

The Ambience of the Presidential Briefing

The two formal briefings for the President's annual budget, during my four year tour, occurred in 1970 and then again in 1971. In 1972 the Chiefs were not permitted to see the President during the budget lock-up period because of his preoccupation with winding down the war. And in 1973 the President was in the middle of the Watergate disaster and ^{it} was therefore arranged that he would have breakfast with the Chiefs along with Secretaries Schlesinger and Clements, Secretary Kissenger and General Hague. The method here being designed to be one to try to give the President a little relaxation from the pressures rather than any real effort formally to brief him. With regard to the first two briefings, they took place in the Cabinet room. The attendance was always limited to the five members of the JCS, the Secretary of Defense and Deputy Secretary of Defense, Secretary Kissenger, General Hague, and Secretary Rodgers. Vice President Agnew attended the first ~~two~~ of these two, I believe, but, ^{I think} not the second. The Cabinet room is a large one with the special table, broad in the middle and tapered a little toward each end around which Cabinet members have frequently been pictured sitting. Individual members of the Joint Chiefs arrived with brief cases carrying the papers to be passed out

to each of the members there, each of the attendees, in ordered that the briefing could be followed. The atmosphere was one of restraint and formality, all attendance rising with the entrance of the President. The President proceeding somewhat regally to his seat at the head of the table. The attendees being seated, the Secretary of Defense, Mel Laird, on both occasions introducing the subject with brief comments. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Admiral Moorer, speaking to the overall military balance and then the individual Chiefs proceeding with the details of their service objectives, plans, and programs. There was very little exchange of views involved. The President listened to the Chiefs on each occasion, asked them an occasional desaltory question and then at the end and sometimes a bit during the interruptions that he would make would deal with the big international picture. One had the impression on each occasion that he had been well pre-briefed by Henry Kissenger and Al Hague and that the meeting was more of a "happening" than it was for the purpose of really making the President knowledgeable of all our views or for the purpose of enlarging his familiarity with our problems. It had the appearance of being staged for affect rather than a working session for the Commander in Chief to get himself on top of the affairs

of the Armed Services. That is not to say, however, that the President did not demonstrate a good grasp of the basic facts of the relationship between ourselves and the Soviets in a military sense, as my discussion with him in the Sixth Fleet and upon my return from the Sixth Fleet have demonstrated.

Visits to and from CNO's

This is a note to Bob. Start out with the discussion of the exchanges of visits which ^{Moore had} ~~moves ahead~~ in her speech to the wives at Greenbriar. ^{Then to the Secretary} Then the following can be added to that.

One specific example of the way in which the contacts between Navy Chiefs were strengthened is that ^{during} ~~following~~ each visit or contact I made a specific proposal that we initiate exchanges of personal correspondence and then followed up. This meant that over the course of the first year we had established correspondence contact with almost every free world Navy on a Chief to Chief basis. The frequency depended upon the nature of the relationship, the size of the Navy, and the urgency of problems but in all cases it was tailored appropriately. These exchanges of correspondence served further to warm the association which may have

begun at the International Sea Power Symposium or during visits by me to the foreign Navy Chief overseas or by him to visit me in this country. Let me now describe an example of the way in which these ties were used. During that period when it looked as though there was a real prospect that Malta would eliminate any access by the free world to Malta and more ominously ⁶⁰ though she might reach the point where Soviet vessels could begin to have access, I watched carefully the positions of the governments of our NATO allies with regard to doing those things necessary to insure that Mentoff was given every opportunity to keep his orientation

^{and} to the west. Two governments within the NATO alliance appeared embarked upon policy decisions that would fail to support NATO efforts with regard to Malta. I cleared with the State Department the idea of my initiating personal ^{entreaties} ~~entries~~ to the senior naval person in these two countries to enlist his support within his own government to make these policy decisions come out right ~~and then maybe some treaties~~. In both cases we saw a rather pronounced shift in the policy of the governments in part, I think, the result of this initiative. (Note to Bob: the two countries involved were Holland where I dealt with ^{Vice} Admiral Johnnie Maas, the Dutch Chief of Naval Operations and Norway where I dealt with Admiral Folke Johanesson

but I would be a little reluctant to finger them cause I don't know whether they cleared their initiatives within their own government. However Johnnie Maas is now dead and Johansson is retired and living in England so I'm open for reclama on this) These associations with Navy Chiefs were one of the most rewarding aspects of the job. Mosa and I became very close to a large number of the Navy Chiefs and their wives and have retained ties of friendship carried over into retirement on both sides.

