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McCarthyism and Eisenhower's State Department, 1953-1961

Scott Alan Rausch

**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of**

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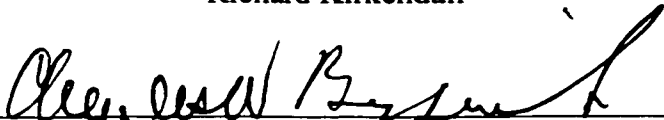


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Abstract

McCarthyism and Eisenhower's State Department, 1953-1961

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The public anti-communist campaign of Senator Joseph McCarthy had a lasting impact on the conduct of U.S. foreign relations, particularly among professional diplomatic institutions like the State Department and its Foreign Service personnel, and McCarthyism did not disappear with the senator's censure in 1954. The "ism" in a broad sense was a set of ideas not only about internal subversion but also about the outside world, including a simplistic, isolationist anti-communism and a deep suspicion about social reform movements abroad. It stood in open opposition to a more complex, even accommodating, view of communism.

Instead of ending the hunt for subversives begun under Truman, Eisenhower made the search systematic, universal, and more broadly defined. McCarthyist Scott McLeod took over security and personnel functions of the State Department and became one of the most famous and despised men in the executive branch. McLeod brought McCarthyist methods and assumptions to bear in ridding the department of what he defined as security risks. Oral history sources provide key evidence for the destructive atmosphere within the department in these years, and they shed valuable light on McLeod's impact on the foreign affairs bureaucracy.

In the short term, the Foreign Service declined in morale, prestige, and influence. By 1954, professionally trained diplomacy, with nuanced, internationalist views lost ground to more simplistic, strictly anticommunist views. During Eisenhower's second term, the Foreign Service and the more moderate approach experienced a resurgence but still faced opposition from hard-liners who survived the McCarthy years.

The Latin American branch of the department embodied the changes in professional diplomacy towards one region of the world. Within the division were the institutionalized tensions of the Eisenhower administration, between career diplomats and political appointees, conservative and moderate anti-communists, and trained diplomats and other specialists. The U.S. embassy in Cuba showed this internal conflict in a microcosm, as the administration's response to Latin American revolution evolved after 1954. McCarthyism accompanied Eisenhower into office, and its effects continued into his last foreign policy crisis and beyond.

Table of Contents

Preface	ii
Introduction	
Truman and the “China Hands” Legacy	1
Chapter 1	
Hidden Hands, Out of the Gutter: McCarthyism and the Eisenhower Administration	22
Chapter 2	
The Universal Duck Test: Defining McCarthyism and “Undesirables”	37
Chapter 3	
Red, Pink, and Lavender Termites: Scott McLeod and the State Department, 1953-5	56
Chapter 4	
Quiet Separations: Internal Security at Work	82
Chapter 5	
“Dull Where They Ought to Be Daring”: McCarthyism and the Foreign Service	108
Chapter 6	
The State Department in Microcosm: Embassy Havana, 1957-61	134
Chapter 7	
“A Tight Rein on the Manifestations”: A McCarthyist and the Cuban Revolution	155
Conclusion	
The Legacy of McCarthyism: An Historical and Moral Perspective	171
Records, Memories, and Stories: A Bibliographic and Historiographic Essay	181
Bibliography	218

Preface

The issues described in this dissertation are still with us today. Although we are now on the other side of the Cold War, issues of loyalty, national security, and the politics of accusation are part of the nation's recent political history. A scientist has recently lost his government position and remains under investigation for alleged atomic espionage for a communist country. (As in some famous cases from the early Cold War, there has been evidence of poor judgment and carelessness, but some debate about disloyalty or even illegality.) As in the 1940's, internal security breaches have compromised America's nuclear leadership from within, while the executive branch defends its internal security policies against congressional criticism. Congress is investigating espionage within the United States, looking for culprits to explain a communist country's recent technological achievement. A would-be presidential candidate has accused a fellow-conservative critic of having greater loyalty to another country, in this case Israel, than to the United States.

Even in the most unlikely places the Second Red Scare rears its head. Last October I walked by a house decorated for Halloween. Among other spooky objects in the front yard were two small cardboard tombstones with catchy limericks under each name. The poems poked fun at death and suggested these two figures would not be missed – presumably no one would be offended by speaking ill of *these* dead. Of all the notorious deceased people to choose from, this dark humorist chose the names “Ted Bundy” and “Jo McCarthy.”

However time may erode spelling, the grave is no escape from historians or historical consciousness. Although I make no claims for the legitimacy (or taste) of Bundy as a subject of study, these paper epitaphs do remind us that heroes have no monopoly, and should have no monopoly, on a citizen's understanding of the nation's recent past. Infamy is the most common source for whatever lessons people draw from their history, and the most powerful moral resolutions frequently promise “never again.”

May, 2000
Seattle, Washington

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The ideas and their development benefited from several research seminars, paper conferences, and presentations. I would like to thank Wilton Fowler, Richard Kirkendall, Charles Bergquist, Carlos Gil, Laurie Sears, Ray Jonas, and Meredith Clausen for their guidance and participation at various stages in the process. Four of the chapters claim their heritage from two papers presented to the Cold War History Interest Group at the University of California, Santa Barbara and to the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations. In both cases their collective expertise moved this dissertation forward. Research for this project would not have been possible without funding, in the form of teaching opportunities and travel grants, from the Department of History of the University of Washington. Thanks also go out to a dissertation work group, composed of fellow U.W. History graduate students also at the dissertation stage, which provided valuable suggestions in the later stages of writing.

Finally, I am permanently indebted to the support and encouragement provided by my friends and colleagues in similar situations: Jason, Byron, Joe, Shawn, Rich, Matt, Jeff, and Cheryl, and everyone else writing for achievement. This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, who made such a thing possible in many, many ways.

Introduction: Truman and the “China Hands” Legacy

In February, 1950, Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin put the town of Wheeling, West Virginia in American history textbooks by announcing at a Republican Party women’s luncheon that he held in his hand a list of 205 card-carrying members of the Communist Party still employed by the State Department. While not the first to accuse the nation’s foreign policy machinery of harboring communists and fellow travelers, the senator took the lead in a distinct phase in the history of anti-communism, a phase which almost immediately bore his name. The speed, aggressiveness, and imagination of his accusations rapidly provided him with publicity and political momentum. Although McCarthy claimed discovery of communist subversion in many sectors of government and private society, his first and most consistent target was the United States Department of State. For the last two years of Harry Truman’s presidency, the department given the formal task of conducting American foreign policy defended itself against charges of treason. Ironically, the agency given enormous responsibility for helping contain communism stood accused of exactly the opposite – not containing subversion, but harboring it.

McCarthy was following in the footsteps of other investigations into the department’s personnel. Recent events provided very rich background for anyone interested in making wild, sweeping accusations about treasonous conduct in America’s foreign relations. Alger Hiss, a former government official suspected of turning over top-secret documents to the then-communist agent Whittaker Chambers, was convicted of

perjury for discrepancy in his testimony about meeting Chambers years before. The murky uncertainties of the Hiss case stimulated the public imagination, especially at a time when America's foreign policy efforts both to contain the spread of communist government and maintain a monopoly on atomic weapons suffered reversals in 1949. If espionage could occur in 1933, why not more recently, when the stakes were even higher?

The Truman administration reacted to calls for stronger internal security measures years before McCarthy brought the issue into the center ring. A government-wide loyalty and security system was already in place by 1947. In that year Truman issued Executive Order 9835, which set up boards of inquiry within each executive agency who would hold hearings to rule on allegations of disloyalty and breaches of security. Within the State Department, the Loyalty Security Board oversaw investigations within the department. The boards would send "interrogatories," either by questionnaire or by a personal interview, to each person accused of wrongdoing and would make recommendations from there. Any employee asked to leave could ask for a hearing to present his or her case and could use the services of an attorney, but the accused had no right to face his or her accusers, no right to cross-examine witnesses, and depended on the board members to decide the agenda for each hearing. Since the hearings were not technically criminal trials, there was also nothing like a "double jeopardy" guarantee; an employee might be subject to review and hearings any number of times even when cleared the first time. Years of positive rulings was no guarantee, while one negative one could mean the end of a career. Above the whole executive branch sat the Loyalty Review Board, which served as a kind of court of higher appeals with the power to

review, re-investigate, overrule, or send back cases passed along to it. Over its five years of existence, the LRB tended to be even more eager to weed out undesirable employees than the agencies themselves and overturned very few negative rulings. With the help of the FBI, the security program was intended to investigate at least in cursory fashion each of the two million federal employees. The FBI was to run a “name check” on every employee to find all references to the person in their files, in case the individual had a criminal record or was ever under investigation for questionable activity. Crucial to the name check system was an ever-expanding list of subversive organizations compiled by the Attorney General’s Office and sent to all government agencies; since the Justice Department considered most of the groups on the list to be communist front organizations, under communist influence, or otherwise subversive, prior membership in such an organization was usually taken as effective evidence of disloyalty. In practice, the most thorough investigations were those brought about as responses to particular allegations, and in this way the general operation of the 9835 program in each department was on a case-by-case basis. The undefined measure of justice was that employees could be dismissed if “reasonable grounds” existed for questioning their loyalty to the United States government.¹

In principle this meant that the burden of proof lay in the government’s hands to show evidence of dangerous behavior, but in practice the loyalty boards became the formal, judicial side of a program that was largely informal and that acted in most cases without ever holding a hearing. Employees accused of being disloyal or of being bad

¹ Athan Theoharis, *Seeds of Repression: Harry S. Truman and the Origins of McCarthyism* (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1971), pp. 101-3, 108. David Cauter, *The Great Fear – The Anti-Communist Purge Under Truman and Eisenhower*, (New York, Simon and Schuster, 1978), pp. 269-70.

security risks most commonly faced a line of questioning designed to get statements from them for use at a later hearing, and it was in this early stage of a case, when the possibility of a hearing or further investigation hung like a threat, where the effects of the system were most felt and possibility of abuse was most acute. The State Department, for example, preferred to solve its loyalty-security cases before they could reach a hearing stage by offering suspects the chance to resign without punishment or to be transferred to another agency. Given that fighting the ruling at a hearing was set up to be an uphill battle and that being fired meant a loss of pension, an end to a career in government, and a mark of disloyalty on one's permanent record, most of those whom the board found suspect opted to resign and avoid further investigation.

From the beginning the loyalty-security program was dominated by politicking and bureaucratic conflict. Truman saw the system as necessary for two reasons, not only to establish a fair and effective set of procedures to root out the guilty and protect the innocent, but also to show a strong stance against domestic communism, restoring confidence in his administration's ability to maintain national security. Government agencies were under outside pressure to show that their security measures were rigorous and thorough, but not provide too much encouragement to the administration's critics who argued that the Democratic Party had been too soft on communism. In short, the boards were to weed out a reassuring number of risks, but not too many. Agencies with a long heritage and sense of professional cohesion like the State Department tended to protect their own bureaucratic interests against incursions from outside agencies and tended to do the security work off the record, since the Loyalty Review Board could intervene in the department's internal operations only if there were an official ruling.

Informal internal security measures kept outside interference to a minimum. Such measures also allowed agencies to treat their own members with sympathy and protect them against some of the fallout that would come from being fired.

The 1949 communist victory in the Chinese civil war led to a search for scapegoats that began before McCarthy took center stage, even years before communist victory was complete. General Patrick Hurley, former ambassador to China, announced after his replacement in 1945 that several Foreign Service Officers who served with him in China had stood in the way of an effective anticommunist stance. In fact, he argued, American diplomats were helping encourage communist success in China. Hurley's remarks during a hearing in 1945 set the foundation for a legend of treason that produced accusations and repercussions for at least the next ten years. He would not be the first conservative ambassador to testify about internal subversion within his former embassy. For conservatives dissatisfied with the Truman administration's foreign policy record in Asia and seeking someone to blame for communist advances, American diplomats associated with China came to represent the ultimate betrayal of American foreign policy.

These "China hands," especially the officials most concerned with formulating policy and those who disagreed with Hurley the most, became some of the first victims of the anticommunist scapegoating that would plague the image of the State Department for years to come. The names of the China hands became handy buzzwords in the hands of Truman's critics in Congress, and what happened to these diplomats under investigation demonstrated that the palpable air of suspicion that pervaded American national politics produced tangible results. The cases of the China hands reveal most dramatically a new dynamic in the conduct of American foreign relations. For the first time, internal security

and the hunt for subversives in government began to have a profound impact on the nation's diplomatic establishment. Personnel and bureaucratic issues, not international relations alone, stood at the center of debate about diplomacy.

Three of the most famous China hands, John Paton Davies, John Carter Vincent, and John Stewart Service, showed in what dire straits State Department China experts found themselves, and the reaction to their performance in China boded ill for their colleagues in the Foreign Service. The use of their names by critics of the Democrats' Asian policy was emblematic of how scapegoating operated. Hurley and then McCarthy preferred to name each of the three by their full legal names, which brought to mind several connotations: the sense of being summoned for some solemn purpose, being accused by one's mother of wrongdoing, and the suggestion of an aristocratic heritage. In any event, use of full names came with sinister connotations. In reality, each of them went by "Jack" and rarely used their middle names, but using such a nickname just would not do if one was looking to give a name a sinister connotation. "Jack" suggests a person much like yourself, with human traits, someone who might be forgiven an indiscretion, while the legal name provides some necessary distance and an air of accountability. A similar name game appeared in the notable case of Harry White, a Treasury official accused of turning over currency plates and secret information to the Soviet Union at the end of the war; it was "Harry Dexter White" who stood accused of the crime. The condemnation of the China hands in a sense remade their names as it brought them into the public spotlight. Jack Service unavoidably became John Stewart Service. The sloppy, superficial use of individual names was part and parcel of McCarthy's opportunistic approach to the subject of subversives in government. In a way, the manipulation of

names provided a cheap and easy method of association. When repeated often, names became part of a handy litany of associations, such as “the Hiss, Lattimore, Jessup gang,” and the slightest similarities could be exploited for political gain. At one point, McCarthy, with a devilish grin on his face, associated Democratic Presidential candidate Adlai Stevenson with disloyalty by purposefully misstating the latter’s name: “Alger – I mean Adlai.”²

Just as the three came to represent all that had failed in America’s Chinese policy, so too did they represent the professional diplomats who had been entrusted with carrying out America’s diplomacy. More specifically, Davies, Vincent, and Service served as examples of government employees buffeted by the changing political winds after World War II. Sincere public servants acting out of duty, though not always with perfect discretion, the three China experts became scapegoats for the “loss” of China, in a situation where the messengers were attacked for the bad news.

Essentially, Davies, Vincent and Service had observed events in China and concluded that the Chinese Communists were growing in strength against the corrupt and declining Nationalist forces, eventually the Communists were going to take over the country, and therefore America’s best approach should be to recognize this inevitability and try to be on good terms with Mao’s forces by the time the dust finally settled. For this accuracy and foresight, the China hands were blamed for bringing about what they had predicted. A powerful “China lobby,” which pushed for unconditional friendship with

² Lately Thomas, *When Even Angels Wept: The Senator Joseph McCarthy Affair – A Story Without a Hero* (New York: William Morrow, 1973), p. 276. McCarthy also liked to pronounce the Democratic hopeful’s name “Ad-lie.” Fred J. Cook, *The Nightmare Decade: The Life and Times of Senator Joe McCarthy* (New York: Random House, 1971), pp. 385-6.

Chiang and unconditional opposition to Mao, branded Davies and his colleagues as obstructionists and, worse, as traitors who undermined Chiang's government.

Davies had been in a very important position to observe and negotiate with Communist forces fighting the Japanese during the war. His messages from Yen-an, the headquarters of Mao's forces in Northern China, regularly mentioned that the Communists would be open to friendly relations with the United States, and that too close a friendship with Chiang would drive the Communists into the arms of the Soviets. Ignoring Davies' bravery and dedication, as evidenced in his parachute jump into and escape from Japanese-held territory, spokesmen for the China lobby branded him a traitor. Although McCarthy denounced Davies as an agent of communist expansion into Asia, the department's Loyalty Review Board cleared him four times. His file had undergone a total of at least eight probes by the department, the Senate Internal Security Committee, and the Loyalty Review Board. Wanting to be rid of such a political hot potato, Dulles first appointed Davies to a safer, out-of-the way post in Lima, Peru in April 1953. Since McCarthy continued to criticize the department for keeping old China hands around, Dulles re-opened the case and sent it to a new five-member board composed of people with little knowledge either of China or the conduct of diplomacy. The ad hoc board found him not guilty of disloyalty but guilty of poor judgment in his methods of reporting. After Davies refused to resign quietly, Dulles fired him in November, 1954.³

³ Paul Gordon Lauren, ed., *The China Hands' Legacy – Ethics and Diplomacy* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987), pp. 19-25. John Paton Davies, "The China Hands In Practice: The Personal Experience," in *ibid.*, pp. 37-57. Cauter, p. 313.

In 1944 Vincent was the chief of the department's Division of Chinese Affairs and later head of the whole Far Eastern Affairs division and therefore the man briefly in charge of the China experts. During the war he had been in contact with Communist leader Chou En-lai and had been an adviser on Vice President Henry Wallace's trip through Soviet Asia. By the time China fell and McCarthy began calling out Vincent's name, the officer's career was on its way downward. He was Minister to Switzerland in 1952 when ex-communist Louis Budenz falsely accused him of guiding Wallace's visit along pro-communist lines. Acheson publicly defended Vincent and even overturned the ruling of his department's own loyalty board. Acheson tried, as Dulles would later, to change the ruling by cobbling together a new board, this time one headed by the esteemed U.S. Court of Appeals Judge Learned Hand, who had already made a name for himself as a defender of civil liberties in the face of unwarranted anti-communist accusations.

Though reluctant to give overt public support of Acheson, Hand was known to be very sympathetic to the Secretary's plight. Before the Hand committee could make much headway through the bewildering mountain of material, Dulles had already begun as Secretary-designate, dismissed the committee, and ruled on his own. In Dulles' view, Vincent's reporting had been of poor quality and the officer was unreliable as an observer. His continued employment would be inconsistent with departmental standards as well as national security. The Secretary offered Vincent the choice of resigning with a pension or being fired and going without. The

diplomat chose to resign.⁴

John Service had also served at Yenan, and like Davies transmitted honest reports about the declining fortunes of the Nationalists and the likely victory of the Communists. In this case, the diplomat had demonstrated a lack of judgment and at some level a breach in security. In 1945 he turned over to journalists personal copies of his own reports to the State Department. The reports were essentially briefings with very general findings, nothing that had not already found its way into the press, but the journalists included the pro-Communist editor of the journal *Amerasia*. The FBI arrested Service for espionage, but a federal grand jury decided that he did not know the editor and colleagues were communists. In 1951, his fifth Loyalty Board hearing found him disloyal, and within hours Acheson fired him. The Secretary acted on what he regarded as the proper decision by the board. Many of the nation's elected representatives in Congress, acting with a growing popular mandate, wanted a change in American policy towards Asia and wanted a more trustworthy Foreign Service. In light of this demand and in light of the department's own ruling, Service's continued employment was incompatible with the new political landscape. In 1957, the Supreme Court ruled in *Service v. Dulles* that the State Department had not followed its established procedures in dismissing the diplomat and ordered the department to reinstate him. Dulles assigned him a low-level position overseeing exports that ultimately paid only a of fraction Service's legal costs.⁵

Because Civil Service and Foreign Service regulations protected the China hands

⁴ Lauren, pp. 18-19. Ernest May, "The China Hands In Perspective: Ethics, Diplomacy, and Statecraft," in *ibid.*, pp. 100-1. Caute, pp. 312-3. For the actions of the Hand committee and the Judge's role in resisting McCarthyism, see Gerald Gunther, *Learned Hand: The Man and the Judge*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994).

⁵ Lauren, pp. 16-8. Caute, pp. 313-4.

from politically expedient dismissal and because Acheson felt an obligation to protect the careers of loyal officers, the department relied on bureaucratic means far older than the State Department itself. Their superiors kicked the trained China experts upstairs, downstairs, and into obscurity. Like the rest of the middle-level officers associated with wartime China, Davies, Vincent, and Service found themselves reassigned as far as possible from Chinese affairs and each other and often into dead-end positions. Vincent went from being an assistant secretary to minister to Switzerland to consul general in Tangier. Davies served on the staff of the High Commissioner for Germany and then deputy chief of mission in Lima. Service served in New Zealand and then briefly at a desk job in Washington on what he called "snake farm duty." Davies' protégé Edmund Clubb passed through several review boards with flying colors only to draw an assignment which was the death sentence for a Foreign Service Officer: the Division of Historical Research. Others like James K. Penfield kept moving through the ranks of the Foreign Service, but they found their years of language training in Chinese dialects useless in Iceland and Finland. In reality, it was Acheson and not McCarthy who scattered the China hands to the four winds. Although Acheson had offered a blanket defense of those officers serving under him and acted from what he saw as sound principles, he was not isolated from the political currents swirling around American foreign policy.⁶

Although the Wheeling speech and its famous imaginary list have become landmarks in the history of the Second Red Scare, the reality of these early days remains elusive in some ways. No recording or extensive newspaper coverage of the speech

⁶ May, pp. 99-107.

exists, and no written version except that produced a week later by McCarthy, who at Wheeling spoke from notes and not a full text. Those who point to the senator's theatricality and boldness in lying suggest that McCarthy never had a list. The satirical figure of Johnny Iselin in Richard Condon's novel *The Manchurian Candidate* certainly represented this view when he finally lands on the number "57," inspired by a ketchup bottle. McCarthy most likely did not have a complete list of names in his hand at the time of the speech, and in his speeches the number and nature of the security risks in the State Department changed over the next few weeks, but the list did exist in a nebulous form. Eventually he did produce several typed lists forwarded to the department for review.

Right away the department fired back, simultaneously investigating the list of names and searching for whatever proof might lie behind the charges. Immediately the communication between the department and McCarthy took place between the senator himself and the Administration division of the department, bypassing not only the Senate Permanent Investigation Committee and Foreign Relations Committee, but also the official departmental liaison with Congress through the Congressional Relations Office. This channel between chief inquisitor and administrator set the stage for much of the conflict between the senator and the department for the next five years. At first, McCarthy's accusations were shrill but not of foremost concern for the institution otherwise occupied with carrying out all U.S. foreign relations activities. A brief investigation and reply from Administration (which included the security bureau) seemed at the time to be sufficient to refute the charges with the low level of publicity worthy of a speech by an obscure Senator on a minor holiday in a sparsely populated state. Also, from the very beginning of the department's encounter with McCarthyism, the

department acted to isolate the loyalty-security issue from the rest of its relations with Congress, so as not to undermine legislative support for its programs. Beginning in 1953, Dulles would take this desire for cooperation to new extremes, but the policy of trying to separate McCarthyites from the rest of Congress was in place when the junior senator began his crusade.

The department's first reaction to the accusations was an attempt to discover whatever evidence McCarthy had, forward it to more responsible, competent investigators, and prevent such cases, true or false, from damaging the image of the department. The number two man for the Administration branch, Deputy Under Secretary John Peurifoy, wrote McCarthy two days after Wheeling to request the names of the (by then) "57 card-carrying communists" in the department. Such information should be forwarded to the FBI for proper investigation, so that "thousands of loyal employees" would not serve "under a cloud of suspicion." Peurifoy kept in contact with Senator Tydings, the chairman of the Senate subcommittee investigating State Department employees and a Democrat interested in keeping McCarthy in line and avoiding the sensationalism of an irresponsible, haphazard attack on a government agency. President Truman sought cooperation with Tydings to the point of almost releasing loyalty review files to the subcommittee, before his Attorney General convinced him that such disclosure would set a bad precedent and undermine the security program already in place. Peurifoy and Acheson reassured Tydings that accusations about people on McCarthy's lists were not true; Owen Lattimore, for example, was not the chief architect of U.S. policy towards Asia. In fact, he had never been on the departmental payroll and had never met Acheson. When the Tydings Committee declared that McCarthy's

accusations against the department had no basis in fact, some in the department considered the public relations crisis virtually over. After surveying news coverage and public opinion sources, the Bureau of Public Affairs concluded that the charges would soon fade from the public eye. The bureau reported that the sooner the department could resolve the charges and silence the diehard McCarthyists who labeled the department “fuzzy” on communism, the sooner the issue of communists in the department would become a “dead issue.”⁷

Meanwhile, with the encouragement of the President and the supervision of Acheson, the department closed ranks and responded to McCarthy’s inquiries with increasingly hostile responses. In official responses to the senator, the State Department impugned his motives and suggested that his form of investigation was ineffective and very damaging to the department. One Deputy Undersecretary for Administration, David Humelsine, wrote to McCarthy that his “indiscriminate lumping together of names and the threat to make them public is tantamount to holding hostage the reputation and rights of those employees who have been or may be cleared of the allegations against them.” Humelsine noted that it was “unfortunate” that the security system “is subject to attack for purely political reasons without regard for the facts,” and he told McCarthy “we will not compromise our legal and ethical responsibilities under pressure of political stratagem or threat.” When McCarthy took the refusal personally, he accused Humelsine of obstruction and continued to demand access to personnel files. The Undersecretary

⁷ Telegram, Peurifoy to McCarthy, February 11, 1950; letter, Acheson to Tydings, April 27, 1950; memo, “Public Comment Concerning State Department Personnel (Aug. 15-Sept. 25),” September 25, 1950, *Foreign Relations of the United States* [hereafter *FRUS*], 1950-54, Vol. I, General: Economic and Political Matters Part 2, “Foreign Policy Aspects of Congressional Loyalty and Security Investigations, 1950-1954,” (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1986), pp. 1379-80, 1397, 1398-9.

refused to turn over files on loyalty and security cases and “in spite of the obvious bias with which your questions are phrased” replied in writing to all of the senator’s requests. In closing, Humelsine highlighted the difference between the department’s approach to the communists-in-government issue: “we do not defend by lies, as you claim, nor do we so accuse.”⁸ Administration had taken a public stance based on its own critique of McCarthyism, putting the senator on the side of falsehood, unethical use of political power, subversion of due process, and violation of individual liberties.

McCarthy and his allies in the Senate continued the pressure, not satisfied with what they saw as the suspiciously slow measures the department used for deciding loyalty and security cases. These original accusations and the regular introduction of new names to his nebulous list kept the administrative department busy tracking down names and files of the accused, and at least some of the time busy just trying to determine exactly how many people were under suspicion. What became known within the department as “the McCarthy cases” became a regular topic of investigation within the department, requiring regular updates and constant clarification.

A key part of the department’s investigations involved figuring out how the senator arrived at his estimates, since often the number came from a haphazard calculation supporting a gross exaggeration. For example, when a typed list compiled by McCarthy’s staff did reach the State Department in March, 1950, it consisted of 81 names. Two of the names on the list were the same person, and only 42 of the 80 individuals had ever worked for the department. Other speeches later added more names, to bring to 61 the total number of current and former State employees named by

⁸ Letters, Humelsine to McCarthy, July 25 and August 7, 1951, *Ibid.*, pp. 1408-1412.

McCarthy as security risks by 1953. The senator was also not above taking credit and making political capital out of mathematical coincidence. In a February 1950 speech in Salt Lake City, McCarthy accused the department of harboring 57 card-carrying communists, and two years later the department reported to another Senate inquiry that in the period 1947-1951 54 employees had resigned or retired for a variety of reasons during the LSB process, while the board found another 3 disloyal. Jumping at the opportunity, McCarthy claimed these were the 57 communists he had mentioned before, but at the time of the speech some had already left the department, and others were not yet employed. None of these people had ever been members of the Communist Party, and McCarthy's list did not include the names of three people that the State Department eventually found disloyal.⁹ Like much of McCarthy's hunt for communists, it was a case of a coincidence turning a kernel of plausibility into a vaguely accurate partial truth, and another case of his potential to be partly right despite of himself.

The effect of McCarthyist pressure on the department was to speed up the loyalty-security review process and beef up the small part of the department charged with investigating such matters. The "McCarthy cases" produced their own caseload, but ultimately the department found those accusations largely without foundation. By the end of Acheson's term in January, 1953, of the 61 people that McCarthy had named as traitors, subversives, and sympathizers, all but 2 had been cleared by the department's Loyalty Security Board. In most of the 61 cases, the higher authority of the federal

⁹ Memo, Humelsine to Acheson, February 8, 1951; memo, Conrad Snow to Acheson, "Report on Loyalty Security Performance, 1947-1952," and attachment, "Product of the Board - 'McCarthy cases,'" January 8, 1953; letter, Humelsine to Senator William Benton, July 1, 1952, *Ibid.*, pp. 1403, 1417-21, 1428, 1430-33.

government's Loyalty Review Board confirmed the decision. Significantly, however, the LRB intervened and overturned the ruling of the State Department's loyalty ruling in two high-profile cases, declaring that Service and Vincent were ineligible for further government employment on grounds of reasonable doubt as to their loyalty. This small number of "McCarthy case" separations should not hide the fact that the department was at the same time conducting its own "housecleaning," investigating on a routine basis a number of employees never named by any outside accusers. From the perspective of Hiram Bingham, the chair of the Loyalty Review Board, the State Department had an abysmal record because it made few adverse official rulings and referred few decisions to the LRB compared to other government agencies, and relative to the public criticism in some quarters the department seemed to find surprisingly few undesirable employees. In fact, like the internal security program under Dulles later, the department got rid of most of its security risks quietly and informally, with no hearings or any judicial activity. At least a dozen employees, "induced administratively to resign," had left the department because of questions about their loyalty, resigning before a loyalty hearing could take place. The LSB kept figures on the number of professional diplomats and department staff forced out because of loyalty and security investigations, and it was far higher than the number that ever reached a departmental hearing, much less the appeal stage: Between 1947 and 1950, the head of the LSB counted 122 separations of people with "adverse security information" in their files, and another 144 who left under allegations of homosexuality.¹⁰

¹⁰ "Product of the Board – 'McCarthy Cases'", attachment to memo, Conrad Snow to Dean Acheson, "Report on Loyalty Security Performance, 1947-1952," January 8, 1953, *Ibid.*, pp. 1432-3; Memo of conversation, Hiram Bingham and Conrad E. Snow, March 26, 1951, *Ibid.*, pp. 1403-4.

The cases of two China hands, John Paton Davies and John Carter Vincent, would continue on into the beginning of the Eisenhower administration, when Dulles and finally the Supreme Court brought some closure to their professional troubles. Davies and Vincent, although cleared several times each by State Department loyalty boards under Acheson, still faced action by the incoming Secretary, John Foster Dulles. In fact, the transition from Truman and Acheson to Eisenhower and Dulles did not bring an end to the Red Scare's shakeup of the department but instead continued the housecleaning in a new form. Davies and Vincent were the most prominent cases of State employees whose careers survived the Truman years but came to an end in the first year of Eisenhower's administration. Dulles inherited some of the wartime China hands and made reviewing their particular cases one of his first priorities even before taking office.

Unfortunately for the continued careers of Vincent and Davies, the new secretary took a dimmer view of their actions and recognized the political and bureaucratic necessity of removing them from the department. That Dulles acted more out of expediency than doubt about Vincent's ability was made perfectly clear the day the secretary asked him to resign. Dulles called Vincent and his lawyer to his residence in Washington, and after offering the diplomat a chance to resign offered him a drink and asked his expert opinion about recent events in China. Vincent was shocked to discover that the man ending his career because of unreliable reporting in reality considered him one of the most knowledgeable people on the subject. Dulles was taking an opportunity to gain valuable informal input from someone he had just coerced into resigning. Having the meeting in private made such a consultation informal, off the record, and out of sight of the rest of the department. To the further shock of Vincent's lawyer, the retiring

diplomat accepted a drink, sat down with Dulles, and rendered his best judgment on Far Eastern events, while down the street the department was handing out a press release saying his reports and advice failed to meet the department's high standards.¹¹

For other diplomats, the disaster of the China experts served as a warning about the dangers of both poor judgment and good judgment. Although some colleagues found Service's press leaks sloppy and Davies' advice suspect, many more saw the China hands as persecuted for giving prescient but unpopular opinions. The lesson of the fall of China was that sincere and accurate opinions taken at face value could one day, ten years later, be evidence of something considered foul and treasonous. Loyalty, expertise, agreement from superiors, even accuracy were no guarantees against future damage to one's career. Apparently, following professional standards of honest reporting could be a disaster later, if the views contradicted powerful political lobbies. Even a sympathetic department might not be able to save one if one were associated with a foreign policy reversal like the fall of China.

After the fall of China and beginning with McCarthy's public crusade, the department's officers took to heart the need for greater discretion. On the one hand, it was a positive, much-needed change in procedures and attitudes. The Foreign Service of the 1920's and 1930's relied on genteel notions of foreign relations, such as the confidence that gentlemen do not read each other's mail, but the Cold War and new concerns over security called for new thinking in the department's operations. In a way, the fate of the China experts brought about a loss of innocence, an end to a certain

¹¹ E. J. Kahn, Jr. *The China hands – America's Foreign Service Officers and What Befell Them*, (New York: Viking, 1975), pp. 255-6.

naivete. Diplomats in the Cold War had to be more circumspect about what they revealed not only to outside sources but to their superiors and colleagues as well.

The effects of the purge and scattering of the China hands went beyond simple caution and tighter security. By 1953 the department was in the midst of an enormous turnover in its ranks, and the Foreign Service was at a low point in its prestige, morale, and influence. Furthermore, for those who remained, what became known as McCarthyism had a fundamental impact not only on how diplomats communicated but what they said and how they acted as foreign policy agents. Internal security and loyalty issues forced officers to adopt more conformist attitudes towards their daily activities, to the point of writing reports based on what they thought their superiors wanted to hear. Those most comfortable expressing sincere views tended to be officers of impeccable anticommunist credentials, and the most unquestionably conservative employees found their positions the most secure. The Foreign Service, through reform, the passage of time, and gradual thawing in the department's Cold War views of the world, managed in a few years to bounce back from the depredations of McCarthy era, so that by the end of the 1950's the strict anticommunist viewpoint forged in the fires of McCarthyism faced challenges from within the department's ranks. A more nuanced, complicated, and accommodating policy attitude towards communism had increasingly powerful adherents in some parts of the department, for example in Latin American affairs. Thus, when the U.S. faced the possibility of a communist regime developing in Cuba in the late 1950's, the foreign policy apparatus faced sharp divisions in its ranks between hard-line anticommunists very reminiscent of McCarthy himself and more liberal professional diplomats now finding a greater voice than they had for over a decade. The end of

Eisenhower's second term did not bring an end to the legacy of the McCarthy years, since accusations of communist sympathies plagued the department into the Kennedy administration. Nevertheless, the case of U.S. response to the Cuban revolution reveals that by 1961 the department, and U.S. foreign policy in general, was emerging from a decade dominated by a McCarthyist worldview.

Chapter 1: Hidden Hands, Out of the Gutter: McCarthyism and the Eisenhower Administration

President Harry Truman's difficulties with the issue of subversives in government left a difficult legacy to his successor. The government security issue was the domestic equivalent of the unpopular war in Korea that Truman had left behind in foreign affairs. President Eisenhower came into office searching for a way to bring closure to McCarthy's attacks on government employees. Although Eisenhower refused to get into public debate with McCarthy, or "go down into the gutter with that guy," the President and his staff nonetheless tried to take over the issue, to undermine any potential criticism of the new administration. Instilling confidence in the government required two things: showing that the Republicans could be tough on government security, and preventing McCarthyites from capitalizing on any more sensational cases. Those in charge of personnel had pressure on them to produce results, to show that the Eisenhower administration could "clean house" effectively. Any security risk could be risky not only for the government itself, but also a public relations hazard; individuals with suspicious backgrounds could, if exposed, damage public confidence far more than they might endanger the government.

In their first year in office, the President and Secretary Dulles in their press conferences stressed that internal security was a top priority. Ike went so far as to say that nothing had absorbed so much of his Cabinet's attention as devising a fair but effective way to keep security risks out of the government, or, in the President's own domestic metaphors, "keeping the house secure against the boring of subversives and that sort of

thing” and tearing out “weeds of disloyalty” without “uprooting a single good plant.”¹ The President and Secretary of State came into office under a “mandate of change,” a phrase so central to Ike’s image that it became the title of his first term’s ghost-written memoirs. Specifically, their mandate called for shaping up the agencies of government, to make them more dependable, trustworthy, and efficient. Polls taken just after Ike’s 1952 victory suggested that a majority of those who voted for him saw corruption and communism in government as the most decisive issues attracting their support, more important even than ending the Korean War.² Each agency now required leadership that was more conscious of internal security and the quality of its employees. As foreign affairs commentator and future ambassador Clare Booth Luce wrote in a letter passed on to Eisenhower, the Secretary of State needed to be “a strong and experienced administrative hand, a tough legal mind, and a vigorous personality to accomplish the ruthless job of pruning out the dead timber and exterminating the termites from the live timber of State.”³ Politically, the new administration needed to silence the criticism from the right, since sharing the same party was no guarantee that conservative Congressmen would not make political capital at Ike’s expense.

The pressure to present a strong stand against subversives combined with two factors that together created an anticommunist storm within the Department of State in the first two years of the Eisenhower administration. First, Eisenhower instituted a new,

¹ “Television report to the American people by the President and Members of the Cabinet,” June 3, 1953, Document #95 in *The Public Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower* [hereafter *PPDDE*], *Volume I, 1953*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1960), pp. 365, 373.

² George H. Gallup, *The Gallup Poll – Public Opinion 1935-1971, Volume Two, 1949-1958*, (New York: Random House, 1972), p. 1115.

³ Letter, Clare Booth Luce to A. H. Vandenberg, (undated), Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library [hereafter *DDEPL*], Central Files, Official File 8, “State Department,” Box 151, folder “January 1953.”

more far-reaching internal security system for the federal government that provided the tools for energetic administrators to begin to remake government agencies according to their own personal whims or political agendas. Secondly, the President's and Secretary of State's delegation of authority in administrative matters allowed a zealous anticommunist, Robert W. "Scott" McLeod, to take control of personnel decisions within the State Department.

McLeod became one of the most famous, feared, disliked, and misunderstood men in the federal government, and his actions as security chief affected the Department for years to come. The thorough "housecleaning" in State thus resulted from the collision of Eisenhower's brand of moderate Republicanism, Dulles' hands-off strategy towards administering his own department, and the influence of McCarthyism, a set of beliefs that found a faithful adherent in the person in charge of the Department's personnel.

President Eisenhower dealt with Senator McCarthy's brand of anticommunism in an indirect way that Fred Greenstein has characterized well as the "hidden hand." Greenstein's research effectively rehabilitated a traditional view of Eisenhower as a man out of touch with the workings of his own government, a figurehead in charge of a government that functioned without him. In fact, Ike was a bureaucratic master, working behind the scenes, judiciously cultivating the press, delegating authority effectively, and keeping a close watch on important matters. According to the hidden hand thesis, Ike undermined Joe McCarthy first by isolating the executive branch from the Senate's investigations and then by directing a subtle, well-timed counterattack from behind the scenes. With the help of television, special counsel for the Army Richard Welch, public

annoyance, and the Senator's own desperation, the administration helped bring an end to the Senator's public crusade.⁴

However, if the indirect approach was successful against McCarthy in a general way, it broke down in the particulars. When it came to conducting internal security measures, Eisenhower did not so much hide his hands as wash them of the whole matter. Although he directed the executive branch's general strategy of dealing with McCarthy, he left internal security administration to his Cabinet heads, with mixed results. In the State Department, Eisenhower's hands-off anti-McCarthy strategy backfired, since it cut off McCarthy but entrenched McCarthyism within the department.

