Centralising Tendencies in the Decision Making Structures of U. S. Diplomacy : the Role of the National Security Adviser

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C E R T I F I C A T E

Certified that the dissertation entitled "CENTRALIZING TENDENCIES IN THE DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURE OF U.S. DIPLOMACY : THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER" submitted by Ms. Seema Gahlaut in partial fulfilment of the award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy (M.Phil) in Jawaharlal Nehru University, is a product of the student's own work, carried out by her under my supervision and guidance.

It is hereby certified that this work has not been presented for the award of any other degree or diploma by any University in or outside India, and may be forwarded to the examiners for evaluation.

(ASHOK GUHA)
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CONTENT

INTRODUCTION

Executive Ascendance in Foreign Policy-Making: The Post-War Phenomenon

Decision-making involves the analysis of given information and making judgements about the anticipated course of events. As such, the inputs of information and perception are equally important in this process. Given the limitations of human reasoning and cognitive capabilities, and the fact that information is almost always incomplete, misconceptions and failures are an inevitable part of the process of decision making. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the sphere of foreign policy where issues of war and peace are at stake. Recognition of this fact has been the reason for deconcentration of foreign policy decision-making powers in all political systems. The elected representatives comprising the legislature, have been given supervisory powers over the executive branch in most of the modern nation-states. However, with the passage of time, and with increasing complexity of issue and power configurations, executive ascendance has become a visible phenomenon in the foreign policy sphere.

The post-war international system has seen the emergence of a complex world of numerous political actors - both governmental and non-governmental, and the fusion of domestic and foreign policy. The enhanced negotiating role of the state in defense of domestic economic

interests has blurred the line between economic policy and foreign policy.[1] The rise of divergent regimes and ideologies, the rapid developments in science, technology and communications has resulted in continued growth of groupings and in the indispensable need for ordering of national priorities and balancing of foreign policy goals. This intermeshing of political, economic and strategic goals has caused the diplomatic agenda to be broadened to the extent where 'deciding' foreign policy goals has become just as crucial as 'efforts' to achieve them. The requirements of leadership and innovation have now to be balanced with the requirements of efficiency and organization of foreign policy-making system. This, in effect, has been the basis for increased control of the executive branch on the setting of foreign policy agenda and on the formulation of options available.

The permanent executive, the bureaucracy, as an important constituent of the executive branch, uses its information and expertise in shaping the policy options presented before the political executive and after decisions have been made, can still exercise significant

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1. R.P.Barston, Modern Diplomacy (London, 1988), p.6.

control over actual conduct of diplomacy by particularistic interpretation of the decided policy.

In Communist-socialist political systems, as in the systems of developing nations, the executive represents the educated and powerful elite, that have asserted their dominance, indeed responsibility, over foreign policy by citing the need for politico-economic mobilization required for development - either towards socialism or towards industrialization. As the post-war nations face an increasingly challenging and self-absorbed world, the need for rapid economic growth seems urgent. The clear articulation and practice of a consistent foreign policy has therefore become the exclusive domain of the executive branch. The process is encouraged by the widespread belief that foreign policy be coherent and implemented in a non-partisan fashion, because domestic and international support for 'national' goals cannot be mobilized unless foreign policy is in the hands of a cohesive and identifiable leadership.

In the United States, constitutional separation of powers notwithstanding, the executive branch has gained considerable control over foreign policy-making, mainly because the legislative branch (the Congress) is not inclined to handle these issues unless they are of

pressing importance in terms of domestic electoral demands.[2] Besides, in the post war era of global US activism, on behalf of the 'free world' and against 'international communism', nearly every executive action has had policy implications for the other nations.

Executive ascendance in foreign policy making is a widespread post-war phenomenon, that represents the growing perception of foreign relations as an exotic and esoteric arena, that requires expert and non-partisan management, because in dealing with other nations, probably hostile or at least having conflicting interests, the prestige and the power of the nation are supposed to be at stake.

With unlimited information resources at its disposal the Executive is considered to be the organ eminently suitable to the task. Very few people consider themselves knowledgeable enough to give alternative views on foreign policy issues. Secondly, most often, the majority of these issues are too remote for general public, so that people are either ignorant or indifferent. In such cases, legislators are not likely to be interested

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2. Bernard Cohen, Public's Impact on Foreign Policy (New York, 1983), p.24.

in opposing the views of the executive if the issues cannot be conceived as domestic electoral ones. Another factor for non-assertive legislative orientation to foreign policy initiatives of the executive stems from the belief that it is impractical for legislators to make detailed national policy when the pressure groups that influence them cannot really be representative of 'national' interest.

Most importantly, it is widely held that operational aspects of foreign policy are complex, given the growing interdependence between the domestic and international issues and events. This, when combined with the increased insecurity of the people, due to fluid international military and economic conditions, serve to highten the public demand for 'effective leadership', that is, visible, non-chaotic and in relentless pursuit of national interest(s). Crisis situations demand decisive action, based on non-partisan, purely 'national' perspective, and the public associates these capabilities with the executive rather than with the disparate body of politicians.

Foreign and Defense Policy Making Powers of the President in USA

The US constitution, with characteristic brevity, gives Congress the power to "regulate commerce with

foreign nations, declare war, raise and support armies, and to provide and maintain a navy". In short, this Article I, Section 8, assigns to Congress, three main powers - "controlling money, approving treaties and declaring war".[3] Simultaneously, the Chief Executive was given powers linked with policy administration.[4] He is the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, can make treaties and appoint ambassadors subject to the approval of the Senate.

This "Partial mix of powers" between the Congress and the President has proved to be an 'invitation to struggle'.[5] There are two main views regarding this dispersal of authority. Many argue that the framers of the constitution intended to confine the Presidential powers by giving policy-making powers to the Congress. However, others argue that the President has "a unique position within the political system: the only office-bearer apart from the Vice-President, who was to have a

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3. E.S.Muskie, K. Rush, et al, The President, Congress and Foreign Policy (Lanham, NY, 1987).

4. Ibid.

5. C.V.Crabb, Jr. and P.M.Holt, Invitation to Struggle: Congress, the President and Foreign Policy (Washington, D.C., 1980).

continuous tenure, a national perspective and the ability to respond quickly and decisively to emergencies."[6] This implies that Congressional powers are meant for guidance and control over executive, not for policy-making or implementation. The role of President as the Commander-in-Chief of armed forces also reinforces the view that wide constitutional powers were to facilitate him to organize these functions as he deemed fit.

The second argument has been variously used, by successive Presidents, to institutionalize their policy-making powers. It is argued that given the fact that executive responsibility rests in a single individual, as contrasted with collective legislative responsibility of a Congress composed of numerous Senators and Representatives, it is obvious that constitutional brevity implies wide organizational powers to the President --to ensure flexibility and suitability to the environment in which he performs and the goals that he decides to pursue.

Post war American globalism has had profound consequences for foreign policy making processes, in three major areas,[7] and each has served to increase the

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. Ibid.

. J.A.Nathan and J.K.Oliver, Foreign Policy Making and the American Political System (Boston, Toronto, 1987).

power of the executive. Firstly, in the realm of executive-legislative relationship, bi-partisan support to cold war goals had led to congressional acquiscence to presidential foreign policy initiatives in the name of national security. Secondly, this idea of US commitment to contain communism and to establish a democratic international order in its own image, also perpetuated the idea of a state of constant seige, paving the way for the rise of a powerful national security bureaucracy, whose monopoly over ideas and information remained nearly unchallendged until Vietnam war. Thirdly, there was widespread public consensus on 'goals' of US foreign policy, viz., as a leader of the 'free world', US was obliged to intervene everywhere, economically and militarily and that bold and coherent action in this respect, can come only from the executive.

Leadership and Initiative

Congressional acquiscence to presidential incursions into foreign and military policy formulation and implementation has been accorded varying amount of importance by scholars.

According to Wildavsky,[8] Presidents tend to get

8. A.Wildavsky, "The Two Presidencies", in A.Wildavsky, ed., Perspective on the Presidency (Boston, 1975), p.452.

their way in the foreign policy realm far more often than in the domestic one. "Although presidents have rivals for power in foreign affairs, the rivals do not usually succeed. Presidents prevail not only because they may have superior resources, but because their potential opponents are weak, divided or believe that they should not control foreign policy". Wildavsky studied presidential proposals from 1948 through 1964, and concluded that "when issues like immigration and refugees are removed from general foreign policy area, it is clear that the presidents prevail about 70 per cent of the time in foreign and defense policy, compared with 40 per cent in the domestic sphere".

But since then, the Vietnam war, the end of the era of bipartisanship and the time of growing congressional assertiveness seem to have changed the equation somewhat. Later scholars like Lee Sigelman[9] (1979) have found that not only did the Congress not back the president more often in foreign and defense policy than in domestic affairs, but since 1973, its support to president has weakened in all areas. On the other hand,

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9. L.Siegelman, "A Re-assessment of the Two Presidencies Thesis," Journal of Politics (Florida), 41 (1979).

Zeidenstein[10] (1981) found more presidential success in foreign policy matters, but declining support for the president in general.

These and other studies of specific issues show that presidents must fight harder to win in Congress, specially in non-crisis situations. Although the Congress has become more reluctant to ratify presidential policy quickly, preferring instead to debate and modify it, the general public, the party leaders and elected officials continue to look up to the president for guidance.

The combined result of these beliefs has been efforts by successive presidents to by-pass constitutional checks on their authority by invoking their extra-constitutional powers and informal techniques for management of foreign affairs.[11] These include: unrivalled information resources, extensive media-coverage, the image as nation's Chief Representative, and the role of political leader.

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10. H.G.Zeidenstein, "The Two Presidencies Thesis is Alive and Well and Has been Living in the U.S. Senate Since 1973", Presidential Studies Quarterly, (Washington,D.C.), 2(1981).

11. C.V.Crabb and P.Holt, Invitation to Struggle: Congress, The President and Foreign Policy (Washington,D.C., 1980), p.18.

Presidents have a number of official and unofficial sources of information and analyses at their disposal, e.g., departments and agencies within the executive branch, embassies, overseas posts, the intelligence and the academic community, the foreign governments etc. Moreover Presidents are often able to withhold this information, even from the Congress, under the doctrine of 'executive privilege'. Comparable sources of information have been acquired by the Congress only recently. However, its dependence on the executive branch in this field remains. This dependence has been accentuated by the growing importance of the chief executive's role as legislative leader, i.e., providing information on the State of the Union and the Budget Message with detailed recommendations for expenditure in all spheres of governmental activity. Thus, role of the Congress remains confined to either modification or acceptance of executive proposals. Besides this, recent Presidents have used their discretion to circumvent congressional wishes by "reprogramming" budgetary allocations, shifting funds from one programme to another, and by impounding (refusing to spend) funds appropriated by Congress for diplomatic purposes not approved by the White House.[12]

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12. Ibid., p.21.

Another base of power of a president is his role as a political leader, which makes him important for legislators at all levels, due to the value of his endorsement for political campaigns and the ability to make many 'patronage' appointments. This, along with the widely held image of the present as 'the Chief Representative' of the country, makes every presidential action and statement 'newsworthy'. Extensive media coverage not only enhances his image, but provides him ample opportunity to 'manage the news', mould public opinion at home and abroad, and to appeal to the public over the head of the Congress. Such an image and ability sometimes helps presidents to commit the nation to a position or course of action in foreign affairs regardless of what others may wish, a somewhat ironic but logical conclusion of popular belief that the source of dynamic leadership in formulating responses to external problems is the Oval Office, so much so that repudiation of presidential policy in this sphere is extremely difficult for both the public and the Congress.

The era of cold war, the time of containment, Marshall Plan and of closing the "windows of vulnerability", has been increasing congressional acquiescence to presidential initiatives in foreign policy field even in areas constitutionally assigned to the Congress. Thus,

presidents have sought to by-pass the control of Senate over treaty-making (ratification) by entering into increasing number of 'executive agreements'. As the table (Table 1) below shows, the number of executive agreements has increased remarkably since 1899. Important among these in the post world war II period, were the Yalta and Potsdam agreements of 1945 and the Vietnam Peace Accord of 1973, the latter inspite of the Case Act of 1972.

Table 1

Treaties and Executive Agreements, 1889-1989

Period	Treaties	Executive Agreements
1889-1939	524	917
1940-1970	310	5,653
1971-1982	201	3,779

Source: Figures for 1889-1970, Louis Fisher, President and Congress (MacMillan, 1972) p.45.
Figures for 1971-1982, G.C.Edwards and S.J.Wayne, Presidential Leadership (St.Martins Press, 1985),

Similarly, the executive has assumed the power to terminate existing treaties without consulting Congress. For instance, President Carter terminated the long-standing defense treaty with Chinese Nationalists (Taiwan) in 1979. Ceremonial functions of the Chief Executive, as the Head

of the State, have been used to make or modify policy towards other nations. Examples of this are: reception of foreign delegates, which implies recognition of regime, whereas 'break' in diplomatic relationship constitutes change of policy towards a country. President Carter recognized Mainland China in 1979 (after 30 years of non-recognition) and President Reagan resumed formal relations with Vatican in 1984. On issues that are in consonance with their foreign policy postures, viz., humanitarian or economic or military aid, presidents have resorted to mobilizing public opinion over congressional heads.

The exigencies of cold war, the low-intensity conflicts, have further eroded congressional control over foreign policy. The military interventions are termed ' 'police action' (Vietnam) or 'rescue operation' (Grenada, Guatemala) such that congress is left with no alternative than to support these executive decisions, given the success of the operations and the consequent public support to them. Economic diplomacy, involving aid, embargo, blockade, hiked tariffs, and military diplomacy of subversion, military presence or arms supply to one country in a region, are all examples of incremental decision-making by the executive, such that particular policy options are presented to the Congress as <u>fait accompli</u>.

However, the most controversial 'power' of the Chief Executive in foreign policy area has been the use of men, information and armed forces. The constitution requires important government posts --judicial, ambassadorial and military , to be filled in through recommendations of the President, provided the Senate accepts it. In war times and in crisis situations, or during the bipartisan era, Congress would mostly support the presidential nominees. But when presidents face a hostile Congress, they resort to the development of alternative mechanisms. This relates to the appointment of personal envoys in place of ambassadors, taking or approving tactical,strategic and military decisions (as the Commander of Armed Forces), and the politicization of foreign policy bureaucracy by placing political appointees in crucial positions within the departments and agencies, and by incorporating the more promising middle level bureaucrats into White House staff, so that familiarity with, and support for presidential policy-perspectives is enhanced among the bureaucrats.

Appointment of envoys like Harriman and Sttetinius, ordering 'Bay of Pigs', bombing of Vietnam and Cambodia, stationing of naval and air forces near Libya are examples of alternative mechanisms for by-passing congressional

authority. But most important has been the Presidential efforts at controlling the foreign policy bureaucracy, either by its politicization, or by creating and modifying institutions that serve to marginalise the bureaucracy.

Institutional Mechanisms in Expansion of Power

President, as the Chief Executive, has been assigned an hierarchy of trained personnel and experts in various fields, to assist him in foreign policy making and implementation. As in other forms of government, this means the bureaucracy, essentially the Foreign Service Officers and staff, as constituted under the Department of State. It is headed by a Secretary of State, who is traditionally regarded as the Presidents' chief spokesperson on foreign affairs and his principal foreign policy advisor. He provides the information and advice, and implements policy-decisions, assisted by career officials organized on the basis of five regional bureaus.

The role of the Department (and Secretary) of State has, however, varied from President to President, depending upon their requirements arising from their perception of world affairs and of their role in it. The era of cold war, containment, technological development, growing interdependence between North and South, and "the

battle for the minds of men", has led to serious challenges to the Department of State in its policy-making role, from within the executive branch, viz., Departments of Commerce, Defense, Intelligence, Treasury and even the UN delegation. These departments, being increasingly specialised, have been able to represent US interests in multi-and bi-lateral fora, better than the Department of State.

Most important, however, has been the growth of highly specialized, co-ordinated and favoured bureaucracy in the White House itself. Of this, National Security Council has been the part most actively concerned with foreign policy making and its application. This is part of the constitutional prerogatives of the President to seek advise from whichever sources he deems fit. In this case, the fact that White House staff is made up of political appointees, implying a consonance with the views of the President, serves to make Presidents more dependent on it for information and advice, rather than on the 'official' bureaucracy.

Besides, there are many who believe that the president needs to assert stringent control over administrative apparatus, to assure compliance with their goals. This inclines Presidents to politicise federal bureaucracy

in the name of public interest and political direction. According to Terry Moe, "maximization of control is viewed as a systemically necessary strategy by the Presidential incumbents".[13] As ex-White House aide Ehrlichman put it: "When we say jump, the civil servants should answer'how high?'".[14] When this is found impossible, due to bureaucratic inertia, and due to rejection of the concept of "neutral competence" as non-operational, presidents resort to centralizing decision-making power.[15]

This is done either by by-passing the operating agencies from discussions, or by relying more and more on politically faithful appointees for information, analysis and advice. Moreover, there is a widespread belief among Presidential incumbents that leadership is equivalent to the introduction of novelty, such that the organic parts of the government, i.e., the institutions and institutionalization, are obstructions to both. These conditions compel the Presidents to operate around the institutionalized apparatus.

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13. Quoted in J.D.Aberbach and B.A.Rockman, "Mandates or Mandarins?: Control and Discretion in Modern Administrative State", Public Administration Review, 48(2), March-April 1988, pp.606-12.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

The National Security Council (NSC) was constituted in 1947, by a congressional resolution, to discourage precisely such circumnavigations by 'Imperial' presidents. But using their executive prerogatives and public support as the Diplomat-in-Chief, Presidents have constituted and reconstituted the NSC according to their predelictions. The use of the council as policy-making body has been severely resisted, but even its advisory capacity was not often realized. However, the most important single post that has challenged the Secretary of State, that of the National Security Adviser, was developed under the aegis of NSC. It was used again and again by Presidents, to thwart the 'institutional' and 'traditional' leadership of Department of State in foreign policy making. Later, under Nixon and Carter, the NSA was used as the implementor of policy, i.e., Presidents' envoy, troubleshooter and negotiator. This was so because NSA represented ideological proximity to the President, congressional unaccountability, non-bureaucratic approach, programmatic coherence and lack of administrative responsibility.

