

# Inside Report . . . . .

By Rowland Evans and Robert Novak

## The Bundy Vacuum

PWT 11/6/66

THE ALMOST certain departure of McGeorge Bundy from his five-star job as presidential adviser on foreign affairs will end a unique experiment—a "Little State Department" in the bowels of the White House itself.

In effect, President Johnson wants to end—or at least transform—this little State Department. This is a key factor behind his private view that Bundy's departure is quite acceptable to him. Mr. Johnson has made no effort to conceal this view from intimates.

Accordingly, while Bundy weeks ago informed the President of an offer to head the Ford Foundation at \$75,000 a year, the President has not tried to dissuade him from accepting it (in contrast to other impassioned campaigns to retain key assistants). Although the President's plans are never certain until announced, it now is likely that LBJ intimate Bill D. Moyers (currently press secretary) will replace Bundy. And a good bet to replace Moyers as press secretary is former Houston ad man Jack Valenti, who has filled a variety of duties in the White House.

The reasons why the President is not twisting Bundy's arm to stay are complicated. Relations between Bundy and Mr. Johnson,



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contrary to most reports, have never been so close or easy as between Bundy and President Kennedy (who hired Bundy away from his job as a Harvard dean).

Bundy today still presides over one of the best run, most efficient shops in Washington. However, the personal influence of the brilliant intellectual with the President has been falling.

IT IS no secret in Washington how Mr. Johnson could keep Bundy at the White House: a strong indication, private or public, that Bundy would succeed Dean Rusk as Secretary of State. So long as the top State Department job seemed possible, the much-sought-after Bundy turned down outside employment offers with monotonous regularity.

Today, however, it is not possible. President Johnson constantly heaps praise on Rusk (recently calling him

the greatest Secretary in this century). This publicly dramatizes the fact that even if the President wished to make Bundy Secretary of State, there wouldn't be a vacancy. Mr. Johnson is nailing Rusk into the floor of his State Department office.

Consequently, Bundy's departure from the White House to take over the Ford Foundation seems inevitable. And if Moyers takes over as Bundy's successor, Bundy's departure will close down the little State Department in the White House basement.

The reason for this is the fact that Moyers is Mr. Johnson's intimate, whereas Bundy is not and never was. Bundy has maintained iron control and discipline over his operation, conducting it as independently as possible for a White House assistant. Because of his total involvement with the President, Moyers could not maintain that degree of independence even if he wanted to.

APART from his imminent resignation Bundy's little State Department already has undergone subtle change the last two years. Under President Kennedy Bundy never was an advocate in public. He kept far from public scrutiny, never allowing his operation to surface a "Bundy position."

Under President Johnson, however, Bundy was brought into the open. During the Dominican crisis, Bundy emerged more or less publicly as advocate of the moderate approach toward the Dominican rebels. In the political debate over the war in Vietnam, Bundy was a public spokesman against the peace bloc in defense of U. S. policy.

Bundy's departure (probably not until early 1966) suggests two things:

First, President Johnson will find himself more personally involved in foreign policy than he has been.

Second, Rusk's State Department, which on occasion has taken a back seat to Bundy's little State Department, will absorb much of the power that Bundy has accumulated over the past five years.

The Bundy vacuum, in other words, will be filled mainly not by his successor but by the President and the State Department. This may be one of the reasons why the President has shown no concern since Bundy notified him of the Ford Foundation offer.

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