Introduction

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An examination of the role of the Department of Defence in policy-making relating to Vietnam necessitates at the outset the formulation of an analytical approach to serve as a frame of reference for the subsequent discussion. The present study is concerned with a situation in which US foreign policy in respect of Vietnam was part of national security policy. Policy-making in such a context is a very complex process. In the United States the issue has attracted many eminent scholars of international politics; some of them had direct experience of decision-making on foreign and national security policy. The present writer is a beginner in the academic study of the field and has had no direct acquaintance with the policy-making process even in his own country. He is acutely conscious of the limitations in his equipment and experience in undertaking the exercise.

For a long time one of the predominant assumptions in writings on international politics had been that the state was the actor in international politics. In recent years some foreign policy analysts have come forth with new approaches. They maintain that more than the state, the internal variables like the decision-making organization and the governmental players play an important role in foreign policy-making. While the former approach almost completely ignores the internal dynamics, the latter approaches, to a considerable extent, minimize the role of the state in influencing the formulation of foreign policy. The
three main models of decision-making on foreign policy may first be briefly discussed before outlining the proposed framework.

1. **Rational Actor Model or "Black Box" Model**

   The traditional approach to the study of international relation is described by some commentators as Rational Actor Model, or the "Black Box Model." Some others call it systemic level of analysis. This model is exemplified by the works of scholars like Hans Morgenthau, Arnold Wolfers, Thomas Schelling, and Herman Kahn, and in some writings and speeches of Henry Kissinger.

   Morgenthau holds, "The first World War had its origins exclusively in the fear of a disturbance of the European balance of power." He explains the behaviour of actors by using a "rational outline." This method, Morgenthau says, "provides for rational discipline in action and creates that astounding continuity in foreign policy which makes American, British, or Russian foreign policy appear as an intelligible, rational continuum regardless of the different motives, preferences, and intellectual

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1 This classification is primarily inspired by Kenneth N. Waltz's "three images" in *Man, the State and War* (New York, 1959); Graham T. Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston, Mass., 1971); and J.D. Singer, "The Level of Analysis Problem in International Relations," *World Politics* (Princeton), vol. 14, no. 1, October 1961, pp. 80-81.


3 Ibid., p. 5.
and moral qualities of successive statesmen." 4 Kissinger's Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy, and Kahn's On Escalation are two other applications of the Rational Actor Model. Wolfers, in his essay "The Actors in International Politics," while taking note of the two new approaches—"minds of men theory" and the decision-making approach—reverts back to the traditional approach—"states-as-the-sole-actors" approach to international politics. He asserts that the "state-as-the-sole-actor" model would best predict the behaviour of states.

What are the basic ingredients of this model? Who are the units? What is "rationality" about this model? These are some of the questions which call for further examination.

This model assumes that the nation-state is the basic unit. (It would, however, be unfair to state that the writers mentioned above treat the state just as an abstract entity and are oblivious of the fact that decisions are actually made by human beings. It would reasonable to argue that they reckon with the fact that human actors are decision-makers, but they do not attach much significance to the various internal dynamics as influencing the decision-making process.) The state is a sub-

4 Ibid., p. 6.

5 Henry Kissinger, Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy (New York, 1957); and Herman Kahn, On Escalation (New York, 1965).

system within an international system. There is continuous interaction between the sub-systems, and "balance of power" is the mechanism by which the equilibrium of the system is maintained. As Spykman puts it, "Equilibrium is balanced power, and balanced power is neutralized power." Thus, each action of a state is in response to some action from outside.

This approach does not take notice of the domestic structure of a state. It is not concerned with any internal variance within a state. In other words, it assumes that whatever happens inside the "box" will not affect the behaviour of the actor. This model, therefore, is also known as the "Black Box" Model. To quote McClelland, "...The international system is an expanding version of the notion of two-actors-in-interaction.... Interaction analysis focuses on the outputs of national systems. The national systems, themselves, are black-boxed."

Thus, the Rational Actor Model assumes the state as the


The "balance of power" concept may relevantly be compared with "homeostasis" theory in biological sciences and Galbraith's concept of "countervailing power" in Economics.

9 McClelland, n. 7, p. 20.
basic unit. The state is conceived to be a rational, unitary decision-maker. It has certain broad goals like national security and national interest. For realizing its objectives, various courses of action which will produce a series of consequences are considered. The state makes a rational choice which is value-maximizing. So it has to select the alternative whose consequence ranks highest in term of realizing the main goal.

2. **Organizational Process Model**

This model is based on the assumption that happenings are the outcome of organizational processes. The way information moves inside an organization and the way it reaches a decision-maker will have some bearing on his decisions. Another assumption of this model is that the rules and habits that grow up within an organization will affect the way the decisions are made within that organization.

Organization means the system of activities and the structure of relationships. The activities and relationships will primarily be the outputs of formal rules governing the allocation of power and responsibility, and the flow of information in the organization. An actor tends to take a decision on the basis of his "definition of the situation," which, in its turn, would be

influenced by the nature and amount of information that would reach him. Hence decisions on foreign policy need to be studied in their organizational contexts.

The placement of an issue under the jurisdiction of an actor or a unit is of major significance. This may happen in two ways, namely, automatic assignment and negotiation. Some issues, because of their noncontroversial nature, may be conveniently assigned to the concerned decisional units. But there are some other issues which are of importance for more than one unit. This is especially true of foreign policy matters with implications for national and international security which are neither the exclusive domain of the State Department nor that of the Defence Department. Often other Departments too try to get into the act. It is thus not unusual that several decisional units quarrel amongst themselves regarding the jurisdiction of a foreign policy issue. Even within a unit, the subunits may squabble over the jurisdiction of an issue. In such cases the concerned units or subunits may negotiate with one another and reach some compromise. Snyder and others say:

...A quite different method of selection is negotiation in cases where no routine procedures exist or where new conditions require


12 Snyder, n. 10, p. 98.
a special procedure. Some of the great struggles within the total foreign policy-making structure are over **who will decide.** Negotiation may be simply a matter of "springing loose" the right officials for a particular task, or it may represent basic disagreement over the location of authority and power. 13

Each organization functions under certain rules. Some rules are statutorily prescribed and others are habitually and traditionally respected. The former are explicit and the latter, implicit. However, both the former and the latter, by and large, tend to evoke the same degree of compliance.

These rules provide, more or less, a fixed pattern. Information moves back and forth according to this pattern. In this sense, the organization is a "communication network" with a relatively fixed pattern of communication flow. This results in considerably limiting the range of choice of actors. In other words, 14 their "rationality" is "bounded." To use game jargon, the location of pieces on the chess-board is fixed and they have to be moved according to certain set rules. Thus, the choice of players is considerably limited in deciding their moves.