Chapter I

THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL: FROM TRUMAN TO JOHNSON

Origin and Evolution

The common perception of presidential powers in the area of National Security Policy making is that of a 'near-autocrat' or 'King', despite the constitutional separation of powers, given the use of prerogative power over the years, the command over a vast pool of information and expertise, and the exigencies of the post-war international situation of perpetual crisis.

However, the constitutional convention of 1787 really created not a government of "separated powers", but a government of separate institutions sharing powers.[1] The powers of the Chief Executive are circumscribed by the powers of the Congress, and to a lesser extent, by those of the judiciary.

Even then, the common perception of the President is that of the Chief Administrator, who manages and decides all issues within the executive branch. This has not been found accurate by a number of scholars. There are two views of the role of the President as the manager of the policy making process. Both are based on the fact that even within the executive branch, a large number of individuals and organizations take part

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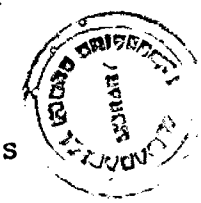
1. Richard E.Neustadt, quoted in R.Hilsman, The Politics of Policy-Making in Defense and Foreign Affairs (New York; 1971).

in decision making, and that each has different interests and perceptions about particular policy. This difference in interest colours the flow of information and advice to the President, such that Presidential dependence upon executive departments and agencies is utilized by these agencies to further their institutional interests, which may or may not be the same as the Presidential interests. But how the President's decisions emerge, is seen differently by these schools of thought.



The Bureaucratic Politics approach[2] emphasizes that government behaviour can be understood less as deliberate choices than as the 'outputs' of organizations. The major characteristic of these outputs is its programmed character, resulting from the necessity to deal with problems according to 'Standard Operating Procedures' (SOPs). Therefore, it is argued that there is constant tension between the necessity of decentralization for organizations to do their work, and the need for central control for co-ordination. This in

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2. For example, Graham T.Allison, Essence of Decision: The Cuban Missiles Crisis (Boston, 1971); I.M.Destler, Presidents, Bureaucrats and Foreign Policy (Princeton, N.J., 1972); Alexander L.George, "The Case for Multiple Advocacy in Foreign Policy," American Political Science Review (Washington,D.C.), (September 1972); Morton H.Halperin, Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy (Washington,D.C.,1974).

effect, explains the tension between State Department-centred v/s White House-centred National security policy-making systems. The proponents of this view believe that although intervention by top officials is successful less frequently than might be expected, they do have techniques for changing government policy without having to fight the major battle that would be required in changing an organization's SOPs. Thus, Presidents can give responsibility for a new policy to a different organization, or create a new organization to deal with it.

The Political Process model[3] regards the organization as only one determinant of what the participants espouse. The other determinant which is more important is the fundamental assumptions of the participants (in the policy making process) about international affairs, their perspective or 'mind-set'. Therefore, it is argued that Presidents do not merely preside, i.e., give orders or decide and choose between various organizational interests. They must engage in the 'politics of policy making': build a consensus for their policies

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3. For example, Neustadt, n.1; Roger Hilsman, The Politics of Policy Making in Defense and Foreign Affairs (New York, 1971); Robet J.Art, "Bureaucratic Politics and American Foreign Policy: A Critique," Policy Sciences (December 1974) as quoted in Roger Hilsman, ibid., p.78.

among the different power centres, not only in the Congress and the interest groups, but also within the executive branch, because "the test of a policy is not that it will most effectively accomplish an agreed upon value but that a wider number of people decide to endorse it."[4] This view of policy making sees Presidents as participants who "frame their actions", i.e., install a particular kind of advisory apparatus, "with a view towards what is required to get a policy adopted".[5] Thus, this model credits the Presidents and other participants "with realistic expectations about the final outcome, and intelligent choices about their strategies to affect the outcome."[6] Therefore, in Neustadt's words,[7]" Underneath our images of Presidents-in-boots, astride decisions, are the half-observed realities of Presidents-in-sneakers, stirrups in hand, trying to induce particular department heads, or congressmen, or senators to climb aboard."

The above discussion identifies a few 'facts' about National Security Policy making process in the

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4. Roger Hilsman, n.3, p.78.
5. Robert J.Art, n.3, p.78.
6. Roger Hilsman, n.3, p.78.
7. Richard Neustadt, n.1,

US. First, there are a number of major actors in this process, apart from the President. These are the Congress, the 'attentive publics', the mass media and the masses, all of whom have expectations stemming from domestic issues and democratic norms of governance. Apart from these, there is the executive branch itself, that is beset with fragmentation of organizational procedures and interests.

Second, the 'role' of the President in this process is not merely that of the Chief Decision-maker; he needs to develop consensus over his policies amongst all major actors.

Third, the President has to spend more time and effort to generate consensus over his policies within the executive branch, and for this, he uses his powers of prerogative to design a particular kind of advisory system that meets his need of information, expertise, advice and effective implementation of decisions.

Finally, the extent to which Presidential efforts at managing the executive branch are successful in making it more responsive to his needs, depends upon the incumbent's leadership style (personality and character), his perception of his office and his 'mind-set' (perception of external and internal threats). All these

components of Presidential style determine his relationship with the major actors in National Security policy-making process, specially in the executive branch.

Keeping in mind these broad conclusions about Presidential power in National Security Policy making in the post war period, we can now examine the various components of this process within the executive branch, and analyse the efforts of successive Presidents to organize and reorganize them with a view to regulating the 'inputs' (information, advice) and the 'outputs' (decision-making and implementation).

National Security Establishment

The experience of World War II and the growth of US commitments globally, led to the need for a better system of command and control over foreign policy-making. Hitherto, foreign policy, with its limited connotation of diplomacy, negotiations and consular activities, was considered the domain of the Department of State. But as military, economic and strategic interests of US grew, and the furtherance of any or all of these varied interests came to be seen as having implications for US National Security, the need for co-ordination of each of these special interests arose. The National Security

Act of 1947, amended by Congress in 1949 and 1958, sought to meet this need, and established the major components of the national security establishment as it stands today: the National Security Council, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the (unified) Department of Defense and the C.I.A.

This legislation established the basis for integrating political, military and intelligence functions into the national security policy process, through the National Security Council, thus giving the President a structure for a systematized assessment of policy and strategic options. Its function has remained the same since 1947: "to advise the President with respect to the integration of domestic, foreign and economic policies relating to national security", so that the military services and other agencies can "cooperate more effectively in matters involving national security".[8] However, its evolution since then indicates how post-war Presidents have used it to organize foreign policy advice to them, 'what they have

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8. James Lay and Robert Johnson, quoted in Anna K. Nelson, "National Security I: Inventing a Process (1945-60)", in Hugh Heclo and Lester M.Salamon, eds., The Illusion of Presidential Government (Boulder, Colorado, 1981), p.230.

desired and what they have received'.[9] This is important because there were, and are, two views about the significance of NSC. One perspective has seen it as a restriction on the presidency, on the 'lone-ranger' diplomacy of Presidents like Franklin Roosevelt, by binding them more closely to their senior cabinet advisers.[10] The other perspective on NSC/views it as the legislation that explicitly recognized that only under the President's personal leadership could a broader perspective on global affairs be defined and co-ordinated as national policy.[11]

The National Security/Act called upon the President to draw on the collective advice of the NSC, composed by virtue of subsequent amendments to the 1947 statute - of himself, the Vice-President and the Secretaries of State and Defense. The other members, in their capacity as statutory advisors, are the Directors of C.I.A., and A.C.D.A. (Arms Control and Defense Agency) and the Chief

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9. I.M.Destler, "National Security Advice to US Presidents: Some Lessons from Thirty Years," in Klaus Knorr, ed., National Security Policy: The Decision-Making Process (New Delhi, 1986), p.242.

10. For example, ibid.; Richard M.Pious, The American Presidency (New York, 1979), p.362; Frank Kessler, The Dilemmas of Presidential Leadership: Of Caretakers and Kings (New Jersey, 1982), p.102; Paul Schott Stevens, "The National Security Council: Past and Prologue," Strategic Review (Washington, D.C.), (Winter 1989), p.56.

11. Z.Brzezinski, In Quest of National Security, ed. and annotated by M.Stremcki (Boulder, Colorado, 1988), p.56.

of J.C.S. (Joint Chiefs of Staff). Apart from these, the President could call upon/invite any other person for advice, if he finds it necessary.

The act also provided for a small professional staff with a designated head, the Executive Secretary of NSC - to prepare the Council's work. However, soon the term "NSC" came to mean simultaneously - and often confusingly - both the deliberative body, which met occasionally at the President's behest, and the staff of NSC, which came to be located permanently in the White House.

Under successive Presidents, NSC was moulded into a Presidential instrument, by making the deliberative body purely advisory, and the inclusion of the NSC staff in the Executive Office of the President, such that the executive secretary of the Council became an administrative assistant to the President. Each of these developments affected the evolution of NSC, which has been divided into two phases by Brzezinski.[12]

The first phase is of 'Institutionalization', between 1947 and 1960, characterized by establishment of procedures for processing of information and advice to

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12. Ibid., p.57.

the President. These procedures gave prominence to the 'line-agencies'-- the Departments of State and Defense in generation of policy papers and options, and NSC was used as a forum for discussion wherein Presidents participated and made decisions. The second phase of 'personalization' lasted between 1961 and 1980, characterized by 'deinstitutionalization' of the NSC process, casual procedures and the prominence of Special Assistant for National Security Affairs as acknowledged policymaker. Thus, NSC's principal staff officer - the former executive secretary, became a co-equal member of NSC with the President's other cabinet members. This enhanced the control of White House over foreign policy and served to by-pass the departments in policy-making and implementation.

Though Brzezinski goes on to say that Reagan Administration marked the end of this phase, and began the phase of 'degradation' of NSC, as the subsequent examination of successive Presidencies shows, the second phase of 'personalization', was necessitated by a number of factors connected with the nature and organization of the Presidency and of the foreign policy bureaucracy, such that it seems somewhat unlikely that without changes in these institutions, any major change can be affected in the mechanism of NSC.

Institutionalization Phase: NSC Under Truman

Truman emphasized the advisory role of NSC, as he disliked anything which resembled a "super-cabinet"[13] that may circumscribe the ability of the President to make decisions freely. To ensure the advisory nature, he refrained from attending the majority of the Council meetings, viz., he attended only 12 of the 57 NSC meetings held between 1947 and 1950. Another reason that has been put forward for this neglect of NSC is that Truman could see no gain by forcing his two cabinet members-- Secretary of State Acheson and Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson - to deal with each other when they shared an untenable relationship to the extent that inter-departmental preparation was impossible.[14]

However, the outbreak of Korean War in 1950 changed this, by solidyfying NSC. Truman began to attend its meetings regularly and participation was limited to fewer individuals to encourage free discussion. He introduced discussion and the practice of reducing any NSC decision to writing.

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13. Frederick C.Thayer, "Presidential Policy Processes and 'New Administration': A Search for Revised Paradigms", Public Administration Review, 5, September-October 1971, p.553.

14. Ibid.

Throughout this period, Truman designated the Secretary of State as Presiding Officer of NSC meetings because he did not approve of the bias towards Secretary of Defense in the interpretations of the act of 1947: that Secretary of Defense would preside over the NSC 'as the agent or alter ego of the President'.[15] Besides, he deliberately abstained from the day-to-day supervision of policy, therefore, his Secretary of State (Marshall, later Acheson) assumed a dominant role. This was also due to Truman's determination to restore regular lines of authority and the primacy of the State Department, that had been lost during the 'Imperial' Presidency of Franklin D.Roosevelt. Both Marshall and Acheson dominated the foreign policy advice that Truman received. They gave their professional diplomats responsibility and took their advice seriously. Therefore, Department of State played a key role in the formulation of early cold war attitudes and policies.

During this administration, regular means for bringing important policy issues before NSC were established, as also the required support of thorough staff work. In July 1950, NSC's role was further strengthened in this sphere by a Presidential directive

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15. Nelson, n.8, p.234.

emphasizing that all major national security policies should be recommended to the President through the Council. Even though this procedure lasted only until effective Presidential participation in Council sessions, it set a precedent.

The NSC senior staff was composed of one nominated member from each of the departments and agencies whose heads were members of NSC. These were individuals of approximately the assistant secretary level, who met twice weekly, and were directed by the executive secretary of the Council.[16] It was the senior staff that produced the studies and policy recommendations which were forwarded to the Council for its consideration. A junior staff, an interdepartmental group composed of staff assistants worked under the senior staff. Thus, by the end of the Truman Administration, the basic co-ordinative and policy planning structure of the NSC had evolved, with the President and the formal NSC, supported by a senior and a junior staff. In addition, there were steering committees consisting of selected representatives of the two staffs, which facilitated a candid exchange among representatives of the affected agencies prior to the submission of policy papers to the full membership of the two interdepartmental groups.

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16. Ibid., p.242.

The arrangement also provided for a 'neutral' Executive Secretary heading the supporting staff structure to interact daily and directly with the President-- to provide intelligence updates, pre-briefs for NSC meetings and to serve as a general conduit between the President and the supporting structure. This view was enhanced by the first incumbent, Admiral Sidney Souers, who established the procedure of all papers being delivered to the President by the Executive Secretary, who would then inform the members of the council of the President's decision. Souers[17] was of the opinion that the individual performing the role of Executive Secretary must be a non-political confidant of the President. He should maintain continuous and intimate contact with the President, be a trusted member of the President's immediate official family, but should not be identified with his immediate staff of personal policy advisers. Souers put into practice his belief that the Executive Secretary was only a servant of the President and of the members of the Council, willing to be objective, to subordinate his personal views, and to forego publicity

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17. Sidney W. Souers, "Policy Formulation for National Security," American Political Science Review (Washington, D.C.), 43 (June 1949), p.542.

and personal aggrandizement, as he has neither the authority nor the responsibility of the President or council members.

Truman had also announced the appointment of Averell Harriman as a new special assistant to the President on 15 June 1950, who assumed his duties shortly after the outbreak of the Korean war. This innovation, was widely welcomed by NSC participants as "President's personal representative" "to follow up and assure implementation",[18] eventhough it proved to be temporary.

This system permitted a high degree of formal co-ordination: the responsible senior staff representative prebriefed his principal or "member" before an NSC meeting, and the Executive Secretary briefed the President. The President and his Secretary of State remained completely responsible for foreign policy. The NSC meetings were used to hear the exchange of views on policy matters, to advise the President on matters requiring specific military diplomatic and intelligence co-ordination once the policy decisions had been made by the President outside it.

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18. Nelson, n.8, p.244.

Acheson[19] is of the view that Truman NSC also provided a formalized system of implementation review, which is debatable, given the celebrated Truman quote about Eisenhower: "He'll sit here and he'll say, 'Do this! Do that!' and nothing will happen, Poor Ike, it won't be a bit like the Army. He'll find it very frustrating".[20]

Institutionalization Phase: NSC under Eisenhower

Eisenhower criticized Truman NSC in his campaign speeches as no more than a shadow agency. He emphasized the importance of a revitalized NSC, and even suggested the appointment of non-government participants, elder statesmen, who could bring fresh viewpoints to the Council's deliberations. His temperament and training in the Army convinced him of the need for reorganizing and streamlining the whole national security apparatus.

He conceived of the Council as "...a corporate body composed of individuals advising the President in their own right, rather than as representatives of their respective departments and agencies. Their function

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19. Quoted in John E.Endicott, "The National Security Council: Formalized Coordination Policy Planning," in R.L.Pfaltzgraff,Jr. and U.Raanan, eds., National Security Policy: The Decision-Making Process (New Delhi, 1986), p.186.

20. Quoted in Richard Neustadt, Presidential Power: The Politics of Leadership (New York, 1960), p.9.

should be to seek... the most statesmanlike solution to the problems of national security, rather than to reach solutions which represent merely a compromise of departmental positions."[21]

Accordingly, at the beginning of his Administration, Eisenhower asked Robert Cutler to review the existing NSC system and recommend needed reforms. This report led to significant changes: the Senior Staff was to continue as the principal source of policy initiatives, but was renamed as the "Planning Board"; the creation of the post of Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, who would perform the dual functions of presiding over the Planning Board and be the Principal Executive Officer of the NSC, "to prevent delays, follow-up decisions and keep the council ahead of crises". Also, the council secretariat was augmented by a special staff in the EOP. Six months later, the system was further changed by creation of an Operations Coordinating Board, to enhance the ability of the White House to coordinate implementation of policy decisions. It was composed of representatives at the Undersecretary

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21. James S. Lay, Jr. and Robert H. Johnson, An Organizational History of the National Security Council, US Senate (Washington, D.C., 1960), p.39.

level, namely, the Undersecretary of State, who was also its Chairman; the Deputy Secretary of Defense; the Director of the Foreign Operations Agency (later called the International Cooperation Administration); and the Special Assistant for the Cold War. The President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs also customarily sat with the Board. The OCB was seen as the operational/executive arm of the NSC as it prepared an outline plan of operations to carry out the actions listed in NSC policy and a progress report every six months.

The NSC met regularly and formally, with well-organized procedures, and Eisenhower faithfully chaired most of the meetings himself-- 329 of the 366 NSC sessions held during his tenure.

Inspite of the stronger NSC apparatus in the White House, and increased powers of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, Eisenhower had a strong Secretary of State , John Foster Dulles, with whom he conferred regularly and upon whom he relied extensively for negotiations with other countries and for being the chief spokesman for Presidential policy in foreign affairs.

This was due both to Eisenhower's confidence in Dulles and to the perception of the role of Special

Assistant developed by Cutler and continued by Dillon Anderson and Gordon Gray. Cutler firmly believed in his role as coordinator[22] - the President's Assistant incharge of the NSC rather than of National Security Policy. He, therefore, maintained a good working relationship with Dulles and preserved the position of the State Department by firmly resisting all efforts to create for himself a permanent staff concerned with the substance of national security. He criticized Hoover Commission Task Force recommendations of an NSC "national staff" because he believed that it would be sterile given its divorce from operational responsibility, and it would tend to intervene between the President and his cabinet members, even as it would unwisely increase the "functional prestige" of the special assistant.