One of the central issues in evaluating Dwight Eisenhower as President has been his relationship with the more conservative members of the Republican Party, including Senator McCarthy. Did the Eisenhower administration encourage McCarthy, appease him, resist him, or actively undermine him? In the revisionist, rehabilitated view of Eisenhower, the President's reaction to McCarthy was one of caution and restraint. In a sense, Eisenhower revisionists find virtue in inaction, but at the time Ike's critics interpreted inaction in the face of McCarthyism as appeasement. The most alarmist critics of the day saw the President as intimidated by the right-wing of his party, and the contemporary image of the commander-in-chief as a figurehead who left decisions to others only contributed to this interpretation. In fact, neither fear of McCarthy nor

⁴ Fred Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency: Eisenhower as Leader*, (New York: Basic Books, 1982), pp. 155-227. For a later analysis in the same vein, see Thomas Rosteck, "The Case of Eisenhower Versus McCarthyism," in Martin J. Medhurst, ed., *Eisenhower's War of Words: Rhetoric and Leadership*, (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1994), pp. 73-95.

confident, skillful manipulation are adequate explanations of Eisenhower's response to McCarthy, since the reality was more nuanced.⁵

Those critical of Eisenhower for not being forceful enough in resisting McCarthy point to his lack of public statements criticizing the senator's methods; as the President and party head, he had the opportunity to use high office and his widespread popularity to use the press to speak out against such abuses of power. The President was aware of his popularity, but also aware of the limits of his particular brand of charisma: as a man above partisan politics, without controversy, and solidly in the middle of the road. His popularity was based on his war record, the general tenor of his political ideas, and the plain, warm image he cultivated, not on any ability as a fiery orator or a great communicator. Although articulate and experienced in dealing with the press, Eisenhower was not very comfortable in impromptu speaking situations and was seldom eager to speak to the press except in very controlled situations. He reluctantly agreed to allow television cameras to cover his press conferences. In dealing with the press, Eisenhower tended to use very cautious, sometimes tortuously convoluted language that avoided controversy, so that he gave reporters little material to quote and nothing to put into a sensational headline. In part this obscure language was very conscious and calculated, but in part it also reflected his personality, which was naturally cautious in answering questions and by nature reluctant to say something controversial or give away

⁵ Examples of evaluations critical of Eisenhower's response to McCarthy include an otherwise sympathetic Herbert S. Parmet, *Eisenhower and the American Crusades* (New York: Macmillan, 1972), Cook, *Nightmare Decade*, and Cauter, *Great Fear*. For the revisionist interpretation, which generally gives the President high marks for making the most of a difficult situation, see former Eisenhower staff member William Bragg Ewald, Jr., *Eisenhower the President: Crucial Days, 1951-1960*, (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1981), Stephen Ambrose, *Eisenhower, Volume Two: The President*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), and Craig Allen, *Eisenhower and the Mass Media: Peace, Prosperity, and Prime Time TV*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1993).

too much information. In contrast, McCarthy aimed at grabbing the headlines by making spectacular accusations, grabbing the spotlight and bringing controversy to himself, and whether guilty or innocent everyone who stood up to him in a public forum became marked in the process. Truman and Acheson had publicly defended the administration against McCarthy and had essentially played into his hands, allowing him to set the terms of debate and setting themselves up as defenders of a government which had occasionally found communists in its midst. In short, for Eisenhower, getting into a direct public confrontation would play to McCarthy's strengths and the President's weaknesses, on the battlefield of the senator's choosing. Where the traditional view sees fear and appeasement, it is possible to see a modesty or at least an awareness of one's limits relative to others. Where revisionists see a calculated use of language and systematic avoidance of public debate with McCarthy, it is also possible to see someone not as highly skilled in manipulating the spotlight who chose more indirect means, not for moral and philosophical reasons but because of his limitations.

In a sense, the simmering conflict within the press between president and senator took the form of a war of attrition, with Eisenhower taking relatively little damage from the public criticism, while McCarthy's use of the press, which included embracing the growing medium of television, eventually undermined the senator. The damage that Ike's public image suffered from accusations of appeasement were miniscule compared to the negative publicity that McCarthy drew to himself, and while Eisenhower had a truly impressive war record, a healthy economy, and an end to the Korean War to his credit in 1953, McCarthy remained a one-trick pony.

The political climate also constrained Eisenhower's choices in dealing with McCarthy. After all, the senator was merely tapping into and aggravating an already widespread belief in the need to reform the federal government and a sense of disillusionment with the previous administration's foreign policy. Eisenhower had run on a platform that called for a good housecleaning of the executive branch, and he was reluctant in his first year in office to defend too strongly a federal government that still included Democratic appointees and that was still in the process of security investigations. Eisenhower was very aware of the public mandate for change within government, and also aware of that a small, staunchly Republican segment of the polity was very supportive of McCarthy. Opinion polls of the day were not very conclusive about McCarthy, even when polls said he courted much more disapproval than approval, even in late 1954 when the Senate, the administration, and, supposedly, public opinion had turned against him. Although Eisenhower grew impatient with the nagging communists-in-government issue, he was up against a public opinion that continued to believe communists remained in government even as most Americans were largely satisfied with Eisenhower's attempts to weed them out. While a tiny percentage of those polled saw McCarthyism as a crucial problem, many more named "communists in the U.S." as the most pressing issue, rivaling unemployment, taxes, and even the threat of world war.⁶ The public was rightly convinced of the possibility that some communists or communist sympathizers might still be in government positions, and public opinion remained decidedly anti-communist and for the most part more supportive of stern measures than the defense of abstract civil liberties of government employees.

⁶ Gallup, pp. 1225, 1240.

Eisenhower was convinced of the need to prevent security risks and get rid of undesirable employees who might be shielded by a partisan defense of the executive branch. Eisenhower, and Dulles in the State Department, wanted to wait for the new security system, the Republican changeover, and the government size reduction to run its course and in this way thwart McCarthyism by giving it little ammunition to attack the current administration. The President and his Attorney General Herbert Brownell sincerely believed that creating stricter, more thorough government security measures would not contribute to public paranoia and irresponsible accusations but rather bring them to an end, by giving mavericks like McCarthy nothing to complain about. In this sense, the hidden hand strategy, however successful in the long run, made a serious miscalculation. The administration underestimated the senator's resiliency and ability to keep the issue alive, and was mistaken in its prediction that McCarthy would shy away from attacking his own party.

In the short term, there was little apparent damage to the U.S. government because of McCarthyism, so little incentive existed to stand up and risk being hurt by McCarthyist accusations. At the time Ike's hidden hand policy of undermining McCarthy was on the surface successful. Ike's popularity and political capital rode fairly high while the senator exhausted his, isolating him more and more in Congress and alienating him more and more from moderate or undecided voters. The damage done to Ike's influence and popularity by appeasing McCarthy was always much less than what McCarthy did to himself, especially by the time of the Army-McCarthy hearings. Also, Ike held a strict interpretation of the separation of legislative and executive power (and given the power that the American Presidency wielded in 1953, he had everything to gain

and nothing to lose from such an interpretation.) He was sincerely committed to protecting executive authority against encroachment from congressional power and defending his privilege in matters of foreign policy and military affairs, but by the same token committed to keeping the executive branch out of congressional matters. Since Congress decided on the federal budget, he recognized the legitimacy, and the long history, of congressional investigation of executive agencies, and he considered it the Senate's role to keep McCarthy in line. At same time the Presidency faced McCarthy's intransigence, it also faced a more general challenge to the power of the Presidency over foreign policy matters, in the form of several amendments proposed to increase the power of Congress over foreign relations and military operations. This attempt to limit the power of the President to make binding agreements was an attempt by the Old Guard of the Republican Party to prevent what they saw as a repeat of the Yalta agreements, whereby a President might sell out American strength overseas without consulting Congress. The legislative fight on this issue was headed by Senator John Bricker. During the two years that McCarthy railed against the Eisenhower administration for ineffectively hunting communists, the Congress debated limiting the administration's power over foreign affairs. A public face of appeasing McCarthy can be seen as compromise, not wanting to alienate conservative supporters in Congress, perhaps to trade some tolerance of McCarthyism in exchange for some opposition to the Bricker Amendment.

In the traditional interpretation of the Eisenhower response to McCarthyism, the new government security system was a craven introduction of McCarthyism into the executive branch that unleashed a needlessly destructive anticommunist storm within the

federal government. Although the new system had this effect in agencies like the State Department, the principles behind the new program were not just rationalizations that gave lip service to fairness and individual rights. Eisenhower's oft-repeated maxim that government service was a privilege and not a right was not just a rhetorical cover for an arbitrary housecleaning, but was at the heart of his and Brownell's interpretation of legal standards of government employment. In the Cold War, especially with communists-in-government issue making front page news, government employment in sensitive agencies was a matter of national security, and national security was to be the standard for measuring the suitability of continued employment – if security investigations were subject to error, it was best to err on the side of national security. The President and his advisors also truly but mistakenly believed that distinctions between disloyal employees and security risks would be clear in the public eye, and that those released from employment because of the latter would not be subject to the same discrimination. The administration underestimated the connotation of being laid off by the government during time of public suspicion. In a similar way, the new administration miscalculated the effects of conducting a universal security check on all government workers. Eisenhower believed that the universality of the security system would maintain a sense of fairness, so that if everyone faced investigation then no one could feel singled out. In fact, however, people who for any reason left government service in Eisenhower's first two years often could not avoid suspicion that they had left for security reasons; private employers might make little distinction between resigning from a government job and being fired.

Eisenhower revisionists described the administration's inactivity as a false front covering a very active Presidency, but they have also found in inactivity a kind of restraint, a virtue that may not have existed. The idea of a restrained and indirect leadership style has undergone some necessary revision, and the case of McCarthyism sheds a key light on the issue. To the question of whether or not Eisenhower was an active, engaged leader (and the weight of evidence convincingly suggests he was) one must add the question to what extent were these actions effective (to which the answer is much more ambiguous.) In the case of the administration's response to McCarthyism, such as the hiring of Scott McLeod, this hidden hand involved a disastrous delegation of authority, and although the administration eventually contained McCarthy and helped undermine him, the inactivity came at the expense of government employees, particularly in the State Department. Restraint is only a virtue when holding back something harmful, but restraint in the face of an indiscriminate and destructive force like McCarthy's brand of investigations was itself destructive.

The virtue of restraint became a hallmark of the historical rehabilitation of Eisenhower's foreign policy, as well. In the 1980's, declassified materials from the 1953-61 period sparked a reappraisal of Ike as more than a figurehead President who delegated Cold War decisions, but as someone who was both actively in command of policy and level-headed in carrying it out. In the light of later events such as the disaster of the Vietnam War and the resurgence of Cold War tensions during the Reagan Presidency, revisionist interpretations have generally complimented Eisenhower on his use of restraint in the Cold War, arguing that he pursued a successful, peaceful middle course combining strength with peaceful overtures. Just as in the domestic political

relationship with McCarthyism, the restraint thesis applied to international relations breaks down in some of the particulars. Although Eisenhower's two Presidential terms fortunately and skillfully kept the nation out of conventional and nuclear war and laid some foundation for more peaceful coexistence, the record of U.S. activity in the Third World reveals much less restraint, for example the increased use of clandestine paramilitary operations against foreign governments in Iran and Guatemala. The White House was key in planning these actions, as revisionists such as Blanche Wiesen Cook have shown, as well as the planning for the eventual Bay of Pigs invasion, which showed a restraint only in an extremely broad sense of the word.⁷

The historiography on Eisenhower's Secretary of State John Foster Dulles has undergone similar transformations, in which the traditional view has given way to a more complex, nuanced interpretation. In Dulles' case, the debate has revolved around interpretations of Dulles' ideologically charged statements against international communism and around the role of the Secretary's moral vision in his view of foreign relations. Was he motivated by a kind of idealistic moralism that saw the world in extreme, absolute terms of good and evil, without the possibility of compromise, or was he in fact more pragmatic, more conscious of gray areas, and more flexible than his public persona revealed?⁸ The role of McCarthyism has been a much more minor issue

⁷ Blanche Wiesen Cook, *The Declassified Eisenhower: A Divided Legacy*, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981).

⁸ The traditional interpretation of Dulles as driven by ideological and moralistic motivations is that of Townsend Hoopes, *The Devil and John Foster Dulles* (Atlantic – Little, Brown, 1973), and to a lesser extent Michael A. Guhin in *John Foster Dulles: A Statesman and His Times* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972). Those supporting the interpretation of Dulles as a realistic pragmatist include Frederick W. Marks III, *Power and Peace – The Diplomacy of John Foster Dulles* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1993) and Richard Immerman, *John Foster Dulles: Piety, Pragmatism, and Power in U.S. Foreign Policy* (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, 1999).

in evaluating the Dulles years as Secretary of State, but it is unavoidably intertwined with interpreting Dulles' political beliefs and his relationship with American domestic politics.

Dulles' detractors, even more than Eisenhower's, saw Dulles' relationship to McCarthy as one of appeasement that opened up the department even more to McCarthy's scrutiny and allowed the senator some cheap political points at the expense of departmental personnel. The Secretary was so eager to curry congressional favor that he rolled over and let McCarthy continue to maul federal employees. In reality, while Dulles was more interested in safeguarding national security within his department than protecting the civil liberties of his subordinates, his pro-McCarthy appointments were not made to cater to the senator but in the case of McLeod was out of an administrative oversight. His need for congressional support did not lead him to hire McLeod, but it did make him reluctant to fire his security chief once the mistake became apparent. Contemporaries described Dulles as aloof, distant, and so pre-occupied with influencing world events that he was out of touch not only with domestic events but also with his own department. In reality the political isolation was exaggerated. Dulles was very aware of his position and that of U.S. foreign policy within the realm of American politics, and he was conscious of making use of policy statements for domestic consumption. He sought to maintain bipartisan support for a reinterpretation of containment, so he tried to remain in as good a favor as possible with the more conservative branch of his Party, including McCarthy and Bridges.

For the higher purposes of Congressional support and effective policy, Dulles effectively allowed his department's cohesion and morale to suffer at the hands of

professional anti-communists. Trading temporary setbacks in his department for diplomatic gains was right in line with character of the peripatetic Dulles flying everywhere around the world, taking personal responsibility for conduct of diplomatic negotiations, bypassing his subordinates on the ground and disrupting established diplomatic relationships wherever he went. Historically, like most Secretaries of State Dulles was far more interested in the dynamic world of high-level negotiation and policy decisions than mundane, administrative concerns or bureaucratic reform, and he had many competing demands on his time before taking office. Even so, in light of the difficulties his predecessor faced against McCarthy and in light of the need to court Congressional favor, his easy delegation of authority over administration and then security appears to have been an enormous, odd mistake. As the head of a Cabinet department, Dulles proved to have a very mixed record, signing off on several disastrous appointments in his first year: Carl McCardle as Public Affairs advisor, Donald Lourie in Administration, Scott McLeod in Security and Consular Affairs, and several embarrassing political appointees to ambassadorships. Despite his lack of interest in his own bureaucracy, or perhaps because of it, Dulles was very successful in selecting innovative experts to reform the Foreign Service and the department's operations, for example the committee headed by Brown University President Henry Wriston.

Those who considered Dulles aloof, rigid, and moralistic and who saw his relationship with McCarthy as fostering a new anti-communist orthodoxy assumed that his reign over the department stifled dissenting views because the secretary was unwilling to hear or allow any contradiction. Although he bypassed his department in many ways and always acted with resolute confidence in the correctness of his actions, he did rely on

the expertise of his department and welcomed dissenting views from his advisors. However, freedom of opinion at the highest level did not necessarily translate into freedom of dissent at the lower levels, especially when Dulles delegated extensive authority to the heads of the regional branches, and at the level of the individual embassy, the personality of the ambassador was decisive in determining the department's openness to dissenting views. His willingness to grant authority to the ideas of others was crucial to his policy of delegating administrative tasks to his subordinates, and this reliance on the professional conduct of others proved to be misplaced when his new chief of personnel and security started to incorporate his own brand of McCarthyism into the department's internal operations.

Chapter 2: The Universal Duck Test: Defining McCarthyism and “Undesirables”

In 1953 the State Department acquired as head of its personnel and security functions a figure who embodied a view of the world which had motivated more than one member of Congress to launch attacks on the department. Scott McLeod was a McCarthyist if not an active member of the senator's personal retinue of followers. He represented a larger point of view that, if not directly following the junior senator's, did show sympathy for his hunt for communists in government. He displayed a suspicion, thoroughness, and zeal that McCarthy could never fault. The security chief gave to the State Department its own particular brand of what many referred to as “McCarthyism.” It was a term that by 1953 was a few years old and was in common usage in interdepartmental correspondence. (In internal memos the term always appeared in quotation marks, and came to refer to a broad range of activities, not just McCarthy's investigations. To this day, dictionaries and spellcheckers are much more likely to include the ism than the man.)

The origins of the term in some ways presaged the use of the word in later contexts. From the beginning the word served as a kind of shorthand for a set of methods that liberal critics of McCarthy found distasteful and which editors critical of the anticommunist campaign began to associate with conservative Republicans. From the start, “McCarthyism” served as a mark of criticism, with a connotation of smear tactics, unfounded accusations, and a haphazard search for communist infiltration. Although the

label soon became a watchword for political commentators, scholars, and newspaper editors, its first appearance met an artistic rather than academic need. The first to coin the term was the *Washington Post* cartoonist Herblock (Herbert Block) in an editorial cartoon in March, 1950, seven weeks after the Wheeling speech, at a time the senator was still reproducing variations on his original accusation against the State Department. The cartoon showed caricatures of Republican Senators Robert Taft and Kenneth Wherry pushing a reluctant Republican elephant towards a precarious stack of tar buckets, with Senator Styles Bridges smilingly poking the scared animal with a sharp prod. At the top of the tower sat the largest, flimsiest barrel of them all, labeled "McCarthyism," on top of which was a plank on which the elephant was supposed to stand.¹

Significantly, Block's drawing left out McCarthy himself, suggesting the real importance lay in the fact that the Republican Party appeared to endorse such tactics, even perhaps against its fundamental principles. Ironically, the senator's absence from the piece necessitated coining the word that bears his name. Block became the most outspoken commentator, in a profession than demanded outspoken editorial stances, on government internal security measures, civil liberties, and conservative Republican tactics. A staunch supporter of Roosevelt and Truman and a loyal Democrat, he served as a daily artistic voice for anti-McCarthy sentiment, usually with a clear partisan flavor. While his work would later show a certain fondness for (or at least relatively mild jokes about) Eisenhower as President, Block reserved his harshest artistic renderings for McCarthy, Richard Nixon, and assorted members of the House Committee on Un-American Activities. He provided a handy visual representation for a caricature that

many held of McCarthy: hairy-knuckled hands dripping with mud, disheveled and dirty clothing, and a five o'clock shadow. It is as much from cartoons as the harsh glare of Klieg lights or merciless television cameras that many Americans' memory of the senator is that he badly needed a shave.²

The "ism" had become such a staple of political commentary that the senator himself tried to adopt the term and use it for his own purposes. Privately he was incensed at the association of his name with a suffix that suggested a vast impersonal threat, like "communism" or "totalitarianism." The most rabid anti-McCarthy polemics frequently used the new term in their descriptions of McCarthy's excesses, for example in Jack Anderson and Ronald May's *McCarthy: The Man, the Senator, the "Ism,"* a piece no more objective than its opponent.³ In the summer of 1952, in the middle of McCarthy's Senate re-election campaign and partly as a reaction to Anderson and May, he and his staff assembled a collection of speeches, Senate testimony, and printed documents defending his allegations against State Department employees and attacking the Tydings Committee investigation as a misguided attempt to sidetrack his investigation. The book, *McCarthyism: The Fight For America*, argued that use of the term "McCarthyism" had been part of a smear campaign by communists and communist sympathizers, to associate his program with fascism. To prove his point, the booklet included excerpts from a

¹ Herblock (Herbert Block), "You Mean I'm Supposed To Stand On That?", *The Washington Post*, March 29, 1950.

² Herbert Block, *Herblock: A Cartoonist's Life, Updated and Expanded Edition*, (New York: Random House, 1998), pp. 132-4. A survey of the artist's prolific work reveals that he usually reserved the stubble and simian knuckles for only his most detested or most terrible subjects: Joseph McCarthy, Richard Nixon, and a personification of the atomic bomb. Two decades later, his pencil would join a chorus of cartoonists who would make names for themselves lampooning Nixon during the Watergate crisis. See *Ibid.*, *Herblock Special Report*, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1974). One could argue that Nixon by 1960 had failed to learn from his earlier colleague the political need for expert make-up and a close shave.

³ Jack Anderson and Ronald May, *McCarthy: The Man, the Senator, the "Ism,"* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1952).

Communist Party of Maryland pamphlet, "Unity Can Defeat McCarthyism," produced in November, 1950. Clearly, in less than a year the word had spread throughout liberal and far left press as a decidedly pejorative term. The fact that an official party press and the mainstream press used the same terms suggested to the more paranoid that the conspiracy truly was immense. McCarthy tried unsuccessfully to take control over the word bearing his name and turn it to his advantage, even to suggest the term had sinister origins. By restating his earlier arguments and suggesting his congressional opponents were part of the problem, he merely reinforced the already negative connotation of the word McCarthyism; he was unable to reclaim the term by using the methods that made the term infamous. By the end of 1954, the word was enough in use that a small number of people listed "McCarthyism" when Gallup polls asked them to name the greatest problems facing the country.⁴

From the start, McCarthyism involved both a partisan political issue and a set of methods used to exploit the issue. Building upon earlier investigations into government subversion, confirmed by some high profile legal cases in the years before 1950, the campaign begun with the Wheeling speech raised the "communists in government" issue to a new height. What the previously obscure senator from Wisconsin added was an energy and a boldness of accusation that the danger was much more widespread than previously imagined. McCarthyism placed the issue of government subversion and corruption higher up the list of the nation's political concerns, giving the issue a prominent place in the country's political consciousness by regularly making the subject

⁴ Joseph McCarthy, *McCarthyism: The Fight For America*, (New York: Devin-Adair, 1952), pp. 13-5, 71-7, 81-7. Gallup, pp. 1225, 1240.

front page news.

Such an extreme position against communism did not appear out of thin air in 1950. The senator placed himself at the leading edge of an extreme political position, but for most of his ideas he was not too far ahead of the American public. Public opinion polls show that however controversial McCarthy was at the time, anti-communist sentiment within the polity was consistently strong. McCarthy maintained a small, solidly loyal following, enough to make up an influential part of American politics but never large enough to dominate the national scene. Polls regularly showed a decisive margin of disapproval, which fluctuated depending on his most recent activities, but Gallup polls continued to record a respectable percentage of approval, even at the end of the Army-McCarthy hearings. The damage to McCarthy's public image did not destroy it so much as shift the ambivalence a little more towards the negative. When asked the question who impressed them the most and the least during the hearings, McCarthy topped both lists. Even after censure and supposed public disgrace, respondents to a "man on the street" survey chose Joseph McCarthy fourth on a list of most admired living men, behind Eisenhower, Winston Churchill, and Adlai Stevenson.⁵

Much less ambivalent was the public perception of the threat of communism at home and abroad, of the need for a powerful stance in foreign affairs, and of the desperate situation the country faced in the Cold War. Even before McCarthy rose from relative obscurity, a majority supported outlawing the Communist Party and requiring all members to register with the Department of Justice. During McCarthy's five years in the

⁵ Gallup, pp. 1247, 1296. Gallup began asking people about McCarthy as early as May, 1950, with very little attention to him until just before the 1952 elections. See especially pp. 1220-47 for regular polls on McCarthy during the McCarthy-Stevens hearings.

spotlight, most voters (including a majority of Democrats) saw U.S. policy towards Asia as disastrous and the U.S. losing the Cold War. As for the anti-communist hunt at home, a large majority was against allowing former communists to teach at the university level, was in favor of the death sentence for treason, and was in favor of a policy in which, in case of war, past and present Communist Party members should be kept out of government jobs, imprisoned, exiled, even executed. One of the highest approval ratings, higher than the well-liked Ike at his most popular, went to the rabidly anti-communist head of the FBI, J. Edgar Hoover. The same month McCarthy launched his public crusade, polls showed 80% of respondents thought Hoover was doing a good job, with only 2% replying in the negative; it was a public approval most professional politicians could only dream of.⁶

McCarthy's type of strict anticommunist mindset took a little evidence a long way and made political judgments based upon leaps in logic; any similarity to Communist Party doctrine suggested communist involvement, whether it existed or not. In common usage, this guilt by similarity took the form of the simple "duck test," which policy makers, commentators, and security officers found useful in many types of situations. As one of McLeod's security agents explained the waterfowl metaphor, "[w]e don't have to prove a man is a duck. If he waddles like a duck, quacks like a duck, and associates with ducks, that's enough."⁷ The duck test is the most obvious example of how the same anticommunist perspective could apply to both domestic and foreign affairs. This simple formula could condemn everyone from the most obscure clerk in the Civil Service to

⁶ Gallup, pp. 873-4, 891, 933-4, 953, 963, 1117, 1135.

⁷ Charlotte Knight, "What Price Security?", *Collier's*, Vol. 134, July, 1954, p. 59.

President Jacobo Arbenz of Guatemala, whose land reform policies and criticism of American corporations suggested that his government was under communist influence. The duck test was part of a simplistic view of the world that ignored the possibility of national communist or socialist movements independent of Moscow and for that matter had no little room for liberalism at home.

The ideological perspective of McCarthyism held suspicion and outright contempt for left-of-center politics and showed a remarkable imagination in seeing the possibility of communist influence virtually anywhere. More importantly for administrative heads like McLeod, the McCarthyist view conflated communist sympathy with a whole host of other issues: socialism, the New Deal, internationalism, peace activism, individual morality, and anything that went against a strict isolationist, anticommunist, pro-capitalist stance. Although red-hunters could imagine all sorts of complex subversive scenarios, at heart McCarthyism was a simple view of the world: failures of American foreign policy abroad and difficulties at home could in large part be traced to communists or communist sympathizers in positions of power. McCarthyists extended this suspicion to include any who had any association with any organization at all socialistic. Taken to its extreme, this mindset demanded from people in power nothing less than pure anticommunist devotion. Merely being non-communist was not enough, since neutrality would only help the enemy.

McCarthyism had much in common with Eisenhower's more moderate Republican political views. Ike found much of the Roosevelt-Truman era distasteful and identified the New Deal as a socialistic set of policies at odds with his own plans for the country. In 1953, the new President warned Dulles of long-time civil servants who might

have been selected “based upon their devotion to the socialistic doctrine and bureaucratic controls practiced over the past two decades.” He warned Dulles that these entrenched civil servants, loyal to “the philosophy of the preceding Administration,” must be replaced before the government could streamline its numbers, because otherwise the result would be “a studied effort to hang onto those believing in the New Deal philosophy and to eliminate those who show any respect for ideals of self-dependence and self-reliance.”⁸

McCarthyism was more than a suspicion of certain political views, however. An individual’s political history was inseparable from other personal issues, like occupation, education, origin, sexuality, and morality. There were many ways that a weak person could succumb to subversion even inadvertently, because of moral weakness or susceptibility to blackmail. McLeod brought with him a long mental list of the categories of undesirables: communist sympathizers, New Dealers, homosexuals, alcoholics, adulterers, and even those who associated too closely with the above list. “It matters little whether an American is a fool, a loose-mouthed drunkard, a good subject for blackmail, or outright disloyal, as far as obtaining the secrets of our government are concerned,” McLeod told a receptive American Legion audience after a few months on the job.⁹ In his attention to the personal lives of professional diplomats, McLeod of course was not alone, but was acting on concerns he shared with many of Eisenhower’s closest advisers. Eisenhower’s first press secretary, James C. Hagerty, in later years explained the expansion of the term “security risk:” “A greater security risk is an individual that can be

⁸ Memo, Eisenhower to Secretary of State, March 18, 1953, DDEPL, John Foster Dulles Papers [hereafter JFDP], White House Memoranda Series, Box 1, folder “White House Correspondence 1953 (2).”

blackmailed. And in that area, you have to include perverts, you have to include people that take dope of some kind one way or the other – a lot of things. An oversexualized [girl] or man. A fellow that’s sleeping around with somebody other than his wife.”¹⁰ Attorney General Herbert Brownell argued that loyalty and security could be clearly separated, but anyone who was a homosexual, an alcoholic, or otherwise “leading an irregular, abnormal life” was “automatically a subject for blackmail.”¹¹ The purging of and search for this wide range of “undesirables” had a profound impact on the morale and personnel of the State Department in the first two years of the Eisenhower administration and beyond. As we shall see later, McLeod’s security team found no definitive cases of disloyalty, but hundreds of security risks.

In the paranoid atmosphere of the early 1950s, some professions seemed more trustworthy than others. Some candidates for public office thus seemed “safer” from an anticommunist point of view than others. Professional diplomats were one of the easiest targets of conservative suspicion. First of all, until the 1950s, young men from elite Northeastern families and graduates of Ivy League universities made up a sizeable portion of the Foreign Service. Not only was one section of the country over-represented compared to others, but the State Department by its nature traditionally lacked a real constituency. Perhaps alone among the agencies and departments of the U.S. government, State had always seemed removed from the general public, as a result of the nature of its activities and because of its highly trained personnel. In the heated politics of the

⁹ Address by Scott McLeod to American Legion Convention, Topeka, Kansas, August 8, 1953, DDEPL, John Foster Dulles Papers [JFDP], White House Memoranda Series [WHMS], Internal Security Subseries, Box 8.

¹⁰ James C. Hagerty oral history transcript, Vol. 3, Columbia University Oral History Project [hereafter COHP], February 9, 1968, p. 393.

¹¹ Herbert Brownell oral history transcript, Vol. 2, COHP, April 12, 1968, p. 300.

McCarthy era, no sizeable part of the American polity came to its defense, and the State Department did not inspire the same sense of public patriotism that the Army found helpful in the McCarthy-Stevens controversy. Politicians who lined up against the New Deal pandered to a widespread public conviction that civil servants were getting rich at taxpayers' expense and that diplomats were the worst offenders. After years of notoriety attached to his name, John Paton Davies implored the public not to confuse "the tedium of social function with privilege, official title with authority, and, silliest of all, the lubricating civilities of protocol with activities subversive to the self-respect of red-blooded citizens – like eating snails."¹²

In part, McCarthy's supporters, particularly in the Midwest, expressed a long-held criticism of the "Eastern establishment" as out-of-touch with mainstream American life. In many minds, "Red" Dean Acheson, though a lawyer by training, typified the image of the professional, Eastern-educated diplomat, the "pin-striped cookie-pusher" who was either soft on communism or generally too weak to take true leadership in the all-important struggle against it. Along with labor organizers and teachers, Foreign Service Officers were the most suspicious characters, because of older stereotypes of the professional diplomat and also because of recent events, like the Alger Hiss case, the victory of Chinese communism, and an air of mystery around diplomatic activities that went at least as far back as the Yalta conference during World War II. Hiss, Yalta, and the "loss of China" became the watchwords in the conservative attack on the Democratic administration, and Republicans kept these lessons in mind under Eisenhower, in case the government continued to be soft on subversives. Officials who spent much of their

¹² John Paton Davies, Jr., *Foreign and Other Affairs*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1964), pp. 168, 197.

careers overseas were also vulnerable to the charge of being out of touch with developments in America, or of becoming too involved in foreign cultures. "Going native" in a country behind the iron curtain or in danger of communist revolution was especially dangerous for national security as well as one's professional career.¹³

The hunt for undesirables had a clear gender or sexual component as much as a political one. McLeod and other administrators applied the same zeal to weeding out alleged homosexuals that they did to hunting communists. In the McCarthyist mindset, communist sympathy and homosexuality were both dangerous perversions of the highest magnitude, and neither could be tolerated in government employment. Homosexuals became part of the anticommunist color code: the young evangelist Billy Graham spoke for many other conservatives when he praised Congressional investigators who "go loyally on in their work of exposing the pinks, the lavenders, and the reds who have sought refuge beneath the wings of the American eagle."¹⁴ The homophobic atmosphere in its extreme suspected of being gay anyone who was not obviously and overtly heterosexual, or any man who was not vigorously masculine, of being gay. A Foreign Service officer who had not been married by the age of forty considered resigning for fear of being branded as a closeted homosexual.¹⁵

There is little proof to support McCarthyist suspicions that State had a greater proportion of gay employees than other government agencies or that it specifically

¹³ Athan Theoharis, *The Yalta Myths: An Issue in U.S. Politics, 1945-1955*, (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1970), pp. 1-6, 73-4.

¹⁴ Quoted in Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), p. 45.

¹⁵ Ellis Briggs oral history transcript, COHP, June 19, 1970, p. 27. For a glimpse into the effects of anxiety over masculinity within American government at the end of the 1950's, see Robert Dean, "Masculinity as Ideology: John F. Kennedy and the Domestic Politics of Foreign Policy," *Diplomatic History* Vol. 22, No. 1 (Winter 1998), pp. 29-62.

attracted large numbers of homosexuals. It is true, however, that recent history certainly provided some sensational cases: one of Roosevelt's top diplomats, Sumner Welles, resigned after a scandal in which he allegedly propositioned a young man. In the last two years of the Truman administration, State had fired over 200 employees for homosexuality, and Republicans, including Governor of New York Thomas Dewey and Nebraska Senator Kenneth Wherry, railed against the apparent influence of "moral perverts."¹⁶ The department reassured Senator Lyndon Johnson that it investigated allegations of homosexuality "immediately and thoroughly, and offenders are promptly rooted out and separated from the department's rolls." The same letter reminded LBJ that departmental security officers testified that in 1951 State dismissed 119 homosexuals, to which the committee chairman replied, "that looks as though somebody is really working."¹⁷ McLeod, in an attempt "very frankly and honestly to face the issue of sexual perversion," revealed that between 1947 and mid-1953, the Department had found a total of 500 cases of homosexual activity, with every substantiated case ending in dismissal.¹⁸ The vast majority, about 425, were separated before McLeod took office, while in the same period only 27 employees had been separated for reasons of loyalty or security. One of the department's veteran security officers, John W. Ford, testified that the new administration got right to work in weeding out gays, continuing the work he began two years before; State was getting rid of an average of one employee every three days on the grounds of "social defects."¹⁹ The suspicion itself was the most important factor, since

¹⁶ Nicholas von Hoffman, *Citizen Cohn*, (New York: Doubleday, 1988), pp. 127-130.

¹⁷ Letter, Thruston Morton to Senator Johnson, February 18, 1953, Record Group 59 [hereafter RG 59], 1950-54, National Archives, File 113/1-2755.

¹⁸ McLeod address, August 8, 1953.

¹⁹ *Washington Post*, March 27 and April 13, 1953.

such accusations were extremely hard to disprove. One suspicious incident could destroy the reputation of a man who was married with two children, as was the case with Charles Thayer, whom Dulles asked to resign in 1953 on morals allegations. McCarthy was not satisfied with Thayer's resignation, since the official announcement was that the diplomat voluntarily left government service to pursue a writing career; McCarthy wanted the record to show that the department forced him out for morally-based security reasons.²⁰

It is plausible, however, to see Foreign Service Officers as fitting, at the time, certain homosexual stereotypes. Aspiring diplomats tended to be (and often *had* to be) well-spoken, meticulous, polite, sensitive, well-dressed, and more than a little open-minded, which were suspicious qualities to those who demanded a strong, simple, militant approach to foreign affairs. Added to this image was the fact that junior officers were constantly on the move and usually lacked the salary to raise a family comfortably, so were less likely than their peers in other professions to get married and raise a family until later. Until the officer gained some experience and was promoted up the ladder, settling down into traditional familial roles was a more difficult proposition, whatever the junior officer's orientation. Association with a known or suspected homosexual was derogatory information itself. For McLeod, it was Charles Bohlen's professional association and friendship with Charles Thayer, who also happened to be Bohlen's

²⁰ In order to spare Thayer the embarrassment of the hearsay allegation of being gay, the department leaked out the admitted fact that Thayer had once fathered an illegitimate child with a Russian woman employed by the VOA. The contents of his file had leaked out to McCarthy, and Thayer convinced the department to leak the "girl" charge, undermining and distracting from the "gay" charge. See Thomas G. Corti and T. Michael Ruddy, "The Bohlen-Thayer Dilemma: A Case Study in the Eisenhower Administration's Response to McCarthyism," *Mid-America* 72, No. 2 (April-July 1990), pp. 125-6, 128-9.

brother-in-law, and other suspected gay men that made Bohlen unacceptable, whatever Bohlen had done at Yalta.

At no time perhaps since the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt had a sense of masculinity become such a defining issue in foreign affairs. McCarthy and other conservative leaders frequently commented on the lack of “strong” foreign policy specialists, and critics of the Democratic administrations often cast aspersions on the manhood of their diplomatic officials. McLeod once told reporters that the kind of man he most wanted as a colleague in the department was someone he could trust behind a tree with him in a firefight. (That ideal came one step closer to reality in 1954 when departmental security agents were authorized to carry sidearms, and Marine guards were allowed security clearances to work with confidential files.) Homosexuality, communist sympathy, and effeminacy became jumbled together as the wrong characteristics for proper personnel in foreign affairs. Senator Wherry told a reporter, “I don’t say every homosexual is a subversive, and I don’t say every subversive is a homosexual. But a man of low morality is a menace in the government, whatever he is, and they are all tied up together.”²¹

The argument that employees with sexual secrets to hide might be ripe subjects for blackmail was not new to the Cold War, much less to the McCarthy era, and in the history of espionage it was not uncommon for “talent spotters” to use sexual bait to trap potential sources in compromising situations. Americans had no special immunity to the “honey trap,” whether gay or straight, at home or abroad. In 1937, a male American clerk for the military attaché in the U.S. Embassy in Moscow informed his superiors that

²¹ Quoted in von Hoffman, p. 130.

Soviet agents had tried to blackmail him with photographs of a homosexual liaison they had orchestrated. The Soviets gave him three days to hand over U.S. military codes, he informed his superiors, and was immediately transferred back to Washington.²² The possibility of blackmail by hostile agents was the ostensible justification for rooting out homosexuals from sensitive agencies, and in this sense the search for gay employees was no different than the search for alcoholics, people committing adultery, or others with secrets to hide from employers or family. However, the zeal with which McLeod and other security chiefs searched for possible homosexual behavior was unmatched by any other category of undesirables; adulterers and heavy drinkers did not inspire the same pride as reporting to Congress and the public the numbers of people cleaned out for alleged homosexuality. In a strange Catch-22, the blackmail argument suggested that the real threat to security came from the stigma attached to homosexual behavior, not from any inherent inability of gay employees to be good security risks. Thus, in the unique circular logic of an Orwellian security system, they were risks because they were socially unacceptable, and they were professionally unacceptable because they were risks.

