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**C³I: A National Security Council Perspective
Rodney B. McDaniel**

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C³I: A National Security Council Perspective

Rodney B. McDaniel

Since 1986, Mr. McDaniel has been Executive Secretary of the National Security Council (NSC), the administrative head of the NSC staff, responsible for the day-to-day functions of the interagency NSC process and providing direct support to the President and the National Security Advisor. He joined the NSC in 1985 as Special Assistant to the President, becoming the Senior Director of the Crisis Management Center, where he developed crisis procedures, systems to support decisionmaking, and emergency preparedness plans. Among many assignments for the U.S. Navy, Mr. McDaniel helped draft the Defense Guidance document that laid out the basic strategy for program planning, led a National Security Council-directed study of Navy force requirements, and commanded a guided missile cruiser. He also served as Chief of Staff to the Commander of the Seventh Fleet, with responsibility for day-to-day operational direction of all Navy and Marine Corps forces in the Western Pacific and Indian Ocean, and as Deputy Commander/Comptroller of the Navy's Shipbuilding Command.

McDaniel: I got into the National Security Council (NSC) business by inheriting the job of Richard Beal, who was a onetime participant in these proceedings, and as a testament to the work that you do, I think one of the reasons that Tony and I met was I was really trying to find out what it was that Beal had in mind. One of the few places I could ever find that out was when he was up here and spoke to the seminar and subsequently created a transcript.*

I think I'll begin at that point by giving you my observations about the direction in which I've tried to go relative to the direction in which Richard Beal had been going. My sense is that what Richard Beal was trying to do was to create within the White House a room where decisions are made in the context of a crisis, or fast-breaking events.

*Richard S. Beal, "Decision Making, Crisis Management, Information and Technology," *Seminar on Command, Control and Communications, Spring 1984*. Program on Information Resources Policy, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, January 1985, pp. 5-20.

Senior people are brought in, kind of late, to a problem that's crashing about them. The perceived need, as Beal saw it, was to harness the power of modern technology, information processing technology, to assimilate all this mass of fast-breaking information. Perhaps you could pull up some history besides and squash that into some form that could be more readily assimilated by decisionmakers than is possible in the conventional setting, which is what he found when he took the job. There was a room like this with a little more security, probably no windows, and a bunch of people coming in with notes and papers, a few of them may have briefing charts, and that's it. Somebody in the corner takes notes. A traditional committee meeting. A room where decisions are made in the context of crisis.

My belief, then, and it's my belief now, is that that plan had some fundamental flaws. First of all I'll stipulate that that's what I think he had in mind. He's not here to defend himself. I may well have grossly misinterpreted, but that seemed to be what he set about, and what he had done. It was a non-trivial exercise in bureaucratic terms. He had gotten

hold of some very hard-to-get-hold-of space in the old Executive Office Building — a room which had been the Secretary of State's office in the original design of the building, which as you know is the State/War/Navy Building and literally held the total departmental apparatus of those three departments at the turn of the century. He converted that into a high tech conference room which had screens to project all forms of media: television, computer screens which could be processed to video and shown on a screen, as well as slides and regular TV.

He created a database, hosted on some VAX machines, and he hired some junior intelligence officers to be database analysts. They were regional specialists, for the Near East, the Soviet Union, etc. There were seven of those fellows who were supposed to be up to speed on what's going on in those regions, and they would be the action officers who, when a crisis went down, would begin to pull the information together and put it in a form where it could be processed and presented on the screen. In 1985, Beal got a serious heart ailment and subsequently died. There was subsequently a gap of six months or so from the point in time when he effectively became disengaged from the White House Crisis Management Center until the time I arrived on the scene. I had the problem of both rebuilding the staff, which had kind of drifted off because the leadership was no longer there — the more energetic folks lost interest and went looking for jobs elsewhere, as well as trying to reconstruct what the guy really had in mind. Given my sense of what Beal was up to, I think there was one major problem with it. It ignored the fact that the larger issue is, there's a process out there that's going on all the time. It's going on right now, this minute; that is, gathering information, digesting it, and analyzing information, and moving that up a series of kind of semi-hermetically sealed chambers to the Secretary of State, and the Secretary of Defense, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Director of Central Intelligence, who are the major members of the NSC. When these fellows or their principal subordinates meet in this room to make decisions, they're simply not going to live off the information that Beal's guys would have processed and put up on the screen. They're going to bring the information that they think is relevant right now with them.

How does that fit with the notion of the dynamic of the decisionmaking process in the room itself? It seemed to me that if you're going to undertake to

make the process of decisionmaking in crisis more systematic, and better, you have to enlarge the scope of your sights to take in that total process of information gathering and analysis that the National Security Community — which is a term I'll just coin — by which I mean the Department of Defense, the Department of State, and the Intelligence Community — engage in. That's point one.

Oettinger: I think Beal also had in mind that through technical prowess he could have those folks bring their own stuff into that room. The technical, bureaucratic, and psychological problems in that are monumental, but I think he was fairly explicit about having that in mind. Whether it ever got pulled off or not, I don't know.

McDaniel: That's precisely my second thought. The second point is where is the information going to come from that Beal is going to get into his computer, in order to digest it and put it on the screen? The answers are going to come from State, Defense, and the Intelligence Community. Are you going to undertake, essentially, to tap their databases, so that if a crisis breaks in Afghanistan you can immediately reach into Defense, State, and Intelligence and pull out Afghanistan-related stuff with no delay while you hook the wires together, or are they going to send it to you, or what? What is the concept?

There are two obvious problems here. One is a technical problem which is, you're talking about access to a mass of data which is just mind-boggling. It really is a tremendous challenge, technically, to think about tying into the databases: Defense, State, and the military. Frankly that's the trivial issue, the technical issue. The real issue is the bureaucratic issue. There just isn't any way that State, Defense, and the Intelligence Community are going to sit still for some low-level people in the White House to be able to reach in and pull out facts and data from these databases with the prospect of putting it up on a screen in front of the President at some time of crisis without passing it through the chain of command of those respective departments, without the Secretary of State, or Defense, ever having seen it first.

Beal's concept was, in many respects, unachievable without undertaking to come to grips with the absolutely fundamental issue: that our government in the Executive Branch is really better thought of as a federation of agencies than it is of a unified, kind of military, organization with a commander in chief and these other officers as his trusted subordi-

nates. If you will put that in the back of your mind, think of it as a federation, you'll be a lot closer to reality when you actually attempt to deal with these institutions in the real world.

We kind of fell back sharply from Beal's basic concept of tapping the databases and getting into that business. We recognized that what we had on our hands, in the first instance, was essentially a computer-based capability to take the messages that did come into the White House on a daily basis and make them more accessible in times of crisis. The much larger issue of how it is decided that different kinds of information were going to get sent to the White House in the first place hadn't really been touched, and that's what we needed to look into. With that as background, that was how I saw my job as I came in. I think the next thing I'll do is kind of talk you through how the government's organized for national security purposes, both for day-to-day planning, and for the making of policy in crisis.

The National Security Act was written in 1947. That act did three things, two of which, until quite recently anyway, were much more well known than the third. The most famous thing it did was it brought the departments of the Army and Navy together into a unified Department of Defense. Although I am no great student of it and it's my personal belief that the history has not been written very well, I've read a few of the more synthesized histories of this piece of legislation and I find them pretty thin going, actually. Basically, the National Security Act of 1947 was the final congressional output of the "fussing and fuming" over the lessons of World War II. It was thought that the Services didn't cooperate with each other very well, so the way to fix that was to put the two Services under a common head. That's the first thing the National Security Act of 1947 did. It unified the Army and the Navy.

Oettinger: What you just said triggered a thought. One of our colleagues emeritus at the law school, Milton Katz, was in his earlier days one of the lawyers who worked on the drafting of the Act of 1947, and it might be fun to sit down and explore that very question. I think he'd be eager to and remembers enough to put some threads together.