It is argued that an organization with more of explicit rules may not well adapt itself to crisis situations because of impediments put by these formalized and nagging procedures. This difficulty may perhaps be modified by prudent and selective

13 Ibid., p. 99; Emphasis in original.
"short-circuits." A more centralized and authoritarian organizational structure finds it possible to attempt "short circuits" with greater ease than a less centralized and authoritarian entity; but the relative advantage may not extend beyond a short-term time span.

The decisional unit or the actor gets back constant messages about the effect of the decision it or he takes. The actor would be knowing about the extent of success or failure of the decision taken in realizing the intended goal. Accordingly he would modify his subsequent decisions. To use the vocabulary of the communication theory, the inputs are subjected to constant modification in accordance with the "feedbacks" received about the outputs—information regarding their performance in term of realizing the goal.

The concept of "comprehensive rationality" as applied in the case of the "economic man" or "administrative man" states that individuals and organizations choose the best alternative, taking into account all the relevant information, and calculating the consequences of all possible alternatives of action, as helping the realization of the stated goal. But there are "practical limits to human rationality." Individual human beings are "limited in knowledge, foresight, skill, and time." Therefore, in general, the actor, instead of looking for the best move, stops,

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in his search, the moment he finds a "good enough" move. As Simon says, "the key to an effective solution appeared to lie in substituting the goal of satisficing, of finding a good enough move, for the goal of minimaxing, of finding the best move." Thus "satisficing," not maximizing, is by and large, the criterion for selecting one of several alternatives while taking a decision.

Past experiences are stored in organizations and standard responses are made in routine situations. When crises or some other situations develop where existing routine procedures prove to be inadequate or insufficient to deal with, a search for new options starts. But such a search would primarily be moving in the borderland of the existing alternatives because of the ease of calculating their consequences. In other words, "search simply builds incrementally on standard operating procedures" depending upon past cases to provide alternatives that may satisfy organizational goals. Allison observes:

If a nation performs an action of a certain type today, its organizational components must yesterday have been performing or have had established routines for performing an action only marginally different from today's action.... The best explanation of an organization's behavior at \( t \) at any specific point in time \( t \) is \( t - 1 \); the best prediction of what will happen at \( t + 1 \) is \( t \)...." 18

16 Simon, n. 14, p. 205.


18 Allison, n. 1, pp. 87-88.
Roberta Wohlstetter's study, *Pearl Harbor*, illustrates this point. The US Navy, in spite of having received clear signals that a Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor was imminent, did not behave on 7 December 1941 in a way which was much different from the way it had behaved on 6 December and other preceding days. This was due to the fact that the Navy's behaviour was a standard response based on established routines.

Bureaucracy is criticized as prone to inaction and inertia, and hostile to innovations. President John F. Kennedy reportedly assailed the State Department as a "bowl of jelly." Its failure to implement Kennedy's decision to close the missile bases in Turkey is a typical case in this regard. Several times, the President had ordered the State Department to talk to the Turkish Government to effect the withdrawal of the Jupiters from Turkey. But the State Department, after noticing Ankara's opposition to the proposal, dropped the idea. But it did not keep the President apprised of the latest development. Nor did it explore any other means of achieving the objective. It just slept over the matter.

The Organizational Process Model thus underscores the point that the location of an actor and the flow of information within an organization influence, to a great extent, the policy-making process. Moreover, it further points out that inertia and standard


operating procedures are significant features of any decision-making unit or subunit. In contrast to the Rational Actor Model, this model directs attention on the importance of internal dynamics. But it stops half-way. It is a partial explanation in the sense that it emphasizes only a few internal forces and ignores others. This lacuna is filled up by the Governmental Politics Model which will be discussed next.

3. Governmental Politics Model or Bureaucratic Politics Model

The "Black Box" Model is criticized on the ground that it does not take into account what happens inside the box. Once the box is opened, we may find that the process (of decision-making on foreign policy) is a very complex one. The output is the resultant of many stresses and strains interacting inside the box.

The proponents of the Governmental Politics Model state that the body charged with the task of making foreign policy is not homogeneous in its composition and nature. It consists of several units and subunits which tend to perceive issues more from the point of view of their parochial interests than that of the national interest. Halperin and Kanter say:

We believe that membership in the bureaucracy substantially determines the participants' perceptions and goals and directs their attention away from the international arena to intra-national, and especially intra-bureaucratic, concerns.... The bureaucratic perspective ... implies: (1) that change in the international environment is only one of several stimuli to which participants in the foreign policy process are
responding /it is possibly among the weakest and least important/; and (2) that events involving the actions of two or more nations can be best explained and predicted in terms of the actions of two or more national bureaucracies whose actions affect the domestic interests and objectives of the other bureaucracies involved. 21

As one of the determinants of foreign policy, "change in the international environment" is accorded the lowest place by Halperin. In other words, he underestimates the role of national interest, as perceived by a state in relation to another state in the formulation of foreign policy. On the other hand, he asserts that the equation between two or more national bureaucracies, that is, bureaucratic politics, would best explain the foreign policy of a country.

Richard E. Neustadt, one of the pioneers of the Bureaucratic Politics Model, says that the President of the United States is not as powerful in making foreign policy as he appears to be. He has to carry with him several agencies which may be fighting amongst themselves over a particular policy. The President and his advisers may often not see things from the same point of view. The President, of course, is constitutionally authorized to take a decision he likes in spite of the opposition of any department. But rarely does he do so. He often persuades his advisers to go

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with him. Neustadt says, "Presidential power is the power to persuade." He again observes:

Underneath our images of Presidents-in-boots, astride decisions, are the half-observed realities of Presidents-in-sneakers, stirrups in hand, trying to induce particular department heads, or Congressmen or Senators, to climb aboard. 23

According to Neustadt, the policy of a government is the result of the bargaining that goes on amongst the bureaucratic players and political personalities who collectively comprise its working apparatus.

Hilsman, whose works approximate to the Bureaucratic Politics Model, and who, like Neustadt, had served as a US government official, says that the decision-making process of foreign policy involves a series of concentric circles. The innermost or first circle, he says, is the President and the men in the different departments and agencies who must carry out the decision—staff men in the White House, the Secretaries of State and Defence who


bear responsibility for whatever the particular problem may be. The middle or second circle includes other departments of the Executive Branch, and other layers within the agencies and departments already involved. The third or outermost circle involves Congress, the press, interest groups, and--inevitably--the "attentive public."

In crisis situations, the decision-making is mostly confined to the innermost circle. But if the decision is somehow delayed, it is then likely to spill over to the next circle. If it prolongs very long and if the issues concerned are deemed vital and controversial, the concerned members of the middle circle manage to sneak into the scene, and the competitive groups in the first circle may seek their allies in the second and third circles. In other types of policy decisions, which Hilsman describes as "program policy" and "anticipatory policy," members of the outermost circle--especially Congress and press--play very useful roles.

Policy making is a slow, long process. It moves in a zig zag way. A decision is the outcome of a "series of incremental

26 "Attentive Public," according to Almond, is the segment of the public which is informed and interested in foreign policy problems, and which constitutes the audience for the foreign policy discussions among the elites.