Regionalism was another factor in the McCarthyist critique of America's foreign policy apparatus. McCarthy was but the most extreme proponent of making the Foreign Service more "democratic" in the sense of being more representative of the country as a whole, rather than an institution dominated by the Northeastern elite. Since World War II and the dramatic rise in the size of government agencies concerned with foreign affairs, State had become more regionally representative, but by 1953 Princeton and Harvard

²² Norman Polmar and Thomas B. Allen, *The Spy Book: The Encyclopedia of Espionage, Updated and Revised Edition*, (New York: Random House, 1998), pp. 264-6.

graduates still made up a disproportionate number of new officers. As an Iowan, McLeod shared with many other Midwesterners an unstated assumption that Americans from the heartland were more solid citizens, more in tune with American values, and better able to preserve their integrity when serving the government abroad. By the time Dulles took over the department, it was aware of its image as a haven for “exotic dilettantes.” The outgoing Public Affairs division left secretary-designate Dulles some words of advice on the subject of public confidence: have FSO’s make extra efforts to appear in public, especially in the Midwest, South, and Southwest, not just to speak on policy “but to demonstrate that those charged with the handling of foreign relations at many levels are capable, responsible, and congenial human beings drawn from and representative of the people as a whole.”²³

Finally, even if a State Department employee or applicant for the Foreign Service showed the values that McCarthyists treasured in a civil servant, partisanship frequently played a role. Eisenhower came into office after twenty years of a Democratic control over the executive branch. Republicans, conservatives especially, saw the election of a Republican president as a long-awaited opportunity to clean out government of entrenched New Dealers, Democratic cronies, and inefficient, untrustworthy Roosevelt and Truman appointees. Conservative Republicans delighted in uncovering New Dealers who, like communists, could be associated with bizarre social beliefs like nudism and free love.²⁴ With growing dissatisfaction over the Korean War, accusations that the

²³ Memo, Sargeant to Dulles, *FRUS, 1952-4, Vol.1*, pp. 41-2.

²⁴ *Washington Post*, February 21. The reporter noted that a woman (whom he felt was necessary to describe as “a slim brunette of 30”) testified to the Senate that when she applied for a job with the Voice of America, one official mentioned he was soon going to try a communal living situation which would include free love. It is more likely such a statement was a sexual rather than political proposition, harassment rather than propaganda.

Truman administration harbored communists, Eisenhower's popularity, and the Republicans' desire to overturn twenty years of Democratic rule, the possibility for a wholesale turnover in appointed office was enormous. Eisenhower was poised upon an opportunity to change the makeup of the federal government almost as dramatically as Roosevelt had in the 1930s. It was with a hungry sense of vengeance that Republicans in Congress and elsewhere demanded that Republicans replace Democrats in appointed government positions. Conservative Republicans expressed disgust at how the New Deal had put so many Democrats in positions at all levels of government, filling "those offices with nits, bedbugs, and lice."²⁵ The usual turnover in government that occurred at a change in administrations was exacerbated in 1953 due to a combination of factors: the length of Democratic rule, the apparent anticommunist failures of the previous administration, and the widely publicized hunt for subversives in the U.S. government. As Charles Bohlen discovered during his contentious confirmation hearings as ambassador to the Soviet Union, the result of the partisan settling was that experience as a veteran diplomat was no guarantee of job security. In fact, seniority could be a disadvantage if the officer had become associated with Democratic "failures," as Bohlen had been as Roosevelt's translator and advisor at Yalta.

Despite this opportunity, partisanship as a factor in high-level appointments was limited by Eisenhower's moderation in appointing Republicans to office. In general, he avoided making appointments strictly on the basis of their political affiliation, preferring instead to let party membership be the "tie-breaker": between two equal candidates of different parties, the job went to the Republican. His reduction in the size of government

²⁵ Ferrell, *Diary of James Hagerty*, p. 15.

hit loyal Republicans as well as Democrats, much to the dismay of members of his own party, who wanted a Democrat to leave a post before “a good Republican.”²⁶ Despite the pressure from powerful Republicans in Congress, Eisenhower over the course of his two terms actually furthered the position of professional civil servants, even within the beleaguered State Department. Republican Senators later in the decade would describe his record of appointing Republicans relative to careerists “a very dismal one.”²⁷ He kept political appointees to bare minimum, and by 1961 the vast majority of ambassadors were veteran Foreign Service Officers. However, while partisanship did not play as large a role as it could have after twenty years of a Democratic executive, some department heads, like Dulles in State and Ezra Benson in Agriculture, and those in charge of personnel at the middle levels like McLeod, had considerable leeway to act on the basis of political affiliation. The overall record of selecting careerists over political appointees made the occasional selection of inexperienced non-career candidates even more glaring, especially in ambassadorial appointments.

McCarthyism included a set of beliefs about international relations, and as such it had an impact on the conduct of foreign relations, from the day-to-day workings to the determination of long-range policy. The Red Scare affected Americans at home in many aspects of life, including education, entertainment, scientific research, and employment. But, McCarthyism was much more than a domestic phenomenon; it was a profound presence in the lives of American officials abroad, it alarmed relations with other

²⁶ For one example that McLeod oversaw personally, see Memo from Hanes to McCloud [sic], March 10, 1953, DDEPL, JFDP, Special Assistants Chronological Series, Box 2, folder “March 2-18, 1953.” (Note that McLeod was still an unknown, judging by the various spellings of his name.)

²⁷ Letter, Homer H. Gruenther to Bryce N. Harlow, February 19, 1958, DDEPL, Central Files, Official File 8, “State Department,” Box 154, folder “February 1958.”

countries, and it continued to affect diplomatic activity at many levels. Questions of foreign policy are as much about personnel as about ideas, and through McLeod the anticommunist movement shaped decisions about who was hired, fired, transferred, listened to, and ignored. One usually thinks of large bureaucracies as rigid, ossified structures, but administration of the huge foreign affairs bureaucracy was in a state of flux during the first decade of the Cold War, with the State Department at the core of the changes, and internal security matters at the heart of the State Department. The impact of McCarthyism on the State Department is thus one important piece of the puzzle of Cold War foreign policy in the 1950's.

**Chapter 3:
Red, Pink, and Lavender Termites:
Scott McLeod and the State Department, 1953-55**

Scott McLeod was one of the most well-known names in Washington in 1953, certainly among those who watched the anticommunist crusade unfold. He came out of nowhere to become one of the most newsworthy appointments of the new administration. Everyone in the Foreign Service and the State Department, and anyone who followed the conduct of foreign affairs soon knew the name. However, even in the most detailed historical treatments of the McCarthy era, McLeod is often no more than a footnoted figure, never near the center of the firestorm.¹ Most accounts mention the security chief in passing, often referring to him as a McCarthyite that Dulles or Eisenhower appointed to appease the right wing of the Republican Party. The traditional view of McLeod's tenure is that he served as an information pipeline to conservative Republican Senators like McCarthy and Styles Bridges and that he was an indiscriminate hatchet man acting under McCarthy's direction.² Then, once the Senate censured McCarthy, McLeod's reign came to an end, as did the nightmare of McCarthyism.

In fact, as is usually the case, the documentary record shows a much more complicated state of affairs. McLeod died unexpectedly in 1961, two years after Dulles'

¹ So far the only historical account to deal with McLeod as a central figure has been a very accomplished, unpublished thesis by Todd Purdum, "The Politics of Security: The Eisenhower State Department and Scott McLeod," Princeton University Senior Thesis, 1982.

² For examples, see Caute, pp. 307-8, 324; Thomas C. Reeves, *The Life and Times of Joe McCarthy – A Biography*, (New York: Stein and Day, 1982), pp. 462, 469; and David M. Oshinsky, *A Conspiracy So Immense – The World of Joe McCarthy*, (New York: The Free Press, 1983), pp. 262-4.

death, and like Dulles did not have the opportunity to write his memoirs. A combination of declassified government documents and oral histories has provided a more nuanced view of a very unpopular figure who was not strictly a McCarthy puppet, who did not alienate everyone within the Department, and who acted largely independently of McCarthy and remained in government service until 1961. Furthermore, McCarthyism cast a shadow on the State Department for years after McCarthy's censure and after Dulles limited McLeod's power in 1955.

Although McLeod's career was tied to McCarthy's fortunes, his longevity was one example of the long-term remnants of McCarthyism in the Department. In fact, the history of the domestic anticommunist crusade still has gaps that historians can work to fill. Until recently, most treatments of the Second Red Scare have focused on the Truman administration, with Eisenhower's first two years marking the climax and end to the McCarthy era. The most important exception has been the work of Jeff Broadwater, who has written on the Eisenhower administration's unique role in the anticommunist campaigns of the 1950's, continuing beyond McCarthy's downfall.³ Most accounts close the story at the 1954 censure, with McCarthy's death as kind of epilogue, but the "ism" remained alive, and the long-term effects of the anticommunist witch-hunts remain largely unexplored. One exception to this lack of attention has been the extensive work, reviewed in Chapter 1, done on the fates of the so-called China hands after the Chinese Communist victory. An intriguing thesis from this thread of analysis is that institutionalized McCarthyism in agencies responsible for Far Eastern foreign relations

³ Jeff Broadwater, *Eisenhower and the Anti-Communist Crusade*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992).

contributed to America's military entanglement in Vietnam.⁴ Still left unexplored is the general long-term effects of McCarthyism in foreign affairs agencies like the State Department and its effect on relations with particular parts of the world besides Asia.

Arguments that the State Department continued to harbor communist sympathizers continued years after McCarthyism's apparent death. At one point researching the relations between Cuba and the United States during the 1950's, I came across the memoir of a former ambassador to Cuba, Earl E.T. Smith, a controversial conservative political appointment himself, who was ambassador when Fidel Castro came to power. In 1962, three years after State replaced him with a professionally trained ambassador, Smith wrote that the State Department had been sympathetic to Castro's movement, knew that Castro was a communist, and had actively undermined the anticommunist program of Cuban President Fulgencio Batista. Essentially, he accused the Assistant Secretary level of the State Department of harboring communist sympathizers who helped Cuba become a Soviet satellite. Smith's accusation differed from McCarthy's accusations about subversives in State only in that the ex-ambassador scapegoated the floor of a building instead of a list of names.⁵ It was surprising to find such an accusation so long after the McCarthy era had supposedly come to an end, and it inspired a question as to what had happened in the intervening years. The tensions and changes in the State Department over these years led invariably back to McLeod's tenure as head of personnel and security.

⁴ Kahn, pp. 294-6. For one example of the McCarthyism-Vietnam thesis, see O. Edmund Clubb, *The Witness and I*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975).

⁵ Smith, Earl E.T., *Fourth Floor; An Account of the Castro Communist Revolution* (New York: Random House, 1962).

Building on a distinction that originated under Truman's State Department, the Eisenhower administration maintained that questions of loyalty could be separated from questions of security, and that one could therefore be dismissed as a risk without necessarily being disloyal. Eisenhower decided that all federal employees should have their files reviewed to spot any potential problems. Without directly shifting the burden of proof onto the employee, the President repeatedly argued that government employment was a privilege and not a right, which gave the government greater leeway in deciding whom to hire and whom to fire. In Eisenhower's mind, this change would lead to a higher standard of conduct among government employees. The new criteria extended beyond questions of disloyalty, to include any information that might suggest the employee would be a bad security risk. Executive Order 10450, which the President signed in March, 1953 and which took effect in May, codified the new system by ordering security investigations into the personnel files of all federal employees and all applicants for federal positions. It defined the terms for finding someone a security risk, set up the machinery for adjudication and appeals, and in a classically Ike-like delegation of authority, gave the head of each agency the final word in all security cases. The "10450 program," as it came to be known, greatly expanded the power and obligation of the government to investigate not only loyalty issues, but also any questions concerning internal security. It ordered a retroactive review of all employees, regardless of their current status, regardless of any security reviews in their past. Under 10450, the executive branch not only cast the anticommunist net far wider, it narrowed the mesh to catch a greater variety of targets.

Section 8 of the executive order showed to how far the security system had moved from narrowly defined (and hard-to-prove) questions of disloyalty to the United States government to more hazy questions of personal propriety. The new system made it possible to dismiss employees for everything from being a Soviet spy to being an alcoholic, a blabbermouth, an adulterer, or a homosexual. In general terms, 10450 defined personnel security issues to include any “behavior, activities, or associations” that show untrustworthiness, “criminal,...., immoral, or notoriously disgraceful conduct, habitual use of intoxicants to excess, drug addiction, or sexual perversion.” “sympathetic association with a saboteur, spy, traitor, seditionist, anarchist, or revolutionist,” and anything in one’s life that could make the employee subject to blackmail. Such general terms, especially guilt by association, left much to the imagination of each department security office.⁶

The logic behind the attempt to weed out “moral undesirables” like adulterers and homosexuals was that anyone with personal circumstances to hide from society might be an easy target for blackmail; foreign agents could coerce them to give up classified information by threatening to expose their personal secrets. Issues of sexual morality also were an important part of the traditional isolationist suspicion of professional diplomats, and the attempt to root out homosexuals was as zealous as the search for communists themselves. Alcoholics or those with consistently poor judgment were risky because they could not be trusted with important secrets. Under the new security system, an unquestionably loyal and dedicated State employee could be terminated for having

⁶ “Executive Order 10450,” April 27, 1953, in Robert Branyon and Lawrence H. Larsen, eds., *The Eisenhower Administration, 1953-61, A Documentary History, Vols. I and II*, (New York: Random House, 1971), pp. 136-42.

relatives who had been members of the Communist Party. In one case a woman's two estranged, married sisters had been members of the Party during the war; by Dulles' reasoning, even though her relationship with them had been a distant one, her relatives might "at some future time... be in a position, either fortuitously or by design, to establish a closer relationship."⁷ In such cases "the interest of the government must override the personal interest of the individual, even though she personally [was] guilty of no wrongdoing."⁸ National security concerns overrode her privileged position as a government employee. In the end, being a potential subject for blackmail was by far the most common charge against those denied federal employment or forced out of government service.

The new security system clearly expanded the basis for getting rid of employees based on national security concerns. Charges of disloyalty were difficult to substantiate, but accusations of questionable judgment were much easier to support and even manufacture. The new system provided more constant scrutiny, without waiting for individual cases to develop. Furthermore, defining government service as a privilege and not a right put the benefit of the doubt squarely in federal hands; when in doubt, national security took precedence over presumption of innocence. The experienced red-hunter Richard Nixon summed up the change succinctly: "Under [the] old loyalty program our friend, Hiss, would have been loyal. Under our program we could get rid of him."⁹

⁷ Draft of a letter, Dulles to [name deleted], undated, DDEPL, JFDP, Special Assistants Chronological Series, Box 5, folder "O'Connor-Hanes Chronological April 1954 (2)."

⁸ Memo, John W. Hanes to Thruston Morton, April 21, 1954, *Ibid.*

⁹ Ferrell, *Diary of James Hagerty*, p. 15.

McCarthyism Enters the State Department

The origins of Dulles' choice to head personnel and security were debated at the time, since this recently-created job was a high-profile one. One of Dulles' first acts as Secretary-designate was to reorganize State and carry out recent legislation creating an Under Secretary of State for Administration, who would oversee most of the routine duties of employees in the Washington offices. Dulles personally looked forward to filling the role as quickly and easily as possible, because he was the most recent of a long history of Secretaries of State who preferred to leave running the bureaucracy to others. More importantly, the same legislation also created an Administrator of Security and Consular Affairs, in effect putting in one person all the oversight for everything from security investigations to hiring and firing to issuing passports. Into this new, powerful office came the energetic McLeod.

Many of the Foreign Service Officers and others critical of McCarthyism saw the hiring of McLeod as Dulles' attempt to appease McCarthy by putting one of the senator's friends in an important office. His appointment was not in fact a direct move to appease McCarthy, but came about through a series of coincidences of which Dulles was only partly aware, in large part due to the immense shakeup of government departments in the transition period between Truman and Eisenhower. McLeod had been a reporter and FBI agent in New Hampshire years before, and in 1950 he became an administrative assistant and researcher for the state's conservative Senator Styles Bridges. Among other duties, he had helped provide the research behind Bridges' exposure of communism in American

agriculture.¹⁰ It was through Bridges' political network that McLeod had gotten his appointment to Security and Consular Affairs.

Donald Lourie, the new Under Secretary of State for Administration and McLeod's immediate superior, had been most recently chairman of the board of Quaker Oats and had no experience overseeing a large foreign affairs institution. Just like many of the department's professional diplomats, he was a graduate of Princeton, but unfortunately for the quality of his government service, he was more well-known for his athletic career than his academic achievement.¹¹ In any case, Lourie joined government service with the idea of leaving it again within the year. He was an important example of the Eisenhower administration's well-known revolving door between big business and government service. Lourie hired McLeod on a recommendation from a fellow Chicagoan, Charles Lindsay, the head of a chemical company whose Washington representative was a close friend of McLeod's.¹² In combination with Dulles' need to delegate administrative authority, Lourie's delegation of authority ultimately brought in, in March, 1953, a man who inspired dread and immediate hatred within the State Department. Lourie took over the Administration branch at a time of "substantial ferment," which Lourie's selection of McLeod only aggravated. The delegation of authority to a McCarthyist security chief increased the uncertainty among departmental employees at a time when Foreign Service officers doubted their own government's desire to defend them against outside attacks.¹³

¹⁰ Samuel B. Bledsoe oral history, COHP, 1954, p. 341.

¹¹ Howland Sargeant oral history, December 15, 1970, COHP, p. 6.

¹² Purdum, pp. 6-7.

¹³ Sargeant oral history, pp. 7-9.

Even before McLeod joined the department, Dulles let his department know he considered internal security a high priority, and reminded them there was a new boss in town. On a cold January day in 1953, on the back steps of the “New State” building still under construction, Dulles spoke for the first time to an assembled crowd of his employees. It was in fact the first time in modern memory that an incoming Secretary had gathered his department together for an opening address, and Dulles wanted to show as much as possible that he intended to distance himself from the previous administration but not alienate his employees. His speech encountered a tense, uncertain silence when he stated he would demand nothing less than the “positive loyalty” of his employees. Dulles considered the phrase very neutral, but the words alarmed many Foreign Service Officers, many of whom saw Dulles as an outsider whose position on McCarthy was unclear, or at worst sympathetic. Because of his introductory remarks, Dulles began his administration with a cool reception, made colder with his eventual delegation of power over personnel.¹⁴

Dulles gave McLeod a free rein over security and personnel in part because of the Secretary’s administrative style. By all accounts, from his most ardent admirers to his toughest critics, Dulles delegated the administrative tasks of the department as often as possible. Although he reinvigorated the Secretary of State’s role in American foreign policy, like most of his predecessors he also distanced the Secretary position from the department itself by leaving the day-to-day workings to his assistants and Under Secretaries. In the first days of his appointment, before McLeod came in, Dulles had to

¹⁴ Years later many former FSO’s could recall that day very clearly as a defining moment in Dulles’ relationship with the Department. For examples, see interviews of Joseph J. Sisco and Richard Rubottom, John Foster Dulles Oral History Collection [JFDOH], Princeton University.

address the outstanding security cases left over from Acheson, and the Secretary continued to involve himself in the most important cases like that of Charles Bohlen, but he left the conduct of the loyalty-security program largely to his subordinates.

It was a chain of delegation from Eisenhower to Dulles to Lourie to McLeod that allowed McLeod such authority over such a politically sensitive issue as the security of the State Department. The always candid C.D. Jackson kept an eye on State's administrative problems, and after two years and comfortable retirement supervising *Fortune* magazine he summarized the disaster of delegated authority:

Meanwhile, Donald Lourie, the new Under Secretary of State for Administration, turned out to be a colossal flop. A heroic Princeton quarterback who rose to the top of Quaker Oats because of his Scotch ancestry, his naively earnest salesmanship, and his radiant decency, he turned out in the first 24 hours of his incumbency to be just a sucker for the Washington wolves.

Of the three men who might have guided him, Dulles, his boss, was committed to leaving him strictly alone; Beedle Smith, the other Under Secretary, having been told to stick to policy and leave administration to Lourie, stuck to policy and left administration to Lourie; [White House staff member] Sherman Adams was going through his 1953 phase of believing that McCarthy, Styles Bridges, Dirksen, Jenner, etc., were just agrarian reformers who if treated with kindness (appeased) would see the light and be good.

So Scott McLeod was given the Security and Personnel job in State as an act of appeasement to Bridges, and immediately became an overt pipeline to McCarthy and J. Edgar Hoover....

While all of this was going on, Eisenhower was being his most stafflike, with the result that he would not interfere with Dulles, his G-State, who in turn was refusing to have anything to do with administration or personnel.¹⁵

McLeod was left with enormous influence over internal security, passports, and personnel decisions. He described his position as "a rather obscure junior vice president in the biggest business on earth -- your government."¹⁶ Lourie lacked the experience and

¹⁵ Letter, C.D. Jackson to Hedley Donovan, April 8, 1955, pp. 3-4, DDEPL, C.D. Jackson Papers, Box 68, folder "Log 1955 (1)."

¹⁶ McLeod address, August 8, 1953.

the long-term commitment to keep close watch on the security chief, and as an outsider to the foreign affairs bureaucracy he sympathized with McLeod because they both met resistance from professional officers. The result was that, although McLeod's official role in personnel and security was limited to making recommendations to the Secretary, this role did not mean he lacked the power to make life difficult for any employee he found suspicious. Dulles' power to turn down McLeod's recommendations rarely came into play, since most of the "separated" left quietly.

McLeod was known as a close friend of McCarthy and suspected to have provided the senator with classified information on departmental personnel, but the evidence of his closeness or cooperation with McCarthy is mixed. McLeod showed admiration for McCarthy to the extent of putting a picture of the senator on his office desk with the words "a true American" written on it, but McLeod also kept a respectable distance between himself and the senator, under Dulles' orders. Whatever personal attachment he had for McCarthy, his devotion to his State Department position proved to be more powerful over time.¹⁷

Early on in his career with State, McLeod offered journalists a glimpse into his perspective on internal security matters. One of his first duties was to reassure the public that the new program under his leadership would be vigorous and to explain to the public how the new regulations would serve justice fairly. McLeod supported Eisenhower's view that working for the government was a privilege and not a right and that when in doubt about an employee, the benefit of the doubt should go to interest of national

¹⁷ Purdum, pp. 47-50. It is still unclear if the writing on the McCarthy photo referred to the senator or was part of an autograph referring to the security chief.

security. Before he had been in the office a year, McLeod explained in the pro-McCarthy *U.S. News and World Report* that the “security-integrity system” was by its nature different from the normal judicial process in the rest of society, and hard proof was less of a requirement than was the possibility of a security risk. Under E.O. 10450, “[w]e are trying to protect the government from what may occur in the future. Since you can’t prove future behavior – future acts are not susceptible to present proof – there is no proof in this system. It is not a judicial system.”¹⁸ Newspapers, particularly those sympathetic to congressional red-hunting, kept their eyes on McLeod, who caused quite a ripple throughout the department. His appointment was a dramatic twist in the continuing saga of ridding government of undesirables.

Dulles’ Security Chief

The Secretary of State immediately came into conflict with his security chief, because McLeod’s appointment coincided with Eisenhower’s nomination of Charles Bohlen to be ambassador to the Soviet Union. Dulles had hoped the White House could send the nomination routinely through to the Senate along with a list of minor appointments, so as not to make the Moscow post seem like a special case. McCarthy dispelled this hope when he and other conservative senators took the confirmation debate as their opportunity to strike against those associated with the Yalta agreements, which they saw as appeasements to Stalin. Bohlen had been an advisor to Roosevelt at the Yalta conference, serving mostly as a translator, but this minor role was enough to taint him as

¹⁸ R. W. Scott McLeod, “We’re Cleaning Up the Mess in the State Department,” *U.S. News and World Report*, Vol. 36, Feb. 12, 1954, p. 62.

a Stalin appeaser. Furthermore, through hearsay and unsubstantiated rumors Bohlen also came to represent for conservatives the alleged moral depravity of professional diplomats. Senator Hickenlooper of Iowa claimed to have extensive information on “the personal angle and the general moral problem in the State Department.” In roundabout, vague language, rumors circulated that Bohlen was homosexual, and McLeod and Lourie subscribed to that suspicion. They referred to Bohlen as “one of them” and working under “the criteria that once one, always one, and consequently a security risk,” terms that applied equally to political as well as sexual orientation.¹⁹ FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover admitted the evidence was mostly suspicion but agreed that Bohlen should not get a high security clearance.²⁰ Both the President and Douglas MacArthur II, legal counselor to the Department, felt the need to defend Bohlen by pointing out their confidence that he had “a normal family life.”²¹ The heated confirmation debate in the Senate demonstrated not only the impact of McCarthyism on America’s foreign policy machinery, but also how interrelated private life and ideology had become in the politics of anti-communism. The political and the personal were inseparable.

A newspaper article in March revealed that McLeod had expressed serious reservations about Bohlen’s nomination and that Dulles supported Eisenhower’s recommendation anyway. The suspicious McLeod and the cautious former lawyer Dulles had read the same personnel file and had come to very different conclusions. McLeod found that Bohlen was an inherently unreliable person because of suspicious hearsay in

¹⁹ Memo of telephone conversation with Donald Lourie, March 19, 1953, DDEPL, JFDP, WHMS, Internal Security Subseries, Box 8.

²⁰ Memo of telephone conversation with the President, March 17, 1953, *Ibid.*

²¹ Memo of telephone conversation with the President, undated, *Ibid.*

his file, while Dulles found no solid proof of anything that would make the professional diplomat an unreliable risk.

At heart, they disagreed over very suggestive private information that had more to do with personal concerns than questions of loyalty or security; instead, Dulles told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee the derogatory material “applied to other matters.”²² McLeod brought the file to Dulles’ attention, but the Secretary found little that would either stand as proof of immorality or make a difference in Bohlen’s reliability even if proven. The FBI investigation of the diplomat showed only “Acquaintance with questionable characters” (a total of three, including Charles Thayer, his brother-in-law) and “Unfavorable comments” from two people, one of whom had judged Bohlen based solely on hearing his voice once over the telephone – she claimed to “have a sense about these things.”²³ Henry Cabot Lodge, the U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., wrote a letter for the record stating his supreme confidence in Bohlen as a morally upstanding individual and noting that the nominee “has a number of children and a happy family life and he and his wife get along well together.”²⁴ In a rare moment in which Eisenhower compromised in his belief in keeping executive branch files out of legislative hands, the President affirmed his confidence in Bohlen by inviting the Senate to select a representative from each party to come to the State Department and view the ambassador’s complete personnel file, including information collected by the FBI. Republican Senator Robert Taft, who at one time encouraged McCarthy in his publicity hunting, met with

²² Untitled memo, author unknown, March 21, 1953, *Ibid.*, p. 1.

²³ Analysis of F.B.I. Report, undated, author unknown, *Ibid.*, and Purdum, p. 34.

²⁴ Letter, Henry Cabot Lodge to file, March 24, 1953, DDEPL, JFDP, WHMS, Internal Security Subseries, Box 8.

Democratic Senator John Sparkman, an outspoken critic of McCarthy for the past three years, and Dulles' assistant John Haynes to go over the Bohlen file. The Senators reported back to their colleagues that they could find no evidence of anything to doubt the diplomat's integrity, loyalty, or dependability.

After only two months in office, the new administration's anticommunist commitment was in question, with Dulles apparently disregarding the concerns of his security expert. The Secretary became angry at the idea that one of his subordinates had shared confidential information with McCarthy and the press, especially at a time when Dulles was trying to accommodate conservatives by trying to build public faith in his department. Dulles told McLeod that discussing cases with people outside regular channels was completely inappropriate and grounds for dismissal, and later he reminded Lourie to make sure the security chief "realizes he is part of State now and not working for any other organization."²⁵ Such an insubordination was particularly galling to the proud Foster Dulles, who refused to let subordinates get on an elevator before him or presume to ride in his car with him without his invitation.²⁶ After consulting with Lourie and deciding he could not be overruled and still continue at his job, McLeod drafted a letter of resignation that apologized for any wrongdoing. Dulles went so far as to draft a letter of his own asking for the resignation. He never sent the letter, however. Dulles decided that to fire McLeod would create too many problems for the Secretary's relations with Congress. Instead, Dulles called McLeod into his office for a heart-to-heart talk to educate McLeod about the dangerous waters he was treading. The Secretary told McLeod

²⁵ Memo of telephone conversation with Donald Lourie, March 16, 1953, *Ibid.*

²⁶ Robert C. Hill oral history transcript, October 19, 1972, COHP, in DDEPL Oral History Collection, p. 34.

that Eisenhower approved of asking McLeod to resign, but was willing to concede that the security chief “had come into the office without adequate understanding.” Dulles informed him of “the responsibilities and complexities of this office,” and that he was “willing to make a fresh start and McLeod seemed grateful and anxious to do it.” McLeod seemed suitably repentant, volunteering to write a letter of apology to Dulles and the President, and agreed not to appear before any Congressional committee without the Secretary’s or the President’s authorization. For the future, the Secretary allowed McLeod to continue his investigations as long as he kept them confidential and let his superiors decide the appropriate ways to release information on the security system. As he told Lourie and two of the President’s advisors, “we will watch him and keep him somewhat on trial.”²⁷

The Bohlen confirmation was an early confrontation between McCarthy and the Eisenhower administration, one of the first opportunities for the President to assert his influence over his own party and limit the influence of the right wing. The President reacted to the opportunity by taking small, indirect steps to distance himself from the Wisconsin senator, by restating his own personal confidence in Bohlen but avoiding any reference to McCarthy. The night before the Bohlen vote, both Eisenhower and McCarthy attended a party thrown by Republican Senator Robert Taft in honor of the first lady. Eisenhower and McCarthy exchanged pleasantries and shook hands with each other for the cameras, but Ike’s friendly smile was conspicuously absent. While the President was politely dodging McCarthy at the party, a White House bodyguard whisked

²⁷ “Subject: McLeod,” Memo of telephone conversation with Adams, Hagerty, and Lourie, March 20, 1953, DDEPL, JFDP, WHMS, Internal Security Subseries, Box 8; Memo, Dulles to McLeod, March 20, 1953, *Ibid*.

McLeod away to a safehouse where no Senate Subcommittee subpoena could reach him. The debate over the ambassadorship witnessed a temporary decline in McCarthy's popularity within his own party, as even his partisan defenders began to chafe against his outrageous conduct. When he suggested a handwriting analysis for the signature on the papers sent from the State Department, to make sure Dulles did in fact sign them, he lost even more credibility in the eyes of his fellow Republicans. The Sparkman/Taft review of the files, along the President's endorsement and McCarthy's shrill reaction all contributed to a large majority in favor of Bohlen, who became the ambassador to Moscow with only thirteen votes against him, all by McCarthy's most dedicated supporters. It was a temporary victory against McCarthyist attempts to dictate Eisenhower's foreign policy choices, but the contention over the nomination made the White House aware that a Republican President would not be shielded from the same conservative attacks that Truman faced. In sending the ambassador off to his Moscow post, Dulles still acted to put to rest rumors about Bohlen's private life; the Secretary made sure Bohlen's wife and children would not join him in Russia two weeks later, as the diplomat had originally intended, but would leave with him to demonstrate his healthy, normal family life.²⁸

The imbroglio over Bohlen was a problem that reached the highest levels. It was an early case in which the President was forced to take a stand in response to McCarthyite accusations, since Eisenhower saw the ambassadorship to the Soviet Union as one of the most important positions in American foreign affairs and had picked Bohlen as his personal choice. While head of Allied forces in Europe, Ike had met Bohlen and was long impressed with his knowledge and ability. As such, the President was very

²⁸ Charles Bohlen oral history transcript, COHP, pp. 13-4, 16.

impatient, even affronted, at any opposition to the confirmation. After the Bohlen controversy, Eisenhower decided that no one in his administration should disclose any possible nominees for overseas posts before all security information on the candidate had come in: “[L]et’s never mention another name until we all have of [sic] these clearances before us and know we aren’t going to get into this again.”²⁹ The McLeod-Bohlen affair also prompted the President to issue orders that everyone in the executive branch should honor congressional subpoenas but should not provide any information from agency files without the express permission of the agency heads. In short, subordinates were to show up and be friendly but give away nothing.

The President was forced to comment on a front-page controversy over a man he had never heard of and who was picked sight-unseen by a subordinate to a Cabinet Secretary. The Bohlen affair started the rumor that Dulles had picked a McCarthyite henchman to appease diehard anticommunists and that McLeod was handing over confidential files to McCarthy. It was an easy conclusion to come to, since McLeod had eaten lunch with McCarthy, Cohn, and Schine the day before his Bohlen opinions had become front page news. More likely, McLeod had discussed Bohlen off the record with his former boss, Styles Bridges, who relayed his doubts to McCarthy. In either case, at best McLeod showed that he was naive about the political aspects of his job and at worst that he was breaking confidentiality and in cahoots with a longtime critic of his own department.

The renegade security chief appeared to fall into line and demonstrated greater

²⁹ Memo of telephone conversation with the President, March 17, 1953, DDEPL, JFDP, WHMS, Internal Security Subseries, Box 8.

loyalty to the administration than to McCarthy. In a symbolic gesture, he later requested an inscribed picture of the Secretary for his desk, presumably to complement or replace his autographed photo of McCarthy.³⁰ He distanced himself from McCarthy and any other possible critic of the administration. The senator called McLeod during the thick of the Bohlen hearings to ask him to testify, to which McLeod snapped back, "you are not going to make headlines out of my blood."³¹ He later consented to an order from the White House to make himself scarce during the Bohlen debate in case McCarthy pressed the issue and issued a subpoena. When a conservative newspaper in McLeod's home state of New Hampshire ran an editorial the week before Easter suggesting Dulles was a liar and comparing McLeod to Christ in the wilderness, McLeod was quick to notify Dulles that he had had no part in the editorial and had never been close to the author.³² Dulles and Lourie began to look elsewhere for McCarthyite informants in the Department, and their own suspicions paid off. McLeod's secretary, Frances Knight, was spotted showing a State Department "Eyes Only" cable to McCarthy's henchmen Cohn and Schine at the airport just before their European tour. McLeod was away on a brief vacation, and Dulles felt confident she was acting on her own initiative, since she had been removed from the Voice of America previously for a similar indiscretion. Only her many friends on Capitol Hill had saved her from getting fired from government service.³³

³⁰ Memo O'Connor to Hanes, June 19, 1953, DDEPL, JFDP, Special Assistants Chronological Series, Box 3, folder "June 1-30."

³¹ Untitled memo of telephone conversation, author unknown, March 21, 1953, DDEPL, JFDP White House Memoranda Series, Internal Security Subseries, Box 8.

³² Memo to Secretary of State, March 27, 1953, *Ibid.*; "The Crisis of 'Scotty' McLeod," *Manchester Union Leader*, March 24, 1953, pp. 1, 18. McLeod had once worked as a reporter for the newspaper before joining Bridges' staff.

³³ Memo of telephone conversation with Mr. Lourie, April 3, 1953, DDEPL, JFDP, WHMS, Internal Security Subseries, Box 8.

The Bohlen case also showed that the State Department had to continue to be cautious in its relations with Congress and that the department's inner workings were still subject to intense scrutiny. Personnel and other administrative decisions could have very high political stakes. From the beginning, the Secretary of State was caught in a dilemma over one of his chief administrators. Despite McLeod's lack of tact and possible disloyalty to his department, Dulles felt constrained by two greater political needs, one executive, the other legislative. First of all, Dulles at first remained aloof from his Department as much out of caution as a desire to delegate more routine tasks. He wished to avoid what he saw as Acheson's major mistake as head of the departmental bureaucracy: failing to ensure that his employees were reliable. The blind trust eventually put Acheson in the untenable position of defending the undefendable. Truman's Secretary of State had blindly relied on people with "pretty damned messy files," in the words of one of Dulles' assistants, files which provided too much ammunition to the growing number of State's critics. In short, Dulles wanted to make sure of his department's dependability and loyalty before he could guarantee his own in return.³⁴ To the dismay of professional diplomatic officers, Dulles refused to make any wholesale defense of the department until he was sure all personnel had been cleared, but such created a long-term rift between himself and liberals, the press, and particularly the professional service.³⁵ According to McLeod's successor in Security and Consular Affairs, Rod O'Connor, McLeod's brand of housecleaning continued for almost three years before Dulles considered the department reliable. In the meantime, Dulles' caution created an opening

³⁴ Roderic O'Connor oral history transcript, April 1972, COHP, p. 29.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

for a McCarthy sympathizer to wreak havoc within the beleaguered department.

More importantly, Dulles could not fire McLeod outright because he was eager to get congressional support for his views on foreign policy. Conservative Republicans like McCarthy and Bridges were the legislators most interested in State's workings, and Dulles felt the need to accommodate his department's established critics. Instead of ignoring or weakly defying McCarthyite attacks as he felt Acheson had, the Secretary tried to foster a spirit of cooperation with the senator. It was a delicate balance to strike between soothing critics and following Ike's policy of keeping absolute separation of the powers of government. As a result, McLeod was allowed to continue his hunting.

Dulles kept the President informed of his problems with McLeod, and Eisenhower seemed satisfied that McLeod's written apology was real. In cumbersome language reminiscent of Ike himself, McLeod expressed regret at anything he had done to embarrass the Secretary or the President and assured them of his own "loyalty and integrity." Ike initialed a short, polite memo to Dulles, more for McLeod's benefit than his boss's, expressing "to Mr. McLeod my satisfaction that he exhibits the kind of attitude that is so explicitly described in his letter.... It is exactly the kind of purpose that should animate our public servants, and I am most deeply appreciative."³⁶ Dulles and the President were very satisfied with McLeod's handling, in July, 1953 of a letter to the State Department from the prominent Socialist Party leader Norman Thomas, who criticized the agency for singling out Socialists and "little 's' socialists" as undesirable. As head of personnel for the Department, McLeod explained that the Department only

³⁶ Letter, Scott McLeod to Secretary of State, March 20, 1953, DDEPL, JFDP, WHMS, Internal Security Subseries, Box 8; Memo from President to Secretary of State, March 23, 1953, *Ibid.*

asked about Communist Party membership, not other political affiliations. Though in practice this was not entirely the case, McLeod defended State's position well. He expressed to Thomas his own personal view (one that Dulles held as well) that he would never knowingly hire a socialist, not because socialists were inherently disloyal but because their political views were so different from the Republican administration. Thomas was upset that he had to wait five weeks for a reply and that the answer came from someone as low on the totem pole as "the Security Officer," but McLeod's superiors found the security chief to be in accord with administration policy.³⁷

Nevertheless, while Dulles allowed McLeod free reign, over time the Secretary acted to isolate his security chief from the rest of the department in order to ease McLeod out of his prominent position without drawing undue attention from outside. The first real opportunity to minimize McLeod's damage came in late February, 1954, when Lourie's term as Under Secretary for Administration was up. Dulles, in consultation with C.D. Jackson, one of Eisenhower's foreign policy and public affairs advisors, decided to reorganize the department in order to weaken McLeod's authority. Also acting upon the recommendations of an outside consulting firm and the President's friend Walter Bedell "Beetle" Smith, the Secretary approved a separation of personnel and security functions, so that McLeod remained in charge of security affairs while someone else controlled personal files, hiring, and firing.³⁸ McLeod came back from a vacation in Florida to discover that the professional Foreign Service Officer Edward T. Wailes held the newly

³⁷ Memorandum of Conversation with Norman Thomas, October 30, 1953, DDEPL, JFDP, General Correspondence and Memoranda Series, Box 3, folder "Strictly Confidential T(2)"; Author unknown, "Memorandum on Meeting with Norman Thomas," October 27, *Ibid.*; Dulles, Draft Memorandum for the President, *Ibid.* Most likely the delay in answering Thomas was due to McLeod's newfound caution in making public statements, and he wanted to respond with the most thoughtful reply.

created Assistant Secretary of State for Personnel Administration and had been given some of McLeod's previous authority. As a compensation for reducing his authority behind his back, Smith, who became an Under Secretary of State, gave McLeod control over the Foreign Service Inspection Corps, which was in charge of inspecting overseas posts and making recommendations regarding personnel stationed abroad. In terms of influence, McLeod had only lost his supervision of State's personnel in the United States but retained control over personnel decisions abroad and over all security investigations in the department.³⁹

The real change was symbolic, sending a message that the administration was beginning to take active steps to thwart McCarthy's public assault on government. Both pro- and anti-McCarthy newspapers interpreted the reorganization as a demotion. The *New York Times* described it as a strike against McCarthy's influence in the executive branch, while *U.S. News and World Report* considered the move a betrayal of the administration's promise to create an effective security program.⁴⁰ As the Army-McCarthy hearings continued through 1954 and Eisenhower gradually took a stronger stance against the senator's verbal abuse, Dulles and others gradually took the opportunity to restrict McLeod's influence in the Department. McLeod became increasingly isolated as McCarthyism became much discredited after the senator's censure in late 1954.