The Budget Briefing for the President

During any four year term, a Chief of Naval Operations must rustle in a major way with the problems of six fiscal year budgets. When I assumed office on 1 July 1970, the Navy had just completed the fiscal year 1970 but there were, as always, major fiscal problems remaining to be resolved during the beginning months of the next fiscal year and therefore early in my tenure I had to make decisions concerning accounts carried over from that fiscal year. At the same time Congress was still in the process of enacting the authorization bills and the appropriation bills for the fiscal year 71 which had already begun on the 1st I assumed office and it was to be several months as has traditionally been

the case in recent years as government has gotten more complex and Congress has failed to streamline it's procedures before there would be monies available for the fiscal year upon which we were embarked and this meant that there were an additional set of management problems with which I must deal using money in the fiscal year 71 under the authority of the continuing resolution which Congress traditionally provides when they have failed to complete the appropriation process in time, namely authority to expend at the rate of last year's budget. This, of course, creates major problems because there are some programs, which in the new fiscal year are being reduced and other programs which one wants to increase as soon as Congress authorizes them and appropriates the money and ⁱⁿ both of these cases programs are therefore carried on at an artificial rate until money is available and this makes for major financial headaches. At that same period I had to begin to shepherd within the Navy the decisions in connection with the budget year fiscal year 72 period. The first gross cut at this budget, by me, had hardly been completed when it became necessary for the JCS to meet with the President on the budget in August of 1970 to discuss the fiscal year 72 budget

which would have to be submitted to the President in a formal way by December of that year and which he in turn ~~now~~ would send to the Congress in January of 1971 in order that the fiscal year 72 budget could in theory be acted on (as I said earlier it never was) by 1 July of 1972. My notes show that immediately prior to this meeting with the President the Secretary of Defense, Mel Laird, provided guidance as follows (here I have to go to the notes of a sec def staff meeting *was to JG my* which I reviewed recently.) Note to Bob Rice - there's a facinating little memory jogger on a sec nav meeting note of September the second (year probably 1970) about Sigmund in the Congo now which has quite a story with regard to Kissenger and President Mabootu on which I need to do additional research. It involved the effort of Kissenger to keep sec def out out of what he was doing. Following my quotation from the notes of the sec def meeting I need to refer to the sec nav writeup of what he told the President, his secretaries meeting with the President, and then my own writeup of my briefing with the President. This then has to be followed by the writeup of what I think I've already dictated (Bob, goose me if I'm wrong) concerning the Hage - Westmoreland knifing. }

Re: Robinson Re: Hague Chewing

It was Rear Admiral Re: Robinson, Kissinger's JCS liason officer, who reported to me that following my August 1970 briefing to the President General Westmoreland sent for Hague and proceeded to read him out for not having alerted him that Zumwalt was going to give the kind of briefing he did and because Zumwalt ran three minutes over his allotted twelve. Robinson said that Hague came back visibly shaken and chastened and told him from now on as far as I'm concerned it's "war against the Navy".

Addition to "The Summons" Chapter

Note to Bob - There is one piece of information that may be of interest that hasn't been worked into the bits and pieces on the summons chapter. I have recorded that there was detached on 15 May in Saigon and I reported the meandering trip home and the final two weeks of the review of studies which led to my probabilities. However, between the return home and the commencement of that final two weeks the following episode transpired. My wife and two daughters and I after returning to the United States where I spoke at the graduation commissioning of my second son,