McDaniel: The second thing it did, for which again I have a smattering of historical understanding, is that it created the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency). The CIA was specifically established as an intelligence organ reporting to the President. Actually, under the Act, it reports to the National Se-

curity Council, independent of State and Defense — independent of the agencies with responsibility for executing policy and programs. Thus, the President presumably got the unvarnished truth without bias, without a spin being put on it by people who are trying to sell some particular policy line.

The third thing it did, and the area where there's the least legislative history, is, it established the National Security Council itself. The mission of the National Security Council, that title in the law that established the National Security Council, remains unamended to this day. I was pleased to note that the Tower Commission recommended that it not be amended. It's a very short act, very readable, and basically it defines the function of the National Security Council as a mechanism to integrate domestic, military, and foreign policy, to effectuate the overall national good. That act, in effect, created the term "national security" which we use so glibly today, a term which really encompasses foreign policy and defense policy. National security policy, then, is the integration or the fusion of diplomacy and military operations.

Implicit in the need to create the Council and establish it by law must have been the view on the part of the Congress that the State Department, the War Department, and the Navy Department were not coordinating as effectively as they should have been, although, as I say, the historical record there is kind of thin. It is, according to the history I've read, apparently a fact that in those days the departments communicated with each other quite infrequently. The Secretaries of those three departments did not meet on a regular basis, and their staffs, depending on the personalities of the Secretaries of State, Navy, and War, were sometimes almost enjoined from talking to each other. In one sense I've characterized the purpose of the National Security Council as to institutionalize the State Department and the Defense Department talking to each other. Indeed, we've come a long way in that regard. So much so, that a great deal of the purpose of the Act is being accomplished totally outside the formal structure of the National Security Council or its staff, because a culture has been created now where State and Defense do talk to each other to a much greater degree apparently than was the case before 1947. That's taken as a matter of routine.

The Act said that the members of the National Security Council shall be the President as Chairman; the Vice President and the Secretaries of State and Defense are the statutory members. The President is the chairman of a committee that reports to

him as President, kind of a quirk in the law, but I'll come back to that because I have my own belief in what that meant. Then that Act or subsequent acts which have come along have defined statutory advisors as the Joint Chiefs of Staff — that was just changed to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff — the Director of Central Intelligence, and also the Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency when arms control issues are involved, and the Director of the U.S. Information Agency when policy issues affecting overseas information are being discussed. Those individuals are named in the various pieces of legislation as statutory advisors to the NSC.

Although the Act does not say this anywhere, it's my belief that what Congress had in mind was the creation in this council of a body that is somewhat like the theoretical Joint Chiefs of Staff. That is to say, the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense come to the table and become advisors to the President. They do not come as the holders of a bureaucratic brief for their respective bureaucracies, but rather as advisors to the President. In conjunction with the Vice President and the President himself, they sit around and talk about policy issues and discuss the pros and cons and the various options, and ultimately make a corporate recommendation to the President. The President, as President then, decides and issues instructions to the agencies to implement. The order, when it goes down, is for the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense to implement as heads of executive agencies. The Council exists as a policy body to advise and recommend to the President.

When I was giving this explanation to someone who will remain nameless he quipped and said, "Yes, you're right, it works exactly like the Joint Chiefs of Staff works because they don't do that either." Of course, the Army, Navy, and Air Force come to the table and defend to the death their respective bureaucratic turfs and that tends to be what we see in the National Security Council, where you have role playing to a large degree with each of those cabinet heads kind of representing the brief of their respective bureaucracies. The notion that they're there to be personal confidential advisors to the President, while it works to some degree, is perhaps more the exception than the rule.

The Act also said that the President could designate others to be members of the Council. This President has designated Mr. Meese, and Mr. Baker, and the White House Chief of Staff to regularly attend meetings. This has varied from admini-

stration to administration, although the person occupying the position of Attorney General turns out to be someone who's frequently in the Council. It's important to remember that in this administration the reason Baker and Meese are at the table is not because they're Attorney General and Secretary of the Treasury, but because they started out in the first term being the Chief of Staff and the counselor to the President, respectively, and retained this special relationship to the President.

Oettinger: This is James Baker we're talking about?

McDaniel: Jim Baker. When Baker went off to Treasury and Meese went off to be Attorney General, one of the deals they made with the President was they wouldn't lose their seats at the NSC. What you had is that they kept it and the new Chief of Staff, Donald Regan, was added on. Now the Chief of Staff's being a main player in the NSC is definitely something that waxes and wanes. I have talked to a few individuals who were previously closely associated with the National Security Council, who told me that during the Nixon Administration, for example, it was not the rule for the Chief of Staff to attend National Security Council meetings or to be involved with NSC stuff.

Student: This is Haldeman?

McDaniel: Yes.

Student: More importantly, it's Kissinger.

McDaniel: That is the formal structure set forth in the law. The law, as I say, occupies a couple of paragraphs. That's all it says in the law. Absent from any mention in the law is the position of the National Security Advisor. He is not mentioned in the law, nor in any other law. The only official that is mentioned in the law is someone called the Executive Secretary of the National Security Council, and he is identified in the law as the individual who is the administrative head of the staff. The law says, by the way, that this council should have a staff and it shall be headed by an Executive Secretary and perform such duties as the President may designate. That's the legal justification for having an NSC staff. The legal justification for the position of the National Security Advisor is actually nothing more than the fact that the Appropriation Act for the White House office says that the President may have 10 — I think that's the number — assistants to the President, and just traditionally one of these positions, one of these budget slots, is filled by a fel-

low who is called the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs.

In effect, then, the National Security Advisor is de facto the actual head of the National Security Council staff, while the Executive Secretary is the staff administrator. It's undoubtedly done that way for two reasons. By not mentioning him in the law, you're left with the potential to keep his relationship to Congress somewhat ambiguous and more closely related to the White House, so as to fend off the periodic forays that people make that this individual should be subject to Senate confirmation. To some degree you insulate a little bit the fellow who has to go up and testify about the budget of the NSC staff who might be called upon to talk about other things if he were the National Security Advisor. When he's not, generally it's very minor. I've done that and it's a very minor hearing where no substance whatever is discussed.

The staff, as far as I can determine, has been pretty much the same for 40 years. It's an eclectic mix of people reflecting the makeup of the national security community. That is to say it has military people who are assigned to duty on the NSC staff. It has Foreign Service officers assigned to duty. It has some intelligence officers, and it has civilians who typically are people with a foreign policy background who had some connection with the winning campaign of the President who kind of float in to the NSC as a function of the post-campaign "finding jobs for people" business. In this administration, that is about 50 professionals, although numbers are very hard to track because some of them are detailed, and some of them are on other agency payrolls, and anybody who's knowledgeable about the federal budget knows that that's untrackable.

The only thing you can depend on for doing historical analysis is telephone books, and that only if you had the internal listing that they really used, as opposed to something that might have been prepared for public consumption. I believe that this administration's staff is smaller than Kissinger's under Nixon, and bigger than Carter's. We're talking about a swing of maybe 10 or 15 professionals, total. It's kind of floated around 30 to 50 people for probably 40 years.

Student: I understand that different administrations, different Presidents, have different management styles and that will have impacts on the NSC staff.

McDaniel: It has an impact on how the staff functions, but it doesn't seem to have that much impact

on how big it is. It has a little impact on that. I'll get to how it actually functions in a minute.

Student: Would you have an ideal model, that the NSC staff should try to be organizationally or functionally flexible to the needs of the President, or should we find an institutional approach

McDaniel: I recommend to you reading the recommendations chapter of the Tower Commission Report as a good overview of that particular body. A good group of people wrote it — you had a former National Security Advisor, a former Secretary of State, and a member of the Senate very knowledgeable of the political process of this country. They made the observation that if you mandate in law how something that is this close to the President is supposed to be organized, what will happen in fact is some shadow organization will get created to do what the President wants and it will simply cease to be used. The answer then is that you can't, in law, tie the hands of the President on something that is this close to him. If you think you can you're kidding yourself. He's basically going to do with it what he wants. I think the institution pretty much has learned the lessons with respect to the size and the organizational structure of the staff. I will now describe the staff, and then I'll get into how the whole business really works.

