

Z: The second major problem that I shall come to face with is the problem of the Soviet Navy having started from behind at the end of World War II moving modestly in the early years while they got their Air Force and Army modernized and then, after this terrible psychic shock of the Cuban Missile Crisis, when they found themselves outpointed stragically, and in the conventional maritime area, we had them blocked off from Cuba, they launched on the largest strategic construction program in history; both missiles ashore, and missiles at sea. And the second largest maritime construction program in history exceeded only by our own in World War II. And they told us at that time they would never be caught with their pants down again. We, having ended World War II in a position of superiority, having not felt the need in the early years to do much, then having the Korean War take a great deal of our expenditures and being able to fight the Korean War essentially with World War II's Navy, the post-Korean War period being involved in the expenditure of large^a

number of billions for the strategic submarines occupied the Navy budget. Then the Southeast War, a decade long period, when the Navy's hidden tax was the . . .

R: At the time when the first strategic submarine program began was there many doubts openly expressed in the Navy about the wisdom of this program or about the imbalance of it?

Z: No. I think that there was concern about the large number of dollars that it was going to take, and the impact that this would have on our financial budget. But t at that time we were so clearly superior to the Soviet Navy, that, and it was so clear that this was a highly survival strategic system in comparison to what you could see happening to the land base system, that there was general support in the Navy for doing it. It was like. .

R: Part of it was kind of the feeling that didn't... that you know that this was better than what the Air Force was up to or the Army was up to, anyway.

Z: Yeah. You know I think you would look at it the way a family looks at the decision to get a one hundred ^{THOUSAND} dollar insurance policy.

We've got to have IT, but boy this is really going to cut down on the . . .

R: Of course one of the things that naturally comes up in connection with this kind of an effort, is you know, what part in all of these different things the well known media cannot. . .the thing of interservice rivalry comes into all of this, you know; that would spice up the book considerably if there is anything real to say about it. Besides that, you know, was the strategic submarine program partly based on one-upping the Air Force for example.

A: Well, the . . .

R: How bad, from the point of view of an insider is all this?

Z: My view of that is that the outsider has a very over developed view of the , undeniably so. But, you know just to put a number on it I'd say that as we were looking at it at the time, and I was a middle-grade officer at the time, we were for it 80% because it was so clearly important for the

country to have a survivable strategic system and 20% because we were one-upping the Air Force, not 50-50 or 80-20 the other way.

R: I also wonder whether there isn't someplace in this book for a rational interesting discussion for this problem. . .from the inside. A candid discussion.

Z: Yeah, yes, I think there is. So. I agree we should Bob, deal with this, and that would be an important point to make. Now just to bring you up to date with my very broad generic context; the third point that I made, to finish that point. I made the point to that I felt the Navy was clearly falling behind the Soviets in the following sense: We could whip them in a fair fight in the middle of the ocean, but if you looked at their capability to perform their mission, as a land power which can defeat its two loviest enemies, the Warsaw Pact on the one hand, and the Chinese on the other, I mean the NATO Pact on the one hand and the Chinese on the other; by land lines of

communication. . .

R: Exclusively, yeah.

Z: . . .and can reinforce its principle allies, the Warsaw Pact by land lines, all they've got to do is cut the lines of us, the world island, dependent as we are on 69 of our 72 critical resources for the use of the seas, and dependent as our allies on the use of the seas to be reinforced by us; We have the tougher job of keeping the sea line open and that takes much more Navy. Viewed in that light, I felt that based on all the studies that I had done, we were getting close to the point where, the odds were, we would lack the capability to keep the sea lines open and the odds were the Soviets would be able to cut. Now. . .