Jim Zurwalt, who was commissioned at that time an Ensign in the Navy, a brief return to Washington, went to Bermuda for what was to have been a couple of weeks vacation. After a few days I came down with an intestinal bug sufficiently serious that the doctors there thought I should return to Washington (actually my first date with the doctors in Bermuda was the result of an allergic reaction to some Iomatol pills that I had taken to slow down the diarrhea but on further interrogation of my condition the doctors concluded I should go back to Bethesda to see whether I had something more exotic wrong with me. I was a very sick guy when I got back to Washington and I went directly to Bethesda where I was turned in for several days. Tests there demonstrated that I had contracted in Southeast Asia and had been suffering probably for several months from a bug known as Giardia Lambda. I was out of the hospital in a few days and able to do those final two weeks of studies of fleet exercises and analysis but remained physically under the weather for seven months after assuming office. When I reported this to my second Vice Chief some six months later after it was behind me and as he looked back on what we had turned over in those first six months he smiled and said thank God you weren't feeling well. Incidentally, Bob, this could be beefed up if it's of sufficient

human interest. The allergenic reaction to the lomitol was sufficient that when I got to the hospital at the Naval Air Station, ^{Bermd}~~Bethesda~~, they thought I might be having a heart attack and as a result of that and their subsequent mistification as to what the root cause of my difficulties was as I returned to Washington I had the sinking sensation that after all these years of striving for a goal and having been appointed to the top slot now, for physical reasons I might ~~not~~ never get there.

Meeting in PHN Office with Rickover

Indicative of the meticulous approach to bureaucratic control that Admiral Rickover has is the experience I had on returning to service in the Department of the Navy and as Executive Assistant to the newly confirmed Secretary of the Navy, Paul ^{the}Nixon in 1963. Soon after we were ensconced in the office, Admiral Rickover came in to establish contact with Paul ^{Nixon}~~Nixon~~. He walked in to the little cubbyhole off the reception area where the Executive Assistant to the Secretary of the Navy traditionally has had his desk and without any preliminaries walked up and said "now remember, Captain Burchett. I didn't reject you, you rejected me!"

By this he was, of course, referring to the fact that after the interview during which he had accepted me and my classmate, Ray Pete, as the two destroyer men who would go to the two nuclear jobs command of the nuclear frigate Bainbridge and Executive Officer of the nuclear cruiser Longbeach and after Ray Pete had been designated by Arlee Burke to take that job and after I had thereupon rejected the Executive Officer job on the Longbeach in favor of continuing with my then current orders to command the new guided missile frigate Dewey, It had been my free choice not to go to the "Rickover job". The impressive thing was that Admiral Rickover's bureaucratic system had kept track of this fact from the period 1959 and was able to reproduce it for him for use at exactly the right moment in 1962. Not many bureaucracies in Washington have this degree of corporate memory to this level of detail and it helps ^{in part} to explain the success of Admiral Rickover's system where ~~xxx~~ he and his principal assistants have continued in the same jobs for now nearly two decades.

Note to Bob Rice - One additional sentence should be added to the information on page 14 of the Irwin debate in Senator Johnston's office and that is the sentence that explains a number of the Senators indicated to me afterwards - -

I should add another sentence saying Senator Jackson told me that the information that came to him was that Doctor Scholvil had been well defeated in this debate.

**Rickover Antidote

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A Rickover Antidote

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JOB Mitsa quite a pitch on how well he ran his organization and how freely he
here

encouraged decent and debate within it and what a wonderful adversary process he maintained. He said that he would like to demonstrate this by sending over a

couple of his top people to talk to the Secretary, to give him some insight as to the way in which they operated. A few days later Admiral Rickover made arrangements

to have two superb officers, both of whom were in training for future command of the nuclear carrier Enterprise, to meet with Paul Mitsa. These were my classmate

Jimmy Holloway, who was later to relieve me as Chief of Naval Operations, and

Forrest Peterson, who was a little more junior, but has subsequently also become

a flag officer. These officers came in and in essence supported the story that the

Secretary had been given by Admiral Rickover. As they left, Admiral Holloway took

me aside and said I've now carried out my orders from Admiral Rickover which were to

do exactly what we have just said, but Admiral Rickover didn't tell me that I

had to lie to you. Be sure that the Secretary knows that what we said to him was what we were told to say to him and that obviously the Rickover system works differently than we described it.