Student: You mentioned that the Council should be integrating foreign policy and domestic policy. Is that something that you'll address?

McDaniel: I think that's a good question. The law says, "Will integrate domestic, military, and foreign policy." Then the law says, "The members shall be the President, Vice President, Secretary of State, and the Secretary of Defense," implicitly recognizing that all of these men are politicians, and when they meet in the Council as councilors, as advisors to the President, they collectively put the domestic implications of making policy into the milieu. That's one interpretation. Another interpretation is, it's the President and Vice President who represent the domestic point of view, and the State and Defense representatives represent the foreign and military policy points of view.

A third observation would be that they screwed up. There are a few people, academics, who have studied the national security process, who think that the procedural injection of the domestic point of view is the least perfect part of the imperfect structure of the NSC process. The sociology of the practitioners of foreign policy, and military policy, in my experience, can only be accurately described as elitists who are most comfortable doing business in

a back room, talking to nobody, and then after they've done it their notion of the domestic angle is you call in the public affairs guy and flack it up. The notion that you bring in a bunch of politicians, Congressmen, and you seriously take what they have to say into account is anathema both to the agency professionals, and the "civilian" policy people — many of whom are cranked out of this campus, I might add — who go down to the bureaucracy and become practitioners. That's an interesting comment you made. I personally think that the Act probably didn't focus on that in terms of setting up the structure of the Council.

Oettinger: It's slightly worse also, in that there is a domestic policy council, which functions more or less, which handles some of the purely domestic things. It seems to me that the functioning, whatever the meaning may be of that language, in practice is pretty empty. What is your observation?

McDaniel: I have never attended an NSC meeting where the bulk of the discussion was not devoted to, "How's this going to play in the press, and how are we going to get Congress to go along with it?" We're talking the domestic content of a national security issue. We're not talking about a forum. It was never the intent of this particular legislation to create a body to make policy for the entire spectrum of federal responsibilities, but rather to inject into the policy deliberation a domestic perspective as well as the perspective of the professional elite.

McLaughlin: Which is presumably also one of the goals of a Meese, or a Jim Baker, or a Bobby Kennedy being included.

McDaniel: It's interesting that the law didn't specify that somebody like that would be on the Council, but it's also interesting that all Presidents have always put somebody like that on the Council probably for just that reason.

Student: Could it be because of the threat perception of the United States — that we see threat as being external rather than domestic? Does that have anything to do with it?

McDaniel: It might.

Student: Might that have changed over time?

McDaniel: All I know is that the law was written in 1947 with the word "domestic" in it. I think that the people who have actually been practitioners in the making of national security policy have always had to grapple with politics. Probably more so in the post-Vietnam period than the pre-Vietnam period. There's kind of a conventional wisdom that

the making of foreign policy was a more bipartisan process before Vietnam. You could cut deals with a smaller number of members of Congress, and the whole thing was more compact and tightly managed than now. How accurate that assessment is, I don't know, but it's the conventional wisdom held by most people.

Even then, it was recognized that in a political democracy you have to have a domestic consensus if you're going to commit your military force to some act outside the boundaries of the country. That's just something that political democracies don't do without laying a domestic foundation for it.

I was going to just talk briefly about the staff structure of the NSC as it is now, and I think pretty much has been, and then talk about how the process works and then illustrate that with a few anecdotal examples.

The staff itself is organized in regional and functional directorates. The regional directorates mirror-image the State Department, which is organized, if you're familiar with it, with Assistant Secretaries of State for regions X, Y, and Z. Soviet and Europe is one; the Pacific and Asia is another; Africa, south of the Sahara, is another; Latin America is another; and lastly, Near East and South Asia which is the Middle East, basically Africa north of the Sahara all the way over to Bangladesh.

In the NSC staff, a big directorate would be four or five professional people, and a small one would be two. In government terms we're talking about a very small staff. When I left the staff, the Europe and Soviet guy was a Foreign Service officer, a former ambassador to Czechoslovakia, and a Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) in Moscow, who has just left to be the Ambassador to Moscow, Jack Matlock. The Latin America guy was a Foreign Service officer, a somewhat more junior officer who hadn't been an ambassador yet, and that was a bit of a fluke because it had originally been headed by a political guy who turned out to be a bit of a maverick who wouldn't take direction, and eventually had to be fired and the current incumbent wound up getting the job.

The Pacific job was headed by a civilian, professional employee of the Office of the Secretary of the Defense (OSD) who had been the Deputy for Asian Affairs in the OSD International Security Affairs Directorate and came over to the NSC from that job. The Africa office was headed by a CIA intelligence analyst who had headed the Office of African Analytic Affairs for 14 years. The Near East, South

Asia was headed by a fellow we recruited from the University of California faculty who had previously been in the Policy Planning Office in the State Department, who would be considered a kind of an academic foreign policy guy, Dennis Ross. That eclectic mix of people, I think, is typical. Carlucci has brought in his people. Many of those people are now gone. But the mix has pretty much been maintained.

There are also a few functional organizations, all of which have responsibilities that cut across the regional areas. One is the intelligence directorate that looks at intelligence policy and budget issues, and also was the office within the NSC staff responsible for coordinating covert action programs. There was another office called International Communications. That was the NSC staff office that looked at the propaganda apparatus of the U.S. government, essentially the U.S. Information Agency, Radio Liberty, Radio Marti. This office was headed by a former officer from the CIA who had a lot of background in political action. Another office looked at space issues from the intelligence, military, and domestic sides and was the staff officer who was the principal White House official on space issues. Those were the principal staff officers of the NSC. As I say, it all totaled up to about 50 folks.

Now, how did it really work? The key to understanding the NSC is to recognize that what you have is a legislative mandate to set up an interlocking set of interagency committees. These committees have been around with various labels hung on them for 40 years. That's the life blood of how the NSC process really works. An interagency committee will be set up. Each administration has found it necessary to relabel them all as well as to relabel the documents that are used to record their decisions for reasons that don't make a whole lot of sense, but it happens. The last two that I can think of — the Carter Administration used as the title of Decision Documents PDs, Presidential Decisions. Prior to that Nixon had used NSDMs, National Security Decision Memoranda. This administration uses NSDD, National Security Decision Directive. It's all the same stuff.

There was one interesting difference, though, when this administration came in to set up its organization. Recall that the fundamental issue for the last at least 15 years, the modern era of strong national security advisors, has been that issue of how strong a National Security Advisor do you want? Conventional wisdom quickly throws out on the table two names to represent two polar extremes,

and obviously this is a great oversimplification to think about it this way: Kissinger on the one hand, and Scowcroft on the other.

This administration, I think it's fair to say, intended to follow the Scowcroft model, and set itself up that way. Initially, Allen, the first National Security Advisor, didn't even report directly to the President. He reported through Meese. The committee structure was set up consistent with President Reagan's concept of "cabinet government" so that the chairmanship of the primary committees was to be vested in the cabinet officer who had principal policy responsibility for the area. There was a Secretary of Defense-chaired committee for Defense Policy, a Secretary of State-chaired committee for Foreign Policy, and a Director of Central Intelligence-chaired committee for Intelligence Policy, and there were no NSC staff-chaired committees, initially.

That evolved over time, so that when I left the staff the Defense-chaired committee essentially wasn't functioning. The CIA-chaired committee was to some limited degree, and the State-chaired committee was fairly active. But a whole host of new committees had been set up on a topical basis. There was a committee for arms control that had been set up outside the framework of this initial structure, which was chaired by the National Security Advisor. There was a space committee that was chaired by the National Security Advisor. There was a covert action review committee that was chaired by the National Security Advisor. The only committee that was supposed to be chaired by the National Security Advisor from the beginning of this administration was the crisis management committee, in effect, which was called the Crisis Preplanning Group (CPPG).

That was the framework, and as I say, State was the most active. There were then established a bunch of subcommittees, in the case of State, that essentially took all the different regions, regional groupings, and established an interagency group for each one. The membership would be the State Department desk officer, or the bureau head for the region, as chairman, and then a representative from OSD, from the JCS, and from CIA, and the NSC would have a staff representative on each one of these groups.

