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Bush, Eisenhower Critiques Draw Opposite Reactions in Pentagon

By Earl H. Voss

Two prominent Americans with long experience in our defense establishment have made some pretty harsh comments recently about "confusion" in the Pentagon. One is Presidential Candidate Dwight D. Eisenhower, former Army Chief of Staff and member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The other is Dr. Vannevar Bush, head of the military's wartime research programs.

There is an obvious difference in the two men's attitudes to this "confusion." The general is eager to find political implications, while Dr. Bush is at great pains to avoid them. Ike tries to blame the Democrats for what he finds wrong, while at the same time half-heartedly absolving his friends in the Defense Department. Dr. Bush, on the other hand, says repeatedly he intends to attack no one, and that "members of both parties have been about equally involved in the development of the laws and procedures under which our planning is conducted."

In three significant areas, however, Gen. Eisenhower's criticisms of Pentagon operations parallel those of Dr. Bush:

1 Both think civilian influence in the military establishment should be increased

2 Both call for a clearer demarcation of lines of authority.

3 Both believe the National Security Council has not been as effective as it could be.

Indications are that all of these points will be brought before the 83d Congress which convenes next January. What some believe to be a long overdue shakeup in the Defense establishment's organizational setup may be at hand.

Bipartisan Commission

Gen. Eisenhower's plans for increasing civilian influence were outlined in his speech at Baltimore recently. He proposes selection of a bipartisan civilian commission next January to revamp the Defense Department. He also wants more civilians to be full-time planners on the National Security Council, and more civilians to aid in weapons development.

Dr. Bush, speaking in Rochester, Minn., remarked that the Joint Chiefs of Staff need but do not seek or get competent, disinterested professional advice in science, business or human relations.

As for lines of authority, Dr. Bush observes that "the control by the civilian secretaries is to some extent circumvented because of the dual role—command and advisory—of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Dr. Bush also charged that the JCS "dips into matters it should avoid." To eliminate this "confusion," Dr. Bush recommends that the JCS be taken out of the line of command and made strictly advisory to the Defense Secretary; that all orders be transmitted to the commanders of the Army, Navy and Air Force through the civilian secretaries, and that overseas commanders be appointed by and responsible to the President and the Defense Secretary. Dr. Bush also thinks it would be better to discontinue the practice of allowing one man to serve not only on the JCS but also as Chief of Staff for his branch of service. He



Dr. Vannevar Bush.

said separating these duties would help to make a clean break between advisory and command functions and strengthen the civilian authority.

Eisenhower's Blast

While Gen. Eisenhower was less specific, he also scored the "failure to establish clean-cut lines of authority." He charged that the three services are "still going their separate ways" and deplored the inability of the "over-all defense staff," presumably the civilian secretaries, to "enforce corrective action."

On the matter of the National Security Council it was Gen. Eisenhower who was the more specific. Dr. Bush merely commented that while it was a "wise move" to establish the council, it "does not as yet work with full effectiveness." Ike was more severe. He said the council's high-level planning "has failed time and again these last years." Eisenhower believes that the members of the council (the President, the Secretaries of State and Defense, and the chairman of the National Security Resources Board) are too burdened with other duties to plan effectively. He recommends the board be expanded to include full-time civilian planners.

Further Criticisms

Gen. Eisenhower made many more stinging criticisms of the defense establishment in his Baltimore speech. The Pentagon has noted all of them, but plays a pretty cagey game in rebuttal. Most Defense Department people seem to be irritated by Ike the politician as differentiated from Ike the general. They obviously feel that some of the general's criticisms come with little grace considering the prominent part Eisenhower himself played in military planning until 1949.

Here are some of the things Ike had to say about his old cronies' records:

1. Our defense program has

suffered from lack of farsighted direction.

2. Real unification of our armed forces is yet to be achieved.

3. Our defense program need not and must not push us steadily toward economic collapse. (This seems to imply that it is pushing us in that direction now.)