Antidote Number Two on Rickover

When I came to the office of the Secretary of the Navy to work for Paul Nitsa, those who were still there were still talking about an episode that happened when Secretary Korth, who was Mr. Nitsa's immediate predecessor in the job of Secretary of the Navy, had been there. The story goes that Admiral Rickover was involved in a series of vendettas with the superb Chief of Naval Personnel, Vice Admiral William R. Smedburg, who was a great fighter for the interests of people and who found himself constantly in conflict with Admiral Rickover who put people a distinct second. Many of these issues could not be resolved ~~by~~ between them and now indeed by the Chief of Naval Operations since Admiral Rickover always insisted in escalating the issues to a higher level and therefore Mr. Korth found himself much too frequently involved in resolving arguments between Admiral Smedburg and Admiral Rickover. The story goes that on one occasion, having had a belly full, Fred Korth sent for both Admirals, cleared

out all members of the Secretary's staff, closed the door and proceeded to chew both of them out in the tallest Texan tradition with ample use of four letter words. The members of ~~C~~orth's staff who were listening outside the door heard the general thrust which was that Fred ~~C~~orth was sick and tired of having to resolve arguments between the two that should be resolved at their level, that he didn't expect to have any more troubles kicked upstairs to him, that this was the last time he expected to see either one of them in his presence to resolve such issues and then summarily dismissed them. As they walked across the reception room toward the Pentagon corridor, Admiral Smedburg was heard to mutter to Admiral Rickover "I've never been talked to by anybody in my life like that." Whereupon Admiral Rickover, quick as a flash, turned to Admiral Smedburg and said "You deserved it." Admiral Rickover, who is all business when dealing with his male counterparts has a common human foible in that he loves to do a little innocent flirting with the female sex. I've heard any number of women, including my own beloved wife, say that they have found him to be a very charming dinner partner. He, also, on occasion, can be rather sadistic with the other sex. I observed the following on one occasion when I was working in the office of the Secretary.

Admiral Rickover came in to call on the Under Secretary, who had a very attractive female Marine working for him. Admiral Rickover walked over to her and said innocently I understand that a common nickname for you lady Marines is Bam, can you tell me what this means? (Admiral Rickover knowing full well that it stood for broad assed Marine.) The attractive young lady blushed and said she didn't know. Admiral Rickover persisted two or three times enjoying her embarrassment. He then walked over to a male Yeomen who was standing nearby and said you surely know what it means, why don't you tell her? The yeomen looked at Admiral innocently and said yes, sir, it means beautiful American Marine.¹ Thereby presenting Admiral Rickover with the only put down I have ever seen effectively delivered.

^{#3}
Another Antidote about Admiral Rickover

When the Navy was in the process of putting it's plan together for the production of the Trident submarine, it was necessary that the facilities at the Electric Boat Company were going to have to be expanded in order to provide adequate drydock facilities to do both the Trident construction and to continue the construction of nuclear propelled attack submarines. Admiral

Rickover negotiated a verbal agreement with the Electric Boat Company as to how this might be done and then put it forward to his Navy superior, Admiral Isack G. Kidd, who was Chief of Naval Materiel. Admiral Kidd had serious reservations about the legality of the arrangement that Admiral Rickover was proposing and after I examined and like, I shared his concern and therefore declined to forward the proposal up the line until the legalities had been resolved by a restructured arrangement. However, during the period that I was serving as a stumbling block, I received a call from Senator Pastory, always a great supporter of Admiral Rickover's, but a man who also was able to see the big picture and the best interests of the Navy and the country. He was, however, concerned and had undoubtedly been lead to be concerned by the impact of the delay on the employment opportunities for his state, since many of the citizens of Rhode Island were employees of Electric Boat. I explained to Senator Pastory what the circumstances were and he accepted with alacrity the need to wring out the legalities and be sure that we were in a good sound posture. I then called Admiral Rickover, who had unquestionably positioned Senator Pastory's call and he, of course, innocently denied any contact.