In the eyes of the administration, the security chief had become less a source of fear and more just a political liability. In January, 1955, McLeod was stripped of his

³⁸ Diary notes, C.D. Jackson, February 21, 1954, DDEPL, C.D. Jackson Papers, Box 68, folder "Log 1954(1)."

³⁹ Purdum, pp. 82-9.

inspection powers over the Foreign Service, although he retained oversight of the passport division and certain key immigration activities. Learning from his previous lack of supervision, Dulles then installed one of his most trusted assistants, Roderic O'Connor, as the head of Security and Consular Affairs in McLeod's place. In his weakened position, and with McCarthy off the center stage, McLeod largely dropped out of the spotlight, except for a few sensational moments. His supervision of the Refugee Relief Act provisions led in early 1955 to a bitter public dispute with Edward Corsi, whom Dulles had appointed to Commissioner of the Refugee Relief Act program but who had butted ideological heads with McLeod, officially his superior. Corsi was forced to resign, but used the opportunity to discredit McLeod's continuing presence in the State Department. It was the first time a prominent, disgruntled former employee went public with the details of his run-in with the security chief and challenged him to a public debate. In the past, those hurt in McLeod's housecleaning had seldom mentioned his name in the rare instances when they came forward, and no one had called for McLeod to answer in person. When McLeod refused to delegate any of his authority to Corsi's successor, Dulles decided to get rid of McLeod by finding an out-of-the-way diplomatic post for him. McLeod had his eye on an ambassadorship to New Zealand, but eventually Dulles settled on sending Scott McLeod as Ambassador to the Republic of Ireland in 1957.

McLeod's nomination for an ambassadorship created a minor controversy compared to the Bohlen nomination years before, since it was clear that Dulles had decided to be rid of McLeod without alienating the right wing of the Party. The

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 85-6, 89.

confirmation process was in fact more ironic than controversial. By an oddly appropriate coincidence, Scott McLeod's nomination went to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee the same time that Charles Bohlen had been named for an ambassadorship to the Philippines. In what could only be described as a poetic historical coincidence, Bohlen and the man who had almost scuttled his earlier nomination were scheduled to meet with the Committee on the same day. They were forced to wait in the same anteroom for the Senators to call them. Their political fortunes within the department had reversed themselves since that brief conflict four years before: Bohlen breezed through a brief, friendly hearing, while McLeod faced two grueling days of barbed questions. The Committee finally approved the nomination by the slimmest margin for any appointee since before World War II. By another strangely appropriate twist of fate, the end of McLeod's security career coincided with the end of McCarthy himself. The Committee sent the nomination to the Senate on May 2, 1957, the same day Joseph McCarthy died.⁴¹

Ireland was arguably the least important post available to a political appointee at that time. Dublin was an out-of-the-way embassy with no language barrier, and compared to the rest of Western Europe Ireland had little at stake ideologically, militarily, or economically in the Cold War. Perhaps the name "McLeod" further recommended the security chief to that part of the world. Most importantly, Ireland was a solidly anticommunist country, with little communist presence to speak of, which made it a safe place to send an outspoken, indiscrete anticommunist like McLeod. Despite his public

⁴¹ Credit for discovering these ironies goes to Purdum, pp. 1, 117-9. No record of what the two ambassadorial candidates may have said to one another survives.

presence earlier in the State Department, he managed to avoid serious controversy as ambassador and remained relatively obscure, even within the small circle of American ambassadors in Europe. His regular reports on the state of Irish affairs tended to be brief and routine, which pointed to the fact that Dublin was a posting off the beaten path and that McLeod had become more cautious in expressing his political views.⁴² He remained ambassador there for the rest of Eisenhower's second term, until the Kennedy administration took office. He took a position as counsel for the Republican minority members of the Senate Appropriations Committee, but before the year was out he died of a heart attack at the age of 47.⁴³ Scott McLeod had traveled a bumpy road from obscurity to notoriety in 1953 to comfortable, forgotten isolation by the time Eisenhower left office.

⁴² For examples of McLeod's reports, see "Northern European Chiefs of Mission Conference, London, Sept. 19-21, 1957," in *FRUS, 1955-1957, Vol. IV, Western European Security and Integration*, Documents #252 and 253, pp. 625-7, 637; and *Current Foreign Relations*, No. 43, October 29, 1958, in *FRUS, 1958-1960, Vol. VII, Western European Integration and Security: Canada*, Document #37.

⁴³ Purdum, p. 123.

Chapter 4: Quiet Separations: Internal Security at Work

Besides the McCarthyist ideological view, McLeod brought with him a set of investigative methods that introduced the Red Scare full force into the State Department. The security measures themselves were as profound as the personnel changes they brought about. Eisenhower's promise to investigate all government employees, especially those in sensitive positions, meant that everyone was now under investigation, with the methods left up to each government agency. The security investigations within the State Department were McLeod's most important impact upon America's foreign policy machinery, and these behind-the-scenes actions caused more ripples through the institution than did any of McLeod's public activities. The real damage to the Foreign Service came from the Security division's quiet daily work, more than from McLeod's occasional public mistakes.

For the first time, State had an FBI-trained security administrator with broad investigative powers. McLeod brought into the Department a network of surveillance and information-gathering that played fast and loose with individual privacy and constitutional rights. He used informants within the Department, hired dozens of security agents, ordered desks to be searched, files confiscated, employees watched at home, and even sent agents to employees' homes to interview family and housekeepers. Security

agents opened private correspondence, tapped the phones, interrogated secretaries about their supervisors, and encouraged officers to report anonymously about each other.¹

The security chief's exerted his influence through a growing number of security officers within the department. By 1952, the State Department stateside had 322 security officers, with a comparable number scattered throughout American missions overseas. McLeod increased that number and brought in agents who usually had the same FBI training that he did. Much of the damage to the morale of the department and the heightening of the sense of paranoia among its employees came from the activities of the department's security agents, who had wide authority to enforce such security concerns as keeping important documents locked up, allowing only people with proper clearances to see certain files, and gathering evidence of any suspicious activity. Security agents were on the front line of McLeod's assault on possible security risks in the department, and an individual agent could have enormous influence over the careers and working conditions of other employees. McLeod was not alone in his conservative, anti-communist ideology; many of his employees in Security and Consular Affairs carried the same mental list of undesirables as their chief, with the same enthusiasm for circumventing due process but without the publicity.

Peter Szluk, a security agent who had gradually worked his way up the ranks within the department's security division after the war to become a chief assistant to the head of personnel by 1962, represented the influence that heightened security measures had on the executive agencies like the State Department. His career traced the growing

¹ Letter, unnamed source, *Study of United States Foreign Policy -- Summary of Views of Retired Foreign Service Officers, Prepared for the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, 86th Congress, 1st Session, June 15, 1959*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1959), p. 51.

power of the new security experts whose influence over the department began under Truman but reached its heyday under Eisenhower. Many years later he revealed in an interview how much of the division's activities depended on the sense of fairness of individual officers and how often security procedure was very informal, left no record, and involved no legal hearings. "Maybe I would go to the Secretary or the personnel director, but there was no formal hearing. Hearings...what the hell for? That was a waste of time! No, I was the hatchet man. Szluk's got it. Szluk says the son of a bitch is a queer, out he goes! I was a power unto himself [sic]." It was up to Szluk to decide if the allegations against an individual were true or trumped up. In either case, someone had to go. Department security relied on informants whose identity would be unknown to the accused and protected by McLeod's agents, preventing any alleged security risk from facing his or her accuser. The informants played a dangerous game, since unconfirmed allegations might turn back on them and lead to their own dismissal.²

Szluk took as his mission to clean out not only those susceptible to subversive activities through temptation or blackmail but also those who spread false accusations because of political or personal disagreements, "to get those that deserved to be kicked out, and to clear those who had been maligned by vicious, no-good sons of bitches." As for undesirables, he and his colleagues saw their job as holding Foreign Service Officers to a higher than average standard and taking very seriously the smallest deviation: "regardless of how small or insignificant it might seem to somebody on the outside, to us it meant you've had it." Aside from questionable political associations, the security

² Peter Szluk oral history, in Griffin Fariello, *Red Scare: Memories of an American Inquisition – An Oral History*, (New York: Avon, 1995), pp. 122-4.

agents were on the lookout for “any human frailty,” most commonly homosexuality, but including any other closeted personal secrets. Looking back on his career, Szluk defended his activities and was unrepentant about his search for undesirables, but he had no fondness for McCarthy, Cohn, or Schine, and he saw how quickly wild accusations (“ninety-nine percent of the time...a bunch of crap”) had spread within the department. Security reports would try to dispel any unwarranted allegations and protect the reputations of the trustworthy, but Szluk admitted that he could not guarantee clearance even if he felt the rumors were false. In a surprising display of tolerance at odds with the strict anti-communism of his chief, possibly a product of his appointment under a Democratic administration, Szluk did not consider former Communist Party membership an automatic disqualification for employment in the State Department. He could forgive such a youthful indiscretion of the political sort, as long as the individual had recanted, shown more mainstream, responsible affiliations since then, and had “a clean bill of health” in terms of personal or public associations.³

Besides bringing in the new breed of security professionals, McLeod also sought advice from consultants who were part of what by 1953 was a nationwide network of dedicated anti-communists of various stripes. In 1953, McLeod scheduled a two-week trip to Europe which would be both a personal vacation and a tour of American facilities overseas. He planned to use undercover agents and investigators from outside the department to investigate Foreign Service personnel stationed in Europe.

One of his recruits was Albert Canwell, who had achieved notoriety years before McCarthy had by spearheading an anticommunist crusade on a smaller scale through his

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 123-5.

direction of an un-American affairs committee in the Washington State legislature.

Canwell was an admirer of McLeod, Bridges, and McCarthy and considered them “fine Americans and experts in the Communist field; they really know what it was all about.”

His campaign platform was at its heart unvarnished McCarthyism, condemning the State Department for losing China and the Truman administration for being soft on domestic communism. In his 1950 race for the Republican nomination for a U.S. Senate seat, the only out of state money he accepted (or could muster) came from McCarthy supporters. By 1953, Canwell had lost his bid for re-election and two campaigns for Congress and was now readily available to hire out his communist-hunting expertise. Canwell had been a longtime friend of Styles Bridges, who had employed at one time not only Scott McLeod but also Richard Auerbach, the FBI district chief in Seattle who had proven very cooperative in advising the Canwell committee. Making use of his connections to find a trusted outsider with impeccable anti-communist credentials, McLeod hired Canwell to go to Europe to investigate the Foreign Service overseas, under the cover of attending United Nations immigration meetings in Geneva as a consultant for the Committee on European Migration. He was given a list of personnel to investigate in Switzerland, Germany, Italy, and spent two weeks travelling with McLeod and his wife, attending meetings, and engaging American diplomats in conversation. At one point, Canwell joined a crowd of Americans welcoming Dulles as he arrived at the Geneva airport for a high-level conference. The Secretary had not been informed of Canwell’s presence but quickly realized he was most likely there because of McLeod. At an embassy party that evening, Dulles and the Washingtonian carried on a long conversation, with Dulles probing into the nature of the other’s activities and Canwell regaling the Secretary with

his opinions on domestic anti-communism, State Department reform, and the need to stop the immigration of large numbers of Italian criminals.⁴

Scott McLeod's McCarthyist zeal and the damage that his operations did to the department and the Foreign Service are the most significant aspects of his brief term as head of personnel, but his tenure also ushered in a period of necessary reform in the area of departmental security and in terms of administrative streamlining. Although ultimately a disastrous choice for the job, McLeod represented a step towards making internal security the work of professionals who were not only trained in investigative techniques and secure records management but also hired from outside the Foreign Service specifically for the tasks required of security officers. The traditional system in which experienced foreign service officers rotated through as chiefs of the security bureau, where friends had the responsibility of evaluating friends, had proven inadequate to the task of operating the foreign affairs bureaucracy of a powerful country leading one side of a Cold War against an enemy apparently highly skilled in the arts of espionage. Although a professional diplomat in charge of security might better appreciate the nature of diplomatic affairs and better distinguish serious information from trivial hearsay, he might not be as savvy about the need for counterintelligence measures and might be influenced by professional and personal sympathies to people under investigation.

McLeod discovered what McCarthy had alleged for three years, that State Department officials had been known to reciprocally clear each other and remove

⁴ Albert Canwell oral history transcript, in Washington State Oral History Program, *Albert Canwell – An Oral History* (Olympia, Washington: Office of the Secretary of State, 1997), pp. 113, 258, 266-71, 279. Canwell's statements about his activities must be accepted with extra caution, since he makes some very wild claims at other points in the interview, for example taking personal responsibility for exposing Alger Hiss and stating that treasonous liberals "rigged up this phony Watergate thing" to bring down Nixon because he had been a legislative success story just like himself. See pp. 235, 293.

damaging information from files in order to help their friends. When public scrutiny intensified in 1950, there was even more incentive for officers to close ranks and defend each other from outside attack. File tampering more often than not resulted from noble motives of personal loyalty and professional solidarity, but such activities confirmed the need for reform. Crudely and at great cost, he instituted his own very drastic program and in his own way dragged the department kicking and screaming into Cold War operations. One fortunate effect that his successors noted thankfully was that McLeod took a lot of heat from inside and outside the department, reduced the number and possibility of security risks, and did most of the really unpopular, dirty work, imposing an order that his successors could moderate later, making his successors seem fair, moderate, and rational in comparison. He had slipped into a powerful position, instituted some necessary policies as well as many destructive, unnecessary ones, and then was reduced in authority once the furor died down.

Besides personnel relations, McLeod's office instituted stricter policies to make the flow of information within the department more secure, to keep sensitive files out of reach of those without clearance to see them, and in general to keep unwelcome guests out of departmental offices. While security officers sometimes rifled through desks and interviewed informants looking for treason and suspicious behavior, more commonly they discovered carelessness and incompetence without much snooping at all, finding confidential materials left on desks after hours, doors to safes left wide open in empty offices, and guests without passes wandering the halls. Office keys circulated without records of who owned them or who made duplicates. Janitors who had never undergone background checks were trusted with keys to departmental offices where careless

employees left sensitive documents in wastebaskets. It was as if spies could be counted on to operate only during regular business hours. In one instance, a pile of secret telegrams fell out of a diplomat's case as he talked with some Senators on the steps of the Capitol; he walked away oblivious of the mishap until, fortunately, another Senator happened by, collected the papers, and phoned the department.⁵ In the days before the ubiquitous paper shredder, government office workers often settled for balling up or ripping paper into quarters when tossing them into wastebaskets. It was just a matter of access, a few minutes of free time, and transparent tape to make a discarded document entirely readable, as in fact Eisenhower's personal secretary Ann Whitman did occasionally (for noble rather than subversive reasons), going above and beyond the call of duty in filing Presidential papers away for posterity's sake.⁶

Unwelcome guests would compromise the department in a whole host of ways besides acquiring secrets for foreign powers; just as likely a danger was snooping from a Congressional committee, an investigative reporter, or a freelance anti-communist looking to cash in on the demand for dirt on America's diplomats. The Eisenhower administration wanted a tighter seal between the executive branch and Congress, to keep tighter control over confidential decisions, keep ammunition out of the hands of irresponsible critics like McCarthy, and bring an end to the communists-in-government issue. A stricter security system in the State Department would protect the department from enemies both foreign and domestic and allay criticism that it harbored subversives and unreliaables.

⁵ John Hanes oral history transcript, JFDOHP, pp. 95-6, 99.

⁶ National Archives and Records Administration, *Historical Materials in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library*, (Abilene, KS: Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, 1996), p. 99.

One much-needed reform that McLeod found the energy and authority to accomplish was a reorganization of personnel files themselves. McCarthy's Committee on Government Operations, besides investigating the possibility of subversion in the State Department, also discovered the confusing state of its filing system. The department's filing system, and its day-to-day administrative tasks in general, were remnants of a pre-World War II age when diplomats trusted that gentlemen did not read each other's mail and when the U.S. had a more limited international role. In a small, decentralized agency where positions rotated among a professional elite, administrative efficiency was low on the list of priorities. In an organization where most of the leading officials knew each other, there was less need to develop any personnel indices, so for example if an incoming Secretary of State wanted to find an experienced, decorated officer who spoke a certain language, there was no list he could turn to; he had to ask around for personal recommendations. Meanwhile, each restructuring of the department's organization usually added another layer of paperwork and duplication of a file.

In part, the disorganization McLeod discovered had evolved as a defense mechanism against outside scrutiny, and certainly since 1950 there had been little incentive to make outside investigations of the department easier. Under Acheson, the decentralized file system had been a kind of strength through weakness. The lack of organization made it difficult for outside investigators to find out how any particular employee had been promoted or who had granted the security clearance. It was also very difficult to determine if a particular file was a complete version or if parts were missing. In early 1953, until McLeod set about to centralize the security program, for any

individual there existed no single complete file, but as many as nine separate files with a variety of details on everything from performance ratings to letters of commendation to security information. Some of the sets of files naturally were less secure than others, and ever since the beginning of McCarthy's attacks, if not before, memos with derogatory information about an employee might mysteriously disappear from an office, whether because of incompetence or outright tampering. Disclosure of certain information could be damaging not only to the employee, but could also cast suspicion on everyone else in any way involved in his promotion or the granting of security clearance. The Committee also discovered that the policy of what information to keep or destroy was up to "whim, caprice, personal likes and dislikes, or other emotional reasons related to personal relationships or interoffice politics."⁷

Thus, one of the sources of McLeod's power within State, and one reason many within the Department dreaded him, was his access to the complete files of all State employees. Like FBI files on all government employees, State Department security information included everything from hard evidence to wild hearsay, and McLeod had the authority to recommend (and more importantly pressure) an employee's dismissal on the flimsiest pretext. His control over the personnel files was a source of bad blood between Dulles and the Foreign Service, and it was the personnel oversight that Dulles quickly removed from McLeod's hands when the Secretary reduced his power after McCarthy's censure.

Although technically McLeod only had the authority to make recommendations to

⁷ *Annual Report of the Committee on Government Operations, January 25, 1954, 82nd Congress, 2nd Session, (Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1954), pp. 28-31.*

Dulles, McLeod's security measures drove State employees out of the Department before their cases came to the Secretary's attention. The vast majority of those "separated" from government service left through quiet resignations, and many of them resigned, retired, or requested transfer before Security and Consular Affairs took any formal action at all. The threat of an impending review of their files convinced many junior officers to leave to avoid any possible smears on their reputations. It was better to leave, even under an air of suspicion, than to have a black mark attached to the person's name, and in the public climate of 1953, protesting that the department had treated one unfairly would only call even more negative publicity to one's name. Resigning quietly instead of risking being dismissed allowed a former employee to keep his pension, and resignation might ensure that friends, family, and colleagues would not discover whatever incriminating information led to the employee's separation. Though zealous and invasive, the security bureau was at the same time usually very discrete about derogatory information if the security risk decided to resign instead of fight back.

Although there is some evidence that McLeod and his security agents overtly pressured employees to resign, they clearly and deliberately created an atmosphere of intense scrutiny. McLeod publicly stated that anyone with anything to hide was *supposed* to feel uncomfortable under the new program, and he made no apologies for anyone who felt pressure to leave the department before any action on their reviews. Part of the reason for a thorough review of departmental files was to discourage security risks from remaining on board. The number of resignations was therefore reassuring, a justification for the measures taken. Although McLeod did not always shy away from publicity, he felt very satisfied with the quiet effects of his administration. The fact that personnel left

before any hearing at all confirmed his belief that the department needed a good cleaning out, and it was enough to know that the department was doing something at last to clear out its risks without a lot of publicity about individual cases. The State Department's housecleaning, unlike the piecemeal battles with McCarthy in previous years, was a quiet affair, much to Dulles' relief.

McLeod became the bogeyman of the State Department. His reputation as a zealous communist hunter made his name a kind of talisman, and he became one of the most well-known men among all the agencies concerned with security or foreign affairs. Rumors circulated around Washington that his power within the department rivaled that of Dulles himself, and that no one could get appointed to an overseas post without McLeod's permission. These turned out to be exaggerations, but they gave weight to the security chief's authority, made him more indispensable, and dissuaded his critics from taking action against him. People applying for employment or up for promotion were quick to mention that McLeod had reviewed their files and cleared them; his approval was as powerful as his disapproval. His appointment to head of security and personnel in the department stayed in the memory of many government employees for decades after the McCarthy era, and even those never affected by McLeod's decisions would look back on his brief tenure as a low point in the history of American government.⁸

The true nature of McLeod's role in the Second Red Scare is more complicated than that of a powerful McCarthyite single-handedly shaking up the State Department.

⁸ Recollections of the period include many epithets for Scott McLeod (even from those who did not remember his name), the nicest of which would be "that fellow McLeod." See oral history transcripts for: Philip C. Jessup, vol. 2, COHP, September 19, 1958, p. 387; Charles Bohlen, COHP, December 17, 1970, p. 6; Eleanor Lansing Dulles, Part II, COHP, May 22, 1978, p. 46; and personal conversation with Brewster Denny, November 1996.

He was not without sympathizers within the department, nor did every Foreign Service Officer consider him the enemy. The relationship between McLeod and the rest of the agency is best recreated in the oral histories of those who worked with him. While accounts of individual personnel cases have surfaced, the overall atmosphere of McLeod's tenure is less easy to capture in the documentary record. Oral history serves well to capture contexts that lack a good paper trail, such as the atmosphere within an organization. They are particularly crucial in matters where personnel files remain confidential and where many individuals may have been reluctant to speak out publicly. Interviews with former State officials also help the historian overcome the destruction of government document collections deemed "of non-permanent value," such as the bulk of McLeod's working files.

According to McLeod's successor as Administrator of Security and Consular Affairs, the more professionally trained and tactful O'Connor, the security chief was not a "hatchet man" but a "constructive" administrator who "had taken all the tough shots" mostly because of his administrative style. Much of the tension between McLeod and the rest of the department came from a conflict in personalities as much as political differences. McLeod's approach as "a trigger operator" grated against Dulles' more calm, naturally diplomatic personality. O'Connor worked with Dulles' assistant John Hanes, Jr. "to take some of the hard edges off, because he was a straight ahead head-on charger, and he got a lot more unfavorable press than he needed to have gotten, had he been a little more prudent and a little more adroit."⁹

⁹ Roderic O'Connor oral history transcript, Interview #2, p. 129.

In the end, an employee's view of McLeod depended upon how closely he or she had worked with him, and whether or not he had fingered the person as a security risk. Some of those who worked closely with him found McLeod easy to work with and willing to seek advice from others, while others who were more ambivalent at the very least found him to be energetic and conscientious.¹⁰ Many who had never met him personally considered him a dangerous presence in the department. Dulles' sister, Eleanor Lansing Dulles, spoke for many of FSO's when she described him as "not intelligent and not dependable and not liked," not necessarily "a crook," but "wrong in a lot of things."¹¹ Bohlen, who had been burned but not permanently injured by McLeod's tenure in State, considered McLeod to be the main source of morale problems within the department; "he [McLeod] was I think a disaster. He was one of these anti-Communists in the worst sense of the word. To him any liberal or socialist viewpoint was practically the same as a Communist." Bohlen subscribed to the commonly held view that McLeod had been passing departmental files onto McCarthy.¹² Chalmers Roberts, a prominent foreign policy journalist in the fifties, saw McLeod as "a spy for the McCarthyites, in the administration, and everybody knew it. So Dulles treaded gingerly around him, too. That was part of the whole operation [of appeasing McCarthy]." Roberts joined others critical of Ike's handling of McCarthyism who saw McLeod's hiring as a disastrous attempt to let the senator have his way with the department.¹³

Dissatisfaction with McLeod's appointment reached as high up as the White

¹⁰ For a positive view, see James Barco oral history transcript, Vol. III, December 12, 1962, COHP, pp. 624-5.

¹¹ Eleanor Lansing Dulles oral history transcript, Part II, Interview #1, May 22, 1978, COHP, p. 53.

¹² Charles Bohlen oral history transcript, December 17, 1970, COHP, p. 6.

¹³ Chalmers Roberts oral history transcript, August 29, 1967, COHP, p. 20.

House. After his confirmation passed the Senate, Bohlen made a farewell call on the President before taking up his post in Moscow. The new ambassador took the opportunity to warn Eisenhower about the falling morale of the Foreign Service, which had been “hounded and chived around.” According to Bohlen,

“Eisenhower immediately said, ‘You mean the appointment of Scott McLeod,’ and I said, ‘In part, yes, sir.’

He said, ‘Well, looking back on it, I guess that was a mistake. But having appointed him, it’s probably impossible to get him out without a great big stink,’ so the conversation ended there.”¹⁴

The mark of the power of McCarthyism in public opinion and in government shows in the fact that despite a solid popular mandate in his own right, Eisenhower was very reluctant to get rid of McLeod, despite clear evidence that the security chief had acted inappropriately in the Bohlen case. Ironically, the McCarthyist ensuring loyalty in State had himself gotten away with disloyalty to the administration.

The Numbers Game

The Eisenhower Administration took up the anticommunist initiative from the McCarthyites, and like McCarthy, the executive branch also produced a confusing numbers game all its own, but one designed to *end* the Red Scare instead of keeping it alive. Like McCarthy’s famous numbers of communists in the State Department, loyalty-security figures produced by the executive branch took on lives of their own and were impossible to pin down. The Civil Service Commission in the fall of 1953 announced that 1,456 individuals had been separated or barred from Federal employment.¹⁵

¹⁴ Bohlen oral history, pp. 6-7.

¹⁵ “Suggested Press Release on Employee Security Program,” undated, DDEPL, White House Central Files, Confidential File, Subject Series, Box 66, folder “Security Program,” Exhibit 1.

Immediately, “the 1,456” and later “the 2200” became hot press issues of the day, just as McCarthy’s “205” had caused a stir three years before. Eisenhower repeatedly disappointed the press’ curiosity by refusing to break the numbers down by category, timing, agency, etc., but instead reminded the public that security risks were not necessarily disloyal people.¹⁶ The President tried to give general figures on security separations in order to reassure the public that he was taking proper steps and to keep the communists-in-government issue out of the 1954 elections. Hoping to stifle criticism from both sides, in December, 1953 he told reporters that “about 1500” had already been removed from the government as security risks through “fair, thorough, and decent investigations, followed by unhesitating corrective action.”¹⁷

Reducing government size while stepping up security measures created some confusion for those reporting on the success of the employee security program, and it created a dilemma for the administration. On the one hand, Eisenhower wanted to restore public confidence in government and demonstrate a firm control over a dependable executive branch, which meant taking credit for exposing every security risk. On the other hand, and especially as time went on, Ike needed to bring closure to the issue by making internal security more of a quiet, routine concern than a widely publicized issue that distracted from more important concerns. Weeding out undesirable Roosevelt-Truman leftovers was one thing, but undermining confidence in one’s own appointees was quite another.

¹⁶ “The President’s News Conference of December 16, 1953,” Document #265 in *PPDDE, Vol. I, 1953*, pp. 840-1; “Annual Message to the Congress on the State of the Union,” January 7, 1954, Document #3 in *PPDDE, Vol. II, 1954*, p. 12; and “The President’s News Conferences of January 27, February 3, and February 17, 1954,” Documents #18, 25, and 39 in *Ibid.*, pp. 208-9, 229-30, 276.

¹⁷ “The President’s News Conference of December 2, 1953,” Document #254 in *Ibid.*, 1953, p. 802.

Eisenhower eventually showed a characteristically short temper when it came to the continuing saga of subversives in government. After a year in office he evaded questions in press conferences about internal security, preferring in some cases to use the oblique, skillfully unquotable language that was a hallmark of his press relations, and eventually refused to answer such questions. In the case of J. Robert Oppenheimer, a top government scientist who had been denied government security clearance because of concerns over Communist Party associations, Eisenhower told reporters "this is something that is the kind of thing that must be gone through with what I believe is best not talked about too much until we know whatever the answers may be."¹⁸ He was especially intent on keeping it out of the public arena. After only a year in office, at a National Security Council meeting "the President, indicating considerable irritation, said that it was high time to stop talking about this subject to the newspapers. He said he was sick to death of the whole matter, and that it should be promptly dropped." He also ordered heads of government agencies not to inflate the numbers of security risks, which "had led us astray, and there was no rational excuse for taking credit for doing what was plainly our duty."¹⁹

The timing of the new loyalty-security system at the same time as a change in administration and a sizeable reduction in force makes it difficult to determine the total numbers of those who left government service as a result of investigations. Within the first two years of Eisenhower's presidency, the size of the federal government decreased by nearly 300,000 employees, the vast majority (90%) of cuts coming in the Defense

¹⁸ See President's News Conference of April 29, 1954, in Branyon and Larsen, p. 144.

¹⁹ Memo, "Discussion at the 189th Meeting of the National Security Council," March 18, 1954, in DDEPL, Papers as President, Dulles-Herter Series, Box 5, folder "March 1955."

Department. The State Department lost 10,000 positions when the U.S. Information Agency became an independent body and another 1000 to the Foreign Operations Administration. To further cloud the issue, the total number that State, the USIA and FOA lost in the size reduction (209) was the same number of those separated from State under the new security system. Observers wondered if the new administration was padding its security figures with those let go for other reasons; one editorial even accused the Civil Service of including those who had died while in office, and anti-McCarthy commentators like Herblock pointed out the eerie similarity between the McCarthy's numbers game and that of the administration.²⁰ Those who remained after the cutbacks might leave government service for a number of reasons unrelated to security investigations: re-organization of departments, retirement, family or personal matters, and job offers from the private sector. Government agencies themselves seldom kept numbers on the reasons for leaving government service but did take careful note of how many left during investigations or during adjudication.

The Civil Service Commission, which oversaw all civilian government employment, noted that under the old system, as of the end of February, 1953, loyalty boards had received over 25,000 cases, including both incumbent employees and those applying for work. Over 2,500 of these were closed before a hearing because the employee left the service or the applicant withdrew. Another 3,500 left or withdrew once their cases reached the boards, and another 500 were finally dismissed or denied a

²⁰ "Dead Persons Found In GSA's Total of 168 Security Risks," *The Evening Star*, March 23, 1954, copy in DDEPL, Papers as President, Names Series, Box 35, folder "Young, Philip D." This particular allegation was unfounded, but the Civil Service figures were not always clearly broken down. See Memorandum, Philip Young to the President, March 23, 1954, *ibid*.

position on the basis of a loyalty board's ruling. All these cases were, of course, under the older system, which examined loyalty on a piecemeal, case-by-case basis, before all employees and applicants were investigated on a routine basis. Only the 500 clearly and officially left government service because of questionable loyalty or security, but there is no question a sizeable number of the other 6000 left to avoid the loyalty board process, usually to avoid potentially negative rulings.

These early, February figures showed that State's situation was unique among Cabinet agencies in the rate at which it got rid of security risks, even before McLeod took over. Cases under the old program were subject to review under the new. In the department, 450 cases had come under review, with over half still in progress. Of the 199 closed cases, no one had been suspended or terminated, but 197 fell in the "Resigned or otherwise separated" category, presumably those who left quietly before an official ruling on their files. The other two were not acted on finally until the 10450 program. Every other Cabinet department had the vast majority of its cases still in progress. Only Health, Education, and Welfare had close to as many resignations, 113, but out of more than twice as many reviewed cases.²¹

Eight months later, the Civil Service Commission could report that under the new loyalty-security policy, the total number of Federal "Corrective actions" had leapt to almost 4,000, with three-fourths of those coming in the previous few months. While the Truman security system had taken action against roughly 6000 employees in five years, the Eisenhower system had already acted on nearly 4000 before the end of its first year. Of the total number of security cases investigated and closed under the new program,

²¹ "Suggested Press Release," Exhibit 6.

approximately 2,700 of the 3,700 cases ended with resignation, with another 850 employees officially terminated. Significantly, no one had been reassigned, and less than 20 had been temporarily suspended; these were either/or decisions.²² The State Department's investigations continued to find undesirables in its ranks. By the end of October, State could report that it had fired or forced to resign 209 employees under E.O. 10450, more separations than in any other Federal agency, as many as the Army and Air Force combined. The Navy was a close second, but it was a much larger organization.²³

The government's compilation of security statistics, however reliable, depend on a misleading definition of "security separation," as the dismissal of an employee because of charges of being a security risk or the resignation of an individual, for whatever reason, while his case was in process. The figures reported by the Civil Service include only those fired or who resigned during the process of investigation, and the numbers did not capture the numbers of employees who left under clouds of suspicion but before they came under review. They also do not include those who resigned who had no derogatory information in their files but who left for fear that such information *did* exist. McLeod did not make these distinctions in his evaluating his bureau's success.

By November 1953, McLeod claimed that State had gotten rid of 484 employees since January 20, without any hearings, under the new security regulations. In January 1954, McLeod admitted to a House Appropriations Committee that in the first year of the new security system, less than 5% of the number dismissed were due to disloyalty. After

²² United States Civil Service Commission to National Security Council, October 21, 1953, DDEPL, White House Central Files, Confidential File, Subject Series, Box 66, folder "Security Program (1)."

²³ Memo attachment, Philip Young to Sherman Adams, October 28, 1953, DDEPL, White House Central Files, Confidential File, Subject series, Box 66, folder "Security program."

a year, only 11 were separated out because of disloyalty, and 7 of those cases were already cases under the Truman program.²⁴

Later recordkeeping among government agencies became more sophisticated as the enormous task of investigating every employee settled into a routine system. A year and a half after Eisenhower took office, the government could produce a simple breakdown of figures for terminations within every executive agency, broken down according to which part of the Executive Order came into play, specifically under Section 8, which defined security risks. From June, 1953 to July, 1954, government agencies terminated over 2,500 employees, while another 4,300 resigned with “unfavorable information” in their files.

Significantly, the obscure Agency of Termination and Resignations of the Civil Service Commission singled out two particular types of “Section 8” information, “felonies and misdemeanors” and “sex perversion.” Information on criminal records decided a large portion of the security cases, large enough to warrant its own category, especially in the Armed Forces. Singling out sexual behavior as a type of security risk put an added spotlight on the State Department, because the “sex perversion” category in fact held a tiny fraction of the federal government total, and was a relatively insignificant type of security risk in most departments, with the notable exception of the State Department. “Perversion” could include a host of ill-defined categories, including adultery and promiscuity, but predominantly referred to evidence of homosexual behavior. Of the State employees separated in the first year and a half, almost half (94) had information

²⁴ Thomas C. Reeves, *The Life and Times of Joe McCarthy – A Biography*, (New York: Stein and Day, 1982), pp. 530, 545.

that fell under the “perversion” category. This focus on sexual morality no doubt contributed to the fact that nearly all (207) of those who left State resigned before the department took official action.²⁵ By the middle of 1955, the totals for the State Department had risen to 10 terminations and 273 resignations, with 147 of those separated because of “sex perversion.” Only the large military organizations had comparable numbers of terminations in this category. Only the larger Army and Veterans Administration discharged more people for questionable sexual behavior, and even then those under this category were a much smaller fraction of their total security risks.²⁶ The State Department had surpassed even military organizations in its crackdown on homosexuals in its ranks.

Clearly, under E.O. 10450 the government took no prisoners, but it provided a quiet way out for those who wished to avoid a formal procedure. Most of the toll that the loyalty-security system exacted on the civil service was at an unofficial level, outside formal channels. By the same token, conflating all resignations together makes it difficult to get a precise figure on the number of people driven or kept out of government service under Eisenhower’s security program.

In numerical terms, McCarthyism had a very small impact on the enormous number of government employees. Given the size of the federal government, and despite public pressure to weed out undesirables, the number of employees terminated for

²⁵ “Second Consolidated Report on Agency Operations Under the Federal Employee Security Program,” undated, DDEPL, Papers as President, Names Series, Box 35, folder “Young, Philip D.” The report was set for possible press release in mid-October, 1954, and shows remarkable detail compared to the confusing reports that occasionally leaked out to the press in the early months of Ike’s term. The President continued to treat the termination figures as sensitive information to be kept out of the newspapers.

²⁶ “Fourth Consolidated Report on Agency Operations under the Federal Employee Security Program,” undated, DDEPL, White House Central Files, Official File OF-104-J, Box 481, folder “Security and Loyalty Program of Government Employees, July 1955.”

security reasons remained a tiny sum, even at the height of McCarthyism. Of 2.3 million federal employees investigated in the first two years of E.O. 10450, less than 10,000 had unfavorable information in their files, and only 3600 were fired. Less than ten per cent of all people discharged from government employment, and less than one per cent of all resignations, had anything to do with the security program.²⁷ Even in departments with intensely heightened security, virtually all applicants to positions passed security muster. Between 1947 and 1953, only 1.3% of all applicants to the State Department were turned down for security reasons.²⁸ This acceptance rate, however, must be weighed in light of a steady decline in the number of applicants to the Foreign Service and in light of the notoriety the State Department acquired, which discouraged anyone with remotely suspicious background information from applying.

As with the numbers game that McCarthy played with personnel lists, getting a solid number of those dismissed for disloyalty or security risk is a slippery task. In any event, the true measure of the impact of internal security programs goes beyond the relatively small numbers of firings, since separation from government service took a variety of forms. Many of those who resigned did so with negative information in their files, or imagined derogatory information in their files, or wanted to avoid future investigation. Others no doubt viewed the newly heightened, universal emphasis on scrutiny as intolerable and saw no future in a government which delved so deeply into a past one could not change.

²⁷ Statement, Philip Young to Subcommittee on the Government Employment Security Program, Senate Post Office and Civil Service Committee, September 26, 1955, DDEPL, White House Central Files, Official File OF 104-J, Box 481, folder "Security and Loyalty Program of Government Employees, September, 1955."

²⁸ Barry Rubin, *Secrets of State: The State Department and the Struggle over U.S. Foreign Policy*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 80.

Although true numbers of those forced out of the department are hard to come by, McLeod estimated that State Department security investigations had led to the separation of almost 500 employees in the first year, with most of those separations in the form of resignations, and all of them without holding a single hearing.²⁹ This figure would include not only those terminated and pressured to resign, but also those in the security chief's judgment who had voluntarily left because of the new security system but before they had been discovered. Given that McLeod probably inflated the numbers of separations and misinterpreted resignations that happened for reasons unrelated to security, and given that most of the separations occurred in McLeod's first year, the figure of 500 serves as a reasonable but conservative estimate of the number of departmental employees who left because of the new security system. Significantly, McLeod found no communists, and only a dozen cases of disloyalty, half of them cases left over from the Truman administration. The vast majority were security risks defined generally by E.O. 10450 and up to the individual security heads to determine. McLeod's methods, harnessed to uphold a narrow definition of proper conduct, had cut a noticeable swath through the ranks of the department. Systematic McCarthyism was a quiet storm that would affect the State Department for years to come.