Dulles, on his part, tried to preserve his special relationship with the President and to protect the prerogatives of the State Department, by firmly insisting that matters of day-to-day operations should not be the subject of Council discussion. In considering the restructuring of the OCB in 1957, it was suggested that the Vice-President should replace the Under Secretary of State as Chairman. Dulles strongly objected and wrote to the

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22. Quoted in Nelson, n.8, pp.250-1.

President: "the relations of the Secretary and the Under Secretary of State to the President in regard to foreign affairs are and should be more intimate than those of the Vice-President. If the time comes when the Vice-President more authoritatively expresses the President's views on these matters than the Secretary of State, then the revolution will indeed have been effected in our form of government."[23]

Yet, even as Eisenhower years saw a growth in the authority of the military and the CIA, the President seemed unaware of the decline in the effectiveness of the Department of State. Dulles's strength as Secretary of State obscured the fact that he used the department sparingly. Adopting a defensive bureaucratic strategy, the State Department resisted the acquisition of functions in intelligence, propaganda and economic aid. As a result, new agencies emerged, either entirely separate from it, or only nominally under its control. Military also expanded into foreign policy, especially through the creation of the office of International Security Affairs, in 1953. This diffusion of responsibility within the foreign policy bureaucracy created problems of management for the President, specially in case of military bureaucracy.

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23. Ibid., p.251.

Inspite of Eisenhower's belief that large-scale organizations, like the National Security Bureaucracy, are "not the enemy of imagination... (but their) purpose is to clarify, simplify, expedite and coordinate",[24] he did not find NSC a suitable forum for making an operational decisions, especially in times of crises. He made those decisions in consultation with a few key advisers.

However, by the late 1950s, both 'insiders' and 'outsiders' found the highly structured NSC process to be time-consuming and labourious. In April 1958 Eisenhower himself urged that council meetings focus less on discussion papers and more on issues, i.e., "provocative issues which required high-level thought" rather than constantly reviewing all existing policy papers. On the other hand, outsiders like Senator Henry Jackson pressed for a review of the National Security Policy machinery by a Committee on government operations, because he believed that the NSC mechanism was unable to produce a coherent national programme for U.S. survival.

The Jackson Subcommittee criticized the Eisenhower NSC process on a number of counts.[25] It opined that the

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24. Quoted in Charles E.Neu, "The Rise of National Security Bureaucracy," in Louis Galambos, ed., The New American State (Baltimore, 1987), p.88.

25. Henry M.Jackson, The National Security Council (New York, 1965), pp.32-38.

Council was originally conceived as an intimate forum where the President and his chief advisers could engage in searching discussion and debate on both long term and immediate problems. Instead, the Council had become the "apex of a comprehensive and highly institutionalized system" for generating proposals and carrying them out. The approval of policy papers was its major activity rather than the resolution of important national security problems faced by USA. The policy papers were often mere statements of aspiration produced by a process that weakened their content and seemed to reach for the lowest common denominator rather than innovation. The NSC Committees muffled dissent, slowed action, and presented the President with bland memoranda that obscured rather than clarified his choices. The study concluded that the OCB gave a false sense of security. In reality it was a useless interagency committee that could only advise. Lacking command authority, it occupied itself with detailed paper work and had little impact on real coordination of policy execution.

The criticism also implied that in the process of making NSC system a "cumbersome paper mill",[26] the President had failed to exert his leadership in the

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26. Walt Rostow's phrase, also quoted in Brzezinski, n.11, p.59.

decision-making process. Alexander George[27] points out that the conventional image of Eisenhower NSC system as bureaucratic, burdensome, inflexible and inundated with unnecessary paper work is not justified, because "genuine policy debate occurred in camera between the impacted parties, often just before the larger NSC meetings themselves." Further, Fred Greenstein's study[28] suggests that Eisenhower was not such a passive 'Administrator' as conventionally depicted, he was the source of all the power that Dulles exercised over NSC process.

However, it was the perception that the formal NSC system had become irrelevant to most of Eisenhower's actual policy decisionsthat carried the day, and the successor, President Kennedy, came to office with the firm conviction that presidential activism in foreign policy is required, and that de-institutionalization of the NSC system was crucial for making it more responsive to Presidential needs.

Institutionalization Phase of NSC: An Overview

President Truman succeeded in using the NSC - a congressionally mandated advisory unit - for increasing

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27. A.George, "The Case for Multiple Advocacy in Making Foreign Policy," American Political Science Review vol.66, September 1972, p.753.

28. Fred Greenstein, The Hidden-Hand Presidency: Eisenhower as a Leader (New York, 1982).

Presidential control over planning process. He also made it White House-dominated rather than Defense-dominated mechanism. Eisenhower institutionalized the NSC in the White House.

Though both Presidents sought to establish regular and formal lines of authority in the flow of information and implementation of national security policy, neither of them used the NSC mechanism to make foreign policy decisions. Its specific use was to inform all the impacted parties about Presidential decisions, and to assure that implementation of these decisions would include those officials who had also participated in the advisory process.

An important point of similarity was that the difference between "foreign policy" and "national security" was maintained. It was the Department of State that was assigned responsibility in the former field, while the problems of national security were under NSC mechanism because these were the foreign policy problems placed in the wider context of military and intelligence information. Hence the clear delineation between the roles of Secretary of State (principal foreign policy adviser) and the Assistant for National Security (coordinator of NSC process).

For the same reason, these two administrations saw the prominence of Secretaries of State: they were deliberately chosen for their ability to dominate foreign policy mechanism, such that there was no parallel foreign policy staff in the White House.

However, despite their much criticized penchant for formal procedures, both Presidents maintained presidential prerogative in obtaining foreign policy 'ideas' from outside. Truman used Averell Harriman while Eisenhower consulted his brother Milton and Nelson Rockfeller. Yet both resisted the idea of a strong National Security Adviser with his own policy staff, because, being interested in good management of large organizations (viz., the foreign policy bureaucracy), they emphasized the value of delegation and of avoiding overlapping between the role of President and that of Secretary of State.

Despite these good intentions, effective management of national security eluded both, for, as Eisenhower later confessed, the NSC's work could have been done better by a single trusted official supported by a small staff.[29]

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29. Dwight D.Eisenhower, The White House Years: Waging Peace, 1956-1961, vol.2 (Garden City, NY, 1965), p.634.

Personalization Phase: NSC Under Kennedy

President Kennedy came to office, heavily influenced by the criticisms levelled against Eisenhower NSC process by fellow Democrat Henry M.Jackson. He was convinced that the machinery had diluted presidential control, imposed "needless paper work between the President and his principal advisers", and produced 'treaties' rather than options for presidential consideration.

This prompted drastic changes in the status of NSC as a forum, in the interactive processes and in the position and working of the NSC staff. The NSC remained as a statutory body, but its meetings became less frequent. Moreover, these meetings were used only to make 'minor' decisions or to 'pretend' to make important ones already decided. This reflected Bundy's advice to Kennedy: "The Council...discussion can do two things... it can (1) open a subject up so that you can see what its elements are and decide how you want it pursued; and (2) present the final arguments of those principally concerned when a proposal is ready for your decision... The special service the Council can render to your associates is a little subtler: it can give them confidence that they know what is cooking and what you want."[30]

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30. Quoted in Nelson, n.8, pp.258-9.

Consequently, Planning Board and Operations Coordinating Board were found obstructive to free-wheeling, informal style of interactive process favoured by the President, and were abolished. Their functions were accomplished by President's men attending interagency meetings. The NSC staff came to serve the President, rather than the NSC. McGeorge Bundy was made special Assistant for National Security Affairs and charged with management of the activist President's daily national security affairs. This, in Bundy's words, "rubbed out the distinction between planning and operation",[31] even as it gathered enormous potential for engagement and influence by the Special Assistant, and led to recruitment of a small number of talented senior aides to extend direct Presidential control in interagency deliberations. As Komer described it: "(The NSC label) was merely a budgetary device. Since NSC already had its own budget, it was sacrosanct. So instead of adding people to the White House staff, Bundy carried them all over here. But, in fact, Kennedy made very clear that we were his men, we operated for him, we had direct contacts with him. This gave us the power to command the kind of results that he wanted - a fascinating exercise

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31. From letter reprinted in Jackson Subcommittee, Organizing for National Security, vol.I, pp.1337-8.

in a presidential staff technique, which insofar as I know, has been unique in the history of the Presidency."[32]

The staff acted as the "eyes and ears" of the President, "a shadow network that clued the President on what the bidding was before a formal, interdepartmentally cleared recommendation got to him." Thus, the President had "sources of independent judgement and recommendation on what each issue was all about, what ought to be done about it, from a little group of people in whom he had confidence - in other words, sort of double-check".[33] The staff also kept tabs on the follow-through to Presidential decisions.

This kind of staff operation resulted in putting the State Department into shade, even though Kennedy had initially wanted to increase the responsibility of the State Department for foreign affairs. In fact, all 'line-agencies' suffered a setback for several reasons. First, the President favoured a small gathering of directly concerned officials for planning, specially for day-to-day management of crises, viz., Ex Comm during the Cuban Missiles Crisis. Second, such a mechanism implied that traditional bureaucracies could not influence

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32. Quoted in I.M.Destler, "National Security II: The Rise of the Assistant (1961-1981)", in Heclo and Salamon, eds., n.8, pp 267-8.

33. Ibid., p.268.

decision-making when President is directly involved in its everyday management. Third, problems/issues were assigned to a Cabinet Officer to prepare analysis, arrange for co-ordination and present recommendations directly to the President. This eliminated interactive procedures between major agencies and put departmental options in direct competition with the less formal, more resourceful and compact NSC staff, who had better access to the President. Lastly, the effective involvement of departments in advising the President remained confined to informal meetings of the Secretaries with the President.

Apart from giving the NSC staff major role in development of policy options, assessing departmental recommendations for 'biases' and coordinating implementation, this process also undermined the bureaucratic hierarchies of State and Defense by maintaining direct link with lower level officials, by-passing regular channels. Thus, if the President so desired, he could cast his net over and beyond the heads of departments by asking for opinions of junior officers, field operatives, ambassadors and even officials of foreign embassies.

In keeping with his view that President must dominate the foreign policy process, Kennedy chose Dean Rusk as his Secretary of State, who could be

content with a modest role. Simultaneously, he upgraded the position of Special Assistant for National Security Affairs by appointing McGeorge Bundy and charging him with a job that combined the work of Eisenhower's staff secretary Andrew Goodpaster with that of his Special Assistant Robert Cutler: Bundy was to manage the day-to-day Presidential Foreign Policy business, and to coordinate advice and options submitted by other advisers, clearly pointing out others' biases.

Both these tasks gave Bundy a new and very important source of leverage, because unlike Goodpaster, he was working for a President who was inclined to make a large number of specific decisions himself, and relied more on NSC staff for evaluation and assessment of information supplied by the bureaucracy. The relative activism of Bundy's staff, coupled with the establishment of Situation Room in White House, made this entire White House operation independent of the leverage exercised by departments through selective dissemination of information and intelligence to Presidential staff. This trend was helped by Bundy's appointment of non-career men to his staff and by his playing the role of Presidential enforcer, even when he consciously avoided 'advocating' his own views.

Working for a President who tended to resist any firm sense of organizational structure and division of labour, Bundy and his staff met the need for informal yet wide-ranging effort at central coordination. In effect, they fulfilled the originally intended function of the National Security Council, which the Council itself had been unable to fulfil because it had turned into a forum for advocating organizational interests of various departments, rather than developing a government-wide "Presidential" view encompassing the military, diplomatic and economic elements in national security policy.

Personalization Phase: NSC Under Johnson

There were no significant changes in the NSC process under Johnson, due to several reasons: he inherited the Kennedy NSC under tragic circumstances; he unlike Kennedy, was not very comfortable with foreign affairs; he shared Kennedy's suspicion for the bureaucracy of foreign affairs as well as his preference for informal procedures, and finally, his total involvement in and dominance over Vietnam policy was made convenient by the NSC system designed under Kennedy.

Johnson continued the earlier practice of utilizing the Council selectively, mostly dealing with Vietnam

or Southeast Asia, but as the Vietnam war progressed, he found the Council meetings to be like 'sieves' - beset with leaks and impossible to control. Thereafter he chose to meet a small circle of key advisers regularly, the "Tuesday lunch" group. It included the Secretaries of State and Defense, Dean Rusk and Robert McNamara, and the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, Bundy, (later Walt Rostow, when he replaced Bundy). After sometime, the Director of CIA and the Chairman of the JCS were also invited.

For a time it looked as if Johnson would reverse the trend towards decline of State Department influence, because he was close to Secretary Rusk and gave him the authority to coordinate all aspects of the nation's foreign policy. Some formal structures of NSC process were revived and State Department given the place of importance in them, viz., the Senior Interdepartmental Group (SIG), chaired by Under Secretary of State, and the numerous Interagency Regional Groups (IRG), all chaired by representatives of State Department.

However, Johnson demanded loyalty and unwavering support from his aides, and did not encourage dissent from his policies. This induced a more or less forced, monolithic agreement among his advisers, which some

scholars have called "Group Think".[34] This served to maintain a show of unity at the cost of frank discussion within the executive branch to the extent that dissenters had to resort to leaks to the press to put forward their policy recommendations. In this situation, the structures of SIG and IRGs, which involved many people and several organizational interests, were found 'uncontrollable' and therefore dispensable by the President.

The President used Bundy as his spokesman, 'debater', 'fact-finder', and coordinator of information, in the earlier part of his tenure. This was mainly because Johnson needed him in an area where he found himself unable to handle issues confidently. Thus, Johnson sent Bundy on a crucial 'fact-finding' mission to South Vietnam in early 1965 and on a diplomatic mission to the Dominican Republic in the same year. On Vietnam issue, Bundy was called upon to 'Meet the Press' and rebut critics like Hans Morganthau, a need which Johnson is believed to have resented because Vietnam was an issue which he dominated. This however, set the trend for greater visibility and public advocacy by the successive Special Assistants.

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34. For example, Irving Janis, Victims of Groupthink (Boston, 1972); George, n.27.

But in an effort to show that he did not need "another Bundy", Johnson denied Bundy's successor Walt Rostow the full title: Rostow was merely 'Special Assistant to the President'. Nevertheless, this 'innovation' in 1966 did not change the role substantially-- Rostow continued to coordinate President's personal foreign policy business as well as the interagency work. In fact Rostow's strong ideological convictions metamorphosized the 'honest broker' role of the Assistant which Bundy had nurtured. Instead, the Assistant became an 'advocate', more so because Rostow saw himself as an 'idea man', personally generating new policies and conceptual schemes, rather than facilitating the advisory process.

The Johnson NSC system has been criticized for its overtly insular character with regard to foreign policy information-processing. It had made SIG and IRGs, even the Council itself, largely irrelevant structures, engaged in infrequent meetings and of cosmetic value, because NSC was used only to legitimize policy decisions. Because, as Kissinger pointed out: "If key decisions are made informally at unprepared meetings, the tendency to be obliging to the President and cooperative with one's colleagues may vitiate the articulation of real choices."[35]

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35. Henry Kissinger, White House Years (New Delhi, 1979), p.40.

Yet, the evolution of NSC system up to 1968 offers several clues as to why later Presidents sought to use it to centralize foreign policy making in the White House.

Evolution of NSC, 1947-1968: Trends Discerned

The phase of institutionalization of NSC system under Truman and Eisenhower seemed to reflect the Bureaucratic Politics model discussed at the beginning of this chapter. The Presidents saw it as an 'administrative' tool, to formalize the channels of information and regularize the sources of advice to the Presidents, in accordance with the traditional structures of executive branch. Thus, Department of State was given a major role in coordinating, analysing and assessing the views of various other concerned departments. This role was of importance also because of the dispersal of responsibility, brought about in the executive branch, by increased US involvement in the world.

But the Department of State could not exercise effective leadership over the specialized agencies that came up. It became merely 'first among equals', dependent upon Presidential confidence even for maintaining this amount of primacy. Thus, the NSC became a place for tug-of-war between different departments, notably the Military

and the State. Efforts at interdepartmental coordination began to produce "negotiable agreements" rather than clear options for the President. Implementation of decisions was chaotic even after the establishment of OCB by Eisenhower, because it meant oversight by the representatives of the same bureaucracies that helped to make the decisions.

Presidents began to rely on their own appointee, the Executive Secretary (later Presidential Assistant) for NSC, to ensure impartial, undisputed coordination of advice tendered by the line agencies. It was only due to the fact of Presidential confidence in them that the Secretaries of State remained the principal foreign policy advisers and spokesmen, their subordinate department(s) could not claim this prominence. Again, it was for this reason that the Special Assistant remained a coordinator-facilitator of the NSC process rather than an assistant-advocate for the Presidential policies.

However, the image of a President surrounded by groups of bureaucrats who made policy based on compromises between them, and of a bureaucracy unwilling and unable to respond to presidential needs for activism and sensitivity to domestic electoral concerns, served to make the

later two Presidents-- Kennedy and Johnson , determined to change it. The phase of 'personalization' gained ground throughout the period 1961-68, mainly because Presidents were concerned with 'making' foreign policy and conducting diplomacy themselves. And at each crucial stage, the foreign policy bureaucracy showed its inadequacies. It could not rise above what the Presidents called the 'narrow organizational interests', or to smoothly follow initiatives by efficient implementation. Bureaucratic inertia and overt hostility to 'crusading amateurs' in the White House, both made it ideologically suspect and a butt of witticisms.

In this phase, crisis management assumed more importance, where presidents involved themselves more fully and demanded more effective information-processing. For this, the political appointees were found most suitable. They were included in the NSC staff and worked under a Special Assistant who was not merely a facilitator but also an enforcer of Presidential decisions. The NSC staff thus became (explicitly) Presidential staff, carrying the President's flag in all interagency battles and ensuring the formulation of 'Presidential' policy within the executive branch.

As the pressure to explain foreign policy decisions to domestic electorate mounted, the role and visibility of Special Assistant grew, he was entrusted the task of articulating not only the specific actions of the administration in foreign policy sphere, but also the long term strategies. It was from this need to build a consensus around Presidential policy initiatives, that the power and importance of the Assistant grew. Presidents strived to make their policies coherent and decisively implemented, and for this purpose, 'personalization' of the NSC system was effected in several senses:

Firstly, the Presidents made efforts to be seen as making and executing foreign policy. This may have been a concommitant of the widespread public expectation of presidential leadership in a sphere where American involvement was seen as making the difference between global freedom and 'global domination'.