It is the resultant of interaction amongst multiple players. Karl W. Deutsch says:

The making of foreign policy resembles a pinball machine game. Each interest group, each agency, each important official, legislator or national opinion leader, is in the position of a pin, while the emerging decision resembles end-point of the path of a steel ball bouncing down the board from pin to pin. No one pin will determine the outcome. Only the distribution of all the relevant pins on the board—for some or many pins may be so far out on the periphery as to be negligible—will determine the distribution of outcomes.... To ask of a government of a large nation who "really" runs is—presumably from behind the scenes—is usually as naive as asking which pin "really" determines the outcome of the pinball game. 29

Players differ in defining goals, objectives and means. They organize themselves into groups or blocs with more or less similar viewpoints. Each group wants to prevail upon the other. But, in the context of American situation, total victory may not be possible. Each group will be ready to accommodate the views of others without yielding too much. It will try to reduce its sacrifice to the minimum. This leads to negotiation. That means, they bargain for best possible outcome. There is a "strain toward

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agreement." What finally emerges is a compromise. Thus policy-making involves conflict, alliance-building, bargaining and cooperation. Hilsman aptly observes that policy making is a process of "conflict and consensus building." Huntington is probably right in saying that whereas the "locus" of decision is "executive," the process of decision (even in the Executive) is primarily "legislative."

Why is there conflict among players? Why do they differ in defining their goals and means? The "personality" of an actor and his "motives" get reflected in the decisions he takes. Here we are primarily concerned with a "sociological conception of personality." By that is meant, in the words of Snyder and others, "a social person whose 'personality' is shaped by his interactions with other actors and by his place in the system." This does not mean that the "personality" that a decision-maker may have developed before he joins his present post is irrelevant as a factor influencing his role in decision-making. He is a "culture-bearer." Because of his peculiar rearing pattern and learning

33 Snyder, n. 10, p. 161.
process, he has his own set of values. Each person comes to his position "with baggage in tow." His bags include his likes and dislikes, his commitments and values, and his various group loyalties and obligations. To go back to somebody's past experiences in order to ascertain his cultural background is not an easy task. It is therefore advisable to first look into his "personality" which is a product of his position in the organization and his interaction with others in that organization.

Once an actor heads or works in a particular organization, he tends to develop a sense of responsibility towards that organization. He feels inclined to safeguard and defend the interests of his organization vis-a-vis other competitive organizations. His advancement may well depend on the success of his organization. He has to take into account the views and interests of his subordinates. Thus he is likely to be influenced by "organizational parochialism." As has been aptly remarked, "Where you stand depends on where you sit," and "the face of the issue differs from seat to seat."

A decision-maker would also take into account the cross-currents of domestic politics. He has to keep in mind the direction in which the wind of public opinion blows. He would be keeping track of the results of various public opinion polls and the discussions in Congressional forums. His action is also likely to be affected by his deference to "shared images" dominant

34 Allison, n. 1, p. 166.
within the government. He would be generally cautious in challenging the perception of dominant participants in the decision-making process. In the beginning phase of the Cuban missile crisis, Robert McNamara argued that "a missile is a missile," and that in the overall content of Soviet missile power the presence of Russian missiles in Cuba hardly made a difference to the security of the United States. But he quickly discovered that this argument went against the widely shared view prevailing amongst the senior players that the installation of Russian missiles in Cuba posed a vital threat to the security of the US. McNamara too changed his tone fairly quickly. James C. Thomson who served both the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations and who was for some time an "insider" in relation to Vietnam, observes that several officials did not oppose the Vietnam policy because of their fear of challenging the widely shared image among dominant players of the "world responsibility" of the US for containing "international communism."

The decision-maker may also have in mind his own interests, both "positional" and "progressive." In other words, if he is

already at the top, he will try to stay where he is; if he is at a lower level, he will like to rise higher. Moreover, each player may simultaneously have several obligations. At the same time he has to serve many constituencies. For example, the Secretary of State, first, is the senior personal adviser to the President on foreign policy and political military issues related to foreign policy. Secondly, he is the colleague of the President's other senior advisers, whose jurisdiction may touch on matters having a bearing on foreign policy. Thirdly, he is the ranking US diplomat in negotiations with foreign powers. Fourthly, he is the chief spokesman of the President on issues relating to foreign policy before Congressional bodies. Next, he is Mr. State Department or Mr. Foreign Office for the community. But he is not one at one time and another at another time. He may have to fulfill many of his obligations simultaneously. When he wears one particular hat, he does not throw out other hats. These obligations may conflict with one another. An actor, because of these "cross-loyalties" may be found in different blocs on separate issues. Thus the process of conflict and consensus-building is a dynamic one. Finally, an actor may develop a stake in the outcome of a particular decision. The more he thinks that his prestige is involved with any decision, the more probably will he resist accommodation. All such variables are likely to influence the attitude of a participant in policy-making.

40 Neustadt, n. 22, p. 7.
All phases of policy-making may not necessarily involve conflicts. Players, in their own interests, may find it necessary at some point to reach some sort of consensus. But, at times, they fail to do so. In such cases, conflict occurs. How is a conflict resolved? What is the power a player uses? The power is bargaining power. This power has two facets. One is the skill of the player and the other is the skill of the opponent. The strength of his skill depends upon the quality of his opponent's skill.

Bargaining is an interaction dynamic. Each player, in deciding his move, takes into account the anticipated move of his opponent. Thus he has to predict the behaviour of his competitor. In other words, it is a game of "interdependent decision." Such games are primarily of two types, namely, zero-sum game and non-zero-sum game. In zero-sum game there are only two players whose interests are exactly opposite. In this game one player exactly wins the amount the other player loses and vice-versa. In other words, their payoffs always would add up to zero. A non-zero-sum game is played by two or more than two players and the gain by one is not necessarily the loss to others. All players may, at the same time, gain or lose. As has been aptly said, they may be "simultaneously advantaged or disadvantaged." Thus in the former


game, each player would be trying to score the "absolute score" or all the points, yielding not a single point to the opponent. In the latter game, each player would be aiming at the "maximum score." In other words, he would be prepared to concede a few points to his opponents. Non-zero-sum games are also known as the "mixed-motive" games. Such games involve elements such as communication, promise, threat, and more or less explicit or tacit bargaining.

But while treating decision-making as games, one has to bear in mind some important differences between them. Game theory assumes an actor as a black-box, ignoring psychological and behavioural attributes. Both game theory and Governmental Politics Model assume rationality. But rationality in the former is "comprehensive" whereas in the latter it is "limited." Tanter says that in game theory, goals are ranked, alternative courses of action formulated, consequences thereof calculated, and rational choice consists of selecting the alternative with maximum benefits. But in the Governmental Politics Model, actors are constrained by the lack of explicit ranking of choices, insufficient information


regarding alternatives and inadequate computational skills to calculate the consequences of each other.