The Cost of McCarthyism

The most important impact of the loyalty-security program was not in the absolute numbers of people fired or forced to resign, which were relatively tiny numbers, but in the atmosphere created in agencies like the State Department. Agencies that had

²⁹ Reeves, pp. 469, 530.

unquestionably sensitive positions, such as the CIA, the Armed Forces, and the State Department, were more heavily affected by the anticommunist crusade, and the personality of the security heads of each agency naturally played a key role. Organizations like State, where the Foreign Service had created tightly-knit groups of professionals, felt the effects of even a small number of resignations. Well-publicized cases like those of the China hands, especially Davies, Vincent, and Service, left an indelible impression on every professional Foreign Service officer, and virtually everyone in State knew at least one person terminated or driven to resign during the McCarthy era. The climate of suspicion that McLeod installed in Foggy Bottom, Dulles' apathy towards administering his own department, and the seeming lack of support from the President or the public undermined the morale of the Foreign Service. Recruitment suffered and the number of qualified applicants dropped, partly out of the Service's notoriety and partly out of fear of the witch hunt that lay in store for the applicant. For the first time since the hiring freeze during World War II, the Foreign Service had no new members in 1953 and 1954, although budget restrictions also played a role in this shortage. Junior officers became much more cautious and vague in their reports from overseas and tended to avoid any statements that might disagree with an orthodox view of the international communist conspiracy theory. The apparent lesson from the "losing China" accusations was that honest reporting was no guarantee of job security, since firing the messenger of bad news was always a possibility.

In the end, the Eisenhower administration's search for a trustworthy set of employees came at a high personal cost. Although the President and his top advisors successfully navigated through the pitfalls of the McCarthy era, their political survival

depended upon distancing themselves from the nasty business of hunting subversives and other security risks. Delegation of administrative authority within the State Department in particular brought McCarthyism into the very agency that was one of its favorite targets. The mandate for change and the need to compromise with conservative legislators forced Dulles and Eisenhower to try to work with McLeod while minimizing the damage Senator McCarthy could do, but the relatively independent security chief threw his own wrench into the foreign policy machinery. Beyond the hundreds of employees dismissed, State's housecleaning shook up the Foreign Service, already in a period of crisis, and thereby undermined the position of trained diplomats. Directly and indirectly, the anticommunist crusade in the Department affected American foreign relations for the rest of the decade and beyond.

Chapter 5: “Dull Where They Ought to Be Daring”: McCarthyism and the Foreign Service

The effect of McLeod's new security system and the negative publicity of the McCarthy accusations was a stifling of dissent within the department. Officers within Washington and abroad were now less likely to express sincere opinions that differed from the administration's apparently very strict anticommunist approach. Foreign Service Officers were particularly wary of sending reports to superiors that might repeat the disaster of the China hands. As a result, often junior officers either sent reports that expressed what they thought their superiors wanted to hear or at least something vague enough to avoid any firm stand that might cause controversy later.

In January, 1954, five well-respected former senior diplomats wrote a letter to *The New York Times* criticizing the new security atmosphere in State. Although they never mentioned McCarthy or McLeod by name, the authors argued that the new security measures were damaging the entire foreign policy operation. An overemphasis on security at the expense of effective administration was playing havoc with the free flow of information necessary for effective foreign policy. McCarthy's attacks had joined with McLeod's policies, as the “forces which are working for conformity from the outside are being reinforced by the present administrative set-up within the Department of State which subordinates normal personnel administration to considerations of security.”¹ They

¹ “Backing Our Diplomats – Forces of Conformity Seen As Danger to Effective Foreign Service,” letter, *The New York Times*, January 17, 1954, Section 4, p. 8, and “5 Ex-envoys Decry Attacks on Corps,” *Ibid.*, Section I, pp. 1, 29. The five authors were Norman Armour, Robert Woods Bliss, Joseph C. Grew, William Phillips, and G. Howard Shaw.

argued that security and personnel responsibilities should be separated, indirectly criticizing McLeod's inability to combine those two roles.

The result of overly heightened security was an atmosphere of conformity that had a direct impact upon how important information flowed within the department. Honest reporting had taken a backseat to a kind of orthodoxy born out of a fear of appearing disloyal. Anyone "who reports on persons and events to the very best of his ability and who makes recommendations which at the time he conscientiously finds to be in the interest of the United States may subsequently find his loyalty and integrity challenged and may even be forced out of the service and discredited forever as a private citizen after many years of distinguished service." The result was an emphasis "upon reporting and upon recommendations which are ambiguously stated or so cautiously set forth as to be deceiving." The final result of "such insidious work" would be nothing less than a threat to national security, since "it is not long before accuracy and initiative have been sacrificed to acceptability and conformity."²

While the five distinguished ex-officers were not the first to level public criticism towards the new security regime, they were the most expert and least obviously partisan source of criticism up to that point. George W. Ball, formerly a Washington lawyer and later to be an important advisor to President Lyndon Johnson, had criticized the new Federal security policy in a letter to *The Washington Post* in 1953. He questioned the fairness of not allowing the accused to confront his accusers, as well as the reliance on hearsay, rumor, and confidential informants, which "can and almost certainly will be used to embrace crackpots, frustrated fellow employees, and grudge-bearing neurotics."

² *Ibid.*, p. 8.

Most likely with McLeod in mind, Ball argued that the role of the security officer within the Civil Service had increased to the point he was “a man to be feared by all employees, however loyal and honest.” The new responsibilities allow the “personnel security officer” to intimidate employees into resigning without a hearing and gives a “well-placed ambitious man” the “power of life and death” over individual careers. Ball further stated that the result for the remaining civil servants would be uninspired conformity: “dull where they ought to be daring, subservient where they ought to be critical, lest an inconvenient display of imagination be held untrustworthy, or independence of thought be considered unreliable.”³

While Ball was a knowledgeable outside observer and a faithful Democrat, the *Times* letter-writers were unquestionably expert foreign policy insiders without clear partisan axes to grind. In 1953, Dulles had named two of the five, Joseph Grew and Norman Armour, to a short-term committee charged with recommending officers to the top overseas posts. Dulles would later ask Armour to serve on an advisory committee, headed by Henry Wriston, to recommend changes in the structure of the Foreign Service to improve morale and effectiveness.

In 1953, as keen an observer of international relations as the journalist Theodore H. White, who knew the China experts personally, found in the representatives of the United States abroad “a level of timidity which gives the American people a Foreign Service of eunuchs.” This timidity was the result of a natural, professional conservatism within the service, aggravated in the postwar era by public attacks, particularly by Congress. “Today, it may be flatly stated that few men who serve the United States do so

³ “The New Security Order,” letter, *The Washington Post*, May 5, 1953, Section II, p. 10.

with less honor, less respect, or less reciprocal loyalty from their fellow citizens.” The scattering of the China experts had shown other officers that honesty was no defense against political attacks ten years in the future, and that expressing any concrete opinion on any dangerous subject could leave a ticking time-bomb for one’s future career. This reluctance to report personal opinions was present up and down the chain of command. White talked with two FSO’s who admitted to drafting incomplete reports, one who winked knowingly, “we’ve learned, haven’t we?” and another who avoided reporting a dangerous situation in his host country because his superior was under Congressional and press criticism and he did not want his own name printed on any official document about the issue, for fear that he would be associated with his unpopular boss. Instead, the second diplomat settled for waiting to talk to his superior in person.⁴

In 1959, former FSO’s were still noting that officers abroad were sending in misleading or vague reports. Since Dulles and McLeod came into office, an officer might be reprimanded for making “reports or recommendations unpalatable to certain persons in the Department and...ordered not to repeat the offense.” FSO’s “have been known to state that under present conditions it is unwise to the point of foolishness” to send messages with “unwelcome facts.”⁵

Writing several years later, John Paton Davies, one of the China hands dismissed because of his reporting on the Communists in China, argued that the attacks from the right undermined whatever search for excellence the Foreign Service possessed up until the early fifties. “The violence and subtlety of the purge and intimidation left the Foreign

⁴ Theodore H. White, *Fire in the Ashes – Europe in Mid-Century*, (New York: William Sloane, 1953), pp. 373-7. White maintains his sources’ anonymity, only calling the first diplomat “Lew.”

⁵ *Study of United States Foreign Policy*, p. 41.

Service demoralized and intellectually cowed. With some doughty exceptions, it became a body of conformists. The timidity influenced promotions, and many cautious mediocrities rose to the top of the Service.”⁶ Another victim of the China hands purge, Philip Jessup, noted that the McCarthy hearings did not interrupt much policymaking , but did require a lot of wasted energy in the department and undermined the morale of the Foreign Service for a long time to come. McCarthyism led to “the spreading of fear, the danger of non-conformity, the danger of putting into a memorandum a recommendation which was contrary to policy, for fear it might be dug up and published and you’d be accused of some subversive reason for having these views in variance to the views of the Department.”⁷

The meekness of the Foreign Service was an issue for Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, a continuing problem left over from the events of the 1950’s. Kennedy’s Secretary of State Dean Rusk inherited a State department that required, in the views of one assistant secretary, “more affirmative, creative thinking” at all levels, to get rid of the “administrative rigidity” of the Eisenhower period. The previous decade had shown that if diplomatic superiors at the assistant secretary level were not open-minded, then subordinates could not be creative or honest. FSO’s abroad often used vague, “evasive language in dealing with controversial subjects,” for fear that the wrong remark could ruin their careers. Rusk felt the need to issue a memorandum encouraging officers to speak frankly even if it might lead to controversy within the department; there was to be

⁶ John Paton Davies, Jr., *Foreign and Other Affairs*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1964), pp. 197-8.

⁷ Philip C. Jessup oral history, COHP, Vol. II, p. 388. “Of course, as you went into the new Administration, and that fellow McLeod in the Department, that was very bad. A lot of them got axed then.” *Ibid.*, p. 387.

no penalty for expressing an unpopular view.⁸ By 1961, despite previous moves to professionalize and improve the morale of the State Department, the new president faced a Foreign Service where expression of controversial views was relatively rare. The New Frontier ideology encouraged bold new thinking, but this ran against the grain of diplomats “whose experience for a decade had been that bold ideas and actions were personally dangerous and could lead to congressional investigations and public disgrace.” Furthermore, while the new administration encouraged diplomats to get to know the opposition parties in other countries, “experience or example had taught that acquaintance with oppositionists at any time, even twenty years earlier, had been the cause for ‘loyalty hearings.’”⁹ By 1970, the idea of a 1950’s Foreign Service that was uninspired, mediocre, and conformist had become the accepted interpretation. Foreign affairs experts writing on the history of the Service and the Department almost took for granted the fact that internal security concerns had a devastating impact on government personnel.¹⁰

FSO Meekness – Hindsight and Memories

Former Foreign Service Officers looking back on the period noted that the service itself was very much responsible for its own decline. In the hindsight of some retired

⁸ Chester Bowles, *Promises to Keep – My Years in Public Life, 1941-1969*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), pp. 304-5.

⁹ Davies, *Foreign and Other Affairs*, p. 198. Note that Davies is applying lessons learned from his own first-hand experience.

¹⁰ “It is not necessary here to pass judgment on this critical view to agree that the 1950’s did represent a distinctive stage in the postwar evolution of American foreign policy, a stage that generally was more rigid and less creative than the one which preceded it and the one which succeeded it.” John Ensor Harr, *The Professional Diplomat*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 22. See also Gabriel Almond, *The American People and Foreign Policy*, (New York: Praeger, 1960), pp. xiv, xv.

diplomats, its members were reluctant to stand up to injustice, they allowed the best posts to be politically prostituted, and showed little courage in objecting to the state of affairs.¹¹ A few ex-diplomats produced very critical analyses of the department's inner workings. One organizational critique argued that by the 1960's the position of the diplomat in the field had more to do with influencing one's superiors than a foreign audience, and the average officer devoted more thought to the diplomacy within State than the diplomacy with a foreign country.¹² Former China hands like Oliver Edmund Clubb looked back on the fifties and sixties and saw the loyalty-security program of the McCarthy era as responsible for a whole host of foreign policy disasters, including a mistaken involvement in Vietnam. Dulles and McLeod's security program equated dissent with disloyalty, which in effect "deadened initiative and fostered conformism," and ultimately led to a militarized, oversimplified foreign policy. Writing in 1974, Clubb went so far as to argue that the antidemocratic methods established twenty years before culminated in the Watergate crisis, a natural result of attacks on State department personnel, the scattering of the China hands, the loss of the principles of civil liberties, and an acceptance of totalitarianism within the federal government.¹³

For its part, the administration publicly announced that everyone in any position in government was encouraged to disagree if expressing an honest opinion. The President told reporters that he expected all federal employees to give their honest opinions when called for, and to follow their consciences when making decisions. He said he had no

¹¹ John Moors Cabot, *First Line of Defense – Forty Years' Experience of a Career Diplomat*, (Washington, D.C.: School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University, 1980), p. 100.

¹² Robert D. Schulzinger, *The Making of the Diplomatic Mind – The Training, Outlook, and Style of United States Foreign Service Officers, 1908-1931*, (Middletown, CN: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1975), pp. 147-8.

¹³ Clubb, *The Witness and I*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), pp. 281-4, 303-4.

knowledge of anyone holding back or misleading his superiors because he was afraid of being reprimanded. One of Dulles' first written addresses to his fellow State employees urged everyone to feel free to express their honest points of view, even if they might contradict the views of their superiors. In the same address in which he called for only "positive loyalty," he added that diplomats must be honest. Appealing to loyalty did not mean calling for dishonesty or distortion. The Secretary publicly said he could not tolerate any "yes men" in his department.¹⁴ After discovering that his "positive loyalty" address had sent a chill through the Foreign Service, Dulles felt the need to show his support for his employees and take steps to defend the quality of the Service. At a dinner hosted by the American Society of Newspaper Editors, he praised the Service, arguing that it had always consisted of able people who were apolitical and as reliable as any military officers. While "some quarters" questioned his trust in Democratic appointees, State and the Service "with rare exceptions" were a "splendid and patriotic" group of professionals.¹⁵

According to his assistants, Dulles sought advice from a wide variety of employees, not just those directly under him, and he insisted that his advisors debate with him. Robert Bowie, head of the Policy Planning Staff, constantly disagreed with Dulles, which went along well with the Secretary's adversarial training as a lawyer. At high level meetings, the President and the Secretary cultivated an "atmosphere of rational discussion, where rank was never pulled, where every nuance of difference of view was invited." One career diplomat noted in later life that Dulles tolerated dissent better than

¹⁴ *Washington Post*, January 23 and 28, 1953.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, April 19, 1953.

the other Secretaries she worked under, and more often than any other head of State, he would call up a very junior officer to ask an opinion.¹⁶ Another who had never worked with Dulles before was surprised to find him willing to listen to disagreements from distant corners of the department, to the point of patiently listening to one staff member who often “spoke from the depths of alcoholic confusion.”¹⁷ The Secretary’s assistants even noticed his willingness to listen to subordinates he personally disliked, for example trusting the intuition of Public Affairs chief Carl McCardle, who frequently annoyed him by telling Dulles his prepared speeches were completely wrong. McCardle was terribly disorganized, inarticulate, and undiplomatic, but had an unerring instinct when deciding what made positive or negative press reaction.¹⁸

Not everyone in the State Department saw McCarthyism working in the same way or to the same degree. Many of the allegations of stifled dissent came from second-hand sources and have remained allegations without specifics. Understandably, few former State officials would have wished to step forward and announce that they had been too afraid to tell unpalatable truths to their superiors. Oral history sources give widely varying accounts of the impact of McCarthyism on the Foreign Service. Those who worked most closely with Dulles saw the Secretary not as someone “soft” on McCarthyism, but someone necessarily cautious in the dealing with a Foreign Service that was resistant to change, a product of overly long oversight by the Democratic Party, and full of many people who saw him as an outsider. In general, the closer the person was

¹⁶ Oral histories, COHP: Roderic O’Connor, pp. 21, 48; Eleanor Lansing Dulles, Part II, pp. 61-2; Loy Henderson, pp. 33-4; Thomas C. Mann, p. 90; quote from Livingston Merchant, p. 19.

¹⁷ James Barco oral history, vol. III, COHP, pp. 654-5.

¹⁸ John W. Hanes, Jr. oral history, JFDOHP, Princeton, pp. 121-3. Hanes could not decide if McCardle, Lourie, or McLeod had been the worst administrative appointments under Dulles – “there were some close horse races in this one.”

to Dulles, the better his morale, the more open the intellectual atmosphere, and, naturally, the more trusted he was. The real yet intangible effects of McCarthyism affected more of the middle and lower ranks of the department, those Dulles knew the least, the ranks where the new Secretary waited for years to secure loyalty and security before feeling confident in them.

Significantly, Dulles' assistants felt a need to defend him in light of a popular perception that the State Department under Eisenhower had become an institution of yes men where conformity was the rule. The perception of conformity was powerful, and while the Secretary may have welcomed disagreement within his inner circle of advisors, there is no doubt an air of timidity hung over much of the rest of the department. James Barco, a member of Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge's U.N. staff who had been surprised to find Dulles open to different views, also noted that intellectual disagreement could still be very dangerous to one's career. The McCarthy era "was unquestionably discouraging to the more active minds, to people who might be inclined to look more adventurously on subjects which were not necessarily ordinary subjects," and was a period that "encouraged, in otherwise pedestrian minds, greater pedestrianism."¹⁹ There was no guarantee the middle levels of the department shared Dulles' sense of open debate with his subordinates.

Most agreed that the first half of the 1950's was a low point in the history of the Service. When Eisenhower came into office, and for the first two years afterwards, the department reached an all-time low in terms of morale. No one denied that the loyalty-security program and McCarthyite attacks shook up the department, and everyone agreed

¹⁹ Barco oral history, pp. 623-4.

that it was “a very difficult period” which “caused a lot of strains in this department and left some scars, no question about that.”²⁰ The public attacks on the department, and the housecleaning policies from within, had discouraged qualified people from applying to or continuing in State. Good candidates might refuse to take the risks that were involved after seeing what even well-trusted, experienced, qualified diplomats had to go through.

However, former Dulles aides argued that other conditions besides McCarthyism had a bigger impact upon morale. Besides the public Congressional attacks on and public suspicion of the department, the Service needed internal reform, including reorganization, pay raises, professionalization, and better incentives to draw and keep talented people. Wriston argued against seeing McCarthyism as a reason for poor morale or poor performance. He saw McCarthy as “more of a shield than a spear” in its effects, since the “timid and time-servers” who supposedly felt silenced failed to say anything significant once McCarthy was dead. Instead, Wriston’s study of the department’s administration revealed that poor morale came from the fact historically most Secretaries of State had been poor administrators who did not push hard enough for enough funding for salaries or budgets. He claimed the lack of funding hurt the morale as much as McCarthyism and Dulles’ constant travel put together. Aside from security reasons, terminations during Eisenhower’s first few months in office were also due to simple partisan turnover, which Wriston estimated was the source of about 80% of the unease in the Service.²¹

The department was not immune to the inertia and time-serving mediocrity that

²⁰ O’Connor oral history, pp. 30-1.

²¹ Henry Wriston oral history, JFDOH, pp. 30-2.

many often associate with civil servants. A few former State officials suggested that some of the complaints about stifled opinions came from spineless complainers who can be found filling seats in almost any large bureaucracy. Those closest to Dulles, particularly the most diehard Republican assistants such as John Hanes, Jr., argued that the morale of an institution like the State Department depended largely on the body's own effectiveness and how able it is to maintain public support, and in both categories Acheson had failed. Hanes downplayed the various complaints about morale, especially the idea that professional diplomats had been stifled from sharing unpopular opinions. Morale was "like a wild fever chart," up and down depending on the time and who was asked, at an all-time low in 1953 but at an all-time high by the end of the decade. Some will always complain of bullying, with or without McCarthyism, and "[y]ou cannot always judge the true situation by the volume of bitching."²² The Department had become a lightning rod for criticism from both the right and left. McLeod's replacement in Security and Consular Affairs, Rod O'Connor, joked that sometimes different editorials accused him of both supporting McCarthyism and having communist sympathies.

In this argument, much of the responsibility for not dissenting from administration policy must lie with those who felt themselves silenced, since most of the censorship was self-censorship. The silenced in fact shirked their duty by not disagreeing. A few former diplomats even suggested that in the long run the conservative attacks on the department might benefit the Foreign Service, by helping weed out not only the undesirables, but also the incompetent. The McCarthy era could be a valuable trial by fire, leaving only those

²² John W. Hanes, Jr. oral history, COHP, pp. 15-7.

with real confidence and unimpeachable credentials in charge of executing American foreign policy. Dulles' defenders argued that however damaging the McCarthy era had been to the Foreign Service and the State Department, the Secretary had prevented even more serious damage and had instilled confidence through the power of his personality and his effectiveness as Secretary. Much of the grumbling could only have been sour grapes, since the morale of formerly important State people was of course low, while those closest to the top tended to be in very high spirits. Those most distant from the top, i.e., those that the Secretary inherited rather than appointed, felt the greatest uncertainty.²³

The Secretary's defenders point to the impressive fact that by the end of the decade, State's record of appointing professional diplomats to top posts was at an all-time high. Despite the very partisan nature of appointments, despite marks on the prestige of the Foreign Service, over the course of the decade fewer ambassadorships went to political appointees. Despite the Service's resentment of him, Dulles tried hard to keep careerists in charge of embassies and to keep political appointments to a minimum, preferring able professionals for positions whenever possible. In fact, he as well as Eisenhower regularly received criticism from fellow Republicans that too few openings were going to loyal members of the party.²⁴

Dulles' and McLeod's most loyal defenders agree that the department went through a rough period of transition during its search for a secure set of personnel, undeniable evidence suggests that institutionalized McCarthyism had profound effects on the Foreign Service and the State Department. The key question is the nature of the price

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

²⁴ Oral histories, COHP: Carl McCardle, pp. 45-6; Eleanor Lansing Dulles, Part II, p. 64.

paid for such security. The new Secretary decided not to make a blanket public defense of his department until he could be very sure that it was cleared of security risks. This cautious position cost Dulles resentment from liberal politicians, much of the press, and most especially among the professional service, who found the strategy of wait-and-see to be outrageous.²⁵ Dulles was determined not to be trapped in Acheson's place, i.e., being embarrassed by statements of confidence before knowing his department was secure. The process was consistent and logical from that standpoint, but painful and for some individuals very costly.²⁶

Security and Personnel Reform

At the time of the Army-McCarthy hearings, the Department was undergoing organizational reform that many argued was long overdue. State was running on basically the same organizational model as before World War II. In addition to the demands of global changes, the Cold War abroad, and the changes in the country's role in the world, the State Department reforms also reflected the effects of McCarthyism on the nation's foreign policy institutions.

Foremost and most well-known of the reforms came from the Secretary of State's Public Committee on Personnel, otherwise known as the "Wriston Committee," headed by President Henry Wriston of Columbia University. In general, the Committee's duty was to find ways to make the Foreign Service more effective and in particular to make the administration of the State Department more responsive to the new demands put upon it. The Wriston Committee's longest-lasting, for some diplomats the most notorious,

²⁵ O'Connor oral history, p. 70.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 70, 128-9.

reform was the “lateral entry” of personnel from other fields such as economics, agriculture, and labor relations into the middle ranks of the Foreign Service. Such “wristonization,” as it came to be known, reflected the growing complexity of the Department’s operations and the apparent need for specialists besides professional diplomats.

Wristonization must also be understood in light of the intense public scrutiny and the heightened sense of security of the McCarthy era. Part of the Committee’s mandate was to analyze the roots of the Service’s morale problem and suggest improvements. Although the committee’s research found non-security reasons for low morale, such as poor administrators and inequalities in the personnel structure, its report noted that public opinion had been “shaken in recent years,” for several reasons “which need no elaboration.” While taking a fairly neutral stand on the ethics of the new security program, the final report noted that under E.O. 10450 the program had been “drastic and thorough,” with inevitable disruptions that must end as soon as possible. In an indirect reference to McLeod, the committee hoped that the search for security risks would follow an objective, professional course similar to those conducted within the FBI. Without going into the threats to truthful reporting, the Committee was quick to point out that the Service must preserve “the tradition of frank and objective reporting that has long constituted one of the State Department’s most enduring sources of strength.”²⁷

The Committee, made up of two senior FSO’s and prominent members of the business and academic communities, found the Foreign Service unrepresentative of the

²⁷ *Toward a Stronger Foreign Service – Report of the Secretary of State’s Public Committee on Personnel*, June, 1954, Department of State Publication 5458, Department and Foreign Service Series 36, (Department of State, Division of Publications, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1954), pp. 1, 3-5.

country it represented to the rest of the world. In arguments very similar to conservative Republican critiques of professional diplomats, Dulles' committee found that the Service was out of touch both with domestic concerns and international developments. The Foreign Service was both unrepresentative of American values and overly specialized at a time when broader expertise was needed.

Wriston recommended a kind of integration-by-rotation within the department, whereby diplomats would be required to spend a certain minimum amount of time in Washington, while staff who would normally spend most of their careers in the U.S. would be rotated overseas more often. The committee argued that too much time overseas isolated the diplomat from events at home, in effect putting the diplomat in exile. It was a mistake to have America's representatives "orbiting overseas" too much. In the worst case, the FSO might go native and lose touch with his heritage: "Men immersed continuously in other societies inevitably tend to lose touch with the circumstances and attitudes that shape national policy at home. Their outlook, their judgment of changing factors of national concern, and finally their sense of urgency in matters affecting the national interest cannot escape being altered."²⁸ Unstated, but no doubt implied, was the danger of repeating the debacle of the State's China experts, some of whom had spent much more time in China than they had in the U.S., and whose judgment was no doubt affected by too much time in foreign lands. Obviously, the consequences of going native were even more dangerous in countries behind the Iron Curtain or with strong communist movements.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-2.

Rotation would keep the officer's "knowledge of American life steadily refreshed" and would have a "leavening influence" on foreign policy over time. While making officers less susceptible to becoming "un-American," rotation back to Washington would also make them more sensitive to domestic political currents, perhaps more wise about the heightened scrutiny inside and outside the department. Such an education in recent politics would help the department avoid not only the crimes of Alger Hiss but also the indiscretions and negative publicity of Service, Davies, and Vincent. Finally, the internal security program itself would benefit, since it was no doubt easier to keep surveillance on people stationed at home than in a foreign country.

Second of all, the Service needed to open its ranks to those trained in important areas besides diplomatic negotiation, international law, and consular duties, for example economists, labor experts, military technical specialists, and professional administrators. The committee argued convincingly that the American postwar presence abroad included new duties in new areas, for which the department needed more than just narrowly-trained diplomats. By the time Dulles came into office, State was running programs as diverse as economic aid, intelligence gathering, military hardware transfer, agricultural development, industrial development, overseas libraries, and foreign language news broadcasts. It was no coincidence that, with the possible exception of labor specialists, the outside specialties were all safer professions, i.e., less suspect in the eyes of anticommunist crusaders.²⁹

When Dulles came into office, the Department was already aware of its public image as an elitist, unrepresentative, untrustworthy institution. State's head of Public

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-4.

Affairs under Truman made a final recommendation to the new Secretary-elect to hire more outside consultants in the future, in order to ensure the “loyalty, the security, the morality, and the competence of personnel.” Consultants for administration should be drawn from the ranks of highly-regarded military men, prominent private citizens, and public servants not affiliated with the Department or the Foreign Service in any way. Public confidence would improve if the department set about changing public impressions of its personnel as “exotic dilettantes.” The Foreign Service needed to appear in public more in areas seemingly distant from the nation’s foreign policy elites – the Midwest, South, and Southwest – which were also areas where people had the greatest misconceptions about the work of professional diplomats, and in the Midwest, represented somewhat by McCarthy himself, where there was the greatest criticism of the State Department. The department’s public relations needed not just to speak on policy, but also “to demonstrate that those charged with the handling of foreign relations at many levels are capable, responsible, and congenial human beings drawn from and representative of the people as a whole.”³⁰

McCarthyism and the Dulles-McLeod security system further strained the inherent tensions between the Secretary and the Foreign Service itself. Partisan politics, the tension between professional and career employees, and the particular nature of the Service all created conflict within the department. Dulles came into office as a faithful Republican, from the party of conservative anticommunists, and nothing in his early tenure as Secretary suggested he was going to publicly stand up to conservative criticism of his employees. Many in the Service interpreted the hiring of McLeod as Dulles’ move

to appease McCarthy or at least deflect his attacks. Second of all, although John Foster Dulles possessed a pedigree that seemed destined to make him Secretary of State, he was not a professionally trained diplomat in the eyes of Foreign Service members but instead was an outsider whose main experience had been as a high-powered New York lawyer. His uncle had been Secretary of State under Woodrow Wilson, his brother Allen headed Ike's CIA, and his sister Eleanor was already in the Foreign Service when he became Secretary. He seemed overly committed to pleasing Congress even at the expense of his own employees.

The Plight of the Housecleaned

The issue of family connections reveals the coherence and clique-ishness of the Service that Dulles came to oversee. At first, he was reluctant to hire his sister for a position in the department because of the awkwardness of employing family and the possibility of charges of nepotism. In fact, he was surprised to find that the department's professional ranks were much more critical of outsiders than they were of nepotism. In a way, nepotism was much more forgivable given how close-knit the department could be. Charles Bohlen and Charles Thayer were not the only diplomats related by marriage, and despite careers that sent one Foreign Service Officers around the world, close ties of all sorts connected members together. The close-knit nature of the Service was an important factor in explaining the severity of McCarthy's impact on the department. In McCarthyist eyes, the closed ranks and secrecy of the department was suspicious, and at the very least

³⁰ "Restoring Public Confidence in the Department of State," memorandum, Howland Sargeant to Dulles, January 16, 1953, *FRUS, 1952-4, Vol. 1*, pp. 41-2.

made the presence of any communist spy that much more dangerous. For the Foreign Service Officer, particularly one too closely associated with the previous administration, the coherence of the Service had become a political liability. This was central to those most concerned with their future in light of McCarthyism. In other sectors of society affected by the Red Scare, the remotest connection to a suspected communist could be grounds for destructive investigations, and thus much more was the danger in a group of people closely linked in many ways and already under public suspicion as a nest of spies. One could see that familial connections were enough to jeopardize one's place in the department, and few officers could claim no connection at all with those dismissed as security risks. The small percentage of State employees actually dismissed for security risks sent a big shudder through the Foreign Service.

In a few cases, the pressure of obsessive security scrutiny combined with the prospect of ending one's career prematurely was enough to cause psychological damage within the ranks of the service. Officers found their careers in danger because of associations that might be decades old, and the prospects were dismal of finding another job once they were branded as former members of the State Department. Depression could lead to suicidal despair, as was the case with John Montgomery, an economics expert who was in charge of the Finnish desk at the State Department. Just a few days after Eisenhower took office, in the midst of the partisan and security shakeup of the department, he committed suicide by hanging himself with a bedsheet off the balcony of his Georgetown apartment. His death led to a Congressional investigation into not only Montgomery's private and professional life but also the bureaucratic structure of the department itself. Congress was relieved (though some were no doubt disappointed) to

discover that Montgomery's position was a fairly low-level one without access to many sensitive documents.

Any such suspicious death within the department in the tense political atmosphere of 1953 would have inevitably invited greater scrutiny, since investigation was the name of the game in Congress, and investigation of the State Department was becoming a popular sport in both the House and the Senate. Republican Congressman Fred Busbey called for a House investigation of Montgomery's death in order to pierce an apparent veil of secrecy around the matter. For Busbey, the department's poor security record meant that no one could assume Montgomery was innocent of subversive associations. Investigations by the department, the police, and Congress ruled that he had been suffering from depression and mental illness for several years such that his job performance had declined to the point his career was at a dead-end. It is possible that the former War Production Board economist saw that his days were numbered in the State Department, or he may have suspected that the incoming security division would have accused him of something more than mediocrity. By McLeod's standard, Montgomery's personal life suggested homosexuality – lifelong bachelorhood and sharing quarters with another single man. Threat of such exposure or accusation may have been the decisive factor in the man's suicide.³¹ Although Eisenhower's new security program was still in the making, Montgomery may have interpreted the changeover to a Republican administration as the herald of an even more troubled future.

Montgomery had not been the first State employee who had committed suicide during the anticommunist crusade. In 1948, Lawrence Duggan, a former Assistant

³¹ *Washington Post*, January 24 and 30, April 30, 1953.

Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs who had been pressured to resign under allegations of being a Soviet spy, fell to his death from the sixteenth floor of his New York office building. His death was most likely a suicide inspired by feelings of guilt over connections with known Soviet agents and the fear that such a past would soon catch up with him.³² An engineer for the besieged VOA jumped in front of a truck after leaving a note saying he was being made a scapegoat in the dispute over the placement of a transmitter.³³ The plight of former FSO's had become well-known enough that life insurance companies took notice. John Stewart Service not only had problems finding an apartment after his dismissal, but also insurance to replace his Foreign Service policy – one agency turned him down precisely because he was fired from the department. The insurance agent confessed, “Well, how do we know? You may jump out a window.”³⁴

In the 1950's the Foreign Service was known as an organization where careers came to die. Officers were reluctant to push too hard for promotion, because every advance up the ladder required another security check, and no matter how many prior clearings were in one's file, there was still the possibility of the department's change of heart. The security system had become a key factor in professional development within the State Department, and had become the most important checkpoint in an employee's advancement through the ranks. Appointments to ambassadorships, the assistant secretary positions, and higher required Senate approval, which during the McCarthy era was anything but a rubber stamp.

³² Allen Weinstein and Alexander Vassiliev, *The Haunted Wood – Soviet Espionage in America, The Stalin Years*, (New York: Random House, 1999), pp. 21, 48-9, and Harvey Klehr, John Earl Haynes, and Fridrikh Igorevich Firsov, *The Secret World of American Communism*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), p. 117.

³³ *Washington Post*, March 25.

³⁴ John Stewart Service oral history, in Fariello, p. 163.

The higher one went, the greater the public scrutiny and the greater likelihood of Senate investigation. In 1950, just as McCarthy began to grab media attention, Acheson asked thirty-three people before finding someone willing to fill one assistant secretary position.³⁵

Those who remained untouched by scandal or intimate investigation nonetheless were affected, and they felt little relief about their escape. Even as respected and influential a diplomat as George Kennan felt the pressure of the McCarthy era, being subpoenaed in January 1953 for a Senate Internal Security Subcommittee hearing on short notice, without any preparation, and without any notice of who would conduct the interview or what the testimony would involve. He found the ordeal “Kafkaesque,” and considered himself very fortunate not to have entrapped himself, because the Subcommittee tried with cryptic and leading questions to channel the veteran diplomat into perjury borne of a faulty memory. Like many others, Kennan felt no sense of security after escaping McCarthyist attacks, since “it was only chance, rather than any superior wisdom or virtue on our part, that saved us from this fate.” Seeing other officers “pilloried” gave him a sense of uneasy guilt, since others had their careers cut short by actions no different from his own. There but for the grace of chance went I, thought Kennan. In his written testimony defending John Service to the Loyalty Review Board, Kennan stated that honestly disagreeing with government policy and recommending an alternative was perfectly proper, as long as the dissent was based on sincerity and not on behalf of an external influence. He found no evidence of outside influence in Service’s case, and hoped the man’s trial would not set a precedent. “I would feel alarmed for the

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

future of the Foreign Service, I said, if we were ever to permit the inference to become established that a recommendation contrary to existing policy was a sign of disloyalty.”³⁶ Such had been the case with John Service.

Kennan retired from the State Department in 1953 for several reasons, but one of the most important was the treatment of his fellow FSO's. He had known Davies while the two were in Moscow together from 1944 to 1946, and Davies had worked for Kennan on the Policy Planning Staff. He found the Department's lack of faith in Davies, its failure to recognize its responsibilities both towards supervising its members and treating them justly, and its poor loyalty to its veteran civil servants added incentive to leave government service. Twenty-five years of service had come to mean nothing in the face of McCarthyist pressures and had even become a liability, and one's superiors could not be counted on to come to your rescue. It confirmed for Kennan the wisdom of leaving the government position when he did. "I was never sure I belonged in a government where such things could happen to one's subordinates, and where one could be so powerless to defend them from obloquy and injustice."³⁷

Those left after the housecleaning, partisan decisions, budget cuts, and reductions in force, and those still confident enough to speak their minds, tended to be the more conservative members of the Foreign Service. Those who composed the loyalty boards were naturally those trusted to be above any reproach, the most clearly dependable and loyal, and the McCarthyist housecleaning left them with even more influence. They were least likely to see any suspicion of their loyalty or their anticommunist zeal, and now

³⁶ George F. Kennan, *Memoirs, Vol. II, 1950-1963*, (Boston: Little, Brown, 1972), pp. 209-10, 218.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 210-1, 214.

more likely to express more conservative policy recommendations. Thomas Mann, for example, served on the board investigating George Melby. Mann had made up his mind that Lillian Hellman was a communist sympathizer and a bad influence, and he found Melby's account of the relationship very suspect. Melby's explanation that he and Hellman had been strictly friends who had profound ideological differences after the war was full of holes, and Mann was relentless in questioning the veracity of Melby's testimony. He recommended discharging the officer on security grounds.³⁸ Mann would serve for several years at the assistant secretary level before becoming Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American affairs in 1960. The 1964 doctrine which came to bear his name set a policy recognizing the legitimacy of governments in Latin America based primarily upon their commitment to anti-communism and secondarily to the origins or ruling methods of such governments, no matter how brutal or undemocratic. The Mann Doctrine, announced a month before a military coup in Brazil and under a President with relatively little interest in overseeing Latin American policy (or the Alliance for Progress), was the culmination of a conservative political view which gained space for itself within the State Department in part due to the timidity of moderates in the face of McCarthyism. Mann had held very similar views as an ambassador under Eisenhower and had been unmoved by the complaints of those who felt injured in the department's housecleaning. He was largely unsympathetic to those dismissed or denied

³⁸ Robert P. Newman, *The Cold War Romance of Lillian Hellman and John Melby*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), pp. 220-32.

employment for security reasons and agreed with Eisenhower that government service was a privilege and not a right.

Chapter 6: The State Department in Microcosm: Embassy Havana, 1957-61

In 1962, former U.S. ambassador to Cuba Earl E.T. Smith published a memoir of his tenure as ambassador, in which he put forth his own interpretation of the course of the Cuban Revolution and the role that the United States played in Castro's rise to power. The book's title, *Fourth Floor*, referred to the fourth level of the main State Department building in Washington, D.C., the floor which housed the offices of the assistant secretaries of State, including the Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs, Roy Richard Rubottom. In a fashion reminiscent of McCarthyist accusations of a decade earlier, Smith suggested that U.S. policy towards President Fulgencio Batista was in part a product of communist sympathizers within the department and a pro-Castro sympathy that reached at least as high as the assistant secretary level. The former ambassador, who had been replaced by an experienced professional diplomat soon after Castro took control in 1959, argued that Castro sympathizers within State had betrayed the legitimate government of Cuba and in effect had encouraged Castro's revolution. U.S. Government officials, including his own embassy staff, had ignored Smith's warnings that Castro was an agent of international communism, either because of naïve softness on communism or outright pro-communist sentiments. The ambassador's wrangling with State department officers above and below him highlighted in miniature some of the tensions present throughout the State Department and Foreign Service, as the U.S. foreign affairs bureaucracy devoted to Latin America underwent important changes in the late 1950's.