Secondly, growing complexity of levels of US diplomacy in the world resulted in a plethora of specialised agencies and departments, all of which had some stakes in the foreign policy making. The activist presidents did not want to be inundated with pressures and 'politiking' from them. Yet their expertise had to

be used as 'input' in any foreign policy formulation. So the involvement of NSC staff, the Presidential appointees, grew to facilitate independent, unbiased evaluation of information and advice supplied by these agencies. In this sense, the 'personalization' of NSC meant 'humanization' through induction of human checks on bureaucratic pen-pushing and contrived argumentation.

Above all, the Presidents required an agent who could represent their views and look after their interests, keeping in mind the fact that it was they (the Presidents) who shared the burden of deciding and of responsibility for any mistakes. The Assistant thus became a crucial tool of the Presidents in their exercise of executive prerogative in shaping the foreign policy advisory system, and for managing the foreign policy.

The fact that even Eisenhower had come to believe in the need for 'a single trusted official supported by a small staff', to manage the NSC process more effectively shows that the rise of the Assistant was not mere innovation by particular Presidents. Indeed, it was a result of a Presidential need for unity in the executive branch, rather than the personal predelictions and styles of particular incumbents, although these factors do contribute towards shaping of this 'personalized' position.

This can be seen clearly as we examine the next stage of personalization phase, the administrations of Nixon and Carter, in a detailed manner. This is the stage when personalization seemed to reach its maximum, to the extent that it began to be believed that 'personalization' has become 'institutionalized'.

Chapter II

NSC UNDER NIXON: THE KISSINGER ERA

President Nixon came to the Office of the Chief Executive with clear and unambiguous notions about the role of President and of the National Security bureaucracy in the making of foreign policy. He saw foreign affairs as the arena where Presidents could make their mark if only they could control the bureaucracy concerned. He treated foreign policy with the sense of mission above politics, because as Eisenhower's Vice President, he had gained some experience in this field, though as an outsider. Moreover, his rise in politics was on a virulent anti-communist platform in 1950s, besides, he had a distrust of officials and institutions to whom American President customarily abdicated so much power in policy-making and implementation, as had Eisenhower and later, both Kennedy and Johnson.

He, therefore, wanted to dominate foreign policy process, and for this, wanted to control the bureaucracy, even as he wished to revitalize the National Security Council as a forum for highest level discussions between the principal foreign policy advisers of the President, namely, the Secretaries of various departments and agencies.

With these professed beliefs and aims, he chose Henry A.Kissinger as his Assistant for National Security

Affairs, much before he chose his Secretary of State and assigned to him the task of re-organizing the National Security policy process. The main guidelines for this task were that the system be White House-centred and that it provide real 'options' to the President, such that the views of all concerned departments be heard by the President, and the consequences of each 'option' be evaluated before final decisions are made.

Pursuant to his initial views, Nixon introduced[1] Kissinger as a person who is "keenly aware of the necessity not to set himself up as a wall between the President and the Secretary of State", whose job would be "to concentrate on planning and not on operations," because he intended to have a very strong Secretary of State. Kissinger, on his part, visualized his job as that of complete overhaul of the White House security-planning machinery to allow for creative, long range formulation of foreign policy. More importantly, he believed "that the position of a White House Assistant is inconsistent with making public statements on substantive issues."[2]

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1. Quoted in Roger Morris, Uncertain Greatness (London, 1977), p.71.

2. Ibid.

The NSC machinery that was established by Kissinger, was based on some fundamental agreement of views between him and Nixon. Both wanted strong Presidential leadership in foreign policy, which, in their experience, was made difficult by bureaucracy and the elite views of the so-called 'establishment'. Therefore, their effort was to seize those powers that earlier presidents had abdicated to bureaucracy: "the control of agenda and the timing of decisions, the ability to frame issues, the power to shape and shade and withhold information, the authority to ordain only those particular questions for the available answers..."[3]

The first thing which Kissinger did was to 'raid the bureaucracy' by picking off some of the brightest military and political minds for his personal staff. Also included in his staff were some academics. The draft plan for a new NSC apparatus came from Morton Halperin, a young Pentagon official, who had "a record as a bright, versatile, aggressive and very ambitious bureacurat, who operated shrewdly through the inter-departmental maze".[4] He drafted a system that was "not designed to eliminate bureaucratic delay and evasion,

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3. Ibid., p.77.

4. Ibid., p.78.

but essentially to balance those natural institutional forces by compelling full Presidential consideration, pro and con, of all the available options".[5] The framework of the new organization consisted of a number of Interdepartmental Groups (IGs) chaired by Assistant Secretaries of State Department, that would prepare specific policy reviews by specific dates, for consideration by the Review Group, a body of senior representatives drawn from various agencies and chaired by Kissinger. The IGs prepared policy reviews as and when ordered by the President through the National Security Study Memoranda (NSSM). The NSSMs originated with Kissinger, approved by the President and were assigned to the appropriate IG over Kissinger's signature. Each IG had a member of Kissinger's staff while producing a policy paper covering "the full range of policy alternatives". These were sent to the Review Group which considered the options given and either returned them to IGs for redrafting or forwarded them for consideration by NSC meeting. Nixon made decisions only after going through all options and after discussion among statutory members of NSC. The decisions were conveyed to the departments as National Security Decision Memoranda (NSDM), and implementation was assigned

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5. Ibid., p.79.

to the 'Under Secretaries' Committee chaired by Under Secretary of State.

The system excluded the CIA on the logical ground that it was not by law or mission a policy making institution, reflecting Kissinger's view that use of CIA in 'operations' had affected its neutrality in intelligence gathering function, and any further role in policy making would enhance this trend. Nixon too was suspicious of CIA. However, this was the only substantial element of the draft that did not survive.

This system ensured that White House did not get confined to passing on information supplied by the bureaucracy according to its own convenience, instead, it enabled the President to reach out for information, review and analyses of any aspect of US foreign relations when he deemed necessary. Presidential agenda and priorities were no longer circumscribed by the vagaries of inter-departmental rivalries for influence over the President. And because of his central position in this national security bureaucracy, Kissinger became powerful. His authority to originate and sign the NSSM meant that he determined the context of policy review, the questions to be asked and to set the deadline for compliance. His staff was involved at the initial level of policy review,

in IGs, where they prodded the others for new information and monitored the preparation of papers. The flow of papers to the Review Group was also supervised by a member of his staff, who would examine the options independent of the regional staff member, schedule the Review Group meetings and agenda, and make recommendations to the Chairman of Review Group, Kissinger. In the Review Group also, Kissinger exercised considerable power by amending, vetoing or redrafting to shape the content and tone of the paper.[6] Though not formally prescribed, he also came to exercise his judgement on all papers, by writing the cover note/memo accompanying NSSM into the Oval Office. These memos were for President's eyes only, and contained Kissinger's summary or analysis of the implications of various options put forward by the bureaucracy.

The initial machinery of NSC conformed to Nixon's view of earlier administrations' weaknesses, as propounded by Kissinger on 27 December 1968 memorandum: "...the flexibility but occasional disarray of the informal Johnson procedure, the formality but also rigidity of the Eisenhower structure, which faced the President with a bureaucratic consensus, but no real choices."[7] Thus,

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6. Ibid., p.81.

7. Henry Kissinger, The White House Years (New Delhi, 1979), p.41.

Kissinger NSC aimed to combine the best features of the two systems, "the regularity and efficiency of NSC, coupled with procedure that ensured that the President and his advisers considered all the realistic alternatives, the costs and benefits of each, and the separate views of all interested agencies."[8] It was essentially the Eisenhower system, with a maze of subcommittees. However, on Nixon's insistence that "influence of the State Department establishment must be reduced",[9] the Eisenhower SIG chaired by Under Secretary of State was replaced by Review Group chaired by National Security Adviser. Eventhough it seemed to be a result of Nixon's personal pique vis-a-vis the foreign policy establishment, it reflected the presidential necessity of having a 'neutral' presenter of departmental options. The common practice of bureaucratic department-heads was to present their favoured option bracketed by two absurd alternatives (strawmen), or empty consensus, vaguely defined, so that the decisions based on it could be interpreted to suit the interests of the department concerned.

Gradually, the NSA acquired more power by virtue of the fact that he chaired as many as six sub-cabinet level committees, dealing with a variety of issues, while

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8. Ibid., pp.41-42.

9. Ibid., p.43.

only one was chaired by a State Department representative. Thus, Kissinger chaired the Washington Special Action Group (dealing with international crises), verification panel (US-Soviet negotiations on SALT), 40 committee (intelligence and covert operations), International Energy Review Group, Defense Program Review Committee (co-ordination of budgetary issues between contending national priorities), and of course, the Review Group. Only the Under Secretaries' Committee (execution of foreign policy throughout the Executive Department) was chaired by Under Secretary of State.

The White House-centred NSC system was strengthened by Nixon choosing William Rogers as his Secretary of State, "because of (the) President's confidence in (his) ignorance of foreign policy".[10] Nixon wanted "a good negotiator rather than a policy maker - a role he reserved for himself and his Assistant..."[11] as also a strong executive who would ensure state Department's support of the President's policies. This was underlined by Nixon's exclusion of his Secretary of State from his first meeting with Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin on 17 February 1969, four weeks after inauguration, eventhough he constantly

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10. Ibid., p.26.

11. Ibid.

emphasized that he believed in having a strong Secretary. This disregard or bypassing of Rogers and State Department became a regular feature, as later Nixon-initiatives show: keeping him in the dark about his private exchange with North Vietnam's President Ho Chi Minh in July-August 1969, until 48 hours before his TV announcement; sending word to the Jewish community that the "Roger's Plan" on the Middle East was aptly named and did not originate in the White House; not taking him on his first tour to Europe; keeping the channels to Moscow secret from him until 72 hours before SALT break-through in May 1971; and finally, informing him of Kissinger's secret trip to Peking in July 1971 only after the latter was on his way.[12]

In contrast to Roger's declining influence, despite his close personal relations with Nixon and his formal position as President's chief spokesman, adviser on foreign policy, Nixon's use of Kissinger and his talented staff increased dramatically after the first year. By April-May 1969, there was widespread acceptance of Nixon's intention of setting his own foreign policy. Yet, the general impression was that it was Kissinger who was the dominant force in helping Nixon

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12. Ibid., pp.29-30.

mould his foreign policy.[13] Kissinger's visibility at all of major tours of Nixon, to Europe and Asia, was being noted as proof of his pre-eminence vis-a-vis Secretary Rogers.[14]

Scholars who subscribe to the 'bureaucratic politics' view of foreign policy making process tend to attribute the growing power of Adviser (NSA) to the central position he occupied in the Nixon NSC system: Kissinger dominated foreign policy advice to Nixon by virtue of his understanding of the way in which foreign policy bureaucracy functioned, and how to manipulate it to his own advantage. The 'operation' of NSC system clearly showed how Kissinger increased his power from being merely a 'presenter' of options to becoming a power centre vis a vis all individuals and groups concerned with US foreign policy.

Kissinger ordered no less than fifty NSSMs in the first few months of the administration, forcing the bureaucracy to review comprehensively, the entire range of US foreign policy problems. This massive and systematic study of foreign policy issues was unprecedented, both in its range and its specificity. Even

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13. "Who's Making Foreign Policy for the United States?" US News and World Report, 7 April 1969, pp.45-46.

14. Ibid. Also "Who's Secretary of State?" News Week 15 March 1971, pp.26-7, and "Mr.Nixon's Professor", News Week, 22 December 1969, pp.25-27.

though the bureaucrats saw it as "an outsider moving in",[15] they complied with the demand of fresh look at existing policies and of supplying alternative courses of action along with the analyses, because Kissinger let it be known that these demands were Nixon's. Moreover he 'graded' the policy papers and often sent it back with the question, "is this the best you can do?"[16] The procedure resulted in prodding the departments into more work and less of aimless penpushing. Further, these gradings served to weed out unrealistic options (strawmen) at the preliminary level, and thus keep the bureaucracy on its toes. Many saw this work as a means by which Kissinger kept the line-agencies out of his way while he increased access and influences over Nixon. As he later claimed, he did genuinely use the information supplied by policy papers, even though the bureaucraciesdid not know the sphere and extent of its use: "My staff was too small to backstop two complex, simultaneous negotiations. The control of inter-departmental machinery served as a substitute. It enabled me to use the bureaucracy without revealing our our purposes. I would introduce as planning topics

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15. US News and World Report, April 1969, p.75.

16. Quoted in Frank Kessler, The Dilemmas of Presidential Leadership: Of Caretakers and Kings (New Jersey, 1982), p.107.

issues that were actually being secretly negotiated. In this manner I could learn the views of the agencies (as well as the necessary background) without formally "clearing" my position with them."[17]

Kissinger's 'raid' on bureacuracy for brilliant officials and reorganization of the NSC staff into regional and functional units, duplicated the structural division of State Department, and his staff effectively monitored all policy studies submitted by the department bureaus meticulously. However, given his lack of interest and expertise in International Economics, he was careful not to try and dominate these issues. Also Defense Secretary Laird's experience in the Congress (Defense Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee) and his continued links with the Congressmen were duly noted, and Kissinger did not try to manipulate him overtly: "I eventually learned that it was safest to begin a battle with Laird by closing off insofar as possible, all his bureaucratic or congressional escape routes, provided I could figure them out, which was not always easy".[18]

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17. Quoted in I.M.Destler, "National Security II: The Rise of the Assistant," in H.Heclo and L.M.Salamon, eds., The Illusion of Presidential Government (Boulder, Colorado, 1981), p.271.

18. Kissinger, n.7, p.33.

Above all, Kissinger was seen as jealously guarding his access to the President, even to the exclusion of his own staff. Thus, by July 1969, it was widely publicized in the media[19] that Kissinger is one of the few men with instant access to the President at any hour of the day or night. "He briefs the President every morning and they generally talk things over at the end of the day. On a typical working day, they may also confer half a dozen other times." "He thus spends an average of one and a half hours with the President every day, and is constantly on the phone to him". He even carried an electronic "call-boy" on the rare occasions that he did go out to dine, so that he could be summoned for instant communication with the President. According to an insider, "people on NSC staff get to see Mr.Nixon only once a year at the Christmas party".

Similarly, Kissinger dominated the administration's contacts with the Press. In the first meeting of his NSC staff in January 1969, he told his assistants that they were never, under any circumstances, to talk to the Press. "If anyone leaks anything, I will do the

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19. For example, U.S.News and World Report, 14 July 1969 pp.16-17; New York Times Magazine, 1 June 1969, pp.10-11; and News Week, 16 June 1969, p.12.

leaking..." adding in a similar understatement that the new Chief Executive had strong feelings about secrecy.[20]

A combination of Kissinger's penchant for guarding access to President Nixon and to Press led him to be extremely secretive about the advice he gave Nixon in private, and being careful never to show his preference (of an option) at meetings. As the administration's spokesman, he was articulate and witty, yet, for a long time, emphasized that he was merely a facilitator of decision making process and there was no 'Kissinger policy'[21] being advocated, if any policy was followed, it was the President's.

His role as secret envoy and negotiator was a 'lateral means of control'[22] that Nixon employed to realize his foreign policy objectives without the usual interference of State Department. And his staff was skilled in the nuances of bureaucratic infighting because of their backgrounds, so that Kissinger gathered power unto himself by cultivating those officials in the departments who would supply him with information and help in implementation of decisions, i.e., the middle level, because, as he has observed before coming to the

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20. Roger Morris, n.1, p.94.

21. Quoted in News Week, 22 December 1969, p.26.

22. Kissinger, n.7, p.45.

White House: "If one wishes to influence American foreign policy, the time to do so is in the formative period, and the level is the middle level of bureaucracy... the highest level in which people can still think."[23]

Yet, Kissinger's position and influence cannot be attributed solely to his skills at being a shrewd bureaucratic politician, who made effective use of his position, "firmly atop the bureaucratic structure, with decisive control over both the formulation and conduct of policy, and thus (have) de facto power greater than the dejure constitutional authority of the Secretaries of State and Defense."[24] Kissinger himself explains that "...in the final analysis, the influence of a Presidential Assistant derives almost exclusively from the confidence of the President, not from administrative arrangements".[25] This echoes Dean Rusk: "The real organization of government at higher echelons is not what you find in textbooks or organizational charts. It is how confidence flows down from the President.

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23. Quoted in News Week, 16 June 1969, p.12.

24. Morris, n.1, p.47.

25. Kissinger, n.7, p.47.

That is never put on paper... Besides it fluctuates. People go up and people go down."[26]

Generally, this confidence derives from the person's ability to demonstrate both that he has mastered his area of responsibility and that he has the President's interest at heart.[27] Also, there must be willingness to assume responsibility and show one's staff skill. Kissinger was a reputed expert in foreign policy, having been an academician and author of several books and articles on diplomacy, nuclear strategy and U.S. foreign policy, and he was a tireless worker, who had a reputation of being a hard taskmaster. Nixon's confidence in him also derived from his being an outsider, who could cater more fully to his needs because he was not encumbered by pressures of managing a large bureaucracy and was more dependent on him (Nixon). But this cannot explain how or why Nixon continued to rely on him to such a great extent, i.e., why was Kissinger consistently chosen as President's spokesman, envoy and negotiator on nearly all sensitive issues that were important to Nixon? To answer this question, one would have to incorporate the examination and

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26. Quoted in Morton Halperin, Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy (Washington, D.C., 1974), p.219.

27. Ibid., pp.219-20.

analyses of the 'personalities' involved, because the policy-making procedure was shaped at each stage by Nixon's perceptions about his own role in it. As the Institute for Defense Analysis study concluded: "Neither practitioners nor students of national security policy should over-emphasize the importance of the procedures of decision making. In the last analysis, the force of personality tends to over-ride procedures,"[28] and Kissinger himself agrees "...the control of inter-departmental machinery and the right to present options at NSC meetings were useful but not decisive... the NSC machinery was used more fully before my authority was confirmed, while afterward tactical decisions were increasingly taken outside the system, in personal conversations with the President" (emphasis added).[29] Therefore, a brief analyses of the commonality of views between Nixon and Kissinger would be in order.