Once the committee's structure is established, it's important to recognize that what you've done is you've established an informal communications network, and that IG (interagency group) becomes the network of people who talk to each other about is-

sues. Many people think that what you really should see is meetings, and agendas, and minutes. That's really missing the whole point. On the foreign policy side, where the IG structure was most effectively used, you had a relatively small number of formal meetings where agendas and papers were circulated in advance. What happened was, a decision would need to be made in respect to something, let's say affecting U.S. policy with respect to the Vietnamese ongoing war in Cambodia. There was a need to make some kind of a decision with respect to that. The members of that IG would talk to each other on the telephone most likely, or they might have a short meeting and they would quickly come to grips with the issue and make a rough cut judgment as to whether this is something that is going have to be run up to the President, or whether we can just agree among "us boys" to just go do it. If they agreed, it was done. The State Department, typically, would write a cable setting forth instructions to some ambassador, or some international delegate to some commission, or some forthcoming vote in the UN, or whatever the issue was, or somebody going to an ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) meeting, and the policy would be established and that cable vetted by this group and sent, done. A policy is made, although the output document is a State Department cable.

That meant that the stuff that floated up to the formal NSC tended to be either big issues, stuff that you really want to get the President involved in because it was a major decision, or disagreements. I've already mentioned that areas where disagreements were the rule rather than the exception, such as arms control, resulted in a new committee being set up, chaired by the NSC, in an attempt to impose decisions. But the vast bulk in this administration and I'm sure in others, the day-to-day making of national security policy, really goes on over the telephone by three, or four, or five people talking to each other either in a conference call or seriatim, in the context — to use a bureaucratic phrase that we used a lot around the NSC — of clearing a cable. It works. It's so much taken for granted that lots of people actually forget that that really is an NSC process going on. They forget it to such a degree that when I became the executive secretary and got curious about how many IGs there were, there wasn't anybody in NSC who had any central book on how many of these groups existed. I might add that when I sent out a memo to find out, I got resistance; why am I asking? What business is it of

mine? Of course, my view was that these IGs really were NSC bodies, they were just operating under delegated authority of the Secretary of State to convene and administer them, because that was what this particular President had mandated when he set up his office.

Oettinger: You're getting, in your last remark, to part of the matter which I hoped you'd address. Given that all of that works and so on, it's a sort of a bottom-upward kind of thing in terms of integrating whatever comes out of this process. In terms of independent presidential inquiries, or initiatives, or in terms of presidential check on what the hell these guys are telling me, etc., how does it work?

McDaniel: The last point I was going to make about the NSC role in overall policy formulation was "How does it really work?" I've said that it works to a large degree over the phone. A network of players is defined to work issues. That leaves only the issue of defining an issue. That is where you come into the several roles that the NSC staff are expected to play. Again, this is not really all that well spelled out in the law. They are expected, I think, to play three roles. One, they're expected to be the traffic cop, the honest broker. Nothing more than making sure that State doesn't try to get a cable out without getting Defense's clearance. They're expected to be guys who will blow the whistle in the State Department if the desk officer says, "Well, it's none of Defense's business." To a large degree, that role is a passive one. Your just being privy to the process has, if you will, a cleansing effect. The fact that there is a presumably non-bureaucratically partisan person who's privy to what's going on serves to keep the phone lines between Defense, and State, and the intelligence community working, because they know the NSC staff guy will blow the whistle on the process if the other agencies aren't accorded their proper role. That's kind of the least exciting one, although a very important one.

The second function of the NSC staff is to be the independent advisors of the President. First they are participants in the interagency process, but to the degree that the President either becomes involved or needs to become involved, the NSC staff person is the person who will write the memo that transmits the issue to the President. Although you may have had an interagency committee write a paper and produce a consensus product with some options in it — a typical interagency paper will have options and a recommendation — that document would go

to the President in the form of a memo from the National Security Advisor which will be written by the NSC staff guy with expertise in the area. In that paper he, of course, will be expected to have his own recommendations, in addition to those of the Secretaries of State and Defense.

The third role of the NSC staff is policy initiation. That is to say, the ability to say, "Let's create policy in this area," or "Let's cause an interagency policy study to be done with the object of reexamining a new Middle East peace process policy, or our Southern Africa policy," to name two where the State Department typically had a lot of trouble getting off the dime and producing anything other than mush.

This is where you have to have an NSC staff that is sufficiently competent, intellectually and professionally, to be capable of being initiators as well as just honest brokers and traffic cops. At the same time you have to have a process which doesn't overload the circuit with a lot of top-down NSC staff-originated ideas, or you will quickly lose the allegiance and the participation of the other interagency players. There are no hard and fast ground rules here. This is very much a personality-dependent process. What I'm trying to sketch for you is there's a whole nest of processes going on out there from each one of these interagency communities for Latin America, or for Africa, or for Asia. Each one of them has a set of personalities that are working on different issues and in different ways interacting to make policy. A key role of the NSC staff has to be the ability to propose policies as well as simply put the final stamp on the policy that's been proposed by the Department of State, or the Department of Defense. How much time a particular staff officer spends on any one of those several roles is the function obviously of what the issue is, his own personal competence, and the competence of the other interagency players.

And lastly, something that I haven't said too much about, is the President himself. The NSC staff guys — we need to remember — are the President's staff for the national security business. These are the guys, either personally, or by receiving detailed direction from the National Security Advisor, who are the people closest to the President on a day-to-day basis. Although it's true that the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense, personally, will see the President on a regular basis, on a substantive basis, traditionally the National Security Council staff is the staff that tells the interagency community, "This is what the President thinks on such and

such an issue." That gets into the style of the President, and the question you were talking about before.

Where you have a President who comes into office with an extensive foreign policy agenda, you generally are going to find that you have a very active National Security Council staff who are just full of ideas, running all over town imposing these ideas on the interagency process. Where you have a President who has a relatively small number of ideas and is relatively indifferent to other dimensions of foreign policy, then you're going to have a relatively less active staff in some areas, but more in others. This particular President has chosen to focus extensively on the issue of military preparedness and the defense budget on the one hand, and on a policy on dealing with the Soviets from a position of strength, and looking for opportunities to undertake operations where we can do to them what they've been doing to us: the regional dimension which leads to his interest in things such as the Nicaragua-Contra business, as well as Afghanistan and Angola. These are areas where the President has very strong personal views, and where his views, to some degree, are not fully consistent with the mainline view of the traditional bureaucratic foreign policy establishment. In those areas the NSC staff, in effect, becomes the President's conscience and becomes the "looker over the shoulders" of the bureaucracy to keep the President's views before the bureaucracy: a role which can produce a high degree of friction and trauma from time to time, and can also be highly dysfunctional if it's done in a rough and crude manner as opposed to a more personal and smooth one.

You're all familiar with how groups of people interact, whether it be this seminar or a more bureaucratic setting, and there's no magic to that. Some people do it better than others. One of the jobs as National Security Advisor is to try to hire a staff that, among other capabilities, has the ability to go and impose the will of the President on a recalcitrant bureaucracy in a way that makes them like it, as opposed to a way that makes them leak to the newspapers and gets antiadministration stories in the press all the time — stories about how Defense and State are at each other's throats about this, that, or the other thing.

Oettinger: How frequently do you get the reaction, "We'll send out a memo which will keep the politicians quiet by saying here's what we're going to do, and we're going to take six years to do it,

because after all they've got four years at the most," that kind of stuff?

McDaniel: Again, as I say, the NSC staff guy is going to be involved in the group that is sending out the memo. The memo is going to get written in the NSC group. Then he has to be the guy who says, we can't take six years, how about three weeks? What this means is with this going on all the time, you're constantly having issues that I would call the "Please call Shultz and make him do so-and-so" kind of issue. Let's talk a little bit about how the staff works on a day-to-day basis.