Bureaucratic players go for consensus for several reasons. They fear that once an issue goes to the President because of the failure on their part to reach an agreement amongst themselves, they will, to a large degree, lose control over that issue. They suspect that it would help increase the influence of the White House staff in decision-making at the expense of departments and other federal agencies. Another motivation of the departments favouring a consensus is their concern for having a quick decision. One is not sure of his capability to induce the President to take a decision on the lines prepared by one. Moreover, there is the fear of hurting one's reputation with the President. It is true that senior players weigh, not to a small extent, with the President. But such weight is limited in quantity and it has to be spent only selectively. A senior player has got the danger of going for a fight and losing it in which case his reputation with the President will be damaged.

There are mainly two ways of reaching a consensus. One is persuasion; the other is compromise. An actor, without changing the proposal he favours, may persuade another actor to accept it in the latter's own interest. An actor may also bring in necessary

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46 Tanter, n. 17, p. 10.
48 Ibid., pp. 208-09.
changes in the proposal in order to make it acceptable to his competitor or competitors as the case may be. It may be pointed out that a compromise may be reached at the outset, thereby averting a conflict; a compromise may also be accepted after a spell of bureaucratic infighting. Here we are concerned with the first type of compromise. The decision to omit from NSC 68 in 1950 costs and details of the planned increases in the US military capability was made with a view to preventing an interservice conflict and presenting a document which would be acceptable to all of them.

Bureaucratic players enter into a conflict if they fail to reach a consensus amongst themselves. Each adversary then seeks to win the game and in this respect he will face opposition from others. He may choose one or more than one of several tactics usually used by players in such a situation. He may seek allies inside the bureaucracy and/or outside it. He may join hands with some Congressional members who share his view. He may encourage defection from the opposing side. Alliance-building is an important feature of a bureaucratic game of policy-making.

An adversary would tend to broaden the circle of players by helping the entry of new ones who are known to share his view. He may also seek to reduce the circle by eliminating from it those who oppose him. Sometimes an adversary may try to change rules


50 Halperin, n. 36, pp. 124ff.
to his advantage. For instance, after he ran into troubles with
the Air Force and Navy over the question of TFX, Secretary
McNamara changed a number of internal Defence Department decision-

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making procedures.

One of the ploys used by bureaucratic players is not to try
to take a bird at one shot. The tactic is to move step-by-step,
or to move by inches. Asking at one time for all that you need
might misfire; it may not go well with the final decision-maker.
But if you ask for a part of it, it is more likely that he may
accept it. And once he swallows the first instalment, it may be
less easy for him to refuse the next when you request it. This
is what the JCS did in February 1968. From the strategic point
of view they thought that the US should send ground troops to
Laos and Cambodia to "clear Communist sanctuaries." But instead
of saying that, they pushed for sending more troops to South
Vietnam which, they thought, could later be deployed to Laos and

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Cambodia.

One of the tactics of winning acceptance of one's line is
to avoid getting oneself directly in a fight among other actors.
Secretary Rusk mostly avoided taking sides when issues were argued
in the NSC and other forums by opposing protagonists. He preferred

51 Robert J. Art, The TFX Decision: McNamara and the Military
(Boston, 1968), pp. 164-5.

52 Marvin Kalb and Elie Abel, Roots of Involvement: The US in
Asia 1784-1971 (London, 1971), pp. 209-12; and Lyndon
Bains Johnson, Vantage Point: Perspectives of the Presi-
giving private advice to the President. The efficacy of this tactic would depend upon the actor's personal equation with the President and the latter's style of administration. Rusk seemed to have been more influential in the Johnson Administration than in the Kennedy Administration.

An Acheson or a Rusk may have direct access to the President; he may have the privilege of meeting with him alone. But the number of such privileged players is very few in Washington. Most of the junior and subordinate players, in their desire to be heard by the President, try hard to establish some link in the White House and use that link for pushing their views towards the Presidential desk.

One of the most potent instruments used in bureaucratic games is to affect information. An adversary may suppress some facts or distort them if they go against him. He may convey only a part of the story which goes in his favour and suppress the other part which will contradict him. He may manoeuvre reporting to the effect that the senior participants see only his side of the story and its other side does not reach them. The reporting from Vietnam was allegedly of this type. An adversary may

53 Dean Rusk, "Mr. Secretary on the Eve of Emeritus," Life (Chicago), vol. 66, 17 January 1969, p. 62B.
54 Halperin, n. 36, pp. 159-72.
request a study from those who will support him. This may strengthen his stand *vis-a-vis* his opponents. Defence Secretary Clark Clifford's initiative in convening a meeting of the "Wise Men" in 1968 to advise President Johnson on Vietnam was apparently meant to bring home to the latter the necessity of de-escalation.

Another ploy used in Washington games is to "circumvent the channel" or to use the "back channel." Hilsman says that at an NSC meeting it was decided to seek some information on South Vietnam from General Paul D. Harkins, then the US Commander in Vietnam. The Pentagon immediately sent, in "back channel" a message to General Harkins advising him on how he should answer Washington's query. If the manoeuvre is discovered, as happened in that case, one's position may be weakened.

Leaking is a recurrent feature of the Washington politics. Leaks are made in a piecemeal fashion to influential newspapers like the New York Times and the Washington Post in order to gradually orient the attitude of senior participants towards a particular issue. Since Washington players primarily depend upon these newspapers for information, this tactic works well. It is also used to draw the attention of the President to a particular issue. Junior players find it difficult to make their views reach the President. Their views get stuck up at some points of the "action

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56 Halperin, n. 36, p. 162.
57 Hilsman, n. 25, pp. 492-3.
58 Halperin, n. 36, pp. 174-95.
channel." Either out of desperation and/or because of their strong conviction in their cause, they may leak a story to the press. Sometimes a leak is made to alert the "attentive public" if an actor is not happy with some policy. Leaking is also meant to undermine rivals. A story may be passed to the press portraying one's opponent as advocating a policy which conflicts with the "shared images" or describing him as one who is not loyal to the President. Leaks may also be directed at exposing the weakness and incompetence of the opponent.

The American policy-making process includes both vertical and lateral units. Among the lateral units, the most conspicuous, apart from various departments, are the National Security Council, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and ad hoc inter-agency committees. The inter-agency-coordination bodies at lower levels are not very common. Thus, in so far as lateral units are concerned, a policy matter is likely to be put to more of conflict-bargain-consensus treatment in higher levels of the organization than the lower levels. Even in an hierarchical structure, the will of the superior does not necessarily prevail upon that of his subordinate. The authority of the higher official may be successfully counteracted by the manipulative and persuasive skill of his subordinate. Again, this formal relationship may be considerably modified by the personal equation between the Chief of the organization (here, the President) and the subordinate concerned. Roger

59 Huntington, n. 32, p. 150.
Hilsman, who, at the beginning of the Kennedy Administration, was the Director of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research in the State Department, did not pull on well with Secretary Rusk. But, because of his personal equation with Kennedy, he could sometimes bypass the Secretary and go directly to the President. Thus there is a strain in the vertical unit, in the lateral unit and the vertical-lateral axis. These strains may have significant impact on policy-making. Huntington has observed that bargaining proceeds along the intra-vertical, intra-horizontal axes and the diagonal axis cutting across both the vertical and horizontal axes.