Another Vinvet on Rickover

When I was Director of Systems Analysis, I was asked to do a Major Fleet Escort study as a result of great concern that I had expressed about the lack of adequate numbers of Fleet Escorts. This study was carried out over a period of several months by an ~~ad hoc~~ ^{ad hoc} group put together from various sources and headed by Captain Mark Gantar, who did a remarkable job and it was apparent that the study done with great care and balance was going to demonstrate that number of Major Fleet Escorts currently on hand ~~was~~ ^{or} being procured was inadequate. When the study was nearly completed, Admiral Rickover called one of the officers who was on this study group, a Captain Forrest Peterson, who had been given nuclear training and was to become the Commanding Officer of the nuclear carrier Enterprise. He made it quite clear to Captain Peterson that if he expected to have a future in the Nuclear Navy, there had better be some support in the Major Fleet Escort study for nuclear propulsion. Captain Peterson, who is a very honest and straightforward person, consulted with me. I suggested that he report this also to my boss, Vice Admiral Heath Holmes, then Navy's Director of Program Planning and later to be Commander in Chief of the Atlantic Fleet. It was perfectly obvious that Admiral Rickover would go to Admiral Holmes next.

Admiral Peterson did so and having covered our six o'clock to this extent, we then sat down to see how best to deal with the new problem. It was perfectly apparent that it was too late to redo the Major Fleet Escort study and that it would not have been appropriate to do so, so we concluded that the best course of action was to initiate as a subsequent piece of work, a study called the "Endurance Supplement" to the Major Fleet Escort study and I decided to put Captain Peterson in charge of this. This, then, gave him the opportunity to report back to Admiral Rickover that he had been successful in having some impact, so that Captain Peterson could survive for what subsequently became a very fine career in the Nuclear Navy and it also seemed to both of us that it would be useful to have the advantage of this additional analysis. The Major Endurance Supplement did justify that some nineteen escorts for nuclear carriers that were then visualized were probably required and that all other escorts probably ought to be nonnuclear propelled. However, the extent to which it was necessary to make assumption after assumption in favor of nuclear propulsion in order to come to this conclusion lead me, convincingly, to question whether or not even that number of nuclear escorts were really justified giving the extremely high costs of construction and whether or not the Navy could afford to give up the large

number of conventional escorts that it would have to give up in order to have the smaller number of nuclear propelled escorts has remained a very serious question in my mind. Indeed, I believe that the truth of the matter is quite convincingly that numbers of platforms from which to defend against air, cruise missile, and submarine attack, play so much greater a role in the capabilities of all our task forces to survive than does the additional efficiency of nuclear propulsion in a smaller number of escorts that it is quite clear that the Rickover lobby has done great harm to the Navy in maintaining it's capability to deal with the Soviet threat.

A Trip to See Vinson

In November (about 20 November) I organized a trip to visit the distinguished former Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, Carl Vinson, who was then 89, still living in his old home town of Millidgeville, Georgia. Mel Laird had suggested this trip. He had had a father to son relationship with Carl Vinson when they both served in the House and ^{that is how} he knew one of the major factors in Eddie Hebert's decision to hold hearings on the Navy's racial incidents was that Carl Vinson had phoned Eddie Hebert from Georgia expressing great concern about what was going on in the Navy. Mel

Laird thought that it would be helpful if I went down and chatted with the old gentleman. This seemed to me to be eminently sensible. I had known Carl Vinson when he was the Chairman and had observed with fascination as he ran his committee in hearings like a benevolent tyrant. He had been Chairman of the old Naval Affairs Committee before the several military committees were merged into a single one to become the House Armed Services Committee, the Chairmanship of which he then inherited. During his nearly fifty years in Congress, he had come to cherish the Navy as practically his own private institution and he watched over it throughout his tenure on the hill like a mother hen. Both Mendall Rivers and Eddie Hebert had told me that even in retirement Carl Vinson retained a very active interest in their affairs and both tenderly referred to him as still the Defacto Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee as he would call them up from time to time insisting that they must do this or must do that and the reverence they had for him was such that they always tried to do so. So it was clear that Carl Vinson was a key player with regard to these hearings. I suggested to the Secretary of the Navy John Warner that he consider going down with me and he agreed to do so. I invited the previous Chairman, Eddie Hebert to travel, too, and he did. On _____ November