Every morning at 7:30 the National Security Advisor sits down with the senior members of the NSC staff. The first order of business is "What was in the newspapers today, and how are we going to respond to that?" That's because the NSC staff has responsibility for providing guidance to the White House press spokesman, who in turn provides guidance to the spokesmen of the other Executive Branch agencies. Secondly, "What's on your mind today?" Typically, it will be a rare meeting where one or two staffers won't say, "Well, we're having this problem on such and such and would you please call George and get him engaged." One of the functions of the National Security Advisor is to be on the phone to Shultz and Weinberger, and to a lesser degree, Casey, fairly continuously getting them engaged in giving top-down direction to what's going on in this interagency process when it's perceived to be off track. Usually there is no real policy difference at the top. I mean, by definition, the President has picked these guys. They are his political confidantes. They are, by definition, going to do what the President wants. If the National Security Advisor calls up and says the President wants so and so, they're not going to argue with whether or not they think that's a good idea, unless there's a good reason. There is that constant "going on over the telephone process."

Sometimes it will work the other way. Shultz will call the National Security Advisor and say, "My guys just told me that your guys said, and that isn't right, is it?" That's just an ongoing management process. That's what they spend their time doing. What I just said probably accounts for 50 percent of the National Security Advisor's time day in and day out.

Let's talk a little bit about the crisis management structure. From the beginning there was an NSC-chaired crisis management group called the Crisis Preplanning Group (CPPG), the title stemming from the fact that if you were doing it right, you would

anticipate a crisis and come up with a strategy to avoid it rather than put out the fire after it's already started. That group was chaired by the Deputy to the National Security Advisor and had as members the Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, a three star; the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Fred Ikle — or he would frequently send the Assistant Secretary for International Security Affairs, Rich Armitage; the Under Secretary for Political Affairs at the State Department, Mike Armacost; and the Deputy Director of Central Intelligence for Intelligence who's called, in the trade, the DDI. He's the principal intelligence officer on the analytic side within the CIA. That core group constituted the CPPG. That group did not meet on a regular basis; they met on an ad hoc basis when they had a reason to meet.

There were two ways they might meet. Somebody might call up, as happened in the case of the Philippines, and say, "Gee, we need to have a meeting, because the Philippines are going to hell in a hand-basket, and we need to have a meeting and talk about what we're going to do about it." That did, in fact, happen. There was an ongoing series of meetings which resulted in some special analyses by CIA, and studies, and consciousness raising within the bureaucracy that resulted in several special emissaries being sent. The rest is history, as you well know, with respect to Marcos stepping down and so forth.

Student: Would you say that was an example of success, because it led to action?

McDaniel: I think so. There's always luck in all of these things. One doesn't want to get too glib about it. The biggest success is when the crisis doesn't happen at all. There was a much more time compressed "mini success," following the Marcos thing, with Duvalier in Haiti. We can't really claim any credit for his having decided to step down, but upon hearing the rumor that maybe he was interested in stepping down, the government moved rather quickly to encourage him along those lines and provided an airplane. The hardest part was finding some country, other than the United States, to take him. We wound up kind of arm-twisting the French in getting him in there, and having them have their noses substantially out of joint. But I notice he's still there.

Here you have vested in each one of those standing members as well as the NSC staff person (which was myself for a while) a responsibility to be looking at the process of gathering information and trying to predict crises. The first year I spent was look-

ing at that issue and saying, "How can you do that better? How can you do it more systematically? Do computers help and stuff like that?" The government, actually, is quite good at compiling laundry lists of places where there's a good possibility of having a crisis. One of the more interesting ones is a CIA publication which is the most analytic document that I'm aware of. The problem with it is, it's more than you can deal with. It produces a list of about 20 places where there's a good probability that there might be a crisis, but you can't deal with 20. You're right back to, which ones are you going to try to deal with? Are you just going to hope for the best and just let the normal process work?

I also want to digress and say that everybody in the national security business is in the crisis avoidance business. That is what our ambassadors think they're trying to do. That is what the desk officer in the State Department thinks he's trying to do. That's what the regional military commands and all the port visits and regional military conferences and dialogues we have all over the world are about; all of these individuals are trying to carry out foreign policy objectives, the chief objectives as best they understand them, and to steer around, avoid, crisis. Of course, that also can be translated into a policy of support of the status quo, and a policy of preserving things as they are now.

One of my observations of the professional diplomat is that his experience and training trained him to be a guy who tends to feel that the perfect state of grace is the problem unmolested. Don't screw with it. It may not be perfect, but it's quiet. This is an area where academics and political observers of U.S. foreign policy criticize our policy most, for seeming to align ourselves with totalitarian leaders around the world. The facts are simple to me. There are more totalitarian leaders than any other kind. If you draw up your own list using normal criteria of democracies and nondemocracies, there will be a lot more nondemocracies. If you add to that the mind set of diplomats, which is to leave well enough alone, we wind up supporting totalitarian governments more often than we are out actively trying to overthrow them. There are very few that we are out actively trying to overthrow. It's just the nature of the diplomatic process.

I must say that I spent a year looking at how you improve the process of sifting information to predict crisis. One of the more interesting things I did was I funded a panel of artificial intelligence gurus and tried to see whether there was anything to that. I concluded that they need to see a problem as vastly

more structured than the very ad hoc and amorphous and messy business of trying to predict instability in the world.

Oettinger: They can hardly tell a real missile from chaff.

McDaniel: I'm not sanguine that a whole lot more can be done. I personally believe that the NSC should continue to have somebody on its staff who thinks about this issue and tries to plug into people like yourself and others around with different perspectives who are trying to look at the process of crisis management as an academic discipline. It remains an area where I think there will be no breakthroughs in our ability to harness quantitative analysis to predict the outbreak of a crisis with greater precision.

Oettinger: You mentioned, over lunch, the *Achille Lauro* incident as an example.

McDaniel: I might come to that in the context of how we organize operationally. I think that fits better there.

McLaughlin: Let's talk about the CIA forecast, in the context that Sir John Hackett had in *The Third World War*, which starts with the idea that more than half the world's national leaders don't know whether they'll wake up in power tomorrow, or wake up period. If you start with that ...

McDaniel: I think that's considerably high. The right number is probably 15 percent or something, but it's a significant number. The world isn't that unstable, I would argue.

McLaughlin: This is the difference perhaps, between the 20 perhaps the CIA can predict following crisis indicators: the number of leaders' children being sent overseas to go to school, or whatever one looks for. On the other hand, there are 80 out there who are random shots. If the guy dies accidentally overnight, you may have a crisis on your hands that you never expected. None of the other crisis indicators are necessarily going up, but with the guy out of the way, he may have 17 contentious successors, or would-be successors. It's just a very unstable world out there in that sense.

McDaniel: The other kind of crisis, or the crisis you don't anticipate, is that you wake up in the morning, and you've got one. What are you going to do about it? That's the crisis management mechanism in its most operational context then. You're scrambling in the first instance to find out exactly what happened. This is what Beal was trying to aim at, and to improve on how the system works when

you're in that state of grace. You wake up in the morning and you've got a crisis on your hands which you hadn't anticipated and there's no high level planning that's been going on. You've got to get it going and get it done.

How would we work that? We'd convene the group, normally in a room. Only on a couple of occasions did the thing go down so fast that it had to be done over the telephone. If we had any time at all, I would call the CIA guy and ask him to do a quick analysis, and if he could, get it distributed to the other members before he came to the table. Rarely was that done. If we were lucky he'd bring it with enough copies or we'd make copies on the Xerox machine and pass them around. The first item of business was for the CIA guy to provide the current intelligence on what was going on, and then to ask other members of the group, "Who has any additional information on this?" and to make sure that all the players had a common base of information. That's a critical first step, and I feel that that worked quite effectively. I was very satisfied that there was a minimum of withholding information or game playing. There was an honest effort made to share information, and that usually had been shared already, but sometimes because of the pressure of time, people were exchanging tidbits right over the table that they hadn't had a chance to talk to on the phone. In general, it kind of validated the fact that the information sharing mechanism of the national security community worked pretty well. That's the first step.