The Bureaucratic Politics Model (BPM) has been subjected to severe criticisms. It is criticized for overestimating the roles of organizational procedures and bureaucratic interests in foreign policy-making. It is argued that organizations are the instruments meant for providing different types of advice to the ultimate decision-maker on any question. The essence of a decisional unit or a subunit lies in its ability to help the Chief decision-maker in realizing the goal(s) of the organization, not in developing its own vested interest.


61 Huntington, n. 59.

The opponents of the BPM challenge the aphorism, "where you stand depends upon where you sit." They argue that decision-makers often do not stand where they sit. Sometimes they do not sit anywhere. In the Skybolt controversy, Defence Secretary McNamara was more concerned about the budgetary implications than the interest of the Air Force. During the Cuban Missile crisis, Robert Kennedy and Theodore Sorensen, two key members of the Executive Committee (Ex Com) were loyal to the President, not to any bureaucratic organization.

The champions of the Bureaucratic Politics Model undermine their position when they concede that bureaucratic politics is not the sole determinant of foreign policy. One's cultural background and psychological motivations also influence his role, Allison admits. Allison does not assert that a decision-maker would be more influenced by his organizational interests than this "culture-bag." Not to assert so is to negate the pre-eminence of bureaucratic politics in influencing policy-making.

Critics point out that the BPM fails to realize the importance of the Presidential role in foreign policy-making. The President selects his advisers and determines who will have how much access to him. Krasner asserts that "these individuals must share his values." In order to continue as members of the team,


64 Halperin and Kanter, n. 21.
they must play ball with him. Krasner concedes some role for bureaucratic interests. But that is possible only when Presidential interest and attention are absent. He says:

Neither organizational necessity, nor bureaucratic interests are the fundamental determinants of policy. The limits imposed by standard operating procedures, as well as direction of policy, are a function of the values of decision-makers. The President creates much of the bureaucratic environment which surrounds him through his selection of bureau chiefs, determination of "action channels," and statutory powers. 65

That the President will try his best to create a propitious bureaucratic environment and that he would not countenance any open or suspected show of disaffection are self-evident. But, perhaps, Krasner over-states the case when he holds that "these individuals must share his values." Some of them may say so and give the appearance that they do so. But the reality may not always correspond to the appearance.

After subjecting Halperin's treatment of the ABM case to a critical examination, Heurlin concludes that it was systemic interaction based on the consideration of national interest, not bureaucratic politics, which determined the outcome. He says that "the organizations are not and cannot conduct themselves as actors in the international system. They can only act in the role as representatives for the central leadership...." 66

It is important to note that these critics are not total.

65 Krasner, n. 63, p. 315.
66 Heurlin, n. 62, p. 255.
in their rejection of the BPM. They concede that in some cases bureaucratic politics may play a significant role in influencing policy-making. In cases where a number of different interests are involved and where many bureaucratic players have to take part in the decision-making, it is said that the bureaucratic game "can play a role, even a major role." The critics further concede that at the time of implementation, organizational procedures and bureaucratic interests would have a big say.

On the basis of the preceding discussion, we may make a few inferences and attempt a theoretical framework for purposes of the present study on the role of the Pentagon in policy-making with reference to Vietnam. The Rational Actor Model would explain a large part of decision-making; in some cases it may explain the whole of policy-making. The behaviour of a state may be studied as a response to the behaviour of another state. But this action-reaction model has its own limitations. States are abstract entities. They themselves do not make rules. It is individuals who take decisions and make policies. Policy-making, therefore, is subject to all stresses and strains, and pressures and counterpressures that individuals are susceptible to. Moreover, the action-reaction chain, for its operation, needs the help of communication. Hence Model 1 is not self-sufficient. It needs to be complemented by Model 2 and Model 3.

67 Ibid., p. 256.
68 Krasner, n. 63, p. 319.
Whether it is an interaction between two states or two bureaucratic players, the game is to be based on some information which has to be communicated from one side to the other. Normally things move in fixed routes, according to established procedures. Hence is the importance of Model 2. But it is not decisive. Procedures may be changed; routes may be altered. Information may be suppressed or distorted in the perceived interest of a nation, in the interest of an organization or in the interest of a bureaucratic player. Model 2, therefore, is not the sole determinant of foreign policy.

Model 3 touches the heart of the problem. It starts with individuals. It treats them as decision-makers. Individuals are players with their goals, commitments and values. It is wrong to assume that bureaucratic politics model can be a tool to predict accurately the behaviour of a nation. A player, though concerned over the interest of his organization, would hardly ignore the interest of his nation. But his perception of national interest would largely be based upon the information filtered through organizational routes and personal orientations.

Thus, in a foreign policy-making process, all three models often function simultaneously. Instead of representing different lines on the graph, they represent different points of the same line. The relative importance of these models is not fixed. That will differ from time to time, from situation to situation. However, it appears to the present writer with his very limited background, that the important task for a student of foreign policy
analysis is to study the movement of a policy between Model 3 and Model 1, prismmed through Model 2. That will constitute the main focus of the present study.

In brief, the proposed model would throw the main emphasis upon the individual as a participant in the decision-making process on foreign policy. He would be influenced by the inputs from the internal as well as external environments. The internal environment, for this study, would include public opinion, especially the views of the "attentive public," the pressures from various pressure groups, the opinions of the press and the mind of Congress as reflected in different Congressional forums. The external environment would comprise of the bilateral relationship between the state to which the individual decision-maker belongs and the state in relation to which the policy is to be made, the regional dynamics--the interaction among the constituents of the region of which the latter state is a member and the broad policy of the former state in the region as a whole--and the global politics which is primarily a function of the equation between the Super Powers.

The inputs from these two environments enter into the mind of the decision-maker normally through the designated routes. As a result, the communication-flow would be affected by organizational inertia and "bureaucratic incrementalism" which are functions of standard operating procedures.

The mind of the decision-maker is not a tabula rasa. It is charged with some psychological predispositions which include
his cultural values which he may have learned and internalized during the period of rearing and his "in order to" motives which would impel him to act in order to achieve or maintain a future state of affairs in the decision-making organization, in the internal environment or in the external environment. The present scheme accepts the dichotomy posed by Snyder and others, between because of and in order to motives. They say, "In order to motives refer to an end state of affairs envisaged by the actor. Such motives thus refer to the future.... On the other hand, because of motives refer to the actor's past experience, to the sum total of factors in his life-history which determine the particular project of action selected to reach a goal...." The present framework would give more weight to in order to motives than to because of motives. Moreover, the sociological personality of each actor--the personality shaped by his interrelationship with other actors and by his position in the system--would also influence his perception. Thus a decision-maker's reception and interpretation of the information, emanating from the internal and external environments and filtered through the communication-routes, would be affected by his in order to and because of motives, especially the former, and his sociological personality.