Mr. Smith Goes to Havana

In many ways Earl Smith was a remnant of a waning era in the history of diplomatic appointments. Like most of his predecessors in Cuba, Smith was a political appointee whose main career was as a businessman, in this case a Florida banker whose appointment to Havana was in return for valuable fundraising for the Republican Party. As noted earlier, over the course of the 1950's, and despite early distrust between Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and the Foreign Service, State's record of appointing professional diplomats to top posts reached an all-time high, with more and more ambassadorships going to professionally trained civil servants, members of the Foreign Service. About four out of five chiefs of mission overseas were careerists, with many of the political appointees sent to "safe places" to get them out of the way, for example the assignment of the controversial McCarthyist State department security chief Scott McLeod to Ireland.¹ Many of the new positions open to FSO's during Eisenhower's presidency were of course in newly independent nations in Africa, and many of the most luxurious and influential posts still went to political appointees, but increasingly Latin American ambassadorships went to senior diplomats. The Havana embassy, because of its proximity to the United States, the relative prosperity of the country, the jet-set lifestyle possibilities of the city, and the country's unique political and diplomatic intimacy with the U.S., still seemed suited for a wealthy political appointee. The island's standard of living and the traditionally expensive social activities of the ambassador

¹ Henry Wriston oral history, JFDOH, p. 27.

required a certain level of income that few FSO's could bring to bear.² Smith's predecessor, Arthur Gardner, recommended to his superiors that the department choose candidates for the Havana embassy based on their means, because Gardner's careerist predecessor, Willard Beaulac, lacked the "substantial expenditures" needed for the "proper position in the community." The average foreign service officer would find himself a "poor devil unable to keep up with the Joneses."³ Furthermore, the country's cultural, economic, and political closeness to the U.S. (some would argue its dependence) suggested that the U.S. ambassador needed to be discreet but would not be doing much troubleshooting and would not need a lot of formal diplomatic training. Batista, the beneficiary of U.S. intervention in an aborted revolution in 1933, had directly or indirectly maintained a measure of stability on the island that suggested that the country was a quiet, prosperous, American-friendly place, the ambassadorship the perfect plum to reward party loyalty.

Many in the Foreign Service considered Smith and Gardner to have been disappointing, even disastrous, appointments.⁴ Gardner had become too friendly with Batista, personally friendly enough that the President, the U.S. ambassador, and their wives played canasta several nights a week, and in his first year as ambassador the

² As far back as 1929, it cost the U.S. Ambassador to Cuba, Henry Guggenheim, up to \$100,000 a year to pay his own way and maintain the prestige and influence of the position. Philip C. Jessup oral history, COHP, Vol. I, p. 140. Phillip Jessup's 1959 oral history account describes Guggenheim as an amateur political appointee very distrustful of his more qualified staff but, in implicit contrast to Smith, a very capable ambassador who could speak Spanish.

³ Letter, Arthur Gardner to Robert Murphy, May 3, 1954, File 113/5-354, Department of State Central Files, 1950-54, RG 59, Archives II, College Park, MD. Under Secretary Murphy replied that ambassadors should get larger allowances so the department would not have to choose based on outside income. *Ibid.*

⁴ Henry Wriston oral history, JFDOH, p. 27. Loy Henderson, the State official in charge of notifying Gardner and Smith that they were relieved of duty in Cuba, found them to be sincerely doing their best duty, but Gardner was too close to Batista and Smith was too anti-Castro. Loy Henderson oral history, COHP, p. 39.

department concluded that “by such enthusiastic endorsement of President Batista... he has become too much identified with him.”⁵ To his superiors, Gardner wrote and spoke glowingly of the Cuban President as the only one who could maintain proper government on the island, and the ambassador early on argued that Batista should have been even more repressive if he was going to survive in office.⁶ Many in the State Department were hoping for a little more diplomatic distance as the government of Cuba adopted increasingly harsh measures in putting down revolutionary elements, including Castro’s tiny but growing operations in the Sierra Maestra. Both Gardner and Smith were successful Republican businessmen appointed by Eisenhower after sizeable campaign contributions, and the professional diplomats and later historians tended to blur the distinctions between the two. One embassy staffer later spoke of the ambassadors together as out of their depth and “partly responsible for the failure of American policy during that period,” since both expressed public sympathy for Batista which destroyed any claim to American impartiality.⁷

Some took Smith’s lack of experience and training in diplomatic service and his very poor (perhaps non-existent) Spanish as a sign that the ambassador was out of touch

⁵ “ARA Chiefs of Mission,” Memo, Robert Woodward to Henry Holland, May 3, 1953, RG 59, files of Deputy Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs, 1945-56, Box 1, folder “Chronological – April 1, 1954,” p. 2. The evaluation of Latin American ambassadors expressed hope that Gardner’s “good qualities may eventually prove to outbalance his defects.” *Ibid.*

⁶ Memo of telephone conversation, Rubottom and Gardner, May 20, 1957, RG 59, Assistant Secretary Series, Rubottom Subject, Box 2, folder “1957 – Cuba,” pp. 1-2. (In the same conversation, Gardner told the assistant secretary that mere act of replacing the U.S. ambassador might topple Batista from office and lead to chaos. Gardner recognized that his removal would be a sign to most that the U.S. sought to show less favor towards Batista.) For his earlier, pro-dictatorship opinion, see letter, Gardner to John Cabot, November 25, 1953, RG 59, Assistant Secretary Series, John M. Cabot, Box 1, folder “Cuba,” p. 1.

⁷ Earl Smith, *The Fourth Floor: An Account of the Castro Communist Revolution* (New York: Random House, 1962), p. 20. Jules R. Benjamin, *The United States and the Origins of the Cuban Revolution: An Empire of Liberty in an Age of National Liberation*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 145. Wayne Smith, *The Closest of Enemies – A Personal and Diplomatic Account of U.S.-Cuban Relations Since 1957*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1987), p. 18.

with the country in which he was stationed, and that furthermore the wealthy, conservative Batista, with whom Smith had much in common, was able to manipulate him. Within the Embassy was a longstanding bureaucratic tension between career officers and political appointees, since careerists felt that appointees were here today and gone tomorrow, and appointees often found the professional officers snobbish to people from outside their clique.⁸ In Havana, Smith and much of his embassy staff were in a constant state of tension, distrust, and even resentment. When Smith told reporters off the record that he did not think Castro could be an effective leader of Cuba, the Cuban public began to label Smith as anti-Castro; instead of blaming the reporters, Smith held his staff responsible for the leak.⁹

Some suspected that Smith acted as an unwitting, naïve dupe of the dictator and his closeness to the head of state prevented him from seeing reality. However, Smith's messages to Washington over the course of his two-year term revealed a surprisingly sophisticated appraisal of both Batista and the Cuban political situation. His appraisals were slanted in favor of Batista and often repeated Batista's statements, but he was not a simple-minded mouthpiece for the government of Cuba. Of course, Smith required all messages from the Embassy to be approved by him, and thus Smith's signature no doubt appeared on political assessments made by better-trained staff.¹⁰ Smith's control over information flowing from the Embassy, though not from the consulate in Santiago,

⁸ *Fourth Floor*, p. 34.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 60-1.

¹⁰ Examples can be found in *FRUS, 1955-7, Vol. VI, American Republics: Multilateral; Mexico; Caribbean*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1987), Documents 289, 295, 299, 306, pp. 845-6, 846-7, 854-5, 865-70. The last, "Policy Recommendations for the Restoration of Normalcy in Cuba," includes a fairly objective analysis of events and suggestions for action; however, it was drafted with the aid of two embassy professionals. (Footnote, p. 865).

remained strict throughout his term.

After his replacement, Smith protested that he strictly followed his main mission of remaining impartial, and went to lengths to separate himself from the previous ambassador. According to him, his primary mission was to dispel the notion that the U.S. was perpetuating the Batista dictatorship. In his own eyes, perhaps only in retrospect, he considered his position one of impartiality, favoring neither Batista nor the opposition. Judging by correspondence between the Embassy and Washington, Smith was aware of Batista's attempts to befriend him. Smith wrote to Washington that the president's "present attitude is to woo me away from present impartial attitude, toward a pro-Batista attitude." Smith was no doubt eager to prove he was more objective than his predecessor, who had been "too friendly with Batista." He further defended himself in his memoirs by arguing that any informal relations with Batista were according to his secondary mission to use personal persuasion to get the dictator to re-instate constitutional guarantees and provide for free, open, and fair elections.¹¹

According to Smith, from the beginning the Cuban government was wary of the new ambassador. The President and Foreign Minister Gonzalo Güell suspected that Smith was sympathetic to the political opposition and kept an eye on the Ambassador's activities. When Earl Smith first arrived in July, 1957, he seemed to promise a new relationship with the Batista government, to the point of being downright undiplomatic. After witnessing police in Santiago de Cuba forcibly disperse a crowd of women demonstrators that had gathered for his visit, Smith publicly expressed his

¹¹ "Telegram from Ambassador in Cuba (Smith) to the Secretary of State," September 23, 1957, *FRUS*, 1955-7, Document 299, p. 855. *Fourth Floor*, pp. 20, 28.

disappointment that authorities had responded with violence. The Cuban government actually protested that Smith was too hostile to the recognized government of Cuba to be an acceptable representative, the government press criticized the new ambassador, and some of Batista's friends called for Smith's recall.

However, the event was quickly forgotten. After initially suspicion of Smith as a government critic, the ambassador convinced Batista that such comments were spoken from the heart and did not reflect any criticism of the Cuban government. After meeting Earl Smith in person, the Foreign Minister concluded that the new U.S. ambassador could in fact be a sympathetic ear; Güell was encouraged by the fact that Smith was a gentleman of means and a businessman. After his first brief tour of several cities on the island, Smith never again toured outside Havana, and within the city seldom left the most comfortable neighborhoods when he strayed from the embassy grounds at all. The charge that Smith was out of touch with the Cuba outside a small part of Havana was borne out by his limited travel within the country and his lack of interest in events in the provinces. As ambassador, his first flurry of travel on the island, in the summer of 1957, consisted of visits to the U.S. government-owned Nicaraguan nickel mine, the North American-run Moa Bay mining operation, the U.S. Navy base at Guantánamo Bay, and Santiago de Cuba, the country's second largest city and the location of a U.S. consulate.¹² This limited travel was not only Smith's idea, but was also based on the State Department's recommendation that the ambassador avoid any visits that Cuban political leaders might interpret as support for one side or another. In any event, Smith did not develop wide personal knowledge of his accredited country.

¹² *Fourth Floor*, pp. 11, 37.

Although Smith protested years later that he kept an appropriate distance between Batista and himself, the ambassador was on very friendly, informal terms with the man that more and more Cubans would call a dictator after 1956. Although Smith described himself as impartial, Smith's memoir revealed that he did not always recognize symbolic forms of partiality. For example, he mentioned but never commented on the fact that only once did Smith and Batista meet in the government's executive headquarters, the Presidential Palace in Havana. Instead, most of the meetings occurred in the evening at the President's private mansion, Finca Kuquine, outside Havana. Only a month after the ambassador's remarks about police brutality, he attended a horse race named in his honor, where hundreds gave him a standing ovation, not a "personal tribute, nor... recognition of any virtues as an individual, but an eager tribute to an American respect of humanity."¹³ Here was an open association of the American government with the organized gambling establishment and simultaneously a public acceptance of the U.S. as an outspoken opponent of police brutality. Smith seldom distinguished between personal and official interactions.

This closeness made it even more difficult to replace Smith while Batista was in office, since the U.S. had a close contact with the Cuban President himself and replacing the ambassador would have sent a public signal that the U.S. was losing confidence in the Cuban government's ability to keep order, even to survive. Until the last months of 1958, Smith and his superiors still hoped that the ambassador could personally convince Batista to step down, name an interim government, bring back constitutional guarantees, anything to prevent a nationwide revolution. Smith's intimate link to Batista was a

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 26-7.

double-edged sword that the State Department could not give up until Batista was himself out of the picture. The result was that the U.S. ambassadorship to Cuba became, in 26 July rhetoric, another symbol of the island's intimate dependency on its northern neighbor. Smith's time in Cuba suggested that the United States was on the side of right-wing dictatorship, to the point of ignoring its own pledges of non-intervention. While the State Department acted to end arms shipments to Batista and limit U.S. involvement, the symbolic formal connection to the dictator remained.

The View from Above

Within the embassy, Smith was a very outspoken anticommunist and a well-known critic of Castro's 26 July movement. This unflinching, suspicious anti-communism, his close association with Batista, and his lack of diplomatic experience made him a liability for the United States once Batista fled and Castro's forces organized a new revolutionary government within the first few months of 1959. Smith's interpretation of Castro's ideology differed from those of his superiors in the department as well as those of his embassy staff, and Smith regularly disagreed with the views of Assistant Secretary Rubottom and William Wieland, Director of the Office of Caribbean and Mexican Affairs (MID). Smith later found Wieland to be a "sympathetic ear" for the Castro revolutionaries, as evidenced by his willingness to meet with Dr. José Miró Cardona of the Civic Revolutionary Front, a Fidelista group.¹⁴ Smith refused to meet with any party of reconciliation that did not include a Batista representative, while his

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

superiors were willing to meet with virtually anyone who represented any important influence on the island, from United Fruit representatives to rebel spokesmen. In ways reminiscent of conservative accusations against the China hands in 1950, Smith interpreted Wieland's distrust of Batista as evidence of a desire to undermine the President of Cuba. In January, 1958, when Wieland drafted a paper arguing that Batista's days were numbered because a stagnating economy would continue to weaken his regime, Smith refused to sign his approval of the Director's predictions. In fact, Smith traveled back to Washington to present his views in person. Rubottom authorized Smith to strike a deal with Batista whereby the U.S. would exchange twenty armored cars for a lifting of suspensions on constitutional rights.

Roy Richard Rubottom served as Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American affairs from May 1957 until July, 1960, when he became ambassador to Argentina. He was the lead figure in the State Department's response to the Cuban Revolution, and the most important figure in the day-to-day policy decisions regarding U.S.-Latin American affairs. In tandem with President Eisenhower's brother Milton, Rubottom set the general tone for U.S. relations with Latin America in Eisenhower's second term, and had enormous influence on Dulles and his successor, Christian Herter.¹⁵ In attacking the fourth floor as a nest of communist sympathizers, Smith had inaccurately characterized Rubottom as a Castroite sympathizer. In fact, Rubottom as assistant secretary was a staunch anticommunist, but his perspective on Inter-American affairs reflected an appreciation for the regional and local

¹⁵ Thomas C. Mann oral history, transcript OH 353, Oral History Collection, DDEPL, pp. 19-20.

roots of unrest in the hemisphere. His anticommunist viewpoint was far from the suspicious McCarthyist assumptions of Earl Smith. Rubottom, Wieland, and various CIA analysts saw the likelihood of much-needed change in Cuba, predicting that Batista's days were numbered. The assistant secretary and CIA Caribbean specialists saw no evidence of communists in Castro's movement. Ambassador Smith and Admiral Arleigh Burke, chief of naval operations in the Caribbean, disagreed. As Smith's immediate superior, Wieland became a frequent target not only of Smith's criticism but also of Congressional investigation after Castro came into power. Although American politics witnessed no real reaction comparable to accusations about the "loss of China," Wieland was called before several Congressional committees to explain his view of Castro's revolution, and a Senate Internal Security Subcommittee held up his security clearance for months after January 1961.¹⁶ Wieland developed a strong dislike for the Batista regime and expressed disgust at its worst abuses, suggesting the regime was running out of control. He expressed hope that Smith could somehow convey to the government of Cuba that "the excessive brutalities by certain Cuban officials should be curtailed, some of the more violent and sadistic officials of the army and police be removed, and/or a strict order from the President calling upon the armed forces to apply the law impartially and in a strictly legal manner."¹⁷

The State Department's internal memos on Castro and the 26 July movement recognized the possibility of future communist advances on the island, but the briefing

¹⁶ Rubin, *Secrets of State*, p. 92.

¹⁷ "Subject: Conversations with Ambassador Smith Regarding Cuban Situation," memo, Wieland to Rubottom, January 17, 1958, Document 5 [Tab A of memo, Rubottom to Dulles, *FRUS, 1958-60, Vol. VI, Cuba*, (Washington: U.S. Gov't Printing Office), p. 10.

papers were far from alarming and in some ways had positive remarks on the revolution. For example, a confidential briefing paper drafted for Castro's U.S. visit described his rise to power in mildly romantic language:

Castro skillfully converted his trip into Habana into a triumphant march the length of the island and was hailed as a conquering hero. Castro's remarkable personal magnetism and his reputation as an honest and dedicated revolutionary quickly made him the hero of the Cuban populace and the undisputed leader of the country. His inevitable fatigue uniform and beard, adopted by his followers and others as well, became the trademark of adventure and derring-do.¹⁸

By the end of 1959, the American Republics branch of the State Department, led by Rubottom and Wieland, considered much of Castro's calls for reform to be long awaited and quite legitimate, whatever the danger to U.S. security and interests: "Castro retains a great popular following in Cuba, having tapped and crystallized the more humble Cuban's aspirations for economic betterment, democratic freedom, and national dignity."¹⁹ Ambassador Smith found such statements to be misguided or at worst treasonous, since he saw Castro's movement as a collection of political extremists divorced from reality, a minority faction that came into power *despite* the popular will. The idea of Castro's movement as a much-needed reform movement was powerful enough with the department's American Republics section (ARA) that John C. Hill, one of the section's own officials, warned his fellow policymakers against falling for Castro's revolutionary rhetoric. "The idea that Cuba is going through a desired and overdue 'social revolution' is... not without conscious or unconscious influence within this

¹⁸ "Subject: Present Political Situation in Cuba," [no author given], April 15, 1959, RG 59, ARA files, Special Assistant on Communism, 1956-61, Box 6, folder "Briefing Papers for Castro Visit." pp. 1-2.

government in influencing our attitudes and policies.”²⁰

Despite Smith’s charges that the fourth floor was sympathetic to communist revolution , neither Rubottom nor his successor as assistant secretary, Thomas Mann, were in any way pro-communist. Their view of the proper policy towards Cuba in fact centered on the need to encourage a broad-based democratic form of government on the island which would remain on good terms with the United States even as it might expropriate foreign investments on the island. This would encourage a stability in relations which would serve to keep communism from making any advances on the island. The department optimistically hoped that the new government of Cuba would act in good faith to safeguard the lives of U.S. citizens, abide by international law, and generally maintain acceptable diplomatic protocol towards American diplomats. The ARA bureau was overly optimistic in evaluating Castro’s spirit of cooperation, but it was by no means encouraging, or eventually tolerant of, a radical program which would come to embrace communist elements.

Rubottom was as committed an anticommunist as anyone else in the Eisenhower administration. In private meetings with Congressman Charles Porter, an outspoken critic of the Batista government and of policies supporting Latin American dictators, Rubottom regularly disagreed with the Oregonian’s recommendations, finding “rather serious differences as to our approaches.” The Assistant Secretary told Porter he refused to support a bill denying all economic and military aid to countries the State department

¹⁹ “Evaluation of the Cuban Situation,” October, 1959, State Department files, RG 59, ARA files, Special Assistant on Communism, Box 4, folder “CUBA – Planning and NSC Briefings, 1960,” p. 2.

²⁰ “‘Social Revolution’ in Cuba,” Memo, Hill to Rubottom and Snow, August 6, 1959, *Ibid.*, Box 2, folder “Cuba 1959 – 2,” p. 1. Hill was suggesting that besides the American press, members of Congress and of the executive branch were overly sympathetic to the Castro regime.

might define as “dictatorships,” which both knew would apply to the government of Cuba. Although Rubottom did not consider himself any less pro-democracy than Porter, he still saw usefulness in sending arms to dictators in certain cases.²¹ Even before Batista’s flight, in September, 1958 he enthusiastically endorsed the creation of a joint State-CIA-USIA task force to use publishable intelligence sources and propaganda to denounce communism in Latin America. The “Task Force to Expose Communist Activities Relating to Latin America” met twice a month, and over its first year of operation the Cuban situation came to consume most of its efforts. By 1960, with support from John Hill in the State Department, the task force devoted the bulk of its research and energy to the task of actively undermining support for the Castro regime.²² Both ARA and the Embassy took part by supplying a “flow of usable, low-classification material which could be incorporated in output to expose the Castro regime.” In the area of propaganda, State early in its relations with revolutionary Cuba began to move against the Cuban government, beginning with possible communist elements in the administration, and eventually against Castro himself.²³ While the assistant secretary supported a position of strict non-intervention in the internal affairs of other nations, he told a 1959 television audience that non-intervention implied the presence of a government that was not only sovereign and independent, but also “responsible.”²⁴ By

²¹ Memo of conversation, Rubottom and Porter, July 10, 1957, RG 59, Assistant Secretary Series, Rubottom Subject file, Box 2, folder “1957 – Porter, Congressman Charles O.,” pp. 1, 3.

²² Memo, Hill to Rubottom, September 4, 1958, RG 59, ARA, Special Assistant on Communism, Box 2, folder “Communism – Anti-Communist Campaign Task Force 1958,” p. 1.

²³ “Current Projects for Exposing Communism – No. 14,” *Ibid.*, Box 3, folder “Communism – Task Force 1960.” The task force continued through the end of 1960, and its biweekly reports are valuable sources for U.S. government ideas and policies regarding the use of propaganda in fighting the Cold War in Latin America.

²⁴ “Draft Comments for TV Show ‘Today,’” November 12, 1959, RG 59, ARA files, Assistant Secretary Series, Rubottom Subject File, Box 15, folder “1959 Press.” The word “responsible” is underlined and part of a handwritten revision on a typed set of notes.

implication, the U.S. reserved the right to intervene in the case of an *irresponsible* sovereign state.

In February, 1959, once it was clear that Fidel Castro was solidly in charge of Cuba, the State Department replaced the decidedly anti-Castro Earl Smith with a professional diplomat, Philip Bonsal, who had experience dealing with social reform movements in Bolivia and Colombia. Bonsal was known as a fair negotiator, well-versed in issues of expropriations, and capable of dealing diplomatically with representatives hostile to the United States. He was the closest the State Department came to a Latin American revolution troubleshooter. Unlike his predecessor, Bonsal had a viewpoint that reflected that of his superiors, and the ambassador became a very agreeable representative of the ARA in Cuba. Rubottom reassured Bonsal, for example, that they were both in agreement about the need to find “effective Cuban leadership” either within the Cuban government, or if that fails, to develop a responsible Cuban leader among anti-Castro exiles. Both agreed that support of “any military adventurer would be...a disastrous mistake on our part.”²⁵

The View from Below – FSO’s and Smith the Younger

Serving with Smith in the Havana embassy were Foreign Service Officers whose experience in foreign affairs were drastically different from their ambassador’s. The Foreign Service, after surviving the catastrophe of McCarthyism earlier in the decade,

²⁵ Letters, Bonsal to Rubottom, April 1, 1960, and Rubottom to Bonsal, April 8, 1960, RG 59, ARA, Special Assistant on Communism, Box 3, folder “Cuba – 1960 Jan-June.” Bonsal wrote that many in Cuba thought the U.S. was supporting a militant anti-Castro exile named Pedraza. In a very revealing unconscious slip, Rubottom’s reply read “supporting Batista” instead of “supporting Pedraza.”

found new life, a new sense of purpose, and a growing but modest prestige by the end of the decade. While Kennedy as President would remark that the Foreign Service had the backbone similar to that of a bowl of jelly, he would have found the Service of the McCarthy era like so much melted butter. With a McCarthy sympathizer in charge of personnel and internal security in Eisenhower's first term, and after intense public harassment of Acheson's State Department, Foreign Service officers became much more cautious in their reporting on overseas events, much less likely to express dissent with current policy, and extremely conformist in their political views.

By the end of the 1950's, however, the political climate within the foreign affairs bureaucracy began to swing the other way. By 1960, being overly suspicious of communist influence at home or abroad smacked of McCarthyism, as did removing employees because of political activities that happened over two decades ago. State Department officials who entered service in the 1950's felt compelled to distance themselves from the dark days of State security chief Scott McLeod and his wholesale housecleaning. A person's previous association with McCarthy became another, albeit smaller, skeleton in the closet, which now hung next to the previous one: an embarrassing earlier flirtation with communism. While the Far Eastern Affairs division within the State Department remained a long-term casualty of McCarthyism, other diplomatic fields experienced a kind of reversal. In the Latin American sections of State, the department began to recognize the local economic and social roots of unrest in Latin America, where they found poverty, underdevelopment, and authoritarian rule to be as great culprits as communist influence.

The Service had bounced back by the end of Eisenhower's second term with a newfound sense of professionalism that was ironically a by-product of the McCarthy era. Stricter internal security measures, the integration of outside specialists in fields such as economics and science, the creation of a Foreign Service Institute similar to the military academies, and a sustained, nation-wide recruitment drive had given back to the State Department a certain level of prestige and public trustworthiness that had been in decline since the trials of Alger Hiss. Once McCarthy was out of the picture, and his sympathizer Scott McLeod was removed from overseeing departmental personnel, officers in State gradually regained their voices in the formulation of foreign policy. At the embassy level, FSO's who had been overly cautious about not rocking the boat became more confident in expressing honest opinions on local matters, even if such opinions differed from their superiors. In the U.S. embassy in Cuba, the professional diplomatic officers frequently clashed with Ambassador Smith, who quickly grew to distrust his embassy staff. At one point, Smith ordered that no messages, no matter how routine, leave the embassy without going through him first. His confidence in his own interpretation of Cuban events clashed with the growing sense of independence that his foreign service officers began to express.

As a loyal Republican conservative and wealthy businessman, Smith moved in similar circles to the Latin American elites and saw the workings of international communism in the calls for social reform in Cuba. His foreign affairs perspective and experience differed markedly from Foreign Service Officers who had survived the McCarthy era and had been trained with a more sophisticated view of international relations. FSO's tended to have more in-depth knowledge of the local situations in their host countries than did amateur political appointees.

In further contrast to Earl Smith, the Foreign Service in the mid-1950's slowly began to make its ranks more representative of the nation as a whole. The State Department took to heart McCarthyist accusations of elitism in the Service, and based on recommendations by Dulles' own blue-ribbon committees, the department diversified its recruitment. Traditionally, Ivy League graduates and upper middle class Northeasterners were the mainstays of the Foreign Service, but changes in the application process, the recruitment programs, and pay scales reached out to a greater cross-section of American society. This meant that by 1960, FSO's would have relatively less in common with the elites of their host countries than they would have had earlier. In fact, a few members of the diplomatic corps in Latin American affairs had closer personal connections to Castro's followers than to Batista's circle of friends. For example, Clarence Boonstra, who was Director of East Coast Affairs in the American Republics branch of the department from 1958 to 1961, was married to a Cuban woman from the same part of Oriente province as Castro. Boonstra and his wife had met Castro years before his attack on the Moncada barracks in 1953. Two members of Castro's Cabinet were friends of Boonstra, who had received letters directly from one of them asking about the U.S. position on expropriations.²⁶ Boonstra had a Castro friend in common with Richard Cushing, the Public Affairs officer in the embassy in the 1950's.²⁷ Although many key ambassadorships still required people who were independently wealthy, embassy staffs like that of Earl Smith were coming from a more diverse set of origins.

²⁶ Clarence Boonstra oral history, Foreign Affairs Oral History collection [FAOH], Georgetown University, pp. 5-7.

²⁷ Richard G. Cushing oral history, FAOH, p.4.

The professional officers above and below Smith recognized the nuances of the multi-faceted revolution brewing against Batista, did not assume the guiding hand of Moscow was at work in Castro's camp, and even recognized the Cuban government's role in making the situation worse. In a small way, Smith's superiors and staff tried to reduce their country's support for a dictatorial regime, or, to use Vice President Nixon's metaphor, change the *abrazo* to a handshake. (To take the metaphor further, Ambassador Smith seemed committed to a warm hug long after such closeness had become improper, while his superiors were calling for a much chillier relationship.) One effect of this tension was a kind of division of labor in the face of an emerging civil war on the island between armed rebels and the Cuban government. While Ambassador Smith remained the eyes, ears, and mouthpiece close to Batista, State Department officials in Santiago de Cuba personally negotiated with the 26 July Movement to release hostages. The Ambassador in Havana worked on persuading Batista, while the Santiago consuls dodged rebel machine guns and army dive-bombers to work on persuading Castro's lieutenants. Meanwhile, in Washington, the middle levels of the State Department met with representatives of opposition groups critical of Batista's government. The Office of Middle American Affairs, headed by Wieland, had an established policy of meeting with members of any sizeable opposition parties in the region, including opposition to the Batista regime.

The State Department sent experienced, thorough-minded officers along with Earl Smith to Havana, in large part to make sure that administrative tasks did not overwhelm the amateur diplomat. Smith came to rely heavily on Daniel Braddock, the Counselor of Embassy in Havana, in composing messages to Washington, and Braddock became

Smith's right-hand man. His peers in the Foreign Service considered Braddock a top-notch officer, practically able to run an embassy himself, and the department considered the Havana embassy trying enough to transfer him from a position in Rangoon to his new post in Havana, without any overlap that might ease the transition.²⁸ Braddock recognized Batista's lack of support and Castro's political advantage before Smith did, but the deputy chief remained loyal to the ambassador.²⁹

The rigid, paranoid anti-communism that the Red Scare instilled in the bureaucracy began to give way to a competing voice, one that was less likely to see communist influence everywhere and one which recognized some legitimate grievances against the Batista government. Ambassador Smith overstated his case when he said the State Department was sympathetic to Castro and communism, but he recognized quite clearly that he was politically to the right of his superiors and much of his embassy staff.

The position of the FSO's in the Havana Embassy can be best summarized in the views of another Smith in the embassy, Wayne Smith, who would in later decades become one of the foremost experts on the ongoing strained relationship between the U.S. and Cuba. The younger Smith was a newly-minted member of the Foreign Service whose first assignment had been to the American embassy in Cuba. Apparently, what had recommended this appointment to the State Department personnel directors had been the title of Smith's undergraduate senior thesis, "Marxist-Leninism and the Monroe Doctrine." His thesis was in fact a very abstract comparison of the two sets of ideas as schools of thought, and not about the Monroe Doctrine in the face of communist

²⁸ Letter, Vinton Chapin to Sam Yates, July 31, 1957, RG 59, ARA, Subject Files Relating to Cuba, 1951-7, Box 1, folder "CUBA - Braddock, Daniel M. 1957," p. 1, and memo, Terence Leonhardy to Braddock, July 15, 1957, *Ibid.*, folder "CUBA - Embassy and Consular Administration," pp. 1-2.

²⁹ *Closest of Enemies*, p. 30.

expansion, but the juxtaposition of the two ideas suggested that he should become a Latin American specialist. Wayne Smith has since produced his own memoir of his government service, including the last years of U.S. Embassy in Havana. In *Closest of Enemies*, the younger Smith was highly critical of the elder Smith as an ambassador out of touch with real events, too close to Batista, and a poor representative of the United States. Wayne Smith, like others on the embassy staff, held little respect for an ambassador they considered an uninterested dilettante, and in return Ambassador Smith was rude and distrusted his fellow personnel.³⁰ Historical sources from the middle and lower levels of the department bureaucracy have captured what archived official documents back and forth from the embassy have not. As with oral history sources, Wayne Smith's memoir reflected historical contexts such as the intangible atmosphere within the embassy and the small diversions in foreign relations that might leave no paper trail. For example, Wayne Smith described the atmosphere within embassy meetings as "poisonous" and depicted the Ambassador as so partial to Batista that he delayed sharing any bad news with the dictator. Ambassador Smith scuttled reports to Washington which further suggested that Batista was doomed after his failed military offensive in the summer of 1958.³¹

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 15, 33-4.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 30, 35.

Chapter 6: “A Tight Rein on the Manifestations”: A McCarthyist and the Cuban Revolution

Within the Havana embassy, then, was a clash between a professionalized, nuanced, even accommodating sense of foreign affairs on the one hand, and a reactionary, uncompromising anti-communism reminiscent of McCarthyism on the other. Ultimately, divisions within the embassy complicated the search for the best policy to adopt towards an island on the verge of revolution, making it more difficult to break completely with a dictator who was on his way out. The idea of non-intervention was not a unifying concept or one that provided a clear path. Ambassador Smith, in defending Batista's position, argued that the enormous influence that the United States had on its island neighbor made non-intervention very difficult. Any activity by the embassy or by politicians in Washington could have a real impact on events in Cuba. Even withholding shipments of armored vehicles and aircraft with the idea of NOT interfering was in effect a kind of intervention, since it would cost Batista militarily and politically.

Earl Smith and Batista both looked back on the pre-Revolution days and reached similar conclusions: the U.S. had undermined the security of the Cuban government by withdrawing its military aid at a crucial time, by half-heartedly stopping revolutionaries based out of Florida, and by generally suggesting that the U.S. had lost faith in Batista's ability to rule. Furthermore, both argued that the Revolution was not a movement with broad-based legitimacy but was the creation of a small cadre of radicals, financed and aided by international communism. Cuba had one of the highest standards of living in Latin America, in many categories in the first or second rank. Batista was quick to point

out that his country had abolished the death penalty and had been generous enough to have granted amnesty to Castro a few years earlier. In Smith's and Batista's view, Cuba was far from ripe for a revolution, but was in fact betrayed into the hands of communists. Smith argued that the U.S. refusal to continue arms shipments to Cuba undermined the government when it most needed assistance, a kind of "intervention by innuendo," and Smith went so far as to turn the idea of non-intervention on its head: the refusal to send arms for use against rebels was in fact meddling in the island's internal affairs.¹ Inaction was intervention.

The two views interpreted the role of communism in the anti-Batista groups in different ways. For Wayne Smith, whose views were supported by CIA intelligence reports, the Castro movement was not a communist movement and was in some ways hostile to the Communist Party. The leaders Che Guevara and Fidel Castro's brother Raul were avowed Marxist-Leninists but were not officially members of the International. Wayne Smith interpreted the presence of Marxists in Castro's supporters as normal for leftist opposition groups in Latin America. The 26 of July movement had a small Marxist following, but its initial stated program was moderate, calling for land reform and a return to the 1940 constitution. In fact, the Communist Party had played an important role in Batista's own revolution in 1933, and several of Batista's advisors had Marxist-Leninist or Trotskyite backgrounds.² While the chief of CIA operations for Central America recognized the danger of communists in Cuba, he disagreed with Ambassador Smith that communists had infiltrated Castro's movement.³

¹ *Fourth Floor*, p. 86.

² *Closest of Enemies*, p. 17.

³ *Fourth Floor*, p. 34.

The overestimation of communist influence was dangerous because Batista was able to justify many of his regime's brutal counter-insurgency activities as anticommunist. Batista argued, and Ambassador Smith agreed, that weapons purchased from the U.S. through the Mutual Defense Assistance Program (MDAP or MAP) and used against Cuban rebels were being used to stop the spread of communism into the Caribbean. According to MDAP regulations, weapons purchased in the U.S. were to be used only for hemispheric defense purposes and not for internal order or counter-insurgency without State and Defense Department approval. The Batista/Smith interpretation defined local communist rebels as agents of Moscow, hence an external threat to the hemisphere and legitimate targets of MDAP weapons. Because of growing public criticism that U.S. arms were being used against Cuban citizens illegally and were being flown into Cuba merely to keep Batista in power, the State Department began to suspend arms shipments to Batista in the Spring of 1957, even before Smith began as ambassador. In May, the U.S. suspended the shipment of eight medium tanks that were supposed to complement seven sent earlier in January.⁴

The government of Cuba complained constantly over the last year and a half of the Batista presidency that the lack of updated arms weakened its effort against communist aggressors. However, the presence of U.S. armaments in Batista's military had effects that were much more symbolic than tactical. The dictator identified the U.S. arms trade as an official North American show of support for his regime but overestimated the usefulness of the weapons in light of the guerrilla war underway in the Sierra Maestra. Defense experts doubted the Cuban Army had the skilled personnel

⁴ *FRUS, 1955-7, Vol. VI, Documents 294, 298, pp. 845-6, 853-4.*

necessary to operate the tanks and armored cars ordered. In any event, morale among Batista's troops and even his generals was low and getting worse in 1958; finding troops willing to sit in the vehicles was increasingly difficult. For Batista, however, the lack of new hardware from his northern neighbor, combined with disloyalty in the armed forces, sealed his government's downfall, since the weapons embargo not only cut off weapons vital to his military superiority but also worsened public opinion against him. On the charge that U.S. arms were keeping him in power, Batista in later years declared, "it is a pity this is not true!" He argued that if the U.S. had truly supported him, Cuba would not have become a communist state. He protested to Smith at the time that although he made every effort to protect foreign lives and property and was head of the most cooperative government that the U.S. could find in the hemisphere, Washington was backing out on a fair deal that had already been concluded.⁵

Ambassador Smith spent much of his negotiating energy in 1957-8 reassuring Batista that any delay in providing military equipment was only temporary, and that overall U.S. policy towards his government was unchanged. In fact, the arms shipment policy had already begun to shift by the time Smith set foot in Havana. Fulfillment of the arms deals became contingent on making progress towards free elections and freedom of the press, speech, and assembly. He suggested at several points that the withholding of arms was directly linked to public criticism in the U.S. press and Congress over the brutal treatment of rebels, the suspension of civil liberties, and the lack of prospects for constitutional rule through elections. In January, 1958, the State Department authorized Earl Smith to tell Batista that the twenty armored cars currently on order would be

⁵ Fulgencio Batista y Zaldivar, *Cuba Betrayed*, (New York: Vantage Press, 1962), pp. 42, 71-2, 93, 96-7.

exchanged for overturning the suspension of constitutional guarantees. Instead of fully aiding a rightwing dictatorship in Cuba, the State Department made continued military support conditional on the government's behavior.⁶ Rubottom argued, and Dulles agreed, that Earl Smith's main role was to work with Batista to personally encourage "acceptable elections and an orderly transfer of the government to a successor to Batista." In a memo to Dulles, Rubottom described the tightrope that the U.S. had to walk with the government of Cuba, to "work with the present regime, while keeping a tight rein on the manifestations of cooperation with it."⁷ Under the Smith ambassadorship, this balancing act was the central challenge and the heart of the controversy within the department.

At the same time, Smith spent much of his correspondence with Washington urging the State Department to continue arms shipments to the Cuban military. When the embassy's Army and Navy attachés reported on the possible use of MDAP weapons against fellow Cubans, Smith hastened to point out that such reports were unconfirmed, and the Air Force report said the use of bombers was possible but could not say for sure. In Smith's opinion, which interpreted the defense agreement very loosely, MDAP equipment was perfectly acceptable for the "legitimate defense of the legally constituted government of Cuba, which has been duly recognized by the United States, against armed and organized rebellion." The Ambassador further defended Batista's need for arms, dismissing the idea that the U.S. should link government repression with the continued sale of arms, since "whether excesses may have been committed does not alter the basic fact." Asking a government NOT to use weapons against an armed rebellion would be

⁶ *Fourth Floor*, pp. 55, 60. *FRUS, 1955-7, Vol. VI*, Document 299, pp. 854-5.

