but because we had certain tremendous assets having to do with the strength of our economy. Having almost an unlimited amount of materiel, we could do a lot of other things well or poorly--it hardly mattered.

I really do not know the answer as to the relative efficiency or lack of efficiency that different nations have shown in dealing with military manpower. My impression is that if you read Rommel's campaign in North Africa, the way he used German troops, he did very well. My studies of the British led me to believe that they were very much more economical and wise in the use of manpower resources than we were; and that on the whole we have always compensated for loose administration through our fantastic industrial strength.

I am not one to argue that as of this moment we are first, second, third, or fourth in relative efficiency in handling military manpower. But I am sure we can do much better.

QUESTION: Frankly, you lost me in your comments about universal military training. I am not sure if you are for it or against it. Would you set me straight?

DR. GINZBERG: That is all right. I will repeat what I said about the problem.

At the present time about 30 percent of the pool will not be called on to serve--and the total number eligible to serve will go up very rapidly shortly. Query: Up to what point can we still talk about a universal military training system when 40 or 45, 50, or 55 percent of the eligible age group does not see service?

I say, this is going to break for sure. It is going to break when some Congressman points out: "Why did you pick Tommy Jones? Why didn't you pick Roger Bacon?" That is what I am talking about. A system of compulsion in a democracy must be substantially equitable with respect to all eligible citizens. I would say that 30 percent rejections and deferments is a dangerously vulnerable point with respect to universality; and we are moving far beyond that. It has nothing to do with whether I like it or not.

QUESTION: I enjoyed your talk so far, but you did not say anything about the Armed Forces' evaluation or rating system. I wonder if you did that intentionally.

DR. GINZBERG: I have lectured to the Air Force in their management courses. The last time I said something about the rating system, the questioner indicated that I did not know how much the services had improved the system from the time when I was acquainted with it.

Let me go back a little and look at this terribly difficult problem as it exists in any large decentralized organization. All efforts to date seem to indicate that it is very difficult to get people to rate carefully. It is very hard to get them to control their personal biases.

Now, the better a man is, the more likely he is to get in dunch with somebody; and this will show up on his record. General Eisenhower, when he was at Denver, heard of somebody at Lowry Field who had gotten into trouble; and he passed the comment that a good officer can't help getting in trouble at some time during his career. The President knows that, but I am not sure the promotion boards always know that when they look at an average score.

Industry has an advantage on you only because it is less big, only because it is less diversified. No one knows the answer of how to develop a good rating system. I think it will take a long time and much talent before we lick it.

If I were to pick the major problems of human resources in the armed services, I would take the rating problem; I would take selection as another one; I would take the evaluation of training as the third; and I would take the development of performance tests as the fourth.

These major problems will not be solved quickly. Good answers will be hard to come by. If you want quick results, you are just kidding yourselves and wasting your money.

QUESTION: This goes back to the subject of equity. I assume now that you are a proponent of universal military training. I am wondering how you reconcile your thoughts on equity in connection with four or six months of military training on the one hand for the universal military trainees, with two years for the draftees on the other hand, when at the same time we are encouraging some people to take three years, or four, or longer periods of time, so that you can get an effective force out of them. How do you expect to get equity in the military service with different obligations on people? Actually, we do not have equity today, since a considerable number of our young men are entering the pool of 18 years and older who probably will never perform any military service.

DR. GINZBERG: I am with you on all you said except the assumption that I am in favor of universal military training. I see the situation such that, if the requirements of the armed services remain what they are--and under one recent assumption they will go down--I do not think that the maintenance of the present system of compulsion will long be feasible.

So I would say that in the next two years, if I had the responsibility for military manpower planning, I would try to figure out how one gets the services turned around to living without compulsion, because I think they may be forced to get on without a compulsory system, at least such as we now have. If requirements keep sliding off, which is one reasonable assumption, it may be impossible to continue to use the present compulsory system. A major effort must be made by the services to see whether they can meet their minimum manpower needs in any other manner.

COLONEL BARRETT: Dr. Ginzberg, on behalf of the Commandant and the faculty, thank you for a most stimulating lecture.

(12 Apr 1955--250)B/mmg