Political action is the process by which individuals turn upon their history to transform their lives. There are given in the world, forces, structures and belief systems, that require specific responses. But

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28. Quoted in K.C.Clark and L.J.Legere, eds., The President and the Management of National Security (New York, 1969), p.8.

29. Kissinger, n.7, p.48.

the style of response, the personality factor, is as crucial as the imperative to respond.[30] Both Nixon and Kissinger assumed responsibility over US foreign policy at the time of "the retreat of American Power", and "loss of faith in the traditional American values, carrying with it the seeds of social and moral anarchy".[31] Nixon became President with only 43 per cent votes and that too because the Democratic Party had become very unpopular due to the Vietnam War. He had a reputation of being 'Tricky Dick', a political conman, and a cold-war warrior, a classic anti-communist.[32] He had been ignored and disdained by the foreign policy bureaucracy even during his tenure as Eisenhower's Vice-President, and the Eastern Establishment, the foreign policy elite, despised him. He was widely regarded as an insecure person, who had achieved his position by sheer doggedness, he was not a natural leader and was obsessed with the idea of leadership and studied the 'mechanics' of it. And his main concern was whether the American public would accept and tolerate his ideas of leadership and his priorities, his view of the world.

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30. Dana Ward, "Kissinger: A Psychohistory," in Dan Caldwell, ed., Henry Kissinger: His Personality and Politics (Durham,N.C., 1983), p.24.

31. Henry Brandon, The Retreat of American Power (London, 1973), p.2.

32. Ibid.

His choice of Kissinger, an established academic and foreign policy analyst of German-Jewish origin, has been explained in various ways. He wanted to run foreign policy from White House and needed the support of an 'establishment' man, which Kissinger was, by virtue of his Harvard credentials. Besides, Kissinger was the foreign policy adviser to Nixon's rival for Republican nomination Nelson Rockefeller, so his recruitment also conferred upon Nixon the honour of being 'fair'. Kissinger's appointment was widely hailed by academics and the Press, because it ensured open channels between the administration and these two 'participants' in foreign policy making. Some scholars argue that Nixon shared with Kissinger not only a number of similar views on substantive, philosophical and tactical issues, but also the characteristic of being 'loners' and being considered 'outsiders' by their respective groups (i.e., Party and Academic establishment), as also the drive for power. Though these specific characteristics are in the realm of psychology, one can still find a number of political issues on which Nixon and Kissinger concurred: the context and role of US foreign policy, the problems with the foreign policies of preceding (post-war) Presidents and problems in formulation and conduct of US foreign policy.

When Nixon and Kissinger met on 25 November 1968, following Nixon's election, they found that they thought about international relations and the place of US in the world in very similar terms. They thought that the post-war world had changed significantly and US required a new approach to its relations with all the major actors of this new international reality, the Communist Russia and China, the European allies and the now independent countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Nixon and Kissinger, therefore, sought to develop a systematic approach, a conceptual framework, which could make US diplomacy purposive and coherent. The emphasis was on gradual acceptance of change in the global status of USA, and the consequent change in strategy: to 'retreat from power' without loss of credibility; to recognize the need of "lowering voices", of new flexibility, of shifting the emphasis from the dramatic to the practical, and of ending the war in Vietnam. The redefinition of 'goals' of US diplomacy meant also the change of 'means': "from confrontation to negotiation".[33]

This concurrence is not upheld merely by examination of their memoirs,[34] but also from the evidence that

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33. Ibid.

34. Richard Nixon, The Memoirs of Richard Nixon (New York: 1978), and Kissinger, n.7.

Nixon wrote to Kissinger about his agreement with latter's views after the publication of Kissinger's book "Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy" (1957) and the article on the mood of Europe in New York Times Magazine in December 1959: "...what particularly appealed to the then Vice-President in that article... was Kissinger's criticism of President Eisenhower's European policy as 'sterile' and too defensive..." Kissinger wrote that "in discussing negotiations with the Russians, we should always be ready to negotiate not only for substantive but also for psychological reasons: to convey our peaceful purposes to the world... only the purposeful can be flexible."[35] Thus, Nixon and Kissinger both believed that in the era of Nuclear parity with Soviet Union, and of the rise of other centres of political and economic power in the world (Europe and Japan), US should tone down the ideological, confrontationist approach towards the Soviet Union; instead, it should deal with both Soviet Union and China, on the basis of mutual interest, with which no middle power should be allowed to interfere. This was essentially an acceptance of the emergence of tripolar configuration of power in the area of security, and a multipolarity in the area of international economics. Such a 'moderate' international

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35. Brandon, n.31, p.25.

order was to be 'managed' by co-operation between the US, the USSR and China.

The 'grand design' so viewed, entailed a few strategies, like détente, strategic arms limitation, exhorting the allies to pay a greater proportion of the cost of defense and seek to prevent escalation of limited wars. Apart from these, emphasis was to be on communication, consultation, co-operation in economic, cultural, scientific and technological areas, that could serve to establish regimes (agreed rules, procedures and institutions) in important issue areas, which, in turn, could be used to promote the grand strategy by 'linkage', i.e., "use asymetrical advantage in one regime to influence other issue areas."

The most important issue on which Nixon and Kissinger shared similar views was Vietnam. As the Nixon Doctrine implied, the attempt was to lower the cost and public profile of American involvement in South East Asia while maintaining the predominant post world war II international position of the US, the objective of primacy. Nixon believed that "the US will participate in the defense and development of allies and friends, but that America cannot, and will not, conceive of all the plans, design all the programs, execute all the

decisions and undertake all the defense of the free nations of the world" (emphasis in original).[36] And this was first applied to Vietnam, where Nixon and Kissinger sought to withdraw American land forces while still protecting the South Vietnamese government through the use of American sea and air power. By June 1969, Nixon's Vietnam policy was being recognized as "very much Henry Kissinger's Vietnam policy, as outlined in an article in the January issue of "Foreign Affairs"... written long before he went to the White House, but it might have been written yesterday."[37]

Much before he joined Nixon White House, Kissinger had criticized the policies of Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson, on the premise that they seem to be 'reactions' to events, "we seem to be prisoners of circumstances rather than their creators".[38] He had expressed disdain in his books, for the men and institutions that had shaped and governed US foreign policy since world war II. His best selling book "Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy" criticized the rigid diplomacy of Eisenhower-Dulles

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36. R.Nixon, U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1970s: A New Strategy for Peace (Washington,D.C., 1970), pp.5-6.

37. Stewart Alsop, "The Powerful Doctor Kissinger", News Week, 16 June 1969, p.12.

38. Quoted in Brandon, n.31, p.25.

doctrine of 'Massive Retaliation': it urged a tactical use of atomic weapons and limited wars, in conditions short of national survival. This and other criticism were based in Kissinger's views about the requirements of foreign policy planning and their apparent lack in contemporary US political system. Insofar as these views emphasised the need for 'Statesmen' to plan and execute foreign policy and their need for control over 'bureaucracy', there was a high degree of congruence between the conception of the role of US President held by Nixon and Kissinger. Both emphasized the need for creativity, decisiveness, risk-taking and ability to understand the dynamics of negotiation process, if foreign policy was to be successful. And both saw bureaucracy as a hurdle in the way of creative diplomacy. Moreover, both underlined the importance of generating a domestic consensus over the diplomatic initiatives that a leader presented. In this respect, Nixon's views of leadership in foreign policy are seen to derive from his ambitious yet introvert nature, that made him prone to take risks, initiate policies and have a keen sense of public mood cultivated through years spent in politics. His suspicious nature and the rebuffs suffered at the hands of foreign policy bureaucracy were the

foundations for his perceptions about the need to 'control' or 'marginalise' bureaucracy in the policy making process. Not being as prolific a writer as Kissinger, there is not much 'evidence' of Nixon's views on this before he came to be the President. But Kissinger's writings as an academic, offer many clues to his perceptions of diplomacy in general, and US diplomacy in particular.

Kissinger was heavily influenced by Max Weber's views on bureaucracy and leadership. He emphasized in his works, the need for creativity, innovation and grand designs in foreign affairs increasingly dominated by domestic bureaucratic structures. The bureaucratic problem, however, is not that of constant competition between politicians and bureaucrats, as the models of bureaucratic politics show but the tendency of a bureaucratic age to fail to produce individuals with genuine leadership qualities. A cursory examination of American political leadership showed him that these eminent men were not really qualified for the task of policy making, coming as they did, from professions such as law and corporate business. The reason was that their experience was in organizations, where reaching the top requires 'essentially manipulative' skills, whereas leadership

requires "primarily creative" qualities: "...very little in the experience that forms these men produces the combination of political acumen, conceptual skill, persuasive power, and substantive knowledge required for the highest positions of government."[39] The lack of these qualities makes these 'policy makers' prisoners of the 'administrators' and this is the prevasive fact of modern developed societies. Kissinger generalized this view as an inherent tension between policy and bureaucracy emphasizing their diametrical opposition:

> The essence of policy is its contingency; its success depends on the correctness of an estimate which is in part conjectural. The essence of bureaucracy is its quest for safety; its success is calculability. Profound policy thrives on perpetual creation, on a constant redefition of goals. Good administration thrives on routine... Policy involves an adjustment of risks; administration on avoidance of deviation... bureaucracies are designed to execute, not to conceive...[40]

Further, he believes that intellectuals who might be able to redress some of the deficiencies in America's leadership group rarely do so because they are either corrupted by the process of consultation and tell the leaders what they want to hear, or are insensitive to the needs of policy-makers and give them advice they

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39. Henry Kissinger, The Necessity for Choice (New York, 1961)

40. Quoted in Robert J.Strong, Bureaucracy and Statesmanship: Henry Kissinger and the Making of American Foreign Policy (Lanham,MD, 1986), p.41.

cannot use. The 'need' that the 'advice' must keep in mind is the need for generating support in the electrorate, because "the test of a policy... is its ability to obtain domestic support. This has two aspects: the problem of legitimizing a policy within the Governmental apparatus, which is the problem of bureaucratic rationality; and that of harmonizing it with the national experience, which is a problem of historical development."[41]

Clearly then, Kissinger's prescription for creative diplomacy in a bureaucratic age was a statesman, who recognized the limits and possibilities of the present, and employed diplomacy and negotiation to recreate and restore international order, even if, at times, he had to act alone and leave history to be the judge of the validity of his (conjectural) vision. Whatever the negative views Kissinger had about Nixon the person, he saw Nixon the President as a statesman, and this can be seen as the basis of Kissinger's efforts to create a national security system that could be controlled from the White House, one that would circumvent and ignore the State Department. Kissinger's views

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41. Quoted in Harvey Starr, "The Kissinger Years: Studying Individuals and Foreign Policy", in Dan Caldwell, ed., Henry Kissinger: His Personality and Politics (Durham, N.C., 1983), p.15.

on bureaucracy fit perfectly with Nixon's desire to tame the bureaucratic system: "The vast bureaucratic mechanisms that emerge develop a momentum and a vested interest of their own... there is a trend toward autarky... when this occurs, the bureaucracy absorbs the energies of top executives... serving the machine becomes a more absorbing occupation than defining its purpose... Faced with an administrative machine that is both elaborate and fragmented, the executive is forced into essentially lateral means of control... extra bureaucratic means of decision. The practice of relying on special emissaries or personal envoys is an example".[42]

This view of bureaucracy as hostile to innovation and characterized by inability to address the most significant range of issues, vacillation and inertia, combined with Nixon's penchant for operating through his Assistants made the Kissinger NSC central.

Kissinger notes that Nixon valued Assistants not only because of their freedom from bureaucratic prejudices and the psychological reassurance conferred by proximity, but also because of his dependence upon them: "Nixon tended to work in spurts. During periods when he withdrew he

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42. H.Kissinger, "Domestic Structure and Foreign Policy", Daedalus, 95 (Spring), 503-27.

counted on his assistants to carry on day to day decisions; during spasms of extreme activity he relied on his assistants to screen his more impetuous commands. They were needed to prevent the face-to-face confrontations he so disliked and dreaded."[43] Another insight into Nixon's choice of Kissinger as his secret agent is provided by Kissinger's comment that in deciding on whom to send to Beijing for the first major meeting, Nixon chose him because "undoubtedly of all the potential emissaries I was the most subject to his control"[44] and because of the faith that he would not "sell Alaska, or his President, short".[45]

The elaborate communications procedures designed to end-run the state Department, the "back-channels", were similarly established "...in order to avoid these endless confrontations... to deal with key foreign leaders... directly... This process started on the day after Inauguration".[46] The purpose was to enable a statesman (Nixon) to conduct foreign policy unconstrained by the bureaucratic politics, leaks and

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43. Kissinger, n.7, pp.47-48.

44. Ibid., p.717.

45. Quoted in News Week, 7 February 1972, p.12.

46. Kissinger, n.7, p.28.

time-consuming nature of working through the State Department. Thus, one can accept that the rise of Kissinger under Nixon's presidency was as much a function of his ability to be a successful player for the 'bureaucratic politics' game, as of his similarity of views with Nixon. Though this has been seen as a result of the complementary relationship between a particular President and his chief foreign policy adviser (which may be a Secretary of State or of Defense and not necessarily the NSA), one can see beyond this particular 'fit' in 'styles' if one recognizes the fact that the need to control and manage the bureaucracy, to aspire for 'statesmanship' and to fulfil the demand for visibly making and conducting foreign policy have all become associated with Presidents, whatever their party-affiliation. The reliance on NSA and the 'personalization of NSC' are a response by all Presidents who want to 'lead' foreign policy making and its conduct.

In this context, one can analyse Kissinger's appointment as Secretary of State in Nixon's second term, as yet another means of using State Department without letting it become a hinderance (this time by the increasing public concern over its deterioration).

Besides, there was the need to 'institutionalize' the gains of initiatives taken in earlier period, when the NSA was predominant. Kissinger himself emphasized Secretaryship more than his other position as NSA, which he held simultaneously, so as to provide public leadership to an administration battling with Watergate. He continued his previous style of consulting with only a small group of hand-picked aides and making no attempt to reform the department or to draw systematically on its expertise. The Nixon NSC thus had the record of effectively avoiding intra-executive branch conflict that had so plagued earlier Presidents. It helped the President to implement several high-level conceptions without the tensions and compromises associated with State Department involvement. The President could dominate a limited range of issues that he thought important, mainly through the use of this NSC system, which had as much to do with general needs of Presidents to 'manage' foreign policy, as with the personal predilections of Nixon: "A President whose inner mix of vulnerability and ambition impelled him to push the historical logic to its extremity... The structural forces tending to transfer power to the Presidency were now reinforced by compulsive internal drives, a sense of

life as a battlefield, a belief that the Nation was swarming with personal enemies, a flinching from face-to-face argument, an addiction to seclusion, a preoccupation with response to crises, an insistence on a controlled environment for decision."[47]

Kissinger, the National Security Advisor, rose to unprecedented prominence both as the head of the particular NSC process and as the particular President's confidant. About the ways in which NSC operated, Kissinger says: "These extraordinary procedures were essentially made necessary by a President who neither trusted his cabinet nor was willing to give them direct orders. Nixon feared leaks and shrank from imposing discipline. But he was determined to achieve his purpose."[48] Besides, the NSC staff provided support, not merely to challenge the bureaucracy that Nixon was suspicious of, but to supplant it altogether, giving him considerable control over issues that he wanted to 'decide' on. Nixon clearly maintained his status as the 'ultimate decider' by demanding clear, written, realistic options before the formal NSC meetings, and after a discussion with the council members, and a

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47. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., The Imperial Presidency (Boston, 1973), p.216.

48. Kissinger, n.7, pp.805-6.

private conversation with his Advisor Kissinger, taking the decision by himself, in seclusion.

Kissinger's position became unique, "...the President's closest confidant, the principal negotiator, his troubleshooter, his First Minister, over-shadowing the members of the Cabinet... no less than the second most powerful man in the world".[49] He owed this to a combination of factors in his favour, not the least of which was the complimentarity of their views and abilities. He not only viewed the aims and process of US foreign policy like Nixon, but had those attributes which served Nixon to realize his political, diplomatic and organizational goals. Thus, Kissinger came to the office with clear notions on and background in bureaucratic politics and public speaking. His writings have been analysed as "projective biography",[50] he stated clearly what he would do as a policy maker under certain circumstances. His diplomacy was seen as being rooted in the insights of his youth (as a doctoral student of Harvard), "We are witness here to a unique experiment in the application of scholarship to statesmanship, of history to statecraft".[51] As

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49. H.Brandon, n.31, p.24.

50. B.Mazlish, Kissinger: The European Mind in American Policy (New York, 1976), p.151.

51. J.G.Stoessinger, Henry Kissinger: The Anguish of Power (New York, 1976), p.37.

already discussed, his perceptions of defects in US foreign policy making meshed with Nixon's own views about it. Even as he gave the President's policy-instincts an intellectual content by theorizing and conceptualizing those ideas that Nixon's political instincts and experience grasped as 'timely', he clearly recognized that the ultimate responsibility is the President's: "Presidents, of course, are responsible for shaping the overall strategy. They must make key decisions; for this they are accountable and for its they deserve full credit no matter how much help they receive along the way."[52] His efforts to dominate White House press briefings as presidential spokesman, were also characterized by the care not to get publicity for himself and arouse Nixon's jealousy or suspicion. When being complimented for his 'brilliant' article on Vietnam in 'Foreign Affairs', he insisted that the last thing he wanted to appear, at that point of time was brilliant.[53] He thus met those personal and institutional needs of the President which no one else did, a responsive personal environment and the flexibility to conduct diplomacy according to

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52. Kissinger, quoted in Cecil V.Crabb, Jr. and Kevin V.Mulcahy, Presidents and Foreign Policy Making: From FDR to Reagan (Louisiana, 1986), p.257.

53. Quoted in News Week, 30 December 1968, pp.22-23.

Presidential preferences, unhampered by the organizational interests of the bureaucracy or by the uninformed, populist Congress.