⁷ Memo, Rubottom to Dulles, January 17, 1958, Document 5, *FRUS, 1958-60, Vol. VI, Cuba*, p. 9.

tantamount to “open intervention in [the] internal affairs of [an]other country,” and the best course would be for the U.S. not to raise the question of use against armed rebels, since any questioning would be expressing “displeasure,” which would weaken the government and strengthen the revolutionaries. The best course was to ask no questions once Cuba received the American weapons.⁸

The final policy by August, 1958 was a compromise between Smith and his superiors. Rubottom, in agreement with Wieland’s recommendations, decided to continue the suspension of arms to the Cuban government, including the transfer of T-28 training aircraft for the Cuban Air Force, but not to demand that Batista comply with MAP regulations for the equipment already in Cuba. The ARA bureau essentially decided to cut its diplomatic losses, figuring it could not really stop government forces from using weapons already in its possession, but could use possible future shipments as political leverage. Judging by a memo Rubottom prepared for Secretary Dulles’s approval, the assistant secretary was unconvinced by Smith’s arguments for renewing arms shipments; the “cons” far outweighed the “pros.”⁹

Earl Smith never doubted that the Castro movement had always been communist-influenced, no matter what its official ideology. The apparent lack evidence of communist influence over the movement merely proved the cleverness of international communism. Smith voiced Batista’s protests that the Cuban government had done all it

⁸ Telegram 442, Smith to State Department, February 7, 1958, Document 11, *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

⁹ “Subject: Arms Policy With Respect to Cuba,” memo, Rubottom to Herter, August 11, 1958, Document 122, *Ibid.*, pp. 192-94. “Tab C – Considerations Pro and Con Resumption of Arms Sales to Government of Cuba,” State Department files, Assistant Secretary Series, Rubottom Subject, Box 8, folder “1958 – Cuba,” pp. 1-2. Among Rubottom’s arguments against was a concern that the 26 July forces might respond to more shipments by taking more U.S. hostages. Records do not indicate that Dulles ever saw or initialed the recommendation.

could to fight communism: it set up a Bureau for the Repression of Communist Activities, cut its relations with the USSR, and outlawed the Communist Party. Batista could not understand why the U.S. refused to continue arms sales to such a friendly and anticommunist government which had consistently voted with the U.S. in the United Nations. The leader of the Free World struggle against communism now seemed reluctant to help its friendliest neighbor defend itself against communist aggression.¹⁰

Earl Smith, despite his attempts to distinguish himself from Gardner, agreed with his predecessor about the importance of Fulgencio Batista for the future of Cuba. If Batista could not hold the country together in the face of economic adversity, there is little likelihood that anyone else could. Moreover, it would be hard to find any other Cuban political figure whose stewardship would be as likely as Batista's to serve the best interests of the United States. Any action that would undermine the economic prosperity, political stability, or military security of Cuba was unquestionably to the benefit of "communist penetration." It was assumed that without labor and army support or economic improvement, Batista would fall, chaos would result, and communist forces would fill the vacuum. Whether or not Castro was communist did not ultimately matter, since any violent overthrow of the legitimate government would mean a setback for the United States.

The best course of events for U.S. interests in Cuba was for the unpopular Batista to be replaced by "an administration which would have the support of the majority of the people and be able to maintain law and order, and fulfill Cuba's international obligations." Given these criteria, neither Batista nor the revolutionaries appeared

¹⁰ *Fourth Floor*, pp. 13, 55, 60.

acceptable. It was hoped that before the military situation grew worse and radical opposition gained the initiative a moderate coalition government would form that was made up of respectable and responsible leaders acceptable to the majority of the Cuban population. Unfortunately, disagreement existed in the State Department over the role that the dictator himself could play in any transition of power.

Earl Smith took Batista's word that after free and open elections the country would return to constitutional rule and Batista would withdraw from politics altogether. However, there were many indications that the end of his Presidential term, scheduled for February, 1959, would still leave him as the head of the armed forces. Although he said he wanted an honorable retirement brought about by free elections, Batista refused to step down until his term officially ended, in order to create a smooth transition for his successor. For him, stepping down early was not an option. Legislation in late 1957 and early 1958 made Batista eligible to become chief of police and armed forces after the end of his term. Control would then remain very much in his hands even if the President-elect Rivero Agüero had taken office. Agüero was a pro-Batista candidate, identified in the popular mind as a puppet executive of Batista. Finding a pro-Batista candidate acceptable to the general population would have been difficult, since his popularity had been declining steadily since his coup in 1952. Furthermore, the elections that brought Agüero to office were, to no one's surprise, tainted with fraud, and Agüero triumphed through

“stuffed ballot boxes and tombstone votes.”¹¹

The Non-Intervention Paradox

To uphold its policy of non-intervention, the U.S. could not openly back the opposition parties nor the committees that formed to create a provisional government. Groups from several sectors of Cuban society, from the Catholic Church to sugar mill owners to Army generals, tried to negotiate a temporary truce in the civil war between Batista and Castro, but they all needed an independent source of political power. With the radical opposition refusing to recognize anyone connected with Batista, who refused to resign, no group claiming allegiance to the 26 July movement or the government of Cuba could gain the trust of the other side, and as a result, the provisional committees turned to the Embassy for even a modest show of support. Naturally, Ambassador Smith was reluctant to endorse any group not affiliated with the legitimate government. Even in the last days of Batista’s regime, when a handful of Cuban generals met with Smith without Batista’s knowledge, Smith refused to consider supporting a provisional military junta they had planned.¹²

Perhaps the most promising independent peacemaking effort, the attempts of the Papal Nuncio to establish a truce and a broad-based coalition government died in infancy. Ambassador Smith clung to the mistaken belief that Batista could leave office, remain in Cuba, and create a coalition government acceptable to the opposition. He did not realize

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 53, 84; *FRUS, 1955-7, Vol. VI*, Doc. 306; *Closest of Enemies*, p. 30. In a bit of ironic understatement about popularity, Batista prefaced his second book with a famous quote (in Spanish) attributed to Abraham Lincoln, a hero of both Batista and Castro: “You can please some of the people all of the time or all of the people some of the time, but you can’t please all the people all of the time.” Fulgencio Batista y Zaldívar, *Piedras y Leyes – Balance Sobre Cuba*, (Madrid, 1963).

that an acceptable government that would end the violence had to be free of any associations with Batista's system of political favors. The Church was caught in a dilemma: the State Department could not back the Nuncio proposals unless they showed some success, but the Church needed some U.S. support to have any chance of success. According to Earl Smith, the U.S. missed a prime opportunity to improve the political situation in Cuba earlier because the State Department "never seriously explored any suggested plan for a peaceful solution that would exclude Castro," and one could not include Castro without abandoning Batista.¹³ Any national unity government had to have some display of U.S. confidence if it hoped to resist both Batista and Castro. In Wayne Smith's analysis, the efforts of the religious and civic leaders came at a highly opportune time. In March, 1958, the Joint Committee of Civic Institutions (JCCI) issued a statement calling for Batista's resignation and a new, neutral coalition government. At this point, Castro's movement had weakened after a failed general strike, and an arms embargo, coupled with the Church's criticism, had weakened the government's resolve. If the embassy had supported the JCCI and the Church's statement, Batista's resignation might have come earlier, before Castro had taken the lead among the opposition and before the political situation had become polarized. However, Ambassador Smith opposed the JCCI proposal, believed that Batista would hold honest elections, and claimed that State Department regulations prevented him from interfering in such matters. "Non-intervention" had thus become a very handy catchphrase interpreted by every player in the Cuban political scene, including Batista's defenders.

¹² *Cuba Betrayed*, p. 121.

¹³ *Fourth Floor*, p. 71.

The policy of non-intervention was applied in an inconsistent fashion. With Earl Smith as ambassador, the U.S. both violated and upheld the policy in order to preserve the Batista regime. Both intervention and non-intervention served the interests of the dictatorship, and the State Department was willing to intervene when it suited U.S. interests but claimed non-intervention when the situation called for action against the status quo. For example, the ambassador was prevented from responding negatively to extreme police actions by Cuban government forces, and yet the same armed forces were using equipment provided by the United States and were trained by American military missions. Following international law was complicated as well: Smith argued that enforcing provisions under which the Cuban government had to consult with State and Defense before using U.S.-made weapons for purposes other than hemispheric defense helped to overthrow the government. Stating the obvious fact that Batista's popularity was waning and violence was on the rise was intervention in internal affairs. By Earl Smith's logic, any U.S. action which had any effect on the situation in Cuba was intervention, and since everything the ambassador did had an impact on the island, the embassy should confine its activities to only those which reflect well on the official, accredited government, headed by President Batista. Ironically, the withdrawal of support for the Batista regime fell under the heading of intervention, much to the confusion of the embassy staff, including Wayne Smith. Stopping intervention had become intervention itself.¹⁴

Any attempt to avoid diplomatic intervention was useless given the obvious

¹⁴ This is the core of Wayne Smith's criticism of the State Department handling of the Cuban situation. *Fourth Floor*, p. 89. *Closest of Enemies*, pp. 26-7.

public presence of U.S. interests in Cuba. For example, the weapons embargo against Batista in 1957-8 was a token effort, given the fact that the U.S. military mission remained and continued to train Cuban forces, and the Cuban military continued to use equipment already purchased from the United States. Days after the government suppression of the Cienfuegos uprising with American-made bombers, the commander of the Cuban Air Force squadron involved received a medal from the U.S. military mission in Havana. The decoration appeared as a clear sign that the U.S. had approved the operation. Later, in May 1958, American generals were present on the reviewing stand at the graduation exercises of new Cuban Army cadets conscripted for the upcoming summer offensive against Castro's forces in Oriente province. The CIA and U.S. military role in the Cuban revolution was in some ways ambiguous, however, and was not completely one of propping up the existing regime. The second-in-command of the CIA in the Havana embassy was giving "moral encouragement" to Castro's forces in the Sierra Maestra mountains, going so far as to suggest that the U.S. would recognize their revolution if successful.¹⁵ In another example among many, the U.S. Navy and the Embassy helped extricate from Cuba an American pilot who crashed in Guantánamo Bay after his twentieth mission supplying equipment for the revolutionaries.¹⁶

For the ambassador, there were inherent contradictions to his impartial position, because his mission as ambassador naturally involved the official recognition of the

¹⁵ *Closest of Enemies*, p. 17, *Fourth Floor*, p. 31.

¹⁶ Paul D. Bethel, *The Losers – A Definitive Report, By an Eyewitness, of the Communist Conquest of Cuba and the Soviet Penetration in Latin America*, (New York: Arlington House, 1969), pp. 60-1. Bethel's account is unclear about whether the pilot acted as a private citizen, government agent, or military personnel, and about whether he flew a military aircraft. In any case, one wonders about the carrying capacity of such a plane, and whether or not he had other missions as well, e.g. gathering intelligence about Castro's position.

government of Cuba. Batista demanded that Smith's loyalty in Cuba was to the legitimate government, trumping all other local concerns. Indeed, in Paul Bethel's account, a more detailed version largely in agreement with Earl Smith's interpretation, the Embassy staff was so unsympathetic to Batista that the official functions of liaison were left "almost by default" to Smith alone. The Foreign Service Officers found dealing with the government's representatives distasteful. In addition, Earl Smith took the contradictory position that impartiality was his primary mission and yet was impossible given the political climate within the country. Every comment and activity was could be interpreted as support for one side or another, and silence on a particular issue could imply condoning the government position.¹⁷

Batista presented another quite different interpretation of non-intervention. By imposing an arms embargo on Cuba and urging other nations to do likewise, the U.S. was in fact enforcing neutrality rather than non-intervention, a subtle but important distinction. He argued that cutting off military aid in effect recognized the belligerent status of the revolutionaries, giving them an undeserved air of legitimacy. The arms embargo implicitly defined the unrest as a civil war between two competing groups. Batista and Güell explained to Smith that the embargo acted against the constitutional government of Cuba by recognizing communist elements in Cuba fighting against Cuba's sovereignty and democracy. A government that all of the Free World recognized as legitimate had become, through U.S. action, merely one competing side for political

¹⁷ *Fourth Floor*, pp. 20, 23, 28. Bethel, p. 62.

control in its own country. For Batista, the revolutionaries were criminals and/or international communist agents, not rebels fighting for a legitimate cause.¹⁸

Both views of the situation considered the non-interventionist approach unworkable and impossible. It could be manipulated too easily by different levels in the State Department as well as by Batista and used to cover what was in effect intervention. Non-intervention tied the hands of the Department staff in Cuba who could have aided a transition to a more acceptable form of government if given enough flexibility. What was needed, which only appeared after the revolution, was an open acceptance of reality: diplomatic impartiality would remain impossible and unnecessary as long as other forms of public U.S. influence existed, including military forces.

Alternatives, and the Simple Smith

The question of alternative courses of action continues to exist, since an explanation that Batista's fall and the State Department's impotence was inevitable is an historically unappetizing concept. Although the historian should not overestimate the power and legitimacy of U.S. influence in the Cuban revolution, at several points, key decisions by U.S. government officials could have made significant differences in the outcome. The situation on the ground in Cuba would have required more risk-taking and greater bending of the letter of the law. First of all, the U.S. could have influenced political developments by giving sympathetic, if informal, support to the third alternatives between Castro and Batista. On a related point, the Embassy could have

¹⁸ *Cuba Betrayed*, pp. 40, 71-2, 95.

taken greater pains to act impartially, more distanced from both Batista and the opposition.

Secondly, even without the benefit of hindsight, the appointment of an inexperienced political appointee to a complex, deteriorating diplomatic situation such as 1957 Cuba seems to have been a serious mistake, although Smith was not completely incompetent. Some, including the ambassador himself, had argued that replacing him with a more experienced, professional diplomat earlier was impossible, because such a move might bring about a collapse of the regime. In a truly desperate situation, the risk would have been acceptable, and surely the State Department, if in agreement, could have found a pretext for removing Smith. After all, Smith had replaced an ambassador considered ineffective, without any adverse effects caused by the transition.

In general, historical treatment of Smith and Batista have been overly simplistic. Batista and Güell were shrewd negotiators and knew how to appeal to American diplomatic ideology, especially the concept of non-intervention. One strength of the Batista regime until the end was its ability to play competing factions against each other, and the government of Cuba channeled Ambassador Smith's energies in an effort to block the increasing American disfavor for the dictatorship, disfavor that extended to Smith's own staff in the Embassy. Although unable to acquire full military and political support, the Batista government was effective at blunting the worst actions of its enemies in the U.S. government.

Smith's term as ambassador was by no means a model for aspiring diplomats or an example of a political appointee rising to the challenge facing an amateur. On the other hand, the communication between the embassy in Havana and the State Department

headquarters in Washington showed a degree of professionalism that Smith's office was seldom given credit for. Judging from memoirs and departmental archives, Smith took his job seriously and with as much professional acumen as he could muster. He was unaware and out of touch in some regards, disagreeable in others, but his view of U.S.-Cuban relations was very consistent, a product of his own independent thought, and consistent with established assumptions about the nature of international communism. The assumption of a monolithic international conspiracy responsible for all unrest everywhere faced a growing number of challengers within the State Department, but within the department a McCarthyist view of the world still held some influence.

Smith was far from naively, hopelessly optimistic about Batista's style of government or its future, and his trust in the dictator's promises was perhaps necessary given his position as liaison. Like other ambassadors, he had to work within a system in which the relationship with the accredited government was the highest priority. This is not to say that Smith was impartial to the Cuban government, since he was in reality friends with Batista and Guell, but that much of his contact with Batista was structurally unavoidable. At some level, he had to take the Cuban government's arguments and criticisms seriously, on their own terms, as diplomatically legitimate concerns and not as the last gasps of a regime. In doing so, however, he took Batista's point of view as his own, against the sentiments of his staff and his superiors, and at the expense of whatever impartiality was possible. His role as Batista mouthpiece, whether consciously or not, hitched the United State's to Batista's star. Earl Smith linked Fulgencio Batista's fate with the fate of American diplomatic influence on the island, a link that could otherwise have left more room to maneuver once Castro assumed control.

Conclusion

The Legacy of McCarthyism: An Historical and Moral Perspective

Ambassador Earl Smith's accusations showed that McCarthyism did not die in 1954 with the senator's censure nor in 1957 with his death. The Eisenhower administration had internalized McCarthyism, particularly in the State Department, a favorite whipping boy for conservatives and the most obvious target for dissatisfaction with America's foreign policy problems. The various attitudes that made up McCarthyism, about subjects ranging from international relations to domestic politics to moral and cultural norms, had a profound influence on the nation's foreign policy personnel. Some effects, such as dismissals, resignations, and lack of applicants, were clear and tangible. Others, such as timidity, conformity, and the air of paranoia were less concrete but palpable nonetheless.

By the first few months of Kennedy's presidency, many of the major players had left the stage. Dulles had succumbed to the cancer he had battled for years, Scott McLeod died soon after leaving his ambassadorship in Ireland, and Eisenhower retired into relative seclusion on his farm in Gettysburg. Eisenhower's weakened health, disappointment at foreign policy setbacks after the U-2 incident, and lukewarm confidence in Nixon as a successor made him a popular but fading lame duck in 1960. The man who replaced Dulles as Secretary, Christian Herter, by all accounts lacked the strong personality of Dulles, and while strongly anticommunist lacked the same fire and

brimstone approach to both external communists and possible security risks in his department.

It is a statement of how far the reactionary attitude of McCarthyism had declined that there was no widespread firestorm searching for scapegoats to blame for the “loss” of Cuba. Granted, Cuba’s size and population were miniscule compared to world’s most populated country, but China was not ninety miles from the Florida Keys, could not spread revolution throughout the Caribbean and Central America, and had never been as intimately linked to the United States as Cuba. In 1961, the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee launched an investigation into State Department operations in the Caribbean and received testimony condemning William Wieland as a security risk if not an outright communist agent. Earl Smith, along with Eisenhower’s special envoy to Batista William Pawley, denounced Wieland, and Smith went one further in suggesting the whole floor of the building was in cahoots with Castro. According to the committee, Wieland had close ties with Castro since 1948, had “scuttled” reports showing Castro’s communist leanings, and should no longer be allowed to work in the department.¹ Although the Committee successfully stalled the granting of a security clearance and pressured Wieland’s reassignment from Latin American affairs, he kept his high-level rank and ironically became part of a committee reviewing security procedures in the State Department.

Unlike the McCarthy hearings, the Senate hearings on Cuba were short-lived and had only a meager audience. The bandwagon of investigation that many in Congress joined ten years earlier held far fewer people in 1961. Faithful adherents to McCarthy’s

worldview still called for housecleaning, and supporters of Barry Goldwater added the charge of governmental subversion to their critique of the incumbent administration. Conservative Republicans could still find evidence of communist agents in all walks of life, and their supporters still produced alarming books and pamphlets warning that McCarthy's work remained unfinished.² However, although Johnson had low regard for Harvard-educated elites and occasionally associated opponents on the left with communists, like Kennedy he had no desire to reopen the public debate about internal security. J. Edgar Hoover continued to suspect civil rights activism was evidence of covert communist activity, and in the 1960's the FBI infiltrated activist organizations much as it had honeycombed the Communist Party USA, but the smear tactic or threat of being labeled as a communist had lost its potency since the end of the McCarthy era.

However, much of the damage from McCarthyism remained in evidence. The Foreign Service experienced a return in prestige and influence in the conduct of foreign affairs, but in Asian affairs the more hard-line anticommunist stance, supported by high-level advisers with little attention to middle-level professional diplomats, still predominated. When planning for his visit to China in 1972, Nixon virtually ignored the area experts in the State Department and had little use for professionally trained diplomats. The formulation of foreign policy continued to bypass the State Department below the level of Secretary, and even then Secretaries like Dean Rusk found their voices drowned out by others with little experience in professional diplomacy. The internal security nightmare of the decade before permanently damaged a generation of FSO's.

¹ Hearings, *Communist Threat to the U.S. Through the Caribbean*, Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, 86th-87th Congress, 1961. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1961.)

² One such gem, which went through 15 printings, is John A. Stormer, *None Dare Call It Treason*, (Florissant, MO: Liberty Bell Press, 1964).

The government lost valuable expertise, sources of solid advice, and dedicated public servants in the obsessive search for politically correct diplomats, and an untold number of potential recruits chose more lucrative, less invasive careers in the private sector instead of giving their energies to government service. Those with irreparably damaged careers saw their talents wasted and soon left the government. After reinstatement, John Service grew tired of wasting his Chinese expertise as a passport officer in Liverpool and retired in 1962 to draw the pension to which he had contributed for thirty years.

The entrance of McCarthyism into the Department of State was one high-profile example of the key paradox of American Cold War anticommunism. The security probes and loyalty hearings operated to prevent subversion at the hands of people more loyal to a totalitarian ideology than to their own country. McLeod and his security staff worked hard to sniff out communists and fellow travelers, who would be a danger to the proper workings of republican government. The irony was that in many ways the security system became more and more like the kind of government the “loyal American underground” railed against. Security agents supported a form of political orthodoxy that had the power to overrule civil service protection, create a staff of timid yes-men, and trample over certain key civil liberties such as due process and the right to face one’s accusers. A turnover in party leadership after a long tenure in office, in this case from Democrat to Republican, led to a type of purge, just as Krushchev cleaned house in his campaign to rid the Soviet bureaucracy of Stalin’s traces.

Much of the criticism directed at Eisenhower’s response to McCarthyism has depended upon an often-unstated comparison to the Truman administration’s reaction to the same political forces. On the surface, the two Presidents, heads of the two main

political parties, appeared to have very different approaches to resisting McCarthyism, and in line with these differences, both were failures in different ways. Although it put a premium on safeguarding employees against unwarranted accusations, Truman's security program was ineffective, defensive, and necessarily forced into some drastic measures, while Eisenhower attracted criticism because it is assumed he had more leeway to confront elements of his own party and could have stood up to McCarthy. There is naturally more moral condemnation for those within the Republican Party who caved into McCarthyism than for the Democratic administration that mounted a weak defense. Republicans like Eisenhower and Dulles were more complicit in prolonging the McCarthy era crusade, even though Harry Truman had begun the loyalty-security program which contributed its own abuses before McCarthy took the stage. In general, historians comparing the two reactions to McCarthyism have come to virtually opposite value judgments about the two responses. Truman was sincere in his desire to combine effective anti-subversion with judicial fairness, if somewhat misguided or underestimating the strength of paranoid anti-communism. His term as President was the culmination of an era that McCarthyites wanted to overturn, and it was the foundations of the Democratic Party's program since the New Deal that were under attack. As such, the Truman administration took on the image of target and innocent victim. In contrast, the Eisenhower response to McCarthyism was craven, cynical, or not courageous enough to stand up to the Party or challenge the mandate that brought the administration into office. Far from being forced to protect victims of McCarthyism, Eisenhower stood in the driver's seat. The Truman approach to the communists-in-government issue saw itself as defending due process of law and workers' civil liberties, but the reality was more

complex, because the creation of a new security system did not bring the issue to rest, but complicated matters. Executive Order 9835 did not restore public confidence and in practice was not entirely consistent with a liberal definition of civil liberties. Compared to the Eisenhower program, Truman's was relatively more concerned with individual rights, but also projected a less uniform security standard, too narrowly focused on particular questions of loyalty while the category of "security risk" remained undefined. In short, in terms of removing of security risks, Truman's security program was more fair and less effective, Eisenhower's more effective but less fair.

Truman's Loyalty Review Board and Loyalty-Security Boards operated on case by case basis, always acting after allegations made, and in this way did not seem to be the preventative measure that Congressional critics called for. Such a reaction to allegations of communist influence also gave the impression that agencies such as the State Department were always behind relative to outside investigators, and the defensive nature of the program set up an implied comparison between what McCarthyists accused and what the department decided. McCarthy could always fire off wild accusations faster than a proper procedure could process, and the department could be seen as defending itself, dragging its feet, covering its tracks. In the administration's defense, its security system was bound to attract criticism no matter what course it took – defend federal employees too zealously and play into charges of a cover-up, but get rid of too many and confirm that the government was indeed full of subversives. Truman and Acheson were put in the position of defending the Democratic administration's record, even going back to the Roosevelt years, and they had a clear political interest in denying presence of security risks. In reality, Acheson was no more objective or more innocent of political motivations

in defending the department than Dulles was paranoid or cynical in not defending it. While more expansive and less attuned to civil liberties, Eisenhower's approach was proactive, systematic, and thorough in comparison, giving greater latitude to agency heads to dismiss employees. This increase in administrative authority gave much-needed flexibility to the internal security system, but simultaneously allowed for greater abuse of power as it allowed opportunity for ideology and partisan politics to exert greater influence within the civil service.

In Truman's defense and with the full power of historical hindsight borne of declassification, the President was not fully informed by own intelligence services about the extent of potential security risks in his government. For example, counter-intelligence agents in the CIA and FBI never informed the President of the existence of the VENONA project, a top secret program that had intercepted and decoded messages from Soviet intelligence agents in the United States and which confirmed the presence of an extensive, very active spy network that had recruited sources in high places, including one of President Roosevelt's key advisors. New evidence brought to light about intelligence networks in the U.S. suggests that McCarthy and others were partially right, or in the words of McCarthy biographer "did the right thing badly," that many of those publicly identified by McCarthy had already been connected with Soviet espionage, but from an earlier period. The extent of the threat and the extent of the commitment of the accused in each case were exaggerated, and McCarthy discovered no real communists and never succeeded in removing any employees that more responsible, objective investigations would not have removed anyway. He benefited not only from a national anti-communist sentiment already well-formed, but also from an information-gathering

system already in place; he and his staff were able to interpret data from other sources who did the dirty work, including security agents in various executive agencies, professional ex-communists, FBI agents, former government employees, and other congressional committees. Some people dismissed were legitimately security risks even if they did nothing illegal or disloyal.

However real the presence of security leaks and security risks in the federal government, and whatever the guilt of the accused, accusations and evidence of disloyalty such as sharing secrets must be evaluated by historians in terms its effects on the course of events. The crucial significance for understanding the role of loyalty-security issues in the Cold War goes beyond the question of individual culpability, important as it is for historians to make some value judgments about individual motivations, the legality of actions by individual and the state, and personal morality. It is possible to see extreme punishment for treason as valid but in the grand scheme of things seeing the particular act of treason as having little impact. While discoveries confirming or disproving the guilt or complicity of individuals in espionage continue to dominate debate on domestic communism, it is important to deal with the question of guilt independently from the harm caused, for example the guilt of the Rosenbergs versus how much difference their information made to Soviet research. The actual threat and actual impact of their secret life may not have been worth the damage to the civil liberties of hundreds or thousands more. So far no evidence has revealed a real threat of a communist takeover, widespread sabotage, or large-scale subversion of the operations of U.S. government, but in the 1940's there clearly existed a danger of espionage agents compromising the country's technological superiority, diplomatic initiative, and

intelligence gathering. In the Cold War world, some government secrecy was necessary in the interest of national security, even though that secrecy and security has continued to hide illegitimate, indefensible, unrelated activities. The question is not whether Presidents Truman and Eisenhower should have created an effective internal security system but whether national security was worth the cost if it undermined the democratic process, the civil liberties of its citizens, and eventually the very credibility of internal security as an issue.

In comparative perspective, of course, the use of the word “purge” would be far from precise compared to the actions of other governments in the world. The worst results of McCarthyism paled in comparison to what Soviet diplomats faced from their own government. While American diplomats out of favor might find themselves in hardship posts, some of them bitterly cold, there was no “Gulag Archipelago” or Siberian workcamp for officers whose past had caught up with them. The Foreign Service was, in historian Griffin Fariello’s words, a “graveyard of careers” in the 1950’s, but most found employment elsewhere, often in similar occupations. Some faced the stigma of leaving departmental service, blacklisting from jobs and housing, and often intense depression bordering on suicide, but the vast majority of “separations” continued on with their lives in secure obscurity, especially as the McCarthy era faded. Many fell back on great reserves of familial, moral, and financial support and joined the private sector as well-educated workers. Only a few American Communists faced jail terms under the Smith Act, and the camps that the McCarran-sponsored 1950 Internal Security Act allowed for detaining security risks during a national emergency never housed a soul. Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were the most famous victims of the early Cold War period, but their sentence

was not a ruling about their political affiliations alone but on the now clear evidence they had given secrets to a foreign power. It was their real espionage and not mere associations that cost them their lives. Others with even more treasonous pasts had cooperated, recanted, and received lighter sentences.

The greater damage went beyond the careers of a small elite group with declining prestige. The government's increasing involvement in world affairs and its commitments on a global scale created a vast bureaucracy whose strength and effectiveness depended upon accurate, expert observations from trained personnel who could give their sincere judgments without fear of retribution, even if those opinions disagreed with their superiors or the public mood. McCarthyism undermined that structure. The institutionalized hunt for undesirables was designed to make foreign affairs personnel more reliable, but succeeded in creating the opposite effect. Secretary Dulles eventually came to trust his subordinates as loyal, but could find little in their bland, conformist reports to trust as meaningful. By the time the decade came to a close and the strict conformity to a McCarthyist viewpoint began to evaporate, McCarthy's legacy continued to influence the conduct of international relations. Remnants reminiscent of the Wisconsin senator still occupied positions of influence. In the psychology of Cold War international politics, Havana, Cuba was not too far from Wheeling, West Virginia.

Records, Memories, and Stories: A Bibliographic and Historiographic Essay

Cold War

For a comprehensive, well-balanced historical survey of U.S. foreign relations during the Cold War, the best approach would be to read two syntheses, John Lewis Gaddis *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), and the ever-evolving Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945-1996*, Eighth Edition (New York: McGraw Hill 1997). Both have competing claims and come to the subject with different political perspectives, but taken together provide a detailed picture.

McCarthyism and the State Department as subjects of American diplomatic history have in recent years been the subject of a growing body of scholarship devoted to couching U.S. foreign relations within a cultural context. The realm of ideas, stereotypes, imagery, and rhetoric has been an important part of the evolution of international relations, and in particular on the interplay of domestic politics and international diplomacy. The Cold War has been a natural subject for approaches that combine cultural and diplomatic history, since the danger came from a perceived enemy from within as well as from without. Such intersections of cultural and political history can be found in the impressionistic but innovative book by Stephen Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War, Second Edition*, (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996) and the quirky Fred Inglis, *The Cruel Peace: Everyday Life in the Cold War* (New York: Basic Books, 1991). As for the State Department's role in the culture of the Cold War, recent

work has explored the propaganda and information functions of the foreign affairs bureaucracy; two exemplary contributions are Walter L. Hixson, *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War, 1945-1961* (New York: St. Martin's, 1998) and Nancy E. Bernhard, "Clearer Than Truth: Public Affairs Television and the State Department's Domestic Information Campaigns, 1946-1952," *Diplomatic History* 21 (1997), pp. 545-568.

Joseph McCarthy

Naturally, a figure who eagerly sought public attention produced a wealth of valuable primary material in his own words. The senator was of course instrumental in getting his Senate speeches published as part of the Congressional Record, for example *Major Speeches and Debates of Senator Joe McCarthy Delivered in the United States Senate, 1950-1951* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1952). Aside from the published public record of Senate testimony, committee reports, and speeches, he also produced other, more independent publications to support his accusations and ideas. The two best examples, drawing heavily from the public record, are his *America's Retreat From Victory – The Story of George Catlett Marshall* (Boston: Western Islands, 1951), and *McCarthyism: The Fight For America*. New York: Devin-Adair, 1952). The former went after the former Secretary of State and Eisenhower mentor General George Marshall, while the latter served as an answer to McCarthy's critics consisting of snippets of speeches, Senate testimony, and Communist Party documents which defend the senator and criticize his opponents. *McCarthyism*, properly dedicated to

his staff, was most likely their creation as much as his, and sought to reclaim the pejorative term and turn it on its head.

Some of the most informative works on McCarthy and McCarthyism appeared within the senator's lifetime or within a few years of his death. What they lack in historical distance from their subject they make up for in their value as quasi-primary materials, informing the historian as much about the climate of time of writing as about their subject matter.

Although McCarthyism appealed to a distinct anti-intellectual sentiment, he did not lack supporters among the intelligentsia, including the very Ivy League that produced Alger Hiss and much of the Foreign Service. The most famous and long-lived of McCarthy's defenders has been William F. Buckley, Jr, who wrote with L. Brent Bozell a thorough case-by-case defense of McCarthy's accusations in *McCarthy and His Enemies – The Record and Its Meaning* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1954). While admitting that the senator occasionally exaggerated and relied on questionable sources of information, the authors defended the general process of communist-hunting and found a common anti-liberal cause in McCarthyism. Buckley argued that it was liberals and communist sympathizers who were responsible for a climate of repression in American politics and culture, and that it was Joseph McCarthy and other stalwart anti-communists who were unfairly attacked for expressing dissenting views. After the senator's censure, Buckley helped launch the conservative journal *National Review*, whose first year of commentary devoted most of its space to supporting McCarthy's contentions about possible subversives in government and the dangers of a liberal resurgence in the backlash against McCarthyism, dangers that ranged from atomic espionage to the misguided (possibly

subversive!) government water fluoridation programs. Even as McCarthy disappeared from the spotlight, *The National Review* espoused the most systematic and intellectually sophisticated variant of what the historian Ellen Schrecker has labeled “McCarthyisms.” (See *Many Are the Crimes*, below.)

Other McCarthy defenders who took up the torch after his censure and death found themselves even more on the margins of national politics but continued the senator’s work with the same zeal, and with even more documentary evidence, than before. Some, like John Stormer, campaigned for other conservative Republicans such as Barry Goldwater. Stormer’s *None Dare Call It Treason* (Florissant, MO: Liberty Bell Press, 1964) is a short, very detailed and well-footnoted argument that the necessary work of exposing communists in government remained unfinished because the government had never taken McCarthy’s charges seriously enough. Among other charges, it adds the loss of Cuba to the loss of China as evidence of communist subversion of the U.S. government.

Most other early interpretations of the meaning of “the McCarthy record” are highly critical and issue warnings about the dangers of wrongful accusations. Most commonly these critiques attack the scattershot and reckless nature of SSI and HUAC investigations as ineffective in countering subversion, and less often point to the question of violations of civil liberties. The bandwagon of anti-McCarthy publications really gets rolling in 1954 during the Army-McCarthy hearings. For the best example, see James Rorty and Moshe Decter, *McCarthy and the Communists* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1954). Rorty and Decter’s most important warning to the public is the way that irresponsible anti-communism stood in the way of the legitimate work of other,

more systematic anti-subversion methods. Many editors and political commentators during the 1950's spilled ink in criticism of their favorite newsmonger. For the most visually appealing and entertaining of these contemporary editorial treatments of McCarthyism, see collections of the commentator credited with inventing the term "McCarthyism," Herbert Block, in *The Herblock Book* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1952), *Herblock's Here and Now* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1955), and *Herblock: A Cartoonist's Life, Updated and Expanded Edition* (Random House, 1998). His collections combine the visual aspects of a portfolio with textual commentary in the form of memoir. His chief employer, *The Washington Post*, led the way in editorial opposition to McCarthyism and is the place to begin when examining press coverage of loyalty-security issues during the period.

For the complex relationship between McCarthy on the one hand and intellectuals and molders of public opinion on the other, see the later scholarship by Edwin R. Bayley, *Joe McCarthy and the Press* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1981) and especially Michael Paul Rogin, *The Intellectuals and McCarthy: The Radical Specter* (Cambridge, Mass.: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1967). Rogin analyzes McCarthy's political support, particularly in the Midwest, and finds little real precedent for McCarthyism in the Populist tradition. Instead, conservative Republicans used common-man rhetoric and populist appeals in an effort to regain office after years of Democratic rule. For the best analysis of the impact of McCarthyism on the world of academia, see Ellen Schrecker, *No Ivory Tower: McCarthyism and the Universities* (New York : Oxford University Press, 1986). For a case study of one editorial staff's reaction to McCarthyism, see Lawrence N. Strout, *Covering McCarthyism: How the Christian*

Science Monitor Handled Joseph McCarthy, 1950-1954, (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1999).

Not surprisingly for a subject that still raises controversy in 2000, few of the studies after McCarthy's death make an effort at neutrality, in part because some of the authors were personally involved. Emblematic of this is the account by former Senator Arthur Watkins, *Enough Rope* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1969), a scathing attack on McCarthy by the man in charge of the committee that censured him. A full fifteen years after the censure, Watkins' summary of McCarthy's misconduct reads as fresh as the original censure proceedings it liberally quotes.

Richard H. Rovere's 1959 *Senator Joe McCarthy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996 [Reprint]) set the tone for much of the scholarship on McCarthyism for the next three decades and beyond. A Communist Party member himself in the 1930's, Rovere by 1939 had become an outspoken anti-communist and was in part critical of McCarthy's tactics because they brought into disrepute the legitimate task of exposing communist subversion. Rovere's biography of the senator considered him a powerful and dangerous seditionist cynically preying on popular hysteria, in the author's words the "first true national demagogue." Rovere found little ideological coherence or vision in McCarthy's investigations and little reason for his political popularity beyond delusion, fear, or cynical self-interest. Written only two years after the senator's death, Rovere's account described a period that was already fantastical and unreal, peopled by "zanies and zombies."

Since Rovere, much of the historiographical debate about the Second Red Scare has taken place in the field of biography, with a running disagreement not so much over

McCarthy's role within the ism that bears his name as over the source of his inspiration and the context in which he operated. See for example Thomas C Reeves, *The Life and Times of Joe McCarthy – A Biography* (New York: Stein and Day, 1982), a biography similar to Rovere's in its approach and conclusions but with a more moderate tone. Fred J. Cook, a journalist during the 1950's, produced a narrative synthesis of the McCarthy era and its short-term legacy, *The Nightmare Decade: The Life and Times of Senator Joe McCarthy*, (New York: Random House, 1971), which was as critical of the cowardice and hysteria of the time as he was of the senator himself. David O Oshinsky, in *A Conspiracy So Immense: The World of Joe McCarthy* (New York: The Free Press, 1983) offers a chronologically balanced, cradle-to-grave narrative biography, very detailed and extensively researched, with subtle analysis, which places McCarthyism within the larger context of the arc of a political career. Though McCarthy was a late convert to rigorous anti-communism, his grandstanding and use of wild, boldly untrue statements were formed much earlier in his political career. Oshinsky supports the view of McCarthy as opportunist: ambitious politician first and foremost, anti-communist a distant second. An alternative approach seeking to avoid moral judgments and focus on McCarthy's political career as theatre is the work of synthesis by Lately Thomas, *When Even Angels Wept: The Senator Joseph McCarthy Affair – A Story Without a Hero* (New York: William Morrow, 1973). Thomas sustains an entertaining but not very deep metaphor of the senator as a marauding pirate, brashly operating outside the system, for whom traditional notions of justice and morality held little influence. Such a metaphor improperly suggests a very transitory phenomenon concentrated in the career of one individual.

The latest and currently very provocative contribution to McCarthy biography is Arthur Herman's *Joseph McCarthy – Reexamining the Life and Legacy of America's Most Hated Senator* (New York: The Free Press, 2000). Unfortunately most provocative where least supported, it sincerely does re-examine the life and career of the notorious senator and places the narrative within the political context of a contest between McCarthy and his opponents. Part of a current scholarly revisiting of the McCarthy era, Herman attempts to strip the senator of demonic image while stripping his so-called victims of their cloak of political innocence. Although never truly defending McCarthy's methods, the author argues that McCarthy's anti-communist predecessors and "anti-anti-communist" opponents both used very similar tactics and that McCarthy's opponents eventually undermined the very valid attempt to keep subversives and communist sympathizers out of government. His opponents were not merely virtuous, patriotic defenders of civil liberties, but also shrewd political operators with their own ideological agenda backed up by their own system of accusation, blacklisting, and cynical use of the press. Herman makes use of recently declassified and available intelligence records that prove McCarthy correct in some of his accusations.