With that as background then the problem became harder. Then — this was the most slippery part of it — I would always try to have the agenda structured so that we would spend some amount of time talking about what would we like to see happen? What are our objectives? before we got down to the action stage. It is an interesting dynamic in the crisis business how people who are very intelligent, and know a lot, and have been around a long time, will come into a room and after just a few seconds will want to start talking about doing things without having spent any time at all talking about what we want to accomplish before we talk about sending emissaries here, or pre-positioning carriers there, or whatever. I think it's kind of an American trait. We really are an action-oriented people. That's our nature.

This sounds terribly trivial, and in a way it is, but one of the useful functions of having a process guy in this thing who is in charge of structuring the agenda, is that you would at least have on the blackboard, on the screen, the words, "Let's talk

about what our objectives are." One of the clichés in the crisis business is "in crisis there is opportunity." It actually comes from an old Chinese proverb. It's very important, when you're kind of in gloom and doom about what a terrible thing this situation is, that you pause and think, are there some opportunities here? Can we take advantage of the situation? because you certainly want to do that if you can.

Some have suggested that technology might, in some fashion, help parse more systematically through this phase of a crisis management process, ideally, by being able to access and scan history rapidly. There may be something to that. I personally believe that there should be some level of effort funded, preferably sponsored by the NSC for the foreseeable future, to attempt to look at how technology accesses history, and pulls it together, and looks for common threads and common elements.

Oettinger: I'm not sure that it's initially a technology problem so much as a history problem: namely, to get the history looked at in the first place. The delivery mode may be second. There's very little reliable institutional memory in the crisis management business.

McDaniel: I think we're saying the same thing. I don't want to imply that this is computers and artificial intelligence. I am persuaded by the fact that if doing a job of historical research requires getting in an airplane and flying to the Eisenhower Library to see relevant papers, and you're in the middle of a crisis, you will never look at history. You won't do it at all. If you have some way of getting access to the Eisenhower Library in an hour, and you could even query that library with a subject matter-oriented search routine that says

Oettinger: It's worse than that. I recently had a totally unclassified visit to NSA. I'm also on the board of visitors of the Defense Intelligence College. I'm persuaded that there are miles and miles of things to do to get cases developed, to get as part of the ingrained training of any intelligence officer, any action officer, etc., etc., some sense of "this incident is similar to Crisis X and different from Crisis Y." This is totally missing today. Why worry about gimmickry when you have a very short memory, institutionally?

McDaniel: I don't disagree, Tony. I tend to see the two as somewhat related. The facts are that the way the system works today, history is what the people who come to the table bring to the table. It's just that simple. If they have it at hand, it's there. If

they don't have it at hand, there's no external process to add it.

Student: May and Neustadt* make the point that quite often the history they bring to the table is incorrect, distorted, mythological, and all the rest of it.

McLaughlin: It's all those people in 1964 saying, "Lyndon Johnson doesn't want to preside over another Munich, or whatever," and the people now — Markey and company — running around and saying, "Well, we don't want another Vietnam in Central America." It's very hard historically to see Nicaragua as not being exactly the opposite of Vietnam.

McDaniel: But at least you have a check on the fact that you've got more than one person in the room. You have the institutions represented, and you have different human beings represented who are at least going to bring six sets of history to the table instead of just one.

Student: Many years ago there was a thing down in the Navy about trying to do a more analytical job of crisis management, make more use of technical tools. Part of the problem is that when you're having a real crisis under way, nobody involved has any time to help anybody who's studying what is going on and seeing what's needed the most. I don't know if there's a good technologist anywhere on the staff there, but sitting in on a meeting and observing the real event is the starting point of what can be done next.

McDaniel: That was Beal's concept, and that was what the role of the Crisis Management Center as a support agency to the NSC staff was intended to be. You'd have some computer-friendly, junior, subject-oriented analyst who would be the person who would attempt to do the quick crash job of historical research to supplement, but hopefully in a more objective and systematic way

Oettinger: There was a slightly more modest objective. If the boss doesn't know where the hell the country is, a simple notion of just getting the map up there so the boss can see it helps. This applies to this President or any President.

Student: I think there are a whole bunch of little things like that that can be done, but again you've got to have somebody who knows what can be done

sitting down, watching, and that's just the starting point.

McDaniel: That's correct. That was the intent and is the intent of having this Crisis Management Center, and it's definitely in its infancy. It represents no more than kind of a token commitment.

Oettinger: That brings us full circle to the observation you made at the beginning. The idea is very threatening to all of the normal players, because it suggests then that there might be knowledge accessible to the decisionmaking individual or group that would not be the knowledge brought to the table. The very statement of the problem has in it some of its dilemmas.

McDaniel: It's an interesting thing to watch it as it plays in real time. If you're in a room and the locale of the crisis is kind of obscure, no one in the room cares whether some NSC staffer goes off and gets the map, or the CIA guy brings the map — the guy who by agency charter is supposed to be the map guy — it doesn't matter. If on the other hand you're having a meeting with the President or the senior advisors, the NSC principal advisors' meeting — when they meet in this situation by the way, they call themselves the National Security Planning Group, which simply gives a signal that it's supposed to be a more closely held, more sensitive group, but the players are the ones I've mentioned as the National Security Council principals — it turns out it does matter. I would find some sensitivity to having the NSC staff put the map up on the wall, as opposed to having the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff bring the map. You simply roll with the punches and you call the Chairman in advance and say, "Please bring a map."

That's one of the things Beal wanted — and this leads to foolishness. Because he comes five minutes before the meeting starts, you barely have time to place the map on the easel. What you'd like to do is have a nice color transparency or something so everybody in the room could see clearly and well, and to do that, you have to have the slides transmitted electronically in advance. When you have a bureaucracy that's unwilling to turn loose any piece of information until Weinberger's seen it, and he won't see it until he's in the car driving over, you have a problem. We created a technology which allowed the instantaneous video formatted transfer of all kinds of data, but we never solved the bureaucratic problem of getting the bureaucracies to turn loose the data without their bosses chop on it, and their bosses wouldn't chop, because they wanted to

*Neustadt, Richard E. and Ernest R. May. *Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision Making*. New York: The Free Press, 1986.

bring it to the meeting. I think that will alter somewhat over time. It sounds so silly, but it's very real.

As a result, just to finish the point, typically the size of the situation room where they meet is about these two tables, plus half of the third one. What literally happens is the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff who has the JCS graphic shop, which is one of the faster-response graphic shops in town, will have the map, and some briefing boards, and what-not, and he'll have them on the easel right here, because the President sits here, and generally Shultz is there, and the Vice President is there, Weinberger is sitting there, and the chairman will stand up to brief. Sometimes they set him over there, and Weinberger does the talking. The National Security Advisor, and Don Regan, and people like that are down at that end of the table, and they can't see the stuff. They literally don't see what the President is seeing.

Surely, technology would allow us at least to have a conference where everybody could see. It's interesting to watch the dynamic. You have to see it to believe it. When Weinberger is briefing the President on a military option, he's really acting as if it's him and the President. These other guys don't really have a real role. That's really what he's saying when he does that, even though it's clear that the intent of the law, and Rod McDaniel's view, is that he's there as a councillor to the President, a co-equal with all these other fellows. The same is true with Shultz in some piece of diplomatic arcaneness. There's no question that the President, personally, must from time to time reinforce the notion of the kind of role he wants his principal subordinates to play, or they're going to tend to act out bureaucratic roles.

Once we have had this preliminary meeting, the next step, which is the crucial step, is generally that the State Department is told to get a working group together and to take 24 hours and develop an options paper. That is the single most important step in the crisis response. I say 24 hours, but whatever. If you have 24 hours, you take 24 hours. If you have a little more, you take a little more. If you want it bad, you get it bad. That joke.

The State and Defense and CIA representatives at the CPPG are responsible for designating someone from their respective staffs to go to the State Department, let's say, to be in the working group, and out of that will come a paper. Again, if possible, that paper will be reproduced and distributed in advance.