Critique

Apart from its centralization and secrecy, the Nixon NSC system was also criticized on a number of premises that it was supposed to have been based on. The demand for 'options' and alternatives was the basic demand that Nixon had put forward from his advisory system. He and his associates assumed that if NSC staff could be developed as 'Presidential' staff, and a knowledgeable person be appointed to oversee the policy-reviews, there would be less chance for 'interdepartmental compromises' being sent to the President as 'options'. Moreover, NSC staffers being political appointees, would be more sensitized to public and congressional opinion, and thus 'weed out strawmen', eliminate unrealistic or drastic options. Pervasive presidential control over information and analyses of major foreign policy problems facing the US would result from constant monitoring of departmental studies by the NSC staffers. But the operation of the system showed that these views were not entirely justified. In

following presidential policy-inclinations, the NSC staff could not reflect popular views of Congress and the public, viz., bombing of Cambodia and US stand on Indo-Pak war of 1971.

Apart from this, the use of NSA as negotiator, conceptualizer and envoy meant loss of accountability as perceived by the Congress. The tendency to use NSA for secret manoevers has also been seen as the tactic to make dramatic announcements, useful in domestic electoral politics, by enhancing the 'image' of the President as statesman-leader and his administration as innovative and dynamic. The foreign policy mechanism thus becomes personality centred, and is geared to lay emphasis on only those issues/crises with which the NSA and/or President are personally concerned. The very size of NSC staff and the human limitations of the major participants prohibits equal interest in day-to-day affairs of diplomatic relations - the continuity. Kissinger's lack of interest in solving the Biafra issue has been seen as arising from his reluctance to involve himself in tactical/technical issues (amount of aid in terms of food, clothing medicines) because he thought of himself as a grand strategist, a conceptual thinker.[54]

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54. E.Drew quoted in Morton Halperin, n.26, p.24.

Finally, the secretive diplomacy of Nixon system has been seen as being more effective when dealing with (similar) authoritarian regimes, that have centralized, personalized decision-making system, based on perceptions of the top few leaders, who do not have to answer to the electorate. According to Charles Neu,[55] Nixon's failure to maintain good relations with allies stemmed from this tendency, whenever bureaucracies and public debates on foreign relations were involved, Nixon system failed.

Inspite of all these deficiencies, and the wide debate it generated in the media and in the Congress, the Nixon system of 'a rival State Department' cannot be seen as a mere aberration. It was rooted in post war developments and in the evolution of the image of the President as a decider of specific issues and as the 'leader' of foreign policy. This can be seen by an examination of the NSC system established by the next elected President, Jimmy Carter.

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55. Charles Neu, "The Rise of National Security Bureaucracy", in L.Galambos,ed., The New American State: Bureaucracies and Policies Since World War II (Baltimore, 1987), p.100.

Chapter III

NSC UNDER CARTER AND REAGAN: EFFORTS AT REFUTING THE KISSINGER LEGACY

Collegiality of Carter NSC: Brzezinsky's Predominance

The frustration and disenchantment of the American people with the 'defeat' in Vietnam and erosion of democratic norms as exemplified by Watergate, found its expression in the choice of the next US President. Carter, an unknown Governor of Georgia, mocked by earliest critics as "Jimmy who?", was chosen to reflect the new US role by reduced global visibility. A moderate Democrat, he campaigned hard to acquire the image of an 'outsider', a critic of the 'big government' in Washington and of the Establishment. This populist platform against 'Imperial Presidency' also included the critique of the realist, power politics approach of the preceeding administration(s). Carter championed the return to the idealistic basis of foreign policy, a view that found ready support amongst Americans who have held a strong belief in the 'uniqueness' of America insofar as the American Republic was based on clear opposition to amoral, power-politics of Europe. In the mid-1970s, US faced a world that was not only politically and economically multipolar, but, in many ways hostile to US efforts at maintaining hegemony by promoting bilateral management of world affairs with Soviet Union in the name of détente, even as it ignored its allies. The so-called Third World was beginning to

flex its muscles by demanding better prices for commodities it supplied and protesting against its treatment as the area where the super-powers could compete for power maintaining 'acceptable levels of conflict','low-intensity warfare' and 'limited conflicts'.

In such a situation, Carter's emphasis on World Order, morality in international relations,human rights and 'building bridges' with the Third World proved very attractive to the American electorate assailed with grave doubts about 'justification' for US interventionism. The philosophy of human rights as espoused by Carter, meant that US could intervene anywhere in the world, armed with its moral right to save the dignity of individuals. Just as containment of communism and making the world safe for democracy, were justifiable on moral grounds, so was 'human rights', because it was based on more universalistic value of individual dignity, world order and, above all, use of non-military means by US.

Besides this, Carter emphasized 'Trilateralism', referring to linkage between US, Japan and Europe for the creation of a new world political and economic order, to accommodate global power shifts, the 'rebellion' of the Third World and financial, monetary and trade conflicts within the advanced capitalist world. Accordingly,

Carter promised a foreign policy that would be different from Nixon's and Ford, in both content and tone. He indicated the three lessons he had learned from Vietnam: need for openness and consultation with traditional allies; a return to idealism in foreign policy to regenerate faith at home; and not to use foreign policy as an escape mechanism to avoid dealing with serious problems at home. The 'idealism' was to take the form of reduced military spending by $5 to 7 million and a cut in arms sales abroad.[1]

This new perspective on foreign relations was to be complemented by introduction of different decision-making procedures in the foreign policy sphere within the US government, because, as Carter declared in May 1977, he was going to have a "foreign policy that is democratic and based on fundamental values, and that uses power and influence... for humane purposes... a foreign policy that the American people both support and for a change, know about and understand".[2] The catchwords, thus were open, non-secretive, democratic, participatory decision-making, a clear reaction against the secret diplomacy and autocratic

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1. Laurence H.Shoup, The Carter Presidency and Beyond (Palo Alto, California, 1960), p.113.

2. Carter's Commencement Address at the University of Notre Dame, 22 May 1977, quoted in Sam C.Carkesian and Robert A.Vitas, US National Security Policy and Strategy: Documents and Policy Proposals (New York, 1988), p.223.

controlled decision making environment favoured by Nixon. The secretive element in preceding administration was highlighted as elitist, and Carter pointed out his 'different' perspective on public participation in decision making for foreign affairs: "We are confident of the good sense of the American people, and so we let them share in the process of making foreign policy decisions. We can thus speak with the voices of 215 million, and not just of an isolated handful."[3]

The desire for openness, for keeping informed both the Congress and the public, was to be complemented by openness within the policy making structure. Carter favoured a balancing approach, giving all concerned parties (departments, agencies, his own advisers) an equal chance to present their views, however, contradictory they might be, because, in his view, the President governs by judicious management of such (inevitable) contradictions. Opposition to hierarchy, with its concomitant 'processing' and 'diluting' of options, was manifest in the model adopted for re-organization of the White House staff. It has been called the "spokes-in-a-wheel" model,[4] wherein each adviser had equal access to

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3. Ibid.

4. Colin Campbell, Managing the Presidency: Carter and Reagan and the Search for Executive Harmony (Pittsburgh,PA, 1986), p.83.

the President, with no chief of staff to regulate it, or to be more equal than others.

Further, decentralization was promoted through cabinet government, such that department heads were to be President's chief advisers on policy, specially in case of foreign policy, where Secretary of State was to be the President's adviser-cum-chief spokesperson. However, in genral, those closest to cabinet operations gave little weight to their own significance in the collective dynamics of foreign policy making, beyond providing forum for Secretaries' exchange of information and pep-talks by the President. At their height, cabinet meetings occurred once every two weeks.[5] Policy (got) made on a one-to-one relationship between each cabinet secretary and the President.[6]

However, it was on the foreign policy side that Carter's desire for collective consultation between secretaries was fulfilled to some extent. It was largely due to the efforts of Carter's Assistant for National Security Affairs, Zbigniew Brzezinski, to revitalize NSC process in accordance with Carter's views on national security decision-making. Carter, though with no experience in foreign affairs, or even any earlier

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5. Ibid., p.63.

6. Ibid.

interest in this area, was determined to dominate foreign policy making. This may have been due in part to his membership of Trilateral Commission,[7] and in part, to the realization that a platform of 'Human Rights' and 're-organization of federal bureaucracy' would be meaningless without presidential assertion on policymaking process. He also wanted to restore the Secretary of State to his position as chief presidential spokesman and adviser on foreign affairs, even as he favoured revival of NSC meetings to get views of other department-heads. The National Security staff was to be a 'think-tank' and co-ordinator of policies developed by Departments of State and Defense, rather than be involved in the conduct of diplomacy or in supplanting the Departments as source of information and analyses on foreign policy issues.[8]

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7. Trilateral Commission is a private international organization composed of members from North America, Western Europe and Japan. They represent multinational business, corporate law firms, academics, labour leaders and highly placed government officials. It was set up in 1972, to outline new strategic directions for co-ordinated changes in the domestic and foreign policies of the member countries, so that they could create a new world order. The ideal policy-makers, according to the views expressed by members of the Commission, are "technocratic and policy-oriented intellectuals", rather than the "value oriented intellectuals". Clearly Carter's background and aptitude in business and management reinforced the 'ideal' promoted by the Commission.

8. "According to Carter's Reorganization Plan No.1, the nature of the Executive Office of the President is supposed to be one of coordinating with and processing the views of the departments... not duplicating their efforts, or substituting for them, or over-riding them", as quoted in Campbell, n.4, p.92.

Accordingly, Brzezinski re-organized the National Security Advisory and Decision-making process, by maintaining a distinction between the nature and capabilities of the two main actors, the Department of State and the NSC staff, because Carter attempted to tap the strongest elements in each, as changing circumstances demanded: the NSC staff was, according to Carter, "a small group of experts, not handicapped by the inertia of a tenured bureaucracy or the responsibility for implementing policies after they were evolved, adept at incisive analyses of strategic concepts and prolific in the production of new ideas."[9] This view can be seen as the basis for Carter's choice of Brzezinski as his NSA, whereas he chose Cyrus Vance to be the head of State Department, whose 'inertia' and lack of innovation could be "beneficial restraint on overly rapid action or inadequately assessed plans".[10]

The choice of Brzezinski for the important post of NSA, reflected Carter's determination to dominate foreign policy, because Brzezinski was a Columbia Professor, a fellow-member (Director) of Trilateral Commission, and acknowledged 'teacher' of Carter in foreign affairs. He had, in a way, been educating Carter on foreign policy

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9. Jimmy Carter, Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President (New York, 1982), p.53.

10. Ibid., p.54.

before and during his presidential campaign. Further, Carter gave the NSA a cabinet status, implying his attendance at all senior-level meetings as well as equal participation along with the Department heads in NSC. Yet, Carter wanted his NSA to be merely a 'facilitator' of policy-process, and assiduously avoid public visibility as either presidential spokesperson or negotiator, because Carter had no desire to have another Kissinger in his administration, even though he charged his NSA with the responsibility for developing four year strategic goals.[11]

This balancing of elements in the national security equation was evident in Brzezinski's efforts at organizing NSC staff. He pruned the size of NSC staff from 50 professionals under Kissinger to 30, recruiting academics and bright bureaucrats, and encouraging debate and collective decision-making within the staff. Thus, they were "idea people" identified with specific schools of thought more than professional policy management "types" thought to be the norm for NSC,[12] a fact that gave indication of subsequent dominance of NSC staff. In addition, Carter NSC maintained a

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11. Z.Brzezinski, In Quest of National Security (Boulder, Colorado, 1988), p.62.

12. I.M.Destler, quoted in Colin Campbell, n.4, p.91.

a significant compliment of officials on loan from within the government, and well-acquainted with the bureaucratic politics of national security reminiscent of Kissinger operation. However, Brzezinski maintained that the youth and the scholarly background of his staff fulfilled Carter's requirements for 'innovation' and 'collegiality', and made "self-effacing start by co-operating with other departments and encouraging open debate on foreign policy."[13]

Similarly, the NSC decision-making process was simplified and made more equitable by a reduction in the number of sub-committees and by dividing the chairmanships evenly between the NSA and the Department. Brzezinski recognized the importance of 'chairing' subcommittees,[14] and therefore, wanted to retain the 7-subcommittee structure of Kissinger-NSC, with major modification being in terms of changed chairmanships: instead of the NSA chairing these, concerned head(s) of department(s) could chair them, to reduce White House control and increase decentralization. But Carter rejected this plan on

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13. News Week, 9 May 1977, p.36.

14. "In the end, Kissinger came to exercise control by chairing a series of sub-cabinet committees, attended by sub-cabinet level senior officials." Quoted in Arthur Cyr, "How Important is National Security Structure to National Security Policy?", World Affairs, vol.146, no.2 (Fall 1983), p.138.

grounds of complexity and obvious links with the past administration. Therefore, the interagency subcommittee structure was simplified into two committees - the Policy Review Committee (PRC) and the Special Cor-ordination Committee (SCC).

The PRC was to deal with foreign policy, defense policy and international economic issues, developing long-term policy and treated broad initiatives and concerns. Thus, Arab-Israeli relations, relations with particular country or group of countries, and international development, were dealt with by PRC, chaired on an issue-by-issue basis, i.e., by cabinet secretaries whose department was responsible for requesting a change or submitting an initiative.

The SCC, on the other hand, dealt with decisions on arms control, crises management and specific intelligence activities, This was chaired by the NSA because these were areas that usually raise greater grounds for jurisdictional disputes and place more premium on timely action - both of which imply direct presidential control due to criticality as well as the need for impartial (i.e., non-departmental) decisions that reflect 'presidential' interests as closely as possible: "I stated that all of these matters not only posed potential jurisdictional conflicts but in one way or another touched upon

President's own political interests. It followed that the Assistant for National Security Affairs should chair the SCC and that this committee ought to be the decision-making framework for the three types of issues mentioned above."[15]

Carter's determination to control the foreign policy decision making was revealed further in changing of the NSC-issued study reports titles: the NSSMs were now Presidential Review Memoranda (PRM) and the decisions were not NSDMs but Presidential Decision Memoranda. All of these steps at re-organization and creation of new structures had only peripheral participation of the Secretary of State, and even when he did protest against anything, the President quietened him down: Vance's unhappiness over inclusion of SALT II and crisis management in SCC was noted by Brzezinski,[16] yet Vance himself recounts that he was relatively satisfied with SCC because he "did not want to be bogged down in the minutes that attended crisis management problems."[17]

Yet the collegiality turned into confusion because even though Carter welcomed the competition as a way of insuring greater freedom of action, the extreme divergence in the views of his principal advisers often required Carter to make "something close to a choice" on staff and departmental responsibilities. His even handed, managerial approach

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15. Ibid., p.139.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

at reconciliation of these opposing views sometimes made him look ridiculously confused, as when he pieced together Vance and Brzezinki's views on relations with Soviet Union in the same speech.[18] He was accused of vacillating and sending mixed signals to allies and adversaries, further reducing U.S. credibility. Thus in 1978, James Chace noted that even though in June 1976, Carter had warned American people against "excessive swings" in attitude towards the Russians "from an exaggerated sense of ompatibility... to open expression of hostility", the priorities of the administration are unclear. "In particular, the President seems to tack back and forth on Soviet policy. On the one hand, there have been denunciations of Soviet meddling in Africa, retaliatory measures for Soviet abuses of human rights, and a commitment to developing the cruise missiles; on the other, he brought the Soviet Union formally back into the Middle East negotiations last October, cancelled B-1 Bomber and deferred decision on the development of neutron bomb."[19] Similar vacillation was noted by Hedley Bull in 1979: "After the June 7 Annapolis speech calling

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18. Betty Glad, Jimmy Carter: In Search of the Great White House (New York, 1980), p.483: "His Anapolis speech, according to James Fallows, was written in this way. Carter just spliced together the often contradictory viewpoints of his advisers Vance and Brzezinki."

19. James Chace, "Is Foreign Policy Consensus Possible?" Foreign Affairs, 57(1), Fall 1978, p.1.

for 'widening the scope of co-operation' and that 'detente must be broadly defined and truly reciprocal,' reflecting Brzezinski's March 1 speech, by July, cooling of the 'Human Rights Offensive' against Moscow... the more orthodox line in pursuit of SALT II and detente... indicated that the influence of Vance and Shulman prevailed."[20] Other issues where ha had to choose between radically opposed recommendations were U.S. relations with China, Soviet-Cuban role in Horn of Africa, its implications for SALT and the handling of the Iranian crisis.

The much-favoured collegiality and 'balance' between Vance and Brzezinski gave way to dominance of the NSA over policy- advice and presidential decisions. A number of reasons contributed to this development, not the least of which was the presidential style. Carter was not content with acting as the board Chairman model of foreign policy making; according to an unnamed staff-member of Carter's White House, he was a 'detail man', whose penchant for detail and selectivity in trust made it difficult to maintain the system's integrity: "At times Carter's impatience produced circumstances in which he would make decisions ahead of the NSC coordinating

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20. Hedley Bull, "A View from Abroad: Consistency under Pressure," Foreign Affairs, 57(3), p.444.

process, prompting me to complain to him. Moreover, whenever I tried to relieve him of excessive detail, Carter would show real uneasiness, and I even felt some suspicion, that I was usurping his authority."[21] This was because Carter had made a conscious choice to found his administrative style on an attention to detail, even before he came to the Oval Office, in his own words: "(My) exact procedure is derived to some degree from my scientific or engineering background - I like to study first all the efforts that have been made historically towards the same goal, to bring together advice or ideas from as wide or divergent points of view as possible, to assimilate them personally or with a small staff, to assess the quality of the points of view and identify the source of these proposals... I like to be personally involved so that I can know the thought processes that go into the final decisions and also so that I can be a spokesman, without prompting, when I take my case to the people, the legislature."[22]

However, this same love for details and capacity of putting in long hours trying to master them, was seen by many[23] as showing lack of intellectural coherence - 'he

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21. Quoted in Campbell, n.4, p.6.

22. Quoted in ibid., p.60.

23. Cyr, n.14, p.139.

did not have this more global overview of what he really wanted', 'vacillation', and 'venality', such that his best-weighed decisions were often proved to be ad hoc and piece-meal responses to immediate problems.

As far as the policy making process was concerned, this style led to increased importance of NSC staff who summarized issues and options sent by the departments. Moreover, President himself had charged NSC staff and Brzezinski with larger strategic thinking, such that the views of the scholarly experts seemed more coherent. The NSC staff did not remain 'neutral' as originally desired, because its historical legacy (Kissinger-era) began to be revived as Brzezinski's view prevailed, and as Carter took to using the same Kissinger methods (sudden announcement about normalization of relations with China, sending Brzezinski as his negotiator to Pakistan, using him as his spokesperson on foreign affairs) that he had earlier denounced.