R: Let me ask you, in describing this particular problem, which sounds to a laymen fearfully complicated and frankly a little bit tedious too, is there some way of dramatizing this with numbers with, however, with examples, with suppose the Soviets did this with this many ships doing this and that, then we would have

to do so and so. I mean some kind of a graphic, and interesting way, maybe even with a couple of charts or something. Because this is the subject which I understand how terribly important it is for this to be discussed and, as fully as possible and as thoroughly as possible. But its also the subject that's going to worry people who want to have a best seller overnight the most of anything that's in the book.

Z: You mean how to make it sexy.

R: How to make it . . . well . . . sexy is not exactly, but just how to make it interesting. I don't think we have to talk about that a lot now, its just one of the things that's in my head, a problem we're going to have, is to make that as engrossing as, you know, talk about rock music, and no hair cuts.

Z: I think its perfectly susceptible of being made interesting and I'm really challenged to try to do so, because one of the frustrating things in the last four years has been in trying to describe

it in an accurate, technical manner, as one has to do as a responsible, titular head of a service, we just simply have not been able and no military man ever has, to really get the American people to understand nor the Congress.

R: See what I'm thinking of is just the, just from the paper yesterday, Fulbright was in despair, he was hoping to provoke a great national debate about detente, and when he called his first hearing, 22 people showed up or something, you know, and one person from the press . So, and it is a little bit shocking and it is too bad, and I'll admit that the human interest of recent events have tended to give people, to hype them up a little too much about what to expect from the news. But even so, it's tough to get people focused on problems in which there are not simple answers or maybe any answers, and are complicated, and give you a headache when you think about them and all that. There we are with that one. Well, you know, the personnel problems, the stuff is very easy to make interesting its just interesting on

the face of it.

Z: Yeah. Well now the third general. . . So I. . . Budget levels that could be afforded, we had to bite the bullet, and start modernizing the Navy if we were going to have any prospect of reversing this trend of Soviet capability and proving and. . .

R: What does modernizing mean for a couple of examples. In terms of weapons and ships.

Z: It means disposing of 47% of our ships over a 5 year period of time and 24% of our aircraft, and 24% of our personnel, in order to be able to start at the adequate budget levels, investing in new ships, new aircraft, new electronics, and all the rest. And. . .

R: It's largely a technological problem.

Z: That's right. And what we, this got into the third objective which was, well modernizing to retain sufficient power to be able to continue to deter the Soviet Navy in the conventional maritime field. Now these were the three points that I made in great detail, and they you know, they could be beefed up to any extent.

R: If the third was modernization what was. . .

Z: No the second was modernization, the first was personnel problem, the second was modernization, the third was the retention of sufficient power to continue to deter while accomplishing the first two objectives.

R: I see.

Z: Now then let me shift off to describe what happened and the dilemma I faced with regard to knowing what the best way is to deal with my story. I don't know whether its best to do it by subject matter as this outline seeks to do, personnel first, modernization second, you know so on, or whether its better to lay out a spectrum of things that happened over the four year watch and kind of try to describe in phases my administration. I kind of tend toward the latter, for the following reasons: Here's what the background milieu was like when I came in in 1970, we had a very dullish President beginning to excite people, the foreign policy looked real good, he was beginning to wind down the war.

R: Had he been to China yet?

Z: Now he hadn't. But. . .

R: He went in July 1st, 1970?

Z: *Yes*. In this two year period to describe it exactly as I came in in 1970 he was still under a lot of flak that we were not getting out of the war fast enough. But within another year, the initiatives. . .

R: Wasn't this just after Cambodia?

Z: *Yes*. It was.

R: So actually there was, it was a troubled time.

Z: Yeah. But. . . I guess I telescoped it too much. In comparison to LBJ, he still had some credibility, he was greatly under attack because of the Cambodia thing, and later because of the Laos thing, and there was a lot of unrest on the campuses, because the war wasn't winding down fast enough.

R: Yeah. Indeed, you came only a couple months after Kent State and Jackson State.

