THE SECRET WORLD OF LBJ

Here's the deal on the all-important, mostly anonymous men the President relies on above any others in times of crisis and calm. A veteran Washington correspondent pierces the White House inner circle in this revealing new book

BY CHARLES ROBERTS

■ *There is a large logbook which records that, on any given day in any given year, hundreds of persons have appointments in the White House in Washington, D.C.*

Yet only a fraction of these people see the man who occupies that house, the President of the United States.

The rest see men and women who operate in modest offices in the west and east wings of that famous structure—many of them virtually unknown to the American people.

It was John F. Kennedy who said he wanted to be President because he felt that would put him at the "center of power."

The Presidency is indeed the "center of power." Everything that stems from the office is molded in the image and desire of the President.

But collectively, outside the President, the "center of power" is his staff.

Few men are more qualified to write a study of the Presidential staff than Charles Roberts of Newsweek. *Chuck Roberts has been covering Presidents for over a decade. It was my privilege to work with him during my more than three years as press secretary to two Presidents. He is one of the most penetrating reporters I have known. He was with President Kennedy day and night during his thousand days in office and in Dallas with him when he was assassinated. He rode back to Washington with the new President—one of only two newsmen present on the Presidential plane during this tragic trip.*

I am confident that this book will illuminate the operations of the Presidential staff—a relatively new institution which has vital significance for the American people.

—Pierre Salinger

At the White House it started out like most overseas crises—with the sudden *crump-crump* of a teletype machine under the harsh fluorescent lights in the basement Situation Room. The message, relayed from the Pentagon to the White House in uncoded English,

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PHOTOGRAPHED FOR TRUE BY BEN SOMOROFF

"They are extensions of the President's eyes, ears and will"

was labeled "urgent"—and it was. Datelined Saigon and signed by General William C. Westmoreland, commander of U.S. Forces in South Viet Nam, it reported that Viet Cong guerillas had opened a savage attack on an American landing strip and barracks at Pleiku, 240 miles north of Saigon. Casualties were already "substantial," and the list was mounting.

It was shortly after 3 p.m., February 6, 1965, when Arthur McCafferty, an ex-CIA man standing the communications watch, ripped Westmoreland's message off the machine and handed it to Bromley K. Smith, a rugged, graying 53-year-old former Foreign Service officer now serving as executive secretary of the National Security Council. Smith had planned to spend that Saturday night at home, but as he read the cable he realized it was now a futile hope.

Bounding up the stairs two at a time, Smith carried the dispatch directly to the Cabinet Room, where, by coincidence, President Johnson was already conferring with some of his top security officials. As the President pushed back in his high-backed black-leather chair to read the message, both the State Department's Operations Center, or "flap house," and the Pentagon's National Military Command Center, or "war room," moved silently into the White House. Thus, before the last shot had been fired in the bloody, lopsided battle of Pleiku, Lyndon B. Johnson began weighing the most fateful move of his first 16 months as President: the escalation of the war in Viet Nam.

His action that night—the order that sent U.S. bombers roaring over a remote North Vietnamese village named Dong Hoi—was far from impulsive. As a matter of fact, he had made the momentous decision to bomb North Viet Nam nearly four months earlier. That decision was made, it can now be revealed, in October, 1964, at the height of the Presidential election campaign.

President Johnson, who had sought unsuccessfully to keep Viet Nam out of the campaign, decided then that South Viet Nam—and the U.S.—were losing that

KEY CARDS IN THE JOHNSON DECK

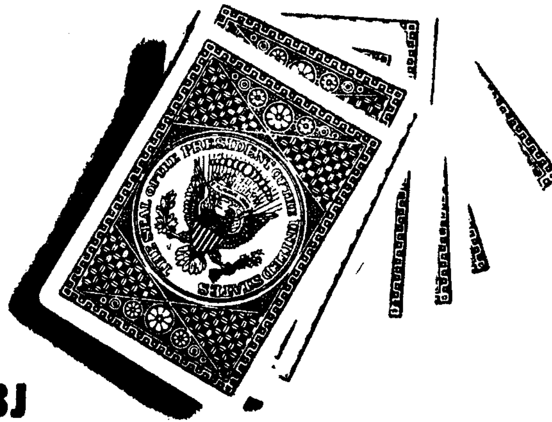
K♥ Jack J. Valenti
A♣ Douglass Cater
K♠ Robert McNamara
J♦ McGeorge Bundy
K♣ Harry C. McPherson
K♦ Bill D. Moyers
J♥ Lee C. White
J♠ Henry Fowler
A♦ Dean Rusk
J♣ W. Marvin Watson
A♥ Hubert H. Humphrey