The actor is an "organization man." He has to fight for the interest of his organization. Organizations compete for more

powers and a larger share of the budget. The actor has to ensure that his organization comes at the top in this competition. Moreover, he is also driven by his personal goals. As a result, there is rivalry and competition amongst bureaucratic players. Hence the conflict-consensus syndrome. Among the techniques used in this game, as mentioned earlier, are pulling and hauling, alliance-building, affecting the information and leaking.

The actor is the President's man. He is appointed by him and is responsible to him. He continues in office during the President's pleasure. It is, therefore, natural that he would be keeping in mind, while taking a stand on any policy-matter, the interests and goals of the President. But it is not an one-way traffic. It is an exaggeration to assert that he must share the values of the President. People of different values may agree on some compromise policy. The President is not an autocrat or a dictator. He is the ultimate decision-maker, but he is not the sole decision-maker. While taking the decision, he has to take into account the views of his advisers. He is the leader of the team. In order to keep the team going, he has to find out the best possible compromise which would give something to all disputants and which would not totally alienate anybody. This may entail some compromise on the part of the President himself. Thus a participant in the decision-making process is not just an instrument to carry out the President's policy. He is a player with some influence. Who will have the President's ear will depend upon the cooperation an actor gets from his associates in
his unit, the skill and competence with which he presents his views to the President and his personal equation with the latter.

To postulate a framework is one thing. To apply it in analyzing a specific issue is a much more complex matter. As a novice in this field, the present writer has made an attempt in the chapters, following an introductory chapter, to examine the role of the Pentagon in policy-making relating to Vietnam during the period 1961-1968.

**Some Hypotheses on the Place of the Military in the Power Structure**

So far the discussion has been concerned with the broad issue of foreign policy-making. Since the present work is concerned with the role of the Defence Department, an examination of significant issues relating to the making of decisions in the Defence Department needs to be undertaken. The Defence Department consists of a military component and a civilian component. The military component itself consists of uniformed representatives of the Army, the Navy, the Air Force and the Marine Corps. The Chiefs of Staff of the Services, designated by the President, constitute the highest military advisory group to the President in the Executive branch—the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The President designates one of the four as Chairman of the JCS whose position in the group is that of first among equals. There is a civilian Secretary for each of the three principal Services—Army, Navy, and the Air Force. At the apex of the organization
stands a civilian appointed by the President, with the advice and consent of the Senate—the Secretary of Defence. The JCS are subordinate to the civilian Secretary of Defence, but they also have the right of access to the President.

Civilian control of the military has for long been regarded as a significant characteristic of the American system of government. In recent years there has been a growing debate in the US whether civilian control is real and effective or whether the military finds it possible to get its own way. Discussion on the issue took a dramatic turn by President Eisenhower’s warning in his farewell speech against possible dangers to a democratic society from a "military-industrial complex." An examination in detail of the ramifications of the problem of the "military-industrial complex" is outside the scope of the present inquiry. However a brief exposition of the historical background and of certain theories concerning the role of the military in policy-making that have been adumbrated in recent years may be apposite.

The problem of the civilian control of the military in the US is as old as her constitution itself. In a way, it was the product of the American struggle for independence. The implications to the liberty of citizens posed by the standing army maintained by England had a deep impact upon the American revolutionaries and the makers of the US constitution. They included some provisions in the Constitution which would guarantee civilian control over the military. They made a civilian—the President—the Commander-in-Chief, and vested in Congress—another civilian
body—the power to raise and maintain the Army and Navy, and to declare war.

With a few exceptions, the pattern of civilian control of military, as envisaged in the Constitution, continued to function almost intact till the outbreak of the Second World War. Prior to that era the United States did not have a large standing army. In earlier wars that the US had fought, a large part of the military forces specifically raised for meeting the requirements of the time was disbanded and the military assumed its normal, modest size. Demobilization took place after the Second World War too, but soon the situation changed.

Policy-makers in the Truman Administration feared that the Soviet Union, the leader of the Communist World, posed a great danger to the "free world" of which, they believed, their country was the natural leader. They believed that a serious security problem existed and that the United States should have the requisite military capability to deter aggression and to "contain" Communism. In pursuance of that objective the US committed herself to the defence of several areas in the world, either bilaterally or multilaterally. Her military preparations were carried on at an unprecedented level. As the "Cold War" intensified, military industries flourished, retired military officers were appointed in high civilian posts, especially in arms industries, and military voices commanded respect in defence and foreign policy matters as never before.

The allegedly increased military penetration into the
civilian domains in the post-war period raised, as indicated earlier, a great deal of concern about the traditional civil-military equation in defence and foreign policy-making. The garrison state hypothesis which Harold D. Lasswell had propounded before the end of the war gained fresh momentum in its aftermath. It had predicted that in both the United States and the Soviet Union, the garrison state would be the necessary product of the prolonged continuation of a state of mutual suspicion and hostility. In such a hypothetical state, dominance would pass over from the businessman to the soldier; belief-systems would be militarized; all other purposes and activities would be subordinate to war and the preparation of war, and power would be centralized. Writing as recently as in 1957, Lasswell maintained that the garrison state hypothesis was still valid today. He concluded that "the Garrison hypothesis provides a probable image of the past and future of our epoch...."

Slightly different from the garrison state hypothesis but equally concerned about the "military ascendancy" was C. Wright


Mills' "power elite" hypothesis. According to Mills, the power elite consists of the economic, military, and the political elites with the first two placed at the top of the structure and the third, relegated to the second level. He charges that American capitalism has become "military capitalism" today. According to him, the highest beneficiary of the three is the military which provides personnel for defence and justify the corporate ideology to the people. He says, "The power elite does, in fact, take its current shape from the decisive entrance into it of the military. Their presence and their ideology are its major legitimations, whenever the power elite feels the need to provide any." According to this hypothesis, the military in post-war America is one of the two most powerful actors, though not the sole master, and it is in a position to significantly influence defence and foreign policy.

Gabriel Kolko and Morris Janowitz view the problem differently. Kolko does not dispute the garrison state hypothesis or power elite hypothesis in so far as they say that powers tend to be exercised by a few hands in their own interest. Beyond this he raises an important question about the alleged threat of the military against the civilian supremacy. He asserts that the military has always been used by the civilian leaders--many with links to corporations--in furthering corporate interests, both at home and abroad. The Military Establishment in the United States, 73


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according to him, "is an effect rather than a cause of political policy, an appearance and instrumentality rather than the full nature of reality." Thus Kolko does not feel that a threat emanates from the strengthened military establishment. On the other hand, the real threat, according to him, comes from the civilian elites who represent "corporate capitalism."