Z: That's right, that's right. And then within the next year it became clear that he was getting us out, he did begin the openings to Moscow and Peking, and he was really on the upswing and by 1972 had a dramatic victory. And then Watergate began to impinge and destroy him, and the disintegration process took place. And there was a . . . before you began to see it publicly, there was all kinds of evidence internally that this Mafia was operating in a very unethical kind of way, and I was beginning to run up against it in a number of different ways. Superimposed across that mosaic was a picture, my participation in the Strategic Arms Limitations debate, where we were, and I have a book here incidentally, by Newhouse, which. . .

R: I read it in the New Yorker when it appeared that was practically the whole book I guess.

Z: O. K. Well that kind of airs from the same point that we were discussing a moment ago that everytime he says anything about the JCS it was a parochial thing that they did to get bigger weapons

systems and he doesn't give us any credit for really being interested in what is good for the country.

R: Newhouse does.

Z: That's right.

R: One gathers that his principal source was Kissinger, right?

Z: Yes, and that's part of my story. Newhouse came to my esteemed ~~frank~~ friend and former boss Paul Nitze, with information out of Kissinger's files so sensitive, that none of the rest of us had ever seen it.

R: Even Nitze?

Z: That's right. Stuff that Nitze had never seen before. And yet, it was selective it had left out everything that had derogated Kissinger, and had only the things that made him look like the great hero, and it was of u such concern to Paul Nitze that he came to consult with me about how we ought to try to contain it, because as a specific example, memoranda in Newhouse's possession that Nitze had done about his great opposite number Choukin on

the Soviet delegation, if it got into the public print would have turned off this pseudo friendship that they had built, that they love German philosophy, they're both in their 60's, they're great philosophers, they're doing a lot of communicating, making beautiful music, and Nitze's getting lots of dope. And so this was before we knew enough about Watergate to know how bad it was, and at that particular moment I knew enough about Kissinger to know we couldn't go to him, so we discussed and finally concluded that Mitchell was the only guy that probably would be willing to get to the President, minus Kissinger, and to make sure the President knew what was going on. So, Nitze flew up to New York. . .

R: Why not Laird?

Z: Uh, Laird and Kissinger were so much like this, (showing opposition) that, that was part of the problem, and the President had two or three times tried to fire Laird during that period. And we did feel that Laird, we felt first that Laird would look as though he, it

was just another effort to cut Kissinger down in the battle that they were having, and second we weren't sure that Laird would feel that for that reason he could go forward and do it. It looked as though, Mitchell. . . Mitchell had been sitting in on the meetings at the National level on the Strategic Arms Limitation business, it looked as though he was neutral, it looked as though he had the smarts to understand the problem, so Nitze laid it all out for him and urged him to get it knocked off. . . asked Mitchell whether he should do anything more, and Mitchell said no, you just stay out of it now, and that was about the time Mitchell began to get disembowled himself, and we don't know whether he ever got to the President. Meanwhile the book came out, it didn't print alot of the memos, I think that probably was the result of Nitze's appeal to Newhouse, that it would do some real harm, but it was clear that information could only have come right out of Kissinger's files. . .

R: Well, that was clear, but do you think the book did the whole enterprise harm?

- Z: I think the book is so far from the truth, as I saw it, its had an unfortunate impact.
- R: It certainly seemed to have been fairly close to the truth in that, in its description of the back-channel stuff.
- Z: That's right. That part is accurate. And its accurate to the extent that it puts across the bureaucratic ~~xxx~~ maneuvering. But Kissinger is always the good guy, the JCS is always the bad guys, defense is always the bad guys, yet the, kind of the bottom line in my whole message about what's going on in the strategic business and in the conventional maritime business is that the President and Kissinger haven't really leveled with the Congress or the people about what the true situation is. Early on, in my contacts with the President when I was in the Sixth Fleet right after the Jordan crisis, waned, I laid out for him and a group of people at this point about the maritime balance, what the outcomes would have been if we had to go to war in support of Israel, or Jordan in September 1970. And I demonstrated to him that there