Even the carefully constructed National Security decision-making process, with simplified structure of PRC and SCC and clear division of responsibilities (chairman-ships) ultimately favoured the NSC-staff and the NSA. This was due to the fact that even though policy papers requested by Presidential Review Memoranda(PRMs) were prepared by the

concerned department and then examined at the PRC chaired by the relevant department-head, the final recommendations/ options were summarized by the NSA when no consensus emerged from the PRC or SCC sessions. Further, if a clear choice had been made it was the NSA who prepared a Presidential Decision Memoranda (PDM), and sent directly to the President, without review by other meeting participants.[24] Vance opposed it, but Carter preferred this procedure because 'he was afraid of leaks if these sensitive documents were circulated before they reached his desk'.[25] This procedure contributed all the more towards enhancing NSA's power given Carter's lower participation in formal NSC meetings (only 35) and his tendency to make decisions informally like Johnson, at "Friday Breakfasts."[26]

As crises developed in the second half of his term, Carter took personal interest in crisis management, so that SCC became an important forum for discussion and for timely action. Even the department heads lent it more importance

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24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

26. Paul Schott Stevens, 'The National Security Council: Past & Prologue", Strategic Review, Winter 1989,p.59.

by attending the meeting personally, even when the presence of their subordinates would have sufficed. The events in Afghanistan, Iran, Nicaragua etc. seemed to Carter to require assertiveness, which secretary Vance lacked(in Carter's view),[27] and Brzezinski stepped in to fill this role because he was eager to move beyond co-ordination and play a central role in shaping the administration's policies and educating the American public about foreign policy, a task which Vance was not particularly inclined to assume on a sustained basis, given his unease when dealing with the Press and with the Congress. Besides Carter began to see Vance as 'typical' secretary, who 'promotes the organizational interests' rather than presidential ones.

The rise of Brzezinski, Carter's NSA, despite the avowed desire of Carter not to have 'another Kissinger' and despite Brzezinski's frequent assertions that he was a mere facilitator of policy making, can be attributed to several factors. Carter's insistence on an informal NSC system, like Johnson and Kennedy, meant that NSA was to be a high staff aide. But Carter's choice of Brzezinski for this post implied that he was 'intent on adopting a middle-of-the-road approach between a Kissinger system and a Dulles operation. This led Brzezinski to envisage his job "essentially as heading the operational staff of the President...

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27. Time, 12 May 1980, p.8

to help (him) coordinate policy and integrate the implementation of policy."[28] Even if it sounded self-effacing and modest, Brzezinski knew that "co-ordination is predominance... And the key to asserting effective co-ordination was the right of direct access to the President."[29]

Access, therefore, was one of the first means by which NSA seemed to influence President much more than any cabinet secretary. He prepared the agenda for NSC meetings and informed the appropriate agencies of that list of issues. He met with the President daily, providing intelligence briefing on international developments within the last 24 hours. He was also responsible for monitoring departmental compliance with White House foreign policy directives. His cabinet rank enabled him to attend all important presidential meetings. According to Hugh Sidey, "Carter's ignorance, inexperience and uncertainty about foreign affairs... his limited contact in the field of national security... (made him dependent upon) the man down the hall (who) was the first one to meet Carter in the morning and often at night. Brzezinski was an articulate and knowledgeable force..."[30]

Prior contact as fellow members of Trilateral Commission, and Brzezinski's acknowledged status as Carter's

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28. Newsweek, 9 May 1977, p.37.

29. Z.Brzezinski, Power & Principle: Memoirs of NSA (New York, 1983), p.63.

30. Huge Sidey, "The Value of Proximity", Time 12 May 1980, p. 12.

'teacher' in foreign affairs, made him important as and when Carter discussed with him pressing foreign policy questions. Later, world-events proved Brzezinski's hard-line views true as Russians invaded Afghanistan and Shah was overthrown in Iran. His reputation as the best briefer in US Government, and impressive T.V. presence and his remarkable ability for hard work and summarizing views and options made him even more useful to Carter.[31]

NSC Under Reagan: Degradation of NSA

President Reagan worked to make a clean break with the immediate past. He came to office pledging to continue the "cabinet government" style he had adopted as Governor in Sacramento, i.e., his Cabinet Secretaries would be his principal officers, and his National Security Adviser would not be their competitor. He had criticized Carter administration for not being able to speak with one voice, therefore, his choice of Cabinet Secretaries was widely seen as indicative of his desire for consistency in foreign policy postures.

The appointment of Alexander Haig as Secretary of State was considered to represent a major commitment by the Reagan administration to a strong presence in foreign policy making. In particular, Haig was judged to have

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31. For example, US News and World Report, 22 May 1978, p.42; Newsweek, 12 June 1978, p.17; Time, 12 May 1980, p.9.

received a mandate to take command of the State Department in order to prevert the vacillation and uncertainty that had characterized American foreign policy in the Carter administration because of the feud between Vance and Brzezinski. This view was further encouraged by Reagan's conscious efforts at down-grading the role of NSA and the NSC staff. The new NSA, Richard Allen endorsed the low-profile, facilitator conception of the job, telling the New York Times that "the policy formulation function of the NSA should be off-loaded to the Secretary of State".[32] He was thus neither to be seen nor heard, He was placed under senior White House assistant Edwin Meese, and not directly under the President, and it was Meese who moved into Brzezinski's White House corner office. In short, the arrangements bore the hallmarks of a reaction to 'activist' NSA. This was further emphasized when in July 1981, the 'long-standing' morning briefing to the President by the NSA, which had started with McGeorge Bundy during the Kennedy Administration, were discontinued. The information needs of the President were now met through two new measures.[33] One was the thrice-weekly meetings with a body of advisers that was the core element for

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32. Quoted in I.M.Destler, "National Security II: The Rise of the Assistant," in Heclo and Salamon, L.M., eds., The Illusion of Presidential Government (Boulder, Colorado, 1981), p.281.

33. John E.Endicott, "The National Security Council: Formalized Coordination and Policy Planning," in R.L.Pfaltzgraff and U.Raanan, eds., National Security Policy: The Decision Making Process (New Delhi, 1986), p.194.

national security policy in the Reagan administration, consisting of Vice-President, Secretaries of State and Defense, the Director of C.I.A., the White House aides Meese, Baker and Deaver, and the NSA. Another was written morning briefings, that the President discussed with the principal aides and called the NSA only when he required some more information or answers to questions raised by the material.

However, the friction between State Department and White House staff continued: the focus had shifted from NSA to chief White House aides, who objected vehemently to any effort by Secretary Haig to assume the Dulles-like dominance in foreign policy arena. Haig was an experienced person in both foreign policy and in the bureaucratic politics accompanying policy-making in the White House. By virtue of his position as Kissinger's deputy in Nixon's NSC, followed by being Nixon's White House chief of staff during the Watergate crisis, he was well-versed in the ways in which power could be concentrated in the White House and the bureaucrats by-passed. His tenure as the supreme commander of NATO during Ford administration gave him the prestige and contacts within the European military and diplomatic community. Even though critics accused him of being a "political general", who owed his meteoric rise to "an unseemly facility for

bureaucratic intrigue and to his uncritical service to Kissinger," his appointment as Secretary of State by Reagan was widely considered to represent the President's long-held strong foreign and strategic policy. He himself interpreted his job as that of being "the vicar" of foreign policy, because of the similarity of his views with that of President Reagan. Thus, he shared with Reagan the commitment to resist Soviet expansionism beyond Eastern Europe, the critique of Carter's policy as being too conciliatory and the belief that the twin-pillars of Nixon-Kissinger policy, detente and deterrence, had failed. Above all, he believed, like Reagan, that increased security assistance to Third World countries ought to be provided to help them counter externally sponsored aggression.[34]

Yet despite this consonance in views, Haig's insistent and dramatic assertions of his prerogatives not only as Secretary of State but as principal foreign policy maker and premier cabinet secretary, were deeply and actively resented by the White House. His controversial announcement in the aftermath of confusion caused by Reagan's attempted assassination on 30 March 1981, "I am in charge here," and his televised appearance as

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34. K.V.Mulcahy, "Foreign Policy Making in the Carter and Reagan Administrations," in K.F.Inderfurth and L.K.Johnson, Decisions of the Highest Order (California, 1988), p.128.

shaken and exhausted, exacerbated the criticism that he was presumptive and obsessed with all matters pertaining to his secretarial prerogatives.[35] His difficulties with White House reached major proportions when Reagan decided not to appoint him as the head of the "crisis-management team". Haig wanted to return to the Eisenhower Dulles model, where the Secretary of State acted as the crisis manager, but Reagan decided that this post would be held by Vice-President George Bush, clearly indicating that even if the NSA is not expected to become the major policy adviser to the President, the policy-making would still be centred in the White House, because the administration's commitment to 'Cabinet government' did not mean a state department-centred policy process.

The NSC process was formalized in early 1982, after Richard Allen resigned and was replaced by Judge William P.Clarke as the NSA. The NSC was to have secretaries of state and Defense, the DCI and the NSA, assisted by three Senior Interagency Groups (SIG), for Foreign Policy (SIG-FP), Defense Policy (SIG-DP), and Intelligence (SIG-I). The innovation lay in the requirement that these SIGs were not only to help formulate policy, but also monitor the execution of decisions and evaluate the adequacy and effectiveness of the line operations.[36]

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35. Ibid.

36. Endicott, n.33, p.194.

The supporting Interagency Groups (IGs) were also established.[37] The Department of State was given the task of establishing IGs in each of its geographical bureaus, and in the bureaus of Political-Military Affairs and International Economic-Affairs. For dealing with specific contingencies, "full time working groups" were to be established by the IGs, to support the crisis management team. Later, a planning group on potential crises, chaired by Deputy NSA, Robert McFarlane was created, followed by SIGs on International Economic Policy and on Space. Of these only the latter was chaired by the NSA. A number of commissions (advisory) were established to examine questions outside the SIG network to augument the detailed NSC process in a systematic way. All these measures were to ensure that the NSC resume its role of "honest broker" in its coordinative and planning functions, and the NSA confine his role to that of a 'neutral-executive' of the NSC staff. Besides, the NSA's prime source of leverage in past years was the flow of information to and from the President (which he was to coordinate and direct), but because Reagan functioned as the Chairman of a board of directors and detached himself from day-to-day decisions, the NSA's influence diminished.

But this professed degradation of the position and role of NSA was accompanied by frequent changes of

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37. Ibid., p 195.

personnel. The Reagan Administration had as many as six NSA's in its eight year term. After Secretary Haig's replacement by George P.Shultz, the cabinet was more or less stabilized in that Shultz and Defense Secretary Casper Weinberger did not publicize their differences. Judge Clarke's replacement by McFarlane in 1983 served to tilt the balance in Shultz's favour, because the third NSA gained President Reagan's (and Mrs.Reagan's) confidence as a compromise choice, and used his influence to solve many Shultz-Weinberger impasses.[38] However, he had to resign in 1985 following his resentment over the fact that the new White House Chief of Staff Donald Regan closed access to the President. McFarlane was also implicated in the spreading Iran-contra scandal of 1986-87, in which he had played a major role in arranging and implementing arms sales to Iran.

The fourth NSA, Vice-Admiral Poindexter was a nuclear scientist, who was content to play neutral facilitator role,having risen to this position "without sitting on the interagency Committees, without having to cement relationship with Congress and without having to talk to with the reporters, in short, without gaining the broad political and public relations experience most

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38. Mulcahy, n.34, p.132.

public officials need before becoming senior members of an administration."[39] He too had to resign with the spreading Iran-contra controversy, within an year.

The fifth NSA, Frank Carlucci, served only for an year before being appointed the Secretary of Defense in 1987, and replaced by his deputy, Lieutenant General Colin Powell, who served till the end of Reagan administration. A cursory look at the appointees to the post of NSA shows that the emphasis was on 'competent manager' of the NSC process, hence the choice of military men, used to taking orders from the President or his principal aides, and having few ambitions given the lack of support-bases outside the Administration itself (i.e., Congress, media, public).

The general impressions about Reagan Administration are that the president delegated day-to-day affairs to his subordinates and favoured competitive model of presidential advice. However, he preferred to be seen as the shaper of foreign policy, even if it was in broad brush-strokes, and had no intentions of letting his Secretaries (either State or Defense) to confuse between the positions of 'vicar' and that of the 'pope' of foreign policy. Haig was eased out despite the consonance in

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39. Keith Schneider, quoted in Inderfurth and Johnson, n.34, p.145.

views (of Reagan and Haig), because he developed ambitions that were not acceptable to Reagan and his White House aides. Thus, Haig was seen as presumptive in ambitions and disruptive for the policy process, because he showed his inability to be a 'team-player', transformed the rivalry with Meese and Baker into a public feud, and above all, the White House became convinced that Haig was trying to preempt the President's role as the nation's chief diplomat. The most important mistake on Haig's part was his failure to remember that no amount of official commitment to secretariat model of foreign policy process (like the Eisenhower-Dulles model) could suffice in the absence of Presidential trust in his Secretary of State. "Haig forgot the fundamental level of successful secretarial-presidential relations in foreign policy-making: it is the president who makes policy and he is free to consult whomever he wishes and to establish what structural process he deems necessary."[40]

Over and above these reasons, Reagan could not support Haig's efforts at the preferred goal of 'unified foreign policy process', because Haig tried to exclude Defense Secretary Weinberger and DCI William Casey from any responsibility in national security policy. This.

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40. Mulcahy, n.34, p.129.

represented a neglect of the changed realities of policy environment since the days of Dulles: "...the scope of foreign policy had broadened beyond the State Department's reach at a time when the growing interrelationship between diplomacy and domestic politics made the White House reluctant to delegate this huge domain to diplomats alone."[41]

On the other hand, even though the emphasis was to be on down-grading the role of National Security Adviser in policy making the Iran-contra affair showed once again that whenever presidents face a hostile policy environment, as did Reagan during congressional and public approbium of administration's policy towards Nicaraguan rebel forces, the White House staff seems to be judged more reliable in carrying out presidential policy in secrecy, because the staff members owe their position solely to the President and share his views about direction of US foreign policy.

The Tower Board of 1987, appointed to enquire into the working of NSC process after Iran-contra scandal, recommended several things that reinforce the view that foreing policy making process is inevitably shaped by the inherent conflict between the advisory and the managerial roles of all the major participants.

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41. Hedrick Smith quoted in ibid., p.130.

Thus the Board recommended[42] that dual capacities of all participants of NSC process must be recognized and efforts to balance them be instituted. The Secretaries of State and Defense, the DCI and the NSA, all serve as both advisers to the President and the 'heads' of departments/bodies under them. Even the NSC staff must assist not only the President and the NSC itself, but its role as assisting the NSA must be acknowledged, and due allowance made for it. Also, the coordinating role of the NSA must not be de-emphasized because the justification for it remains valid whatever the foreign policy making mechanism adopted by a president. The Board, and later the congressional subcommittee concerned with these investigations, came to the conclusion that the complexities of a nuclear-age foreign policy demand both consistency and crisis management, making it necessary for all administrations to develop a national security policy process that balances the 'formalism' with 'competiton'. In other words, when dealing with complex and continuous realities of domestic linkages with foreign policy and of gradually decreasing American hegemony/primacy at the international level, institutional continuity is needed,

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42. Paul Schott Stevens, 'The National Security Council: Past and Prologue," Strategic Review, Winter 1989, p.60.

so that the traditional bureaucracies as well as the NSC staff must be utilized and not by-passed. On the other hand, when faced with fast paced developments in domestic and international arena, the emphasis is on crisis-management, quick and decisive response, so that the use of appropriately structured mechanisms, whether White House based or NSC-centred, is a presidential prerogative. Even when Presidents require 'multiple advocacy' to get wide ranging information about complex developments, some amount of 'formalism' is necessary to avoid or reduce 'battles for turf' that tarnish the image of unified foreign policy perspective of an administration.

The above discussion raises the age old questions about the organizational dilemma faced by all leaders, at all times: how to minimize error without destroying creative impulses. The chief executives believe that they are elected to represent the electorates' desire for innovation and change, and therefore, evolve new mechanisms that are responsive to their own needs, almost like inventing the wheel anew at each revolution. The lack of organic continuity through breaks in institutional memory serves to isolate presidents from broader currents outside their advisory systems. The

popular reactions against 'undemocratic procedures', secrecy and autocratic decisions, combined with the need to project a unified and strong image to adversaries and allies at global level, make the presidents feel as if they were in a 'seige'. This evokes responses that include increased reliance on loyal and unencumbered, non-bureaucratic advisers, namely the White House aides. Even when the commitment is to collegiality or to cabinet government, the need to 'lead' the nation in a very visible and apparent way dominates all impulses towards delegating authority to bureaucrats. And this is so whatever the character, style, personality or commitments of the different presidential incumbents. Their image of themselves as 'statesmen' and 'leader' derives not only from their own attitudinal orientations, but mostly from the public expectations of visible, decisive leadership in foreign affairs, where the complexities of international relations and 'national' prestige need to be effectively managed.

CONCLUSION

The President is the single most important 'actor' in the formulation and implementation of US foreign policy. He is the only individual, apart from the Vice-President, who is elected by a 'national' constitutency and seen as representing the entire nation - the Chief Representative, the Chief Diplomat and the Chief Executive. By virtue of his position as the Head of the State as well as the Head of the Government, he is entrusted with wide responsibilities in foreign policy sphere. The constitutional brevity in the enumeration of foreign policy powers has been interpreted as 'ingenious flexibility', such that the system has been able to readily adapt itself to changed environment: the changed nature and extent of national power, and the changed conceptions about its use in international affairs.

In the exercise of his constitutional (implied or prerogative) powers, the President has to face the other major 'actors' in the foreign affairs field - the Congress, the mass media and the bureaucracy. Given the inevitability of some amounts of conflict of perceptions and interests between these major actors and the need to fulfil democratic aspirations of the electorate, the President must give credence to the interests espoused by other actors in the making of foreign policy.