Studies of McCarthyism have entered the historiography of postwar American politics, particularly in terms of the place of conservative Republicans in the bipartisan policy of containment and the role of political ideology in evaluating the legacy of the New Deal. In historians' description of a liberal consensus, domestic anti-communism such as McCarthyism has been the flip side of the coin, the segment of American politics running against the grain. See for example Robert Griffith, *The Politics of Fear – Joseph R. McCarthy and the Senate* (New York: Hayden, 1970) Thomas G. Paterson, *Cold War*

Critics – Alternatives to American Foreign Policy in the Truman Years (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1971), and Alonzo L Hamby, *Liberalism and Its Challengers: FDR to Reagan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

McCarthyism, 1947-1954

Still the foremost work on the role of Truman and Eisenhower in domestic anti-communism is David Caute's very thorough *The Great Fear – The Anti-Communist Purge Under Truman and Eisenhower* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978), which examines the impact of extreme anti-communism across a broad section of American society, from government employees to labor unions and educators. Caute describes a national crisis, of which McCarthy was only one part, in which government, business and labor needlessly violated civil liberties in a very widespread attack on suspected subversives. The work focuses largely on the various effects of anti-communism on thousands of careers and sets aside questions of guilt or innocence, although Caute clearly writes from a position of sympathy for the accused. A more succinct summary along the same lines, devoted almost exclusively to McCarthy's role in the period and his impact on politics and government, can be found in Richard M Fried, *Nightmare in Red: The McCarthy Era in Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

For the relationship between Truman's foreign policy and McCarthyism and the role that the communists in government issue played in the years before 1950, see the twin, contemporary approaches in Athan Theoharis, *Seeds of Repression: Harry S. Truman and the Origins of McCarthyism* (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1971) and Richard Freeland, *The Truman Doctrine and the Origins of McCarthyism: Foreign Policy,*

Domestic Politics, and Internal Security, 1946-1948 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972). Each see the development of the internal security issue as inevitable given the Truman administration's rhetoric and approach to international communism, and each see the important role that Truman's postwar leadership played in establishing conditions under which McCarthyism thrived. While Theoharis is critical of Truman's militaristic, hardline approach to U.S.-Soviet relations as giving McCarthyism a head start, Freeland sees the development of the Truman Doctrine, Marshall Plan, and the internal security system as mutually reinforcing and inevitable. Theoharis is elsewhere critical of the Truman administration's constitutional sacrifice to Cold War fears in "The Threat to Civil Liberties," in *Cold War Critics – Alternatives to American Foreign Policy in the Truman Years*, edited by Thomas G. Paterson (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1971), pp. 266-98. In this Theoharis built upon his earlier analysis of the conservative critique of the Roosevelt-Truman era found in *The Yalta Myths: An Issue in U.S. Politics, 1945-1955* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1970). For very revealing, selected published documents on the relationship between Truman and McCarthy, see *Documentary History of the Truman Presidency, Volume 25: President Truman's Confrontation with McCarthyism*, edited by Dennis Merrill, (University Publications of America, 1999), which has reproduced some key documents currently held in the Truman Presidential Library.

The research that comes the closest to matching or superceding Cate's is that of Ellen Schrecker in *Many Are the Crimes: McCarthyism in America* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1998), a book two decades in the making. Relying heavily on legal briefs, unclassified government documents, and years of personal interviews and oral histories,

Schrecker chronicles the work and impact of anti-communists in several sectors of American society in a broadly conceived project less detailed than Cate's but as ambitious. Like Cate, she emphasizes that McCarthy played only a partial role in McCarthyism, but like Arthur Herman (though coming from the opposite end of the political spectrum) she balances her personal sympathy for the accused with recent evidence challenging some of their political innocence. More than putting McCarthy in a larger perspective, her account spreads responsibility far and wide, beyond the halls of government and onto the most culpable agents of McCarthyism: employers in the private sector.

Schrecker's earlier, much smaller contribution, *The Age of McCarthyism – A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford Books, 1994) served as the kernel for her much larger project and provides one of the best concise introductions to the McCarthy era. It is a brief treatment of the impact of loyalty-security investigations and anticommunist crusading on particular professions, from teachers to labor leaders to diplomats, supported by a selection of primary documents, largely legal proceedings and investigative records. A good companion to *The Age of McCarthyism* is the edited collection of oral histories by Griffin Fariello, *Red Scare – Memories of the American Inquisition*, (New York: Avon, 1995), which as the title suggests offers first-hand accounts largely from those most affected by loyalty-security investigations, including Alger Hiss and John Stewart Service from government circles and eight tales from the Hollywood blacklist in the world of entertainment. Significantly, even Fariello's interviews with former communist hunters (in a chapter entitled *Hounds*) express either deep regret or ambivalence about their role in the process. The people most damaged by

the inquisition appear as the most innocent of victims, while the most unrepentant anti-communists come across as the most extreme.

Dwight D. Eisenhower

Substantial primary research into Dwight Eisenhower as President depends on making a trip to Abilene, Kansas, the location of the Eisenhower Presidential Library, operated in part by a federal agency, the National Archives and Records Administration. Of interest to political and diplomatic historians are the files found in the White House Central Files, the White House Official Files, the John Foster Dulles Papers, and the Ann Whitman File. Whitman served as Eisenhower's personal secretary and was the individual most crucial to the preservation of Ike's own office papers. In cases that have now become legend among manuscript archivists (but which would have disturbed internal security experts) in those days before the executive paper shredder she would retrieve a ripped-up document from the President's wastebasket, tape it back together, and file it away.

Another place to begin research would be with Eisenhower's own account of his years as President, his two memoirs, *Mandate for Change: The White House Years, 1953-6* and *Waging Peace, 1956-61* (both published in New York by Doubleday, 1963 and 1965, respectively). While somewhat candid about what Ike viewed as mistakes and disappointments in his two terms, such as the 1956 Suez crisis and the 1960 U-2 affair, these two ghost-written accounts naturally cast a favorable light on Eisenhower's achievements as President. They support the Eisenhower administration's public image of itself as politically moderate, internationally active, and committed to fighting the Cold

War effectively while pursuing measures to maintain peace. For published speeches shedding the same light, see *Peace With Justice – Selected Addresses of Dwight D. Eisenhower* (New York: Popular Library, 1961).

For more extensive published public documents from the Eisenhower Presidency but without reference to much classified material, see *The Public Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower, Volumes I-VIII, 1953-1961* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1960-3), which includes internal memoranda, private correspondence, executive orders, speeches, minutes of Cabinet meetings, and transcripts of press conferences.

Besides oral histories collected by presidential and university archives, the 1953-61 period produced several key memoirs of top administration officials. Some notable examples are Robert H. Ferrell's edited work, *The Diary of James C. Hagerty – Eisenhower in Mid-Course, 1954-5* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), John Emmet Hughes, *The Ordeal of Power*, and Herbert Brownell and John P. Burke, *Advising Ike: The Memoirs of Herbert Brownell* (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1993).

In stark contrast to biographies of Joseph McCarthy, biographies of Dwight Eisenhower have remained largely sympathetic if much less inspired. Parmet, Herbert S. *Eisenhower and the American Crusades*. New York: MacMillan, 1972. Stephen Ambrose, *Eisenhower. Volume One, Soldier, General of the Army, President-elect, 1890-1952. Volume Two, The President*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983, 1984.

Fred I Greenstein's *The Hidden-Hand Presidency: Eisenhower as Leader* (New York: Basic Books, 1982) marked a watershed in the historiography of the 1953-61 period, making use of some previously restricted materials but largely working with open

but underutilized sources. The book became the center of a scholarly revision of the image of Ike as a caretaker leader with little involvement in his own administration. In Greenstein's account, the President was a shrewd, behind-the-scenes operator who used his public image as figurehead to his advantage, most nimbly in the case of gradually undermining McCarthy without a direct confrontation. Although Greenstein occasionally misreads calculated restraint in cases where disinterest works better as an explanation, his book is crucial for anyone examining Eisenhower in particular and Presidential decision making in general. A similar conclusion appears in Robert Divine's analysis of Eisenhower's approach to foreign affairs, *Eisenhower and the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981). Just as Greenstein finds a cautious and commanding President solving domestic political problems, Divine reveals a leader firmly in control of American foreign policy, not playing second fiddle to his Secretary of State. Furthermore, just as other revisionists found virtue in Eisenhower's hidden hand, Divine finds the President's moderation and lack of dynamism in foreign relations as evidence of an impressive, wise restraint.

Like Greenstein, the contributors to Martin J. Medhurst's edited collection, *Eisenhower's War of Words: Rhetoric and Leadership* (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1994) find a shrewd, surprisingly sophisticated use of rhetoric and calculated language on the part of a largely unquotable President. Incorporating the field of rhetoric studies into political science analysis, the book examines several episodes in Ike's presidency, including Eisenhower's response to McCarthy's activities in the Senate. Of particular interest for the McCarthy period is Thomas Rosteck's contribution, "The Case of Eisenhower Versus McCarthyism," which

analyzes President Eisenhower's use of rhetoric in the debate over McCarthyism and argues persuasively that what undermined an immediate and effective executive reaction to McCarthy was the fact that the President allowed the senator to set the terms of the debate. Eisenhower operated on the basis of a false choice: let McCarthy set the agenda of a confrontation, or have no real confrontation at all.

Sparking and supporting Eisenhower revisionism was the declassification of a large body of material from his Presidency made available to historians in the 1980's. The most extensive and groundbreaking work to make immediate use of these documents is Blanche Wiesen Cook's *The Declassified Eisenhower: A Divided Legacy*, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1981), which contributed not only to the Greenstein thesis of a highly active President but also an important piece of the growing historiography of U.S. covert operations during the Cold War. In Cook historians can see an Eisenhower who used plausible deniability and covert activities not only when dealing with domestic political opponents like McCarthy but also when addressing perceived crises abroad. Of particular use to diplomatic historians and area specialists are the twin "successes" of Ike's covert cold war in the Third World, the CIA operations in Iran in 1953 and Guatemala in 1954. The book confirms the extent of the U.S. role in the overthrow of Arbenz and helped make the Guatemalan case the center of a large body of scholarship as a highly visible landmark in U.S.-Latin American relations on par with and inseparable from the Bay of Pigs invasion. A less critical but equally probing look at the role of covert activities in the administrations overseas activities is that of Stephen Ambrose and Richard Immerman, *Ike's Spies – Eisenhower and the Espionage Establishment* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981).

For good general description of the historiographic debate and trajectory of “Eisenhower revisionism,” see John Robert Green’s concise summary, “Bibliographic Essay: Eisenhower Revisionism, 1952-1992, A Reappraisal,” in Shirley Anne Warshaw, ed. *Reexamining the Eisenhower Presidency, Contributions in American History Number 149* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1993). For a less enthusiastic review of new disclosures about the administration’s hidden activities, see Ronald Pruessen, “Revisionism 2,” *Radical History Review* 33 (1985): 155-64.

Eisenhower, McCarthyism, and Internal Security

One increasingly central subject of debate in evaluating Eisenhower as President, in particular Eisenhower as Republican, has been to what extent and with what effectiveness he resisted, undermined, or stood up to the right-wing of his party. In the first two years as President, his complex, very indirect relationship with McCarthy was as important as with any other individual.

For an account of the multi-faceted approach of the Eisenhower administration to the question of internal security, see the pathbreaking work of Jeff Broadwater, *Eisenhower and the Anti-Communist Crusade* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), the only major work to date exclusively devoted to Eisenhower’s role in domestic anti-communism. A necessary addition to Cauter’s work, Broadwater extends the analysis of the internalized Red Scare through to the end of the Eisenhower years.

Case studies of the administration’s policy towards suspected security risks have added key pieces to the puzzle, at least in the most high-profile cases. See Mary S. McCauliffe, “Dwight D. Eisenhower and Wolf Ladejinsky: The Politics of the Declining

Red Scare, 1954-5" *Prologue* 14 (Fall 1982): 109-127, for an account of an embarrassing overreaction on the part of Ike's Secretary of Agriculture. For an examination of the Bohlen confirmation in the context of a larger political compromise with McCarthyism, see Thomas G. Corti and T. Michael Ruddy. "The Bohlen-Thayer Dilemma: A Case Study in the Eisenhower Administration's Response to McCarthyism." *Mid-America* 72 (April-July 1990): 119-133.

Analysis of the executive branch's internal security system and its incorporation of McCarthyites, security experts, and new security measures remains scanty, and much has yet to be written. Within the histories of McCarthyism and the State Department, the figure of Scott McLeod and other influential security chiefs have rarely ventured beyond very brief reference. Todd Purdum's unpublished 1982 Princeton senior thesis, "The Politics of Security: Scott McLeod and the Eisenhower Administration," remains to date the most detailed examination of Dulles' onetime security chief. Purdum had access not only to Princeton's Dulles collection, but also to some of McLeod's private papers made available through the assistance of McLeod's widow, then living in New Hampshire. The location and state of McLeod's papers in 2000 remains unknown.

John Foster Dulles

Leonard Mosley's *Dulles: A Biography of Eleanor, Allen, and John Foster Dulles and Their Family Network* (New York: The Dial Press, 1978) was the first to make extensive use of oral histories from the various oral history collections, most notably those at Princeton and Columbia. Although too often relying on extensive, undigested quotations from the oral histories, it provides a good examination of the informal

relationships within the Dulles family and in particular the working relationship between John Foster Dulles and his departmental staff.

The most valuable single resource on the life and work of John Foster Dulles lies in the private, unpublished John Foster Dulles Collection housed in the Firestone Library at Princeton University in Princeton, New Jersey. For Dulles' years as Secretary of State, the other most valuable research archive is in the John Foster Dulles Papers at the Eisenhower Presidential Library in Abilene, Kansas. Valuable holdings in both locations include not only Dulles' correspondence with government officials, foreign representatives, and political leaders, but also memoranda of telephone conversations and oral history interviews conducted with those who had contact with Dulles during his years of public life.

One of the first to make extensive use of the Princeton papers was Townsend Hoopes, *The Devil and John Foster Dulles* (Atlantic – Little, Brown, 1973), a well-written biography that made the most of oral history not only in transcript form but also in the form of personal interviews, and years before the great bulk of unpublished government documents became available to researchers. As his title suggests, Hoopes supports the position that the Secretary's strict and moralistic anti-communist conviction "formed the bedrock" of his approach to international relations as Secretary of State.

Frederick W. Marks III, *Power and Peace – The Diplomacy of John Foster Dulles* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1993) examines the Secretary as policymaker, finding at work not only an ideologue but also a pragmatist who was not primarily concerned with launching an international crusade but with securing American national interests in the face of a perceptible threat. Richard Immerman continues to explore the man's complex

combination of idealism and realism in *John Foster Dulles: Piety, Pragmatism, and Power in U.S. Foreign Policy*, (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, 1999), which is devoted to Dulles' tenure as Secretary of State, with the pre-1953 biography as formulative background. As the title suggests, Immerman's Dulles was not the strictly dogmatic anti-communist, but a sophisticated policy planner who combined a moralistic vision with an awareness of practicality. Although Dulles oversimplified and misinterpreted some developments such as the rise of Third World nationalism, the weaknesses of his legacy were not from inflexibility or doctrinaire thinking.

The best treatment of Dulles as the head of a government bureaucracy operating within the context of domestic politics is that of Michael A. Guhin in *John Foster Dulles: A Statesman and His Times* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972). Guhin gives equal attention to Dulles as partisan politician as he does to Dulles as diplomat, couching the Secretary within the political currents of the early Cold War, explaining the domestic political limits and influences on his range of diplomatic possibilities. A privileged vantage point for observing Dulles' relationship with his department and the Foreign Service can be found in his sister Eleanor Lansing Dulles's 1963 tribute to the late Secretary of State, *John Foster Dulles: The Last Year* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1963). A experienced professional diplomat in her own right, Eleanor Dulles had the unique position of being an "insider" in both the Foreign Service and Dulles' private life. She served occasionally as a confidential advisor to the Secretary on questions of Service morale and working conditions.

Internal Security, Counter-intelligence, Espionage

The most significant recent contribution on the early Cold War, certainly the most provocative, has come from discoveries in the history of intelligence agencies and espionage. Much of the groundwork for the examination of internal security operations, counterintelligence, and Soviet espionage in America had been laid by the end of the Cold War, with some crucial pieces of the puzzle appearing after the break-up of the Soviet Union. Just in time for the Central Intelligence Agency to be embarrassed by the surprisingly quick fall of the Iron Curtain, Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones produced *The CIA and American Democracy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), a comprehensive survey of the role of the agency in American politics and society since 1947. In a revealing chapter on the 1950's, Jeffreys-Jones describes the ways in which the CIA closed ranks and gathered enough bipartisan support to pre-empt McCarthyist investigations of an Agency which was as vulnerable and at least as deserving of investigation as the State Department and the Army. The end of the Cold War has stimulated a renewed interest in the history of espionage, leading to the publication of works appealing to a popular audience, such as the episodic, poorly documented, but entertaining and valuable Norman Polmar and Thomas B. Allen, *Spy Book: The Encyclopedia of Espionage, Updated and Revised Edition* (New York: Random House, 1998). It ambitiously serves as an historical dictionary of intelligence gathering from the days of the Old Testament through the end of the Cold War.

Harvey Klehr, John Earl Haynes, and Fridrikh Igorevich Firsov made use of some of the first post-Soviet archives available and of Freedom of Information Act petitions to produce *The Secret World of American Communism* (New Haven: Yale University Press,

1995), which traced the explicit links between the American Communist Party and Soviet intelligence networks. Whatever the legitimate ideology of social reform, civil rights, and political participation, the Communist Party also took part in espionage activities directed against the U.S. government and served as a recruitment vehicle for the Soviet Union before and during World War II.

The most important entry into the historical debate comes from the publication of previously top-secret, intercepted Soviet messages to undercover operatives in the U.S. These incomplete, sometimes inconclusive intercepts, code-named VENONA, began to be declassified for public use in the mid-1990's and confirmed the presence of a Soviet spy network employing American citizens from the 1930's into the early postwar period. For published selections and a brief history of the decoding project, see Robert Louis Benson and Michael Warner, eds., *VENONA: Soviet Espionage and American Response, 1939-1957* (Washington, D.C.: National Security Agency and Central Intelligence Agency, 1996).

Historian Allen Weinstein and former KGB agent Alexander Vassiliev correlated VENONA data with temporarily opened KGB files to produce *Haunted Wood: Soviet Espionage in America – The Stalin Era* (New York: Random House, 1999), which renewed an intense re-examination of the charges of the McCarthy era and has become lately one of the most controversial and important works on the Cold War. Weinstein had earlier produced the most important examination of the Alger Hiss case, *Perjury: The Hiss-Chambers Case* (New York: Knopf, 1978), in which Weinstein discovered his initial assumption about Hiss's innocence was false. *Haunted Wood* triggered a passionate response, including *New York Times* editorial accusations of justifying

McCarthyism. Relying on incomplete Russian archival sources that have since been closed to view, Weinstein and Vassiliev confirm the guilt of Alger Hiss, Noel Field, the Rosenbergs, Lawrence Duggan, and other U.S. government officials during the Depression and World War II. Some of the public accusations against Roosevelt and Truman officials have turned out to be true in light of VENONA revelations, but the captured material also suggests that the Soviets had given up using American agents by 1947. McCarthy and others may have pointed fingers at some of the right people in 1950 and beyond, but they found no one in government currently spying for the Soviet Union. Like much of recent scholarship on the communist in government issue, *Haunted Wood* is simultaneously provocative and incomplete, leaving as many questions as answers.

U.S. Department of State and Foreign Service

Good general reference materials for the history of American foreign relations and guides to diplomatic terms include Bruce W. Jentleson and Thomas G. Paterson, *Encyclopedia of U.S. Foreign Relations, Vol. 1-4* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), Stephen A. Flanders and Carl A. Flanders, *Dictionary of American Foreign Affairs* (New York: MacMillan, 1993), and John E. Findling, *Dictionary of American Diplomatic History, Second Edition* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989).

The main archival holdings for the United States Department of State are found in the National Archives, Record Group 59, currently housed in the National Archives II complex in College Park, Maryland. The vast majority of departmental documents produced in the 1950's have been declassified, the remainder dealing with State Department roles in top secret operations, for example in conjunction with the Central

Intelligence Agency. Personnel files of individual employees and the files of security divisions remain classified and require Freedom of Information Act actions to open. The huge bulk of documentary materials can also be an obstacle, as government archivists must make room for the exponentially increasing amount of documents produced by federal agencies. The department regularly publishes its historical materials in the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series, released in short blocks of time and organized regionally and thematically. They are most useful for examining high-level decision-making and U.S. foreign relations during key historical moments. Of special value to this dissertation has been *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-54, Vol. I. General Economic and Policy Matters, Part 2, "Foreign Policy Aspects of Congressional Loyalty and Security Investigations, 1950-1954,"* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1986), pp. 1379-1559.

To date there is no definitive, comprehensive history of the State Department in the twentieth century, although the department has been the subject of continuing evaluation and study. In place of broad overviews, the scholarship on the subject has included more narrowly focused approaches centered on particular chronological periods, parts of the bureaucracy, or distinct foreign policy themes. Barry Rubin comes closest to giving a dependable, broad overview of the postwar period in *Secrets of State: The State Department and the Struggle Over U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985). The department has on occasion sponsored self-examination from outside consultants. One of the most well-known cases, and key to this period is that of the Wriston committee, which produced the State Department report "Towards a Stronger Foreign Service – Report of the Secretary of State's Public Committee on Personnel,"

June 1954, Department of State Publication 5458, Department of State and Foreign Service Series 36 (Washington, D.C.: Department of State, Division of Publications, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1954). The report includes a good summary history of the contemporary department and a deep analysis of the structure and functions of the department, with detailed and specific recommendations for reform. It is a telling example of the impact of outside consultants on government bureaucracy and of the development of “management science” as a field of study.

The 1960's began a sudden proliferation of scholarship on the department, largely undertaken by former employees, consultants, and administrative policy specialists. Most of these approaches aimed at strengthening the department as an agent in the formulation of foreign policy or bringing it in line with contemporary world affairs. Some enlightening examples of can be found in Smith Simpson, *The Crisis in American Diplomacy: Shots Across the Bow of the State Department* (North Quincy, Mass.: Christopher, 1980); Gabriel A Almond, *The American People and Foreign Policy* (New York: Praeger, 1963); John H. Esterline and Robert Black, *Inside Foreign Policy: The Department of State Political System and Its Subsystems* (Palo Alto, California: Mayfield Publishing, 1975); Frances Fielder and Godfrey Harris *The Quest For Foreign Affairs Officers – Their Recruitment and Selection, Foreign Affairs Personnel Study No. 6*, Carnegie Endowment for Peace, 1966; and John Ensor Harr, *The Professional Diplomat* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969).

Of particular note for this dissertation are commentaries from former foreign service officers who had encountered the effects of McCarthyism in the department: Charles Bohlen, *The Transformation of American Foreign Policy* (New York: W. W.

Norton, 1969) and John F. Melby, "The China Hands and McCarthyism: An Overview." In *The China Hands' Legacy – Ethics and Diplomacy*, edited by Paul Gordon Lauren. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987. In an odd cycle of renewal, the department regularly undergoes rediscovery and attempts to resurrect it. For example, see Donald Snow and Eugene Brown, *Puzzle Palaces and Foggy Bottom – U.S. Foreign and Defense Policy-Making in the 1990s* (New York: St. Martin's, 1994).

The Foreign Service has had its defenders over the years, and the bulk of the written record on the service has highlighted the strengths, necessity, and potential of an expertly trained, professional diplomatic corps with real influence on American foreign relations. A key primary source for viewing the professional world of the diplomatic official is the *Foreign Service Journal*, a kind of trade magazine similar to those of other specialized occupations. It is published by the American Foreign Service Association, a non-profit organization that serves as the main advocate for U.S. diplomatic officials. Its editorial board has consisted primarily of retired veteran officers chosen by the ranks of the Service, and it served as a newsletter, professional journal, and employee advocate. Since the *Journal* was in the unique and delicate position of representing a group of people who were exclusively government employees, the editorial tone, at least for the period of the 1950's, had a semi-official bent, critical of the McCarthy era and the administrative reforms only in indirect ways. As sources, issues of the journal provide a very telling glimpse into the Service's sense of identity, the contemporary challenges it faced, and its response to changes at home and abroad.

Historical attention to American diplomatic officials has been well-established for the pre-World War II era, particularly in light of the professionalization program of the

1920's. See Robert D. Schulzinger, *The Making of the Diplomatic Mind – The Training, Outlook, and Style of United States Foreign Service Officers, 1908-1931* (Middleton, CN: Wesleyan University Press, 1975) and Hugh De Santis, *The Diplomacy of Silence – The American Foreign Service, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War, 1933-47* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979). De Santis reveals the professional milieu that produced the original Russian affairs experts such as George Kennan, and the state of the diplomatic establishment as it entered the Cold War.

Other perspectives on the history of the Foreign Service have dealt with particularly defining episodes. The most notable example was that of the Far Eastern Affairs bureau, as in the edited collection by Paul Gordon Lauren, *The China Hands' Legacy – Ethics and Diplomacy* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987), which includes articles by the purged China hands John Melby and John Paton Davies, and the richly detailed E.J Kahn, Jr., *The China Hands – American Foreign Service Officers and What Befell Them* (New York: The Viking Press, 1975), which explores in depth the individual cases of over a dozen diplomatic officials whose connection with Chinese affairs affected their subsequent careers. Into the 1970's former hands, for example Oliver Edmund Clubb in "Security Risks: National Security and the State Department," *Foreign Service Journal* December 1973, pp. 13-5, continued to warn against McCarthyist thinking in the department. For examination of a long-running case of individuals hounded by McCarthyism, see Robert P. Newman, *The Cold War Romance of Lillian Hellman and John Melby* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989). Melby's relationship with the allegedly communist-influenced author spelled the end of his career

in the State Department during the Eisenhower years, and the period from accusation to dismissal was a long and torturous road, without a quick and merciful ending.

Autobiographies and Memoirs of Diplomats:

When researching the formulation and execution of foreign policy, the historian has a lot to gain from sources that lie outside the traditional paper trail of memoranda, executive orders, and official reports. A rich mine of information lies in the memoirs, published diaries, and autobiographies of diplomatic officials, and the early Cold War period is as rich as any in terms of firsthand accounts. Although McCarthyism stifled the working environment of the State Department for much of the Eisenhower period, or perhaps because of that atmosphere, retired diplomats in the 1960's were very active in publishing their own perspectives of the recent history of American foreign relations.

Several of the memoirs are in direct response to the purge of the China hands and the impact of loyalty-security investigations in the State Department, because their authors were targets themselves. They range from the very bitter, such as O. Edmund Clubb's *The Witness and I* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), which traces the fiascoes of the Vietnam War and Watergate to the persecution of the China hands such as himself, to accounts which dwell surprisingly little on McCarthyism, such as John Paton Davies, Jr., *Foreign and Other Affairs* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1964), which sets to paper Davies' observations about how the foreign affairs establishment should operate and what the proper Foreign Service should look like. In other places Davies comments on his experience in China and the accusations against him, for example, the article "The China Hands in Practice: The Personal Experience," *The China*

Hands' Legacy – Ethics and Diplomacy, edited by Paul Gordon Lauren (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987).

The two landmark memoirs of Truman's diplomatic corps are from two high-level officials at the center of policy making, Secretary of State Dean Acheson, in *Present at the Creation* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1969), and former head of the Policy Planning Staff George Kennan, in his rich part account, *Memoirs, Vol. I, 1925-1950 and Vol. II, 1950-1963* (Boston: Atlantic – Little, Brown, 1972). Acheson, of course, was one of McCarthy's favorite targets of innuendo, responsible for the State Department's reaction to Congressional investigation, and ultimately responsible for the fate of the China hands who served under him. According to Kennan, the Soviet expert left the Department in part over the treatment of his fellow Foreign Service Officers. Naturally, his relationship to his diplomatic colleagues was more that of a peer than Acheson's had been, and unlike Acheson Kennan was a professionally trained diplomat who rose up through the ranks. To read his memoirs, the reader would get the misimpression that Kennan retired from government service out of protest against the treatment of the Foreign Service, more than the real reason that the incoming Secretary Dulles found no room for Kennan in his plan for the department.

The Eisenhower administration lacks the same kind of monumental diplomatic memoirs, with the possible exception of the President's most trusted professional diplomat, Robert Murphy, who had served on General Eisenhower's staff during World War II. His *Diplomat Among Warriors* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964) is an account largely in sympathy with the Eisenhower-Dulles approach to international relations and quite supportive of Dulles' brand of departmental housecleaning. As the

title suggests, Murphy identified more with his militarily trained superiors George Marshall and Dwight Eisenhower than the ranks of professionally trained diplomats who served as his colleagues. Murphy's memoir focuses on high-level negotiation and the internal workings of Eisenhower's staff, and has very little to say about the McCarthy period, except to end on a warning to the next generation of diplomats to practice discretion, honesty, and loyalty.

Other valuable published memoirs of diplomatic service under Eisenhower at the assistant secretary level and below include Ellis O. Briggs *Farewell to Foggy Bottom – The Recollections of a Career Diplomat* (New York: David McKay, 1964), John Moors Cabot, *First Line of Defense – Forty Years' Experience of a Career Diplomat* (Washington, D.C.: School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University, 1980), and Roy M. Melbourne, *Conflict and Crises: A Foreign Service Story* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1993). Eleanor Dulles, Foster's sister, produced an informative if sketchy memoir of her long career in diplomatic service. Despite the inclusion of the distinguished family tree in the frontmatter, *Eleanor Lansing Dulles: Chances of a Lifetime, A Memoir* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1980) is strangely silent on her relationship with her two powerful brothers, except to say that having relatives in high places was an obstacle and not an advantage. Also informative for this dissertation was an early draft of a manuscript by former Foreign Service Officer Charles Cross, *Born a Foreigner*. Other valuable information comes from memoirs of those who were not in the Service but who were in frequent contact with professional diplomats, such as the journalist and foreign affairs commentator Theodore H. White, in *Fire in the Ashes – Europe in Mid-Century* (New York: William Sloane, 1953). White regularly

produced articles critical of America's inattention to properly training and supporting its representative overseas.

Diplomatic officers at the middle and lower ranks have also produced smaller first-hand accounts published in collections. Some of the first work of interviewing retired diplomats to recount their experiences was, appropriately enough, the work of a Congressional Committee in 1959, headed by Senator William Fulbright. Its final report, *Study of United States Foreign Policy – Summary Views of Retired Foreign Service Officers, Prepared for the Committee on Foreign Relations, 86th Congress, 1st Session, June 15, 1959* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1959), allowed a dozen recent retirees from diplomatic service to voice anonymously their opinions on the state not only of America's international relations but also the state of its diplomatic institutions. Although the internal loyalty-security issue was virtually non-existent in their responses, one un-named respondent considered the McLeod security program one of the policies most damaging to the health of the country's foreign relations network.

Schools and programs set up to train future Foreign Service members, such as at Georgetown University, have sponsored autobiographical surveys of retired diplomatic officers. A very informative collection aimed at prospective Foreign Service applicants is that of Dayton Mak and Charles Stuart Kennedy, *American Ambassadors in a Troubled World – Interviews with Senior Diplomats, Contributions in Political Science No. 303* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1992).

Oral Histories and Oral History Collections:

Some of the most valuable sources for researching the internal dynamics of an institution like the State Department are oral histories produced after the fact by the historical actors themselves. Oral histories provide key insights into a situation which may not leave a noticeable “paper trail” of printed documentation but which has an important impact nonetheless, for example, a working atmosphere within an institution, conversations, informal decision-making, and important statements made in confidentiality. The usefulness of oral history becomes even more apparent when the documentary record may be inherently at odds with the reality off the record, for example, if some members of an institution write reports based on what they think their superiors want to hear.

One of the largest and most professionally maintained collections of oral histories and transcripts, particularly of prominent individuals in government, journalism, business, and entertainment, is found in the Butler Library of Columbia University, in New York City. Many of the oral history transcripts located in Presidential libraries, for example the vast majority of those at the Eisenhower Library in Abilene, Kansas, are versions from the Columbia Oral History Research Project, now in its fourth decade. The COHP is a good place to begin research both for highly prominent individuals but also for figures who are more significant than their relative obscurity might suggest, for example key Cabinet staff assistants such as Dulles’ right-hand man John W. Haynes, consultants for government committees such as Henry Wriston, and journalists close to an administration, such as Chalmers Roberts. Transcripts vary in length and scholarly

weight depending on the respondent, the interviewer, and the subject matter, but in most cases give unique first-hand insights in particular historical contexts.

Archives and manuscript holdings, most notably those of Presidential libraries, have gradually elevated oral history collections into a place of prominence in their service to researchers. For the purposes of diplomatic history, one notable example, and one invaluable to this dissertation is that of the John Foster Dulles Oral History Collection, a distinct part of the John Foster Dulles Papers at Princeton University's Firestone Library in Princeton, New Jersey. The JFDOH holdings devote themselves to interviews centered on the life and work of Dulles and those who had important roles to play in his State Department, for example assistant secretaries of state like Richard Rubottom and departmental counsel Herman Phleger. Naturally, the information is organized around Dulles as the central subject, but the transcripts also provide key evidence for examining high-level decision-making, the conduct of foreign relations, and bureaucratic relationships.

The most extensive collection of oral histories of former diplomatic officials of all ranks and lengths of service is found in the Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection at the Mudd Library of Georgetown University. It is particularly thorough and ambitious in providing accounts of officers from the lower levels of the department, less likely to attract scholarly attention than would assistant secretaries, but who were nonetheless part of larger historical events and in key positions as witnesses, for example the consular agents in Santiago de Cuba who negotiated with Castro the release of American hostages. In addition, the FAOH interviews generally benefit from the highly specialized knowledge of its directors and are unique in their attention to the details of diplomatic

affairs. Because of this professional connection, Georgetown has been able to conduct interviews otherwise not possible, for example the enormous John S. and Caroline Service interview, available nowhere else.

Eisenhower, Latin America, and Cuba

To date the foremost research on the Eisenhower administration's approach to Latin American relations is that of Stephen G. Rabe's *Eisenhower and Latin America – The Foreign Policy of Anticommunism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), which surveys the administration's evolving reaction to developments in the hemisphere. Rabe's survey digs beneath the surface appearance of an administration indifferent to Latin American relations and exposes a multi-faceted approach to regional issues that evolved over the eight years of Eisenhower's Presidency but in many ways changed too little too late to mitigate the diplomatic disaster of being on the wrong side of social reform movements in Latin America. Significantly, Rabe was one of the first to consider the surprisingly accommodating North American response to revolution in Bolivia as an example of Eisenhower foreign policy, as defining an incident in U.S.-Latin American relations as the overthrow of Arbenz.

U.S. Ambassadors to American republics, have been central to implementing and forming U.S. policy, and have often been some of the most powerful individuals in their host country, acting with wide latitude. For a view of the successful as well as disastrous role of diplomatic personnel in U.S.-Latin American relations, see C. Neale Ronning and Albert Vannucci, *Ambassadors in Foreign Policy – The Influence of Individuals on U.S.-Latin American Policy* (New York: Praeger, 1987), which uses case studies to explore the

influential role that U.S. chiefs of mission in Latin America have exerted on local events and policy in general.

For published primary sources on the State Department's role in the early years of the Cuban Revolution, see the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series, for example *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-7, Vol. VI, American Republics: Multilateral; Mexico; Caribbean* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State, 1987).

In giving a view into the inner workings of the U.S. embassy during the Batista and early Castro years, personal memoirs have supplemented the official record and provided a sense of the internal conflict within the department. The last ambassador to pre-Castro Cuba, Earl E.T. Smith, complemented Senate testimony with a personal memoir about his years in Havana, *The Fourth Floor: An Account of the Castro Communist Revolution* (New York: Random House, 1962), in which he defends his close relations with Batista and accuses the State Department of encouraging Castro's rise to power. His account of a contrary, defiant, and naïve staff is supported by a memoir of an embassy press attaché, Paul Bethel, in *The Losers – A Definitive Report, By An Eyewitness, of the Communist Conquest of Cuba and the Soviet Penetration in Latin America* (New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House, 1969). Smith's and Bethel's interpretation of events in Batista's fall and Castro's run parallel with the batistiano argument about the revolution as an illegitimate communist coup. See Batista's published defense of his regime, ghost-written in exile while trying to obtain entry into the United States, *Cuba Betrayed* (New York: Vantage Press, 1962), and a representative view of the Cuban exile community in the decade after the revolution, Mario Lazo, *Dagger in the Heart: American Policy Failures in Cuba* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1968).

A more balanced, sober, and dispassionate set of personal narratives include those from others in Earl Smith's embassy and from his successors. Wayne Smith served as a junior officer within the Havana embassy and eventually became a leading expert on U.S.-Cuban relations. His *The Closest of Enemies – A Personal and Diplomatic Account of U.S.-Cuban Relations Since 1957* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987) begins with his days under Earl Smith and traces his inside view of North American relations with Castro. Philip Bonsal, Earl Smith's successor as Ambassador to Cuba, countered some of his predecessor's accusations about his staff and argued that it was inevitability and not betrayal that led to the Cuban Revolution's anti-Yankee posture. See his memoir of his service in Cuba and commentary on policy options, *Cuba, Castro, and the United States*. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1971). Other U.S. observers expressed unabashed sympathy and admiration for the Revolution, the most famous of which was the *New York Times* reporter (and Earl Smith scourge) Herbert L. Matthews, who was instrumental at one point in dispelling rumors of Castro's death. His *Revolution in Cuba: An Essay in Understanding* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975) tones down his original enthusiasm but maintains his earlier sympathetic view.

Despite nearly forty years of officially severed relations, the United States' relationship with almost no other Third World country has inspired the same uninterrupted, unsolicited expert advice and evaluation as the relationship with Castro's Cuba. The historiography of U.S.-Cuban relations during the Cold War, both pre- and post-1959, has been dynamic and largely critical of the U.S. relations with Batista and Castro. Most historians of the subject convincingly support the view of the Revolution as a reform movement having deep indigenous roots, addressing longstanding historical

grievances, and becoming radicalized in reaction to North American influence on the island. For example, Jules Benjamin in *The United States and the Origins of the Cuban Revolution: An Empire of Liberty in an Age of National Liberation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990) shows pre-1959 Cuba as an exemplary case not only of economic dependency but also of thwarted nationalistic traditions of independence and democracy. Morris Morley's *Imperial State and Revolution: The United States and Cuba, 1952-1986*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) identifies a thorny tradition on the other side of the Florida Straits, a stubborn U.S. policy dating back to the early Cold War which sees U.S.-Cuban relations in overly simplistic, confrontational terms. The short-lived, unsuccessful diplomacy with the Castro government is the subject of Richard E. Welch, Jr.'s *Response to Revolution: The United States and the Cuban Revolution, 1959-1961* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1985).

The foremost expert on Cuban history since 1898 has been Louis A. Pérez, himself a refugee from Communist Cuba. His *Army Politics in Cuba, 1898-1958*, (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1976) and *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution. Second Edition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995) are indispensable to understanding the not only the indigenous, nationalistic origins of the Cuban Revolution but also the way in which a ubiquitous North American presence was a key element in the radical nature of the Revolution's social programs and foreign relations. The best survey of twentieth century Cuban history, focusing on the historical roots of the Revolution, is still that of another Cuban-American, Jorge I. Domínguez, *Cuba: Order and Revolution* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap, 1978). Pérez and Domínguez combined with two other Cuba specialists, Hugh Thomas and Luis Aguilar to produce the

concisely informative *Cuba: A Short History*, edited by Leslie Bethell, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), which brings together chapters from the large collection *The Cambridge History of Latin America, Volumes III, V, and VII* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, 1986, 1990). Of greater value than its synopsis of Cuban history is the useful bibliographic essay at its end.

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