I guess it's time now to talk about the tension between leak-consciousness and process. That's worth talking about now in the real world.

Almost everything that I've suggested and alluded to, I and others, about how do you maybe make this better, tends to mean more people get involved. Paranoia over security says fewer people involved. One of my colleagues used to joke that if more than four people know, it's gone. Pick your number, but there's no question that there's a logarithmic relationship between the number of people who know and the probability of a leak. So you do have a real tension between things you do to promote orderly process in crisis, and things you do to keep secrets in crisis. Laid on top of that legitimate tension is a very pernicious bureaucratic tension. Everybody who's a real practitioner, and I'm sure you're all not naive in this regard, realizes that there are two uses to which security classification is put: the legitimate desire to protect secrets, and protection of bureaucratic turf. As a practitioner in the real world, it's about 90 bureaucratic turf; 10 legitimate protection of secrets as far as I'm concerned.

One of the functions of the NSC staff is to try to pry this stuff with a crowbar out of the other agencies and spread it around, so that everybody gets a chance to see it. You are fighting against the grain all the time when you do that. It's just a fact of life. It's not going to change. That's just the way the world is.

I left the job on the NSC feeling very uncertain in my own mind about this tension over security. I mean it is a terrible problem to have a meeting where there are fewer people in a room than this and read about the meeting in *The Washington Post* tomorrow. It is precluding options. It's either precluding options domestically because you're going to have Congress posturing, and taking positions, and making life difficult, or you signal the enemy what your intentions are and make it easier for him to deal with it.

You can't figure out "who dunnit." I assure you, once you've been burned a few times you just are going to want to tell fewer people, and you're going to join the group of people who say, "I don't want more people." I don't want this honest, objective, graduate student in history that I hired and put on the CMC staff with the thought in mind that he would be the computer-friendly historian who did dissertation work in Soviet-U.S. crisis decisionmaking. My lofty ideal was, here is a real perfect guy

who would help pull the history together quickly, but he's a stranger. You can overcome that to some degree in noncrisis periods. You get the group together and you explain what you want to do and they all nod their heads and agree that having this guy in the room is okay. You cannot do this when it hits the fan. It's too late, if you haven't done it in advance.

The next day the option paper comes back. Hopefully, we've put it out in advance, so that the group has looked at it. There is a very good facsimile system around town — one of the most used pieces of technical equipment we have. It allows you to send document copies on a secure basis through the mail, or through the secure communications rooms, but again code clerks get involved, so if you really are concerned about it you won't use that system. You'll pass it out at the table, denying people the opportunity to read it in advance. Then you wind up spending the first half hour of the meeting with everybody else reading the paper, because no one will have seen it before, which is a waste of time.

Then you have the most important meeting that you're ever going to have, and you talk about that paper. What are the views, the pros and cons, and you try to have the best possible, no-holds-barred discussion of the options. Then you go back and turn the crank on it one more time and you're ready to go up to the NSC, and have an NSPG meeting. What makes the NSPG function is that the CPPG members brief their bosses. They come to the NSPG aware of all the discussion and all the pros and cons and give and take that's taken place in the CPPG, as well as their views of what the options are. They come to the table with the President at the head, and they look at the options and they make their points to the President with respect to the options, whatever they are, and more often than not, there's consensus frankly, but not always.

Normally, this President does not decide things at the table. If there's consensus, it doesn't get said, and the National Security Advisor is responsible for getting things implemented. If there is a disagreement, then the National Security Advisor plays one of the most important roles in this process. He goes in to see the President with a paper, generally, that provides the recommended decision. That paper will normally not have been seen by anybody before it's seen by the President. If the Advisor is doing his job right, it will be a fair distillation, and he will probably have talked on the telephone to Shultz and Weinberger before he puts it in final form. He will sit down with the President, and he will say, "We

had our meeting yesterday and these were the real issues. Shultz thinks this and Weinberger thinks this, and I think this and I think this is what you ought to do." The President will say, "Okay, I'll do it." He'll initial it "RR," and the National Security Advisor goes back to his office, picks up the phone and calls Shultz and Weinberger and says, "The President decided this, do it!" And they do it. Why? Because they believe him. They have to believe him. If they don't believe him, they pick up the phone and call the President themselves, and they only do that once on the average. That's a non-problem. The person who's going to be the National Security Advisor will be trusted and accepted by the Cabinet principals as a guy who faithfully transmits what the President decided.

Then the NSC staff role is essentially a monitoring role at that point, because the operational direction will flow down to either the State or the Defense Department. That then leads me to the last point I wanted to make. I guess I'll close on this. I've a couple of vignettes to show that this process of integrated, political-military thinking still has a lot of rough edges around it when we try to impose political-military thinking either on the planning dimension or on the operational dimension, on what is essentially a federated structure which is what I said it was.

One of the vignettes that we were talking about before lunch was *Achille Lauro*. I personally audited most aspects of *Achille Lauro*, those that I wasn't personally familiar with and involved with, so I'm reasonably comfortable with my possession of the facts on that one. Recall that the cruise ship which had been taken over by the terrorists had sailed back into Egypt. The terrorists had decided to surrender to the Egyptian authorities. The hostages had been released into the custody of the ambassador and the terrorists were taken into the custody of the Egyptian government.

We gained intelligence from a third country, that will remain nameless, as well as from some SIGINT, that the Egyptian government was going to return them to Libya. Poindexter really had the idea that it might be possible to intercept the plane. He called Vice Admiral Arthur Moreau, who was the Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the regular JCS counterpart on the CPPG. This is the network that I've talked about at work. He calls him on a secure phone. He says, "Have you seen this intelligence report? What do you think?" He says, "I don't know. It's an interesting idea. Let me check." He gets hold of the J3 who

calls to Europe, the unified command in Europe, who calls the Sixth Fleet, and by sheer chance there was a battle group that was en route to a port visit in Yugoslavia, I believe it was, and just happened to be practically under a flight path — if you got a map out and drew a line between Egypt and Libya, it would go practically over where this boundary was.

It also transpired that the Commander of the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) was in an airplane equipped with a tactical satellite communication device which now, even to this day, in spite of \$10 billion a year for C³, most of our aircraft do not have, but he has it because the JSOC is given special priorities in these matters because it is normally deployed under the direct control of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He was in an airplane. They had been deployed to the Mediterranean with the thought in mind of preparing to go take down the *Achille Lauro* using the SEALs, which is one of the scenarios the SEALs have practiced for in the Joint Special Operations milieu. That obviously wasn't really needed because the ship had gone in; the hostages were off. Once again the capability had arrived too late to be of any value.

Anyway, they were in an airplane getting ready to go back to the United States and were airborne at the time. The Chairman got hold of the General on the phone and said, "Turn around and land at Sigonella." That then created a command structure where you had a regular JCS chain of command, communications, secure phones, talking through the unified CINC in Europe to the Sixth Fleet battle group, and you had a guy on the ground at Sigonella, which was where they were going to try to get the plane to land. They were going to force the terrorists down at Sigonella, put them in a U.S. aircraft and take off. And bring them to the United States and try them under U.S. law. You'll recall that one of the hostages was murdered and the Attorney General was of the opinion that he had the basis for at least indicting them under U.S. criminal law. The basis for claiming jurisdiction was quite clearcut in this case. That was the plan. The JCS guy came back and told Poindexter, "Yes, it looks like we can do it. Let's give it a try."

Poindexter then convened a conference call, a secure-voice conference call, getting the NSPG principals together: Shultz, Weinberger, Casey, and the Vice President. The President was traveling on a campaign trip as I recall. He was brought in on the conversation. I think he was in Air Force One at the time flying to Chicago. He agreed, but he said he

wanted to approve the final operation if it turned out to be feasible. Everybody recognized that the thing might not work. They might not be able to find it, or intercept it, or what not. Subsequently, everything fell into place. Almost miraculously, through special intelligence sources, they were able to gain information that led to knowing what the tail number was of the aircraft and the exact time it was going to take off, and they were going to fly a standard route to Libya. It was quite possible to predict an intercept point.