Another refutation of the "military ascendancy" concept in the garrison state-power elite hypotheses was made by Janowitz in his work, The Professional Soldier. He questions the validity of assuming that the military services act as a monolith. He asserts that the cleavage between the services is so deep as to inhibit collusive action. Often they are not able to achieve a "unified position," unless forced to it by their civilian heads. He also points out that the military leaders are different from corporation managers; there is hardly any social cohesion between them and the military is not positively interested in politics. He further states that the military pressure groups, because of their frequent clash of interests, are hardly united against their civilian colleagues. In conclusion he says that there is no fear of the military invasion of the civilian supremacy in the field


of defence and foreign policy. He observes:

...The military have accumulated considerable power, and that power protrudes into the political fabric of contemporary society. It could not be otherwise. However, while they have no reluctance to press for larger budgets, they exercise their influence on political matters with considerable restraint and unease. Civilian control of military affairs remains intact and fundamentally acceptable to the military; any imbalance in military contributions to political-military affairs--domestic or international--is, therefore, often the result of default by civilian political leadership. 76

Two differentiating hypotheses are thus put forward. The first holds that "military ascendancy" in post-war America tends to endanger the traditional civilian supremacy in the field of defence and foreign policy. The second asserts that the military though considerably strengthened in post-war America, is still subject to the civilian control and thus has not in fact a dominant role in decision-making in politico-military affairs.

Evolution of the Department of Defence

The role, powers, and the scope of action of the major actors of the civilian component and of the military component are set out in law. When the law gives a decisive edge to the civilian actor, the military actors are in a subordinate position unless the civilian actor fails to exert the full extent of his authority. The historical experience, conventions, usage, and

76 Janowitz, n. 75, p. viii.
the immediate past as well as the personality of actors will tend to have a bearing on the manner in which business gets done. To understand the play of forces within the Department of Defence, it is necessary to discuss briefly the historical background, to trace the law relating to the Department, and to touch on the other factors referred to that have a bearing on the study.

The "substantive" military input into foreign policy-making in the United States is of recent origin. It came to the fore with the struggle against the Axis Powers. With Pearl Harbor, the country went to war. "Total victory" became the national objective. The civilian sector seemed to resign the business of war to the President and the military. Cordell Hull, the Secretary of State, told Henry L. Stimson, the Secretary of War, "I have washed my hands off it and it is now in the hands of you and Frank Knox—the Army and the Navy." Stimson himself said that his war time duty was "to support, protect, and defend his generals."

According to William Emerson, President Franklin D. Roosevelt:


78 Cited in Huntington, ibid., p. 317.
assumed the role of "Master Strategist." He ordered the military chiefs to deal with him directly. However, while the President took a keen and continuing interest in the planning and managing the war, he did not seek to interfere in operational decisions as Winston Churchill, the British Prime Minister did. He reposed great confidence in his Chief of Staff, General George C. Marshall. In the hands of the Chief of Staff was concentrated "the authority and responsibility for the whole military establishment." Despite the enormous power that Marshall wielded, there was no question during the entire period of war of where the supreme authority lay. It lay securely in the hands of the President and Commander-in-Chief.

The State Department continued to believe that its function was diplomacy and that its domain was different from that of the military. But, in its own domain, the State Department was often denied its perceived role while the war lasted. Hull was not invited by the President to attend the Atlantic Ocean meeting or the war-time summit conferences. He was also not associated with major war decisions. "I was not told about the atomic bomb," Hull writes plaintively in his memoirs. The "mood" of the country, the Presidential predilection for working with the

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80 Paul Y. Hammond, n. 77, p. 123.

81 Cordell Hull, Memoirs (New York, 1948), part 2, pp. 1109-10.
military, and the "civilian abdication" represented by Hull's willingness to put up with a greatly reduced role for his Department, coupled with the growing appetite of the military leadership, contributed the enormous growth of the military's power in foreign policy-making. Secretary of War Stimson had more intimate access to the President on matters having foreign policy implications than Hull himself. Both Roosevelt and Stimson held the reins fairly tightly on the military in respect of overall controls and decisions but otherwise gave a fairly free hand to the Service Chiefs. By the very nature of situation—the country at total war, the cult of military heroes, and the latitude that the military leadership received from the President—the military leadership found itself in a position to make its impact felt significantly. Admiral William Leahy was reported to have said in 1945, "The Joint Chiefs of Staff at the present time are under no civilian control whatever." While the statement was somewhat of an exaggeration, it did contain an element of truth. Nonetheless, there was no occasion when the military leadership sought to challenge or defy the President.

When the war ended and it became evident that the country would have to maintain a large military establishment to cope with the situation posed by the onset of the Cold War with the Soviet Union, the new President, Harry S. Truman, sought to move in the

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82 Cited in US Senate, Cong. 79, sess. 1, Committee on Military Affairs, Hearings on S. 84, p. 521.
direction of a reorganization of a national security establishment. The problem was studied by the Commission on Government Reorganization headed by former President Herbert Hoover. The period also witnessed the emergence of the conflicting approaches among the services themselves. Publication of the recommendation of the Hoover Commission was followed by the enactment of the National Security Act, 1947.

The Act was a compromise between the Army which was for "centralization" and the Navy which advocated "confederation." It created the Office of the Secretary of Defence, but with ambiguous powers. It provided for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and a joint staff, both organized on the basis of equal representation of the Army, Air Force and Navy (including the Marines). The object of the legislation was to create a single, strong, civilian authority functioning under the President, ostensibly capable of rising above inter-service rivalries. Such an authority, through the exercise of powers bestowed on it, was hoped to overcome the weakness that had been brought out during the war-time experiences, provide adequate scope for the different services, and, at the


84 Ransom, ibid., p. 364.
same time promote sounder decision-making. In the years that followed, amendments to the Act gave further powers to the Secretary of Defence. Each service chief wears two "hats"—as head of his service and as a JCS member. The 1949 amendment of the Act increased the powers of the Defence Secretary. The Army-Navy-Air Force Departments lost their cabinet rank and became "military" departments with the Defence Secretary speaking for all these three departments in the National Security Council. The 1953 amendment of the National Security Act was another step in the direction of centralizing authority in the Office of the Defence Secretary. It created Assistant Secretaries of Defence with responsibility in functional areas, such as supply and logistics, and manpower and personnel. The 1958 amendment seemed to tilt the balance even more in favour of the Defence Secretary vis-a-vis the JCS. Under this legislation, the JCS, as a corporate body, became "directly responsible" to the Secretary of Defence. Lines of command were clarified. They were to run from the Commander-in-Chief through the Secretary of Defence and from the latter via the JCS to the "unified" or "specified" commanders. The Service Secretaries and Service Chiefs were removed from the chain of command. Equally important was the role assigned to the Secretary of Defence in respect of the disposition of weapon systems. He was empowered to assign a new weapons system, regardless of which service might have developed it, to any of the three armed services for production, procurement, and operational control. Thus, successive legislations
strengthened the Office of the Secretary of Defence at the cost of the Service Secretaries and the JCS. However, the civil-military equation is not "fixed." It may be affected by the personality factor, the interaction of the Secretary and the JCS with the President, their interrelationship with Congress and other contextual variables. When a Secretary of Defence enjoyed the full confidence of the President and was able and willing to exercise the powers that were available to him, his role could be truly formidable. This was brought out during the "reign" of Robert S. McNamara.