1972 we flew to _____, Georgia, the airport nearest to Millageville. Carl Vinson met us at the airport with his housekeeper. He, obviously had not changed a bit from the benevolent tyranny with which he used to run things when on the hill. He directed the Secretary of the Navy, John Warner, to ride with him in one car and directed Chairman Hebert and me to ride in the second car driven by a Navy recruiter Carl Vinson had summoned to perform. We drove to the home of his housekeeper (I need to get this name) where lunch was to be served. There was a very pleasant pre-lunch period during which Carl Vinson reminisced at great length. I reminded him that I had been with Paul Nitsa when we drove him to the Naval Academy graduation in 1965 (I think) where Carl Vinson gave the graduation address as one of his final acts before leaving Congress. I reminded him that he had told me on that trip that whenever he was going to have a hearing in which he really wanted to cut somebody up he would put Congressman Eddie Hebert on it and that if he was even madder than that he would put Porter Hardy on the subcommittee with Eddie Hebert and that if he was really out to get somebody, he would make it a three man subcommittee and add Daniel Rivers to it. He had said that those three were the meanest members of his committee and he could really count on them to go to work on whoever was the object

of the hearings. I said somewhat ^{quietly} ~~lightly~~ that at this point in 1972, seven years later, I hoped that Eddie Hebert was not resorting to the same technique in the way in which he had set up the Hicks subcommittee. Carl Vinson grinned with appreciation and winked at Eddie Hebert from which I gathered that a similar synario was visualized. Carl Vinson regaled us with stories going back many years. He recalled how he had been the one who had insisted that the Naval Petroleum Reserve be protected by statute and had authored the legislation which required that Naval Petroleum Reserves be maintained for the private use of the Navy in war time. He said that later on there had been a major effort to regain these lands for use by commercial interests and that he had had to compromise a little in winning the fight, as a result of which the oil reserves were now held by statute for use in a national emergency but not exclusively for the Navy. He scolded Eddie Hebert a bit about the on going efforts on the part of the oil industry to get access to the Navy Petroleum Reserves and Eddie Hebert assured him like a son assuring a father that no changes would be put through the Congress as long as he remained Chairman of the Committee (a commitment upon which Eddie Hebert has contined to deliver). During the course of this pre-arranged conversation, Carl Vinson, like the smooth and efficient maestro he is, got

each of the three principals off in a corner and had a private session with us.

John Warner did not pass on the conversation that he had. Eddie Hebert reported that the Chairman counseled him to give the Navy a good scrubbing on this one and make sure that everything was under control and also urged him to insure that the Navy's budget was adequate. With me Carl Vinson asked a series of rapid fire questions about the Navy situation in general to which I gave ~~possibly~~ equally rapid fire answers. In a period of about five minutes I would estimate that we covered fifteen or twenty such issues as the Ex Chairman sought to plum the nature of the difficulties. The questions became, I thought, friendlier and friendlier as time went on and in the end he then shifted abruptly to probe a little bit as to whether the Committee (the House Armed Services Committee being the only one to which either party could possibly be giving consideration) was doing enough to support the Navy's budget. I reported to Mr. Vinson that the House Armed Services Committee each year cut us a bit but that they were the least harmful of the four committees and most concerned of the four about the rapid ~~expanding of the Soviet~~ ^{by} ~~expanding of the Soviet~~ growth of the Soviet Navy and what this meant with regard to our own decreasing capability to perform our mission. At this point, Carl Vinson

became quite animated, asked a number of questions about the Soviet threat and ended up asking for additional material with which to study up on the matter. I provided him with material when I returned to Washington. Suddenly, as though satisfied, Carl Vinson directed that we all sit down to lunch. Lunch was devoted exclusively to a series of reminiscences again or general questions in keeping with the old southern tradition of not getting any business done during lunch. Carl Vinson broke the lunch up promptly at the appointed time, knowing of our commitment to make the plane, managed to have a little private session again with each of the three of us before we left the house and marshalled us ~~with a great big mitty in a~~ ~~palm~~ back to the airplane where we all agreed that it had been a most fascinating performance and experience. One of the things that seemed to please Mr. Vinson the most was when I let him know that it was Mel Laird's suggestion that