4. The largest savings in the budget can and must be made in our \$60 billion defense budget without reduction of defensive power.

5. He wants to get help from civilian leaders—business, labor and professional—"who really know their jobs."

6. Service disagreements have been allowed to become "public brawls."

7. This country needs a "realistic weapons program" with special emphasis on "simplicity in design."

Many anonymous Pentagon officials wonder how Gen. Eisenhower can avoid sharing some of the responsibility for whatever lack of farsightedness there has been. He was Army Chief of Staff until 1948, and then served as presiding officer of the Joint Chiefs of Staff well into 1949, after he became president of Columbia University. In 1949, the then Defense Secretary Louis Johnson sent him a letter of thanks for the "difficult and diligent work which you and the chiefs have been doing on the 1951 budget."

Others had thought that Gen. Eisenhower approved the Lovett approach to unification, that is, the "solid" way of seeking voluntary co-operation by the services even though this is slower than knocking heads together.

Secretary Lovett likes to remind people of the special circumstances under which unification is being achieved.

As Mr. Lovett points out, we are fighting a war in Korea, mobilizing and training manpower, demobilizing trained troops through rotation, expanding the industrial mobilization base, pro-

viding weapons for today and developing new ones for the future, assisting our allies and avoiding too heavy a drain on the civilian economy. All this is happening at the same time. Each one of these objectives could be considered of more immediate concern than unification. The Defense Department has consistently taken the position that the transition to unification should not be allowed to cripple the country's defenses, implying that the speed some suggest would do more harm than good. In the procurement field, Secretary Lovett estimates that 75 per cent of the services' buying is now done under a unified system. He adds that he doubts whether complete unification would result in more efficiency or effectiveness.

Change of Heart

Gen. Eisenhower's emphasis on civilian advice amuses some Pentagon old-timers who remember his opposite sympathies at the time he retired as Army Chief of Staff. Actually, extensive use already is being made of civilian advice. For instance, there are 12 industry advisory committees and 24 subcommittees—all civilian—in the Munitions Board. The 14 committees which advise the Research and Development Board are predominantly civilian. And the Secretary of Defense is now ap-

pointing two more civilian committees to study means of economizing on manpower and to recommend a new schedule of hazardous-duty pay.

In contrast to the Pentagon reception of Ike's criticisms, there is a noticeably friendlier attitude toward Dr. Bush's remarks. In his Rochester talk, Dr. Bush set down six general-ly accepted principles of organization, many of which he said are being violated in the top levels of our defense establishment.

1. The military organization in our democracy must be subordinate to the civilian authority.

2. Authority and responsibility must go together.

3. There is need of staff for advice and there is need for a line of command. These elements must be kept separate. Parallel lines of command must be avoided.

4. Any person carrying enormous responsibility must have available prompt advice from a competent, loyal staff and must be able to issue his orders through subordinates of his own choosing.

5. The entire organization should focus in the Commander-in-Chief, execute his decisions and carry out his delegations.

6. The effectiveness of functioning should be reviewed by

selected representatives, who control the public purse, who insure that the organization is well manned and works well, but who do not superimpose their judgment on that of professional men.

Agreement With Bush

These are points on which many Defense Department officials can agree. The pressure to revise the organization setup in the Pentagon is building up rapidly, both on the inside and the outside. The department is known to be studying legislative revisions in the National Security Act now.

Before Secretary Lovett leaves the department in January he is sure to go on record with recommendations for improving the gigantic operation he has headed now for more than a year. The "old pros" around the Pentagon who claim that Lovett has been the "best" Secretary of Defense so far are certain that he will have some constructive suggestions for tightening up the organizational structure.

No doubt Secretary Lovett, in his final report, also will have words of caution for super-critical Congressmen, as Dr. Bush did. Trying to keep the "people's representatives" from second-guessing the experts, however, is sticking at a national pastime at best as well established as baseball.