As you know, the carrier aviators and the Air Force people routinely practice those kinds of intercepts. If you call up some tactical commander and say there's going to be an airplane with such and such identification, taking off at such and such a time, and flying such and such a route it's easy for him to complete the necessary details and intercept it. It is quite straightforward. They did intercept it and Poindexter called McFarlane who was traveling with the President, and he went in and told the President this. One of the specific things the President wanted to get straight was rules of engagement; that there'd be no shooting. We weren't going to shoot down an Egyptian airplane. If they chose not to cooperate that was going to be the end of it. Of course, we didn't tell the Egyptians that. He approved, "Go ahead."

They did intercept the aircraft and through a combination of hand signals and transmission over the common aircraft-to-aircraft frequency which is used for emergencies they gave the guy to understand that he should follow them and proceeded to divert him to Sigonella. At that point the thing began to unravel a little bit because Sigonella is an Italian-run, U.S.-tenanted base. The Italian authorities were alerted to the fact that something unusual was happening. The Italian commander denied authority. Actually, the Egyptian airplane came up on the circuit and requested to land at Sigonella. They stewed around for about a half an hour with this airplane orbiting. This is kind of unusual, but we had real-time knowledge of this from the battle group guys on the one hand, talking fighter aircraft to carrier; carrier over a secure radio-phone circuit into Stuttgart, and then Stuttgart over secured-landline to the J3 in the Pentagon, who then goes up to see the Chairman who calls up Poindexter and tells him this.

Poindexter calls Armacost at State to get the U.S. Ambassador to get on the phone to the Foreign Minister of Italy to try to explain the situation. Of course, the Ambassador didn't know anything about

this up until this time, so somebody had to explain to our Ambassador what it was we were trying to do. Then he had to find the Foreign Minister and get him on the phone. Meanwhile, Crowe, who had served a tour in Naples and was a friend of Spadolini, who's the Italian Defense Minister, checks with Poindexter, and then calls Spadolini up directly. He just places a commercial phone call. Spadolini explains what we're doing to him, and meanwhile, while all this is going on, the aircraft declares a fuel emergency — I think it really was — and lands anyway.

The next event in the saga, then, is the struggle for physical control of the terrorists. You'll recall the plan was to use U.S. Special Forces to move these fellows into the U.S. airplane and take off. But the Italian force is covering it, which in this case is the Carabinieri, the paramilitary police organization of the Italians who are normally stationed there to provide base security. And these two groups of soldiers have some tension between each other. I've never completely gotten a clear picture of exactly how that was, or why that couldn't have been greased over a little bit more, because presumably they work with each other all the time. But there was no doubt tension there, and in any event, the Italian Carabinieri or the base commander had gotten instructions from the bosses in Rome not to release. This, then, came back through the radio- phone to the Chairman in his office, who notified Poindexter, who notified Armacost, who reenergized the Ambassador again, and then the President was brought in to talk to the Prime Minister of Italy. Somebody on the NSC staff, probably Ollie North, had to crash around and put together a few talking points for the President. Then you had to get an interpreter lined up, and get the Prime Minister of Italy on the phone, and all that takes about an hour or so. All this is going on while there's a standoff on the ground at Sigonella. Eventually the Italians decide not to release, but say, "We'll take care of it ourselves." They fly the group to Rome. They put Carabinieri on this Egyptian airplane, and then they actually fly the Egyptian airplane to Rome, and it lands there and the terrorists are taken into custody by the Italian government, as we all know.

Then, Meese was energized and he got on the phone to his counterpart, the Interior Minister in Italy. This was now the next day, and he attempted to get them to hold them long enough to go through normal proceedings for extradition. The Italians ultimately declined to do that. It became a domestic

political issue in Italy. That's true in most countries. Even our staunchest allies have great difficulty being seen to be toadies of Uncle Sam in public. Eventually, the Italians made their own decision as we all know.

That's how it happened. Are there lessons learned from something like that? It was viewed as a success even though the complete operation, meant to spirit them into a U.S. airplane and bring them back and try them in the United States, was not accomplished. It was still viewed as a success. By anybody's estimation, the command and control was a complete and utter lashup, and complete serendipity that you had a U.S. general on the ground in Sigonella who allowed us to know these problems with the Italians. We'd never have known that because the Sixth Fleet communications obviously didn't extend on the ground to Sigonella. As far as I was able to determine, EUCOM (European Command) had never cut the base commander into the act. That, in my opinion, probably accounts for why there was this tension between the Carabinieri, with whom the U.S. base commander had to have good relations, and these Special Forces guys, who are foreign troops, U.S. troops, not stationed there. That's why there was a problem with the Italians.

How would you have worked that better? I don't know. It has led me to formulate an interesting thesis which I throw out on the table for some of you who might want to pick it up and run with it. Notice there's an interesting dichotomy when you stop and think about it, about how the U.S. government is organized operationally, as between Defense and State. The Defense Department had organized its operational command through a CINC, in this case U.S. EUCOM in Germany, and then through his subordinate commanders, in this case, the Sixth Fleet commander and the battle group.

CINCEUR has under it people who are stationed in the Mediterranean area, on land in Italy, attaches in Egypt. They can pick up the phone and have communication and the capability to coordinate people stationed throughout that region. But the State Department is organized on a country basis with each ambassador reporting nominally to the President/Secretary of State, but in reality to the country desk officer in the Department of State. Their regional coordination is accomplished in the State Department in Washington under the cognizance of an Assistant Secretary of State for the region.

To coordinate EUCOM and Italy diplomatically requires that you come back and work the problem in Washington. We don't have a way to delegate —

to say, "Okay, Ambassador and EUCOM, work it out, and let us know if you need help. The two of you talk to each other." We just don't do business that way. So, you had Armacost on the phone in the Department of State talking to the ambassador while at the same time you had Crowe on the phone at the Pentagon talking to the general in Italy, and EUCOM, to a large degree, playing no role in this particular case except trying to figure out what was going on and be helpful where they could.

In my mind, an interesting alternative would be to consider regionalizing the Department of State and actually have the Assistant Secretary for Europe collocated with CINCEUCOM, and to have those two authorities able, within their respective spheres of influence, to coordinate in the region and then talk to each other directly because here you really did have a real-time problem. You were talking about events like airplanes orbiting at an airbase waiting to land. Next to a missile attack being launched, that's about as real-time as you can get. To try to coordinate that out of Washington is just crazy. The military clearly had recognized that you've got to move that kind of coordination problem much closer to the scene of the action or it won't work. Now historically you can do that by having someone, the general on horseback, looking at the battle from the highest hill. It's true that today with communications you may sometimes find that the guy with communications is actually sitting in Washington rather than sitting in Germany, but you've got to have somebody with communications and all the relevant elements who has the authority to effect coordination and resolve these kinds of issues.

Interesting question. There are down sides to doing it. I just threw it out for exploring. That, I think, is my view on the crisis. Over to questions.

Oettinger: We are almost out of time.

McLaughlin: Did the U.S. general ever contact his counterpart, for which there is a long history of coordination?

McDaniel: In Italy? No.

McLaughlin: His Italian counterpart would certainly have had access back up to Andreotti, Spadolini, and Craxi.

Oettinger: Or even the base commander.

McDaniel: The Carabinieri at Sigonella are not in the special circuit. They're not "snake-eaters."

McLaughlin: I know that. That's why I was asking why he wasn't talking to NOCS.*

McDaniel: I don't know. I didn't talk to him, so I didn't fill in all the elements. It's just an interesting point. It happened pretty fast. I'm not sure. But, you're right: It would have been interesting. Once the Defense Minister and the Prime Minister of Italy are involved, the military guys talking to each other aren't going to be able to affect it, I think, at that point.

Oettinger: It's a good question. On that note, though, let us thank Rod for an absolutely fascinating and very helpful session. Thank you very, very much.

*Nucleo Operativo Centrale di Sicurezza, the Italian special forces unit reportedly responsible for rescuing U.S. Army Brigadier General James Dozier from Red Brigade kidnappers.