The Congress has legitimate interest in directing the Chief Executive because of its constitutional powers of appropriations, treaty-ratification and confirmation of senior cabinet members of the administration. Increased US involvement in other countries, in military, economic and political areas has spawned a number of domestic pressure groups that have a stake in particular foreign policy priority or action, e.g., farmers, corporate business, the arms-industry, the bankers, various ethnic groups etc. The growing economic interdependence in the world has resulted in clear domestic linkages with events abroad, and promotion of US strategic interests are enmeshed with the domestic economic and political interests. The post-Vietnam and Watergate period has seen more assertive Congress as a reaction to the imperial presidency of the Cold War years, where Presidents invoked their wider powers for crisis-management, in the name of threat to national survival and security from international communism. The abuse of these powers for personal political gains and for 'perception management' at home and abroad, was resented by the public and the Congress, hence the congressional efforts to check the growth of executive predominance in foreign policy making through a number of Acts and resolutions.

The mass-media, with its growing importance as educator of public opinion and highlighting issues and as an alternative means to express dissent from Presidential policies by both, Congressmen and bureaucrats, play a crucial part in circumscribing or promoting the policies adopted by a President. It represents the democratic aspirations of electorate for 'openness', responsiveness and public accountability of elected and non-elected members of the government.

Lastly, there is the bureaucracy, consisting of numerous departments and agencies, which is a repository of information and of neutrally competent specialists and experts concerned with the various aspects of US foreign policy. Contrary to popular ideas, the foreign policy bureaucracy is not 'neutral' or monolithic. It is imbued with its own 'culture' and has its own 'goals', that may or may not be those of the other 'actors', the Congress, the public or even the Chief Executive. The numerous organizations and individuals within the bureaucracy espouse different organizational or personal interests, and seek to promote them by virtue of their control over information. Bureaucratic politics, the competition within the bureaucracy, for influence over the Chief Executive, takes many forms, from filtering of information and defining of options in a particular way, to edging out

competing interests, and to sabotage through leaks and lethargy. The basic ingredient of struggle for 'Presidential ear' is the effort to enhance proximity and to control the flow of information to and from the President. This is important in shaping of policy because the immense powers and responsibility of President in decision making process outclass 'individual' capabilities and increase risks of failure or mistake, unless information is processed and selectively applied.

The President of US has constitutional powers as the Chief Executive and Commander-in-Chief of armed forces. Besides this is his symbolic power of being the focus of national aspirations regarding effective leadership in foreign policy. Thus, the combination of ceremonial and constitutional functions enhances his mandate as the 'Leader' and the Chief Administrator. "No one can experience with the President of the United States the glory and agony of his office. No one can share the majestic view from his pinnacle of power. No one can share the burden of his decisions or the scope of his duties" President Johnson's quote highlights the fact that responsibility and power are circumscribed by a number of factors, not the least of which is the concentration of attention upon him as "the decider" of policy issues. An immense task like this generates the problem of cognitive assimilation

of all information, and making of all decisions, by one man. In Steinbeck's words "We give the President more work than a man can do, more responsibility than a man should take, more pressure than a man can bear. We abuse him often and rarely praise him... And with all this, Americans have a love for the President that goes beyond loyalty or party nationality..." In such a situation, Presidents cope with their responsibilities of information-assimilation by 'selectivity', in dealing with issues, in deciding the extent and the point of initial involvement in policy making and in delegating responsibility for coordinating information and analyses coming from various sources.

The foreign policy advisory system adopted by a particular President becomes an important 'actor' in the foreign policy formation of that administration, because 'advising' and 'co-ordinating of information' means the power to control Presidential options and the power to shape policy to a large extent. Therefore, in choosing their foreign policy advisory system, presidents are guided by their need to further their own interests and visions in a complex and frequently hostile domestic and international environment consisting of the Congress,the public, the mass media, the foreign policy bureaucracy as also the other nations and international organizations.

A commonly accepted view of Presidential needs and interests is that of choosing the 'best' option, on a rational basis. This view sees the policy-making role of President as being confined to that of a 'disinterested decider', who seeks to choose from among a number of options presented by the advisory system. Such a view implies that the logical corollary of national, neutral, non-partisan decision-making is the advisory system that permits multiple advocacy, so that the President can get a variety of views, be able to assess them and then choose whichever he judges to be in best position to help achieve national goals. Such an advisory system is deemed democratic insofar as it gives a large number of concerned parties a chance to articulate their views in front of the Chief Executive and simultaneously reduces the chances for arbitrary Presidential choices, or even the chances for development of 'Group Think', the consensus forced by demand for conformity within a small advisory group.

But some scholars see the role of the President as not merely a 'decider' but also a 'leader'. The president is not a neutral decider, he has other legitimate interests flowing from his personal and partisan perceptions and ambitions. He has to minimize the decision-making costs and further domestic electoral

gains because his power is not absolute, it is political, i.e., dependent upon the support of various 'power-centres' within the country. He cannot merely 'decide', but must also 'persuade' others to accept his directions and decisions in order to achieve his substantive policy goals. Therefore, the advisory system required would be one that he 'controls', the priorities to issues, the development of policy and the inclusion or exclusion of some options at the initial stages of intra-executive debate, all these must be shaped by 'presidential' priorities. When large volumes of informations are to be meaningfully related for purposes of policy-making, information-processing is not a 'neutral' task. Defining of options as non-viable or politically unacceptable, is a task that involves value-judgements even at the preliminary stages. Presidents who need to 'lead' in foreign policy must not only 'get educated' or receive information from diverse sources; they must also 'educate' the others or 'move the nation' towards a future that they envision. Such a view assumes at the outset that each of the concerned parties in foreign policy process has its own interests and perceptions such that competition and conflict is inevitable, both within the realm of elected representatives (the Congress and the President) and of

elected v/s non-elected officials (the President and the bureaucracy). Given the fact that Presidents are elected to govern and manage change, it is understandable that they seek to get 'their' policies implemented despite opposition from Congressmen or bureaucrats.

It follows from this that if Presidents must not be mere administrators, but also leaders, they need an advisory system that not only provides information and advice, but also becomes an administrative strategy to control subordinates. It channels the capabilities of subordinates towards goals and means which the President favours, by focussing attention on issues important for President and by co-ordinating the actions of the subordinates with those of the other actors of the environment, the Congress and the mass media.

Advisory systems provide high-quality information and advice, as well as helping in the exercise of presidential leadership. Therefore, the choice of advisory system depends on two things: the desire to achieve specific policy goals, and the intelligent calculations regarding the response (negative or positive) of the larger policy-making environment, i.e., strategies for minimizing resistance to presidential initiatives.

While policy-goals may be derived from the personality, character and style of a presidential incumbent, the strategies derive from presidential perceptions of policy-making environment. This contention can be readily validated as we examine the foreign policy advisory systems of post-war presidents. The two phases of NSC system, that of institutionalization and personalization closely followed the changes in policy-making environment of presidents at home and abroad. Thus, the powers 'usurped' by the 'cold-war' presidents - Truman and Eisenhower, in the name of fight against international communism, encountered a policy-environment characterized by bipartisan support for dominance of national security objectives and acquiescence towards presidential initiative and leadership in foreign policy. The international environment was sufficiently simple, characterized by US dominance and opposition to USSR as the centre of communist conspiracy and challenge to US. In a situation like this, overwhelming consensus on goals and means of US foreign policy, the deference to president in times of crisis and sudden increase in bureaucratic involvement in foreign affairs combined to produce an advisory system that sought to 'carry the other actors along' the presidential lines. Hence, the NSC process favoured the bureaucracy because presidential direction was not really challenged.

The efforts at reorganization were based on criticism of bureaucracy as lethargic and status-quoist.

However, as the prolonged period of presidential leadership began to be questioned, and executive policy was criticized as 'reacting' to events abroad, presidents felt the need to reassert control over the advisory apparatus. Domestic upheavals of race-riots and emergence of 'black power', along with growing power of the USSR and the allies, complicated the policy-making environment for President J.F.Kennedy. The problems with bureaucracy that were then perceived were its resistance, indeed opposition, to presidential direction. Demoralizing effect of McCarthyism on the bureaucracy was seen as reason that made it insensitive to presidential interests in activism. Hence the beginning of personalization phase of NSC, the rise of the National Security Assistant (later 'Adviser') and of a White House-centred foreign policy advisory system. Johnson's unfortunate involvement in the Vietnam War brought this trend to a head, by provoking popular blacklash against the powers of the President to commit the nation to wrong policies and of the bureaucracy to preclude popular debate on options by invoking executive privilege of 'secrecy'.

Following the same argument, one can examine the development of Nixon-NSC as a culmination of the process

described above. As the international power configurations changed, newer responses from US were required; and as scepticism or distrust for presidential initiatives grew within the US, the need to legitimize the new responses domestically became more pressing for successive presidents, both, to further US interests and to shore up their domestic image(s) as national 'leader'. Nixon's choice of Kissinger as his NSA was meant partly to give credence to his new strategy of détente and partly to help tighten the White House control over foreign policy formulation. Kissinger's established reputation as a conceptual thinker, well-versed in the theories of international politics gave him public acceptability and Nixon's mediocre team was widely seen as having been brightened by Kissinger's appointment by the attentive publics, the mass media and the Eastern Establishment. The similarity in their views on bureaucratic and administrative approach to US foreign policy, which they saw as the characteristic of the preceding administrations helped them in opting for an NSC process under direct control of the president, through his NSA. Use of foreign policy bureaucracy to obtain information, without disclosing the objectives, establishment of secret channels by-passing the state department, use of NSA as president's personal envoy in

negotiations with other nations, well-timed disclosures of diplomatic breakthrough, and the involvement of NSC staff at each shape of the preparation and evaluation of policy papers, all these tactics were to ensure that it is the presidential writ that runs in foreign affairs. Dramatic announcements of developments in US foreign relations, brought about by secret negotiations, and stage-managed presidential summits with foreign leaders, served to project Nixon's image as that of a leader-statesman, and it helped him in his second-term elections as well as during Watergate crisis, when foreign policy achievements were recognized as the only positive contributions of his administrations. Even when Kissinger was made the Secretary of State, the move was interpreted as an effort to boost up the State Department morale, and more importantly, as a device to eradicate even a semblance of conflict between NSC staff and State Department, because Kissinger headed both departments.

Kissinger's rise as the most visible symbol of presidential control over foreign policy has been widely accepted. His reputation as a foreign policy expert from the Eastern Establishment who was campaign-adviser to Nelson Rockefeller, Nixon's rival for Republican nomination in 1968, was established, and Nixon sought to use it

as a resource for his leadership. He had come to the helm at the time of public weariness with US involvement abroad and of increasingly sceptical Congress. His earlier record was not bright, but somewhat suspect because of his rise on virulent anti-communist campaign in the 1950s and his image as 'Tricky Dick'. His choice of cabinet-members was pointedly criticized as "the bland are leading the bland". The chances for presidential 'leadership' in domestic sphere were dismal, and the imminent need to 'retreat' in foreign affairs made it difficult for Nixon to project his 'leadership' in terms of aggressive defense of US interests in the global sphere. Hence the choice of 'realism' as the philosophy governing US foreign relations, with strategies of detente and co-operation with Soviet Union, nurturing the 'China-Card' for use in the balance of power policy and a more even-handed approach towards the Middle-East problem.

In this period, critique of foreign policy bureaucracy centred around status-quoism and intellectual stagnation. It was seen as providing no support to new initiatives of the president, and worse - actually obstructing presidential directions by quoting operating procedures or by 'leaking' information to the press and the Congress. Finding only qualified support in the

Congress, the administration assiduously wooed the mass-media, to gain public acceptability. Kissinger's image as 'super K' and 'secret-swinger' engaged in the delicate but glamorous secret diplomacy, faithfully carrying out presidential policies, was nurtured by the media and helped the Nixon administration in focusing public attention on issues that were given priority by Nixon. The rise of Kissinger was due to several other reasons like compatibility of views with Nixon, his dexterity at bureaucratic politics and at media-management, but if one needs to know why Nixon chose to have a NSA who overshadowed his Secretaries of State and Defense, psychological explanations (based on his personality and style) do not suffice. One must take into account the environment in which he was to work as the president, viz., the constraints and the opportunities that he was faced with. This can be validated better if one examines the next elected Presidency, that of Jimmy Carter, who, despite major differences in personality, style, character, policy-goals and part-affiliation, ended up having a NSA stronger and more visible than his Secretary of State.

Carter was a Democrat, moderate and born-again Christian. His electoral campaign was based on populist reaction against 'big bureaucracy' and 'secret, imperial

government'. His training was as a manager of business enterprise, preceded by his career in the navy. He had no experience in foreign affairs and most of his views on the subject were developed after he came into contact with the Columbia Professor Zbigniew Brzezinski and the Trilateral Commission. He cultivated the image of an 'outsider' to the corrupt government structure in Washington D.C. and promised public participation in policy making, government accountability and openness in policy implementation and review. His criticism of Nixon-Ford administration was based on concentration of power in the White House and the consequent marginalization of bureaucracy in foreign policy formulation and conduct. He promised collegial and decentralized policy-process, through Cabinet-Government, and adopted a spokes-in-a-wheel model of White House staff structure, so that each of his advisers would have direct access to him. The NSC staff was instructed to formulate long-term plans and not try to supplant the foreign policy bureaucracy.

However, even he realized the need for presidential control over crucial areas of foreign policy process, he accepted that his NSA chair the special Co-ordination Committee charged with crisis-management, arms-control and intelligence operations. His reasons were to avoid 'leaks' of sensitive information and to provide coordination of inter-agency issue options that would be

impartial and above departmental politics, therefore, acceptable to all participants. The system of summaries of NSC meetings being prepared by the NSA and sent directly to the President strengthened the influence of NSA despite his low visibility publicly.

The rise of Brzezinski as Carter's spokesman cum personal envoy is widely seen as a consequence of developments abroad. Even though he began with a 'balancing approach', Carter's reliance on Brzezinski's judgement grew as the latter's predictions about Soviet ambitions and designs seem to come true with growing Soviet Cuban involvement in Africa and later, Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. While earlier Carter had vacillated between the two options of using 'Human Rights' as a strategy aimed directly at the Soviet Union (to pressurize) and the alternative of promoting detente and arms-control without 'linkages' as events progressed, and domestic criticism of his 'dovish' policies mounted, Carter began to adopt Brzezinski's line more and more. The fact that Brzezinski was also the "best briefer" in Washington, had the reputation as an academic and a brilliant 'idea-man' and had become a media personality following his controversial opinions vis-a-vis West Germany and Iranian Shah, actions in China and Khyber Pass, all helped to focus public attention on him as Carter's forceful spokesman.

His views on 'detente without illusions' and 'linkage to pressurize USSR' were widely accepted as appropriate when Soviet belligerence seemed to be a direct response to earlier US 'softness'.

As the Carter administration faced crisis after crisis, the importance of Special Co-ordinating Committee within the NSC process grew, and along with it, the influence of the small, young, energetic and scholarly staff under Brzezinski. The announcements regarding resumption of diplomatic relations with Peoples Republic of China, the freezing of Iranian assets after the hostages were taken in Tehran, the rescue-mission (that was aborted) - these were the sudden dramatic disclosures that seemed to utilize their public impact much as Nixon administration had done. The decision about the rescue-mission to Tehran was taken without the knowledge or acquiescence of Secretary Vance, and was the cause of his resignation.

The above discussion points out the importance of policy-making environment in shaping the advisory systems chosen by presidents. Presidential character, style, specific doctrines and goals may differ, but so long as the environment, consisting of presidential interests, resources (authority and prestige), opportunities (created by foreign governments, or bureaucrats or own

actions), and demands (of bureaucratic politics, congressional assertiveness, public interest) remain similar, presidential strategies of obtaining and using foreign policy advice would remain similar.

Several tentative statements can be generated by this conclusion, about presidential foreign policy advisory systems and the role of National Security Adviser in the NSC-based process.

First, in the age of 'balancing of national interests' and 'ordering of priorities' due to limited national resources (including political and economic power), and sensitivity of issues involved, diplomacy requires secrecy in negotiations to facilitate compromises or linkages that may not be democratically acceptable. And such a diplomatic process would require 'media-support', to focus public attention on the gains derived from the agreements/manoeuvresand appeal to the public over the heads of congressmen. Therefore, Presidents increasingly rely on a policy-making apparatus that helps them to carry out their policies despite opposition from Congress and hostility of adversaries and allies.

Secondly, in both cases, an individual directly under the president's control would be deemed more useful by the president himself, because this would help to

maintain continuity in the negotiations and his standing with the other party would be stronger if he is seen as the president's spokesman. The confidence in his performance and the secrecy possible by using him would be an asset in dealing with the press and the public. The dramatic coups, talent for briefing and defending administration's viewpoint in the terms calculated to evoke favourable populist sentiments would contribute to public support and faith in leadership abilities of the president.

Thirdly, if president's need to garner public support for their foreign policy initiatives, and take all the credit for it, then they are not likely to use an individual who is either encumbered by administrative duties or by departmental attitudes. Hence, cabinet members are unlikely to generate confidence in the present. Further, their effectiveness for implementation and for supply of 'inputs' in policy-making may be hindered by attitudes/attributes of the bureaucracies that they head, viz., elitism, clientism, status-quoism, genuine or deliberate inertia, Besides, if the cabinet members do have strong views on foreign policy their criticism of 'presidential' policies may be interpreted as evidence of their personal political ambitions, and may therefore, generate insecurity in the president.

Fourth, most secretaries of state who have been influential in foreign policy advisory systems, have been so because of President's confidence in them, based on factors like similar views, total loyalty to president above differences of opinion and clear division of issue areas between them. This position has not been reached by being efficient administrators of their departments.

Lastly, if the secretary of state represents bureaucratic expertise, and NSA the presidential interests, the best course would seem to be a balance between the two. Yet Carter's efforts of combining 'Kissinger-operation' with 'Dulles-system' showed that the more vocal of the two, in terms of correct judgement about presidential views on activism, would win. And a media-personality would be an added qualification because of presidential need to legitimize policy through public support. A most likely result would, therefore, be the rise of the NSA, because he was probably chosen for these same qualities in the first place, i.e., to maintain coherence in foreign policy and responsiveness to presidential needs and to increase presidential discretion by quick and decisive action.

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