The one major confrontation involving a very prestigious and popular military figure and civilian authority represented by the President was that between General Douglas MacArthur and Harry Truman. The President's decision to recall MacArthur was unanimously supported by the JCS. The JCS also extended solid support to the President on the issue of sending American troops to Europe. As Huntington points out, the Truman Administration needed the support of the military leaders with prestige and popularity to cooperate with it and carry out its policies. By and large, with the exception of MacArthur, the Administration succeeded in obtaining such co-operation. As Truman's successor, Eisenhower, the hero of the Second World War, did not stand in the same need as Truman of prestigious generals for carrying out his policies. The Administration, as Huntington says, wanted

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85 Huntington, n. 77, pp. 374-99.
agreement, not advocacy from its military chiefs. Senior military officers like General Matthew Ridgway and Lt. Gen. James Gavin who had reservations concerning the doctrine of massive retaliation, espoused by the Administration, left the service. The President had no difficulty in turning down the recommendation of Adm. Radford for American military operations in Vietnam at the time of Dien Bien Phu. And the dominating figure of the Administration was neither the Secretary of Defence nor any military figure but the Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles.

The reorganization brought about by the National Security Act and its amendments could not succeed in ending or mitigating inter-service competitions. With a unified defence organization and unified budgeting, there ensued a bitter struggle among the different services for more funds and more organizational powers. Each service tried to sell its own superiority over others in terms of meeting future military contingencies. Each one stressed its own unique qualifications and credentials to be entrusted with the development of costly weapons. Each knew that acceptance of its plea would mean greatly expanded resources for itself and reduced resources for the other services. Each knew what was in store for it if its plea failed and another service got the green signal. The issue of Universal Military Training (UMT) which

86 Ibid.
the Army tried to sell to the country received no enthusiastic welcome from the Air Force. The Air Force pushed its own 70-group programme against which the Army waged a losing battle. The B-36 programme of the Air Force was opposed by both the Army and Navy who contended that air power would not be decisive in a future war. They argued that all the forces--air, navy and land--would play important roles in the future total war. Therefore, they urged a balanced development rather than over-emphasis on air power. Some middle level naval officers almost succeeded in manipulating opinion within the Administration to develop a carrier-based aircraft which would deliver nuclear weapons. This was a direct challenge to the Air Force which did not believe that the Navy could successfully deliver nuclear weapons.

The Eisenhower Administration too was not free of inter-service fights. The "massive retaliation" doctrine seemed to tilt the balance decisively in favour of the Air Force. The worst loser was the Army. Some top Army officers who did not buy the official policy had to leave. Many other dissidents, who did not leave their jobs, continued to fight inside as much as they


could. In the field of anti-ballistic missiles, the Army Nike and the Air Force Bomarc sharply collided. So also did the Army Jupiter and the Air Force Thor. Thus, by the time Kennedy occupied the White House, the spotlight was focused not on the issue of civil-military conflict but on inter-service fights. The civilian leaders had the advantage of playing one service against another or others. Within the Pentagon the Defence Secretary, instead of being an opponent in the game as far as the service chiefs were concerned, emerged, many times, as the referee.

A unified position on the part of the Secretary of Defence and the JCS for a course of action favoured by the President can greatly strengthen the President's hands. Truman's ouster of General of the Army, Douglas MacArthur, is an instance in point. A unified position on the part of the JCS in support of a course favoured by the Secretary of Defence can significantly strengthen the hands of the Secretary as he bargains with the President or other Executive actors. By the same token factionalism and rivalries among the JCS, and the Services they represent, may pose severe complications for a Secretary. The allocation of resources

90 For the Army "revolt" against the New Look of the Eisenhower Administration, see General Matthew B. Ridgway, Soldier (New York, 1956); Maxwell D. Taylor, The Uncertain Trumpet (New York, 1959); and James M. Gavin, War and Peace in the Space Age (New York, 1958).


92 Huntington, n. 87, p. 371.
among the fiercely competing services, and especially far-reaching
decisions relating to weapons development and procurement with
implications for one service or another confront the Secretary
with serious problems and pitfalls in maintaining harmony and
unity in his domain.

When the Secretary and the JCS are able to achieve a unified
position, they can bring into play a significant volume of support
from veterans organizations, and "Service Associations." These
organizations and associations can, in such circumstances, make a
fairly significant impact upon public opinion and also influence
Congressional opinion. When the Service Chiefs are more or less
placed in a situation of disagreement with the civilian element
in the Pentagon, the veterans organizations and service associa-
tions tend, most often, to reflect the point of view of the mili-
tary. When, however, there is disagreement among the services
themselves, the service associations work at cross-purposes and
the veterans organizations find themselves in somewhat confused
position. Inter-service bickerings most often arise in respect
of assignment of weapons systems. A particular service may oppose
the claims of another service for a weapon system if it perceives
the move as a threat to its own role and mission. The differences
may be carried into debates on overall strategy in which each
service will favour that approach which ensures a significant
role for itself.

93 Jack Raymond, n. 77, pp. 189-204; Armacost, n. 91,
pp. 10-14; and Rose, n. 75, pp. 134-52.
Another extra-Pentagon variable that sometimes plays a part is represented by the armament industries. The Pentagon is the sole or at least the most important customer of many major corporations. In general, the armament industry deploys its lobbying resources in activities supportive of the Defence Department's course. However, when differences develop among the services, or between a service and the Secretary, the lobbying resources of a corporation tend to be mobilized in support of that entity whose stand promotes its own interest.

A very significant extra-Pentagon variable is, of course, Congress in general, and important committees of the two Houses dealing with appropriations, armed services and foreign relations. As indicated in the preceding analysis, the greater the unity among the components of the Pentagon, the greater the likelihood of substantial Congressional support. The armament industry with its potential campaign contributions, and the veterans organizations and service associations with their potential for votes will have significant impact on Congress. But when differences develop among the services or between the services and the Secretary, the Congressional situation gets complicated. Often a member of Congress—especially one who has a place on the Armed Services Committee—whose constituency has substantial defence installations and industries, tends to view an issue on the basis of its impact on his constituents.

The manner in which decisions are to be made is exceedingly complex and involves far too many variables that only those who are rash and unwise may be able to claim definitiveness for their analyses. The involvement of the US in Vietnam is a very tangled issue. In the present work, after a background survey of the developments from the end of the Second World War to the induction of Kennedy as the President, an attempt will be made to examine the role of the Pentagon in regard to policy-making on Vietnam in the broad context of the framework outlined in this chapter.