frustrating 10-year-old war. The situation in October was worse than it had been a year ago. President Kennedy's strategy of fighting a limited but tougher antiguerilla war simply was not working. The Kennedy-announced goal of total U.S. withdrawal by the "end of 1965" had become totally unrealistic—unless the U.S. intended to withdraw in defeat. Something *had* to be done. Anything but peace

What President Johnson decided to do that October was to change the rules of the war. (He still denies that he escalated, insisting that he only used a new "tactic" after Pleiku, but the distinction is semantic.) Under the old rules, as Johnson saw them, it was proper for North Viet Nam to send bombs into South Viet Nam by truck, bullock cart and boat, to be exploded against innocent men, women and children, both native and American, but it was improper for South Viet Nam (or the U.S.) to "return" them by any means, against any targets. Under the new, Johnson rules, South Viet Nam and the U.S. would be allowed to carry bombs back to North Viet Nam by a more efficient means—the airplane. Under the old rules, the U.S. was a muscle-bound giant, fighting at a crippling disadvantage. Under the new, it could hit back "at the people who were hurting us the most."

In October, as in February, the President had ample evidence, in the form of intelligence reports, war prisoners' statements, [*Continued on page* 101]

False, & known to be false



THE SECRET WORLD OF LBJ

[*Continued from page* 31]

captured weapons and intercepted radio broadcasts from the north, that it was the Hanoi North Vietnamese government that was "hurting" us. But he also had good reasons for delaying the execution of his decision to bomb north of the 17th parallel.

The new policy, when put into effect, involved an obvious, awesome risk—that North Viet Nam and Red China would respond by sending hundreds of thousands of ground troops into South Viet Nam, confronting President Johnson with "another Korea." Another imponderable was the effect of the new policy on relations between the Soviet Union and Red China. Would it drive them farther apart or pull them together?

As it turned out, the President and his advisers had four months to consider these weighty questions before his decision was implemented. For his part, Johnson went on about the business of serving out Kennedy's term and getting elected to a four-year term of his own.

Three weeks after the election the President began taking visible steps to implement his decision. He recalled his top expert on Viet Nam, Ambassador Maxwell D. Taylor, for a full dress review of the situation. At a meeting in the Cabinet Room on December 1, President Johnson assembled a virtual council of war to hear a gloomy report on the military and political situation from Taylor—a brilliant four-star general before he became a diplomat—and then to hear Taylor state the case for air strikes against North Viet Nam. Ranged around the table were Vice-President Hubert Humphrey; Secretary of State Dean Rusk; CIA Director John McCone; General Earle Wheeler, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; McGeorge Bundy, Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs; his brother, William P. Bundy, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs; and John D. McNaughton, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs.

Taylor hardly needed to tell this group that the situation was deteriorating; they had read his cables. The Viet Cong had cut South Viet Nam almost in half. As it turned out, there was little need for him to argue for U.S. air raids against North Viet Nam, either. By December, the long struggle within the Johnson Administration between the "hawks" and the "doves" was coming to a close, with the doves becoming hawks, or, as one LBJ adviser insisted, all of them becoming "dawks." A dawk, that December, could be defined roughly as an ex-dove who once insisted on a negotiated settlement of the Viet Nam war, but now agreed that a hawklike show of strength was necessary in order to get *any* kind of settlement.

After the December 1 meeting, strategists in the Pentagon began updating top secret Viet Nam contingency plans that had been mulled over for years. Armed with fresh intelligence reports from Army's G-2 and the CIA and photographs from both the Navy and the Air Force, they pinpointed and assigned priorities to targets in what had been the Viet Cong sanctuary to the north.

Still the President had to steer a wary, zigzag course before he found a climate suitable for launching U.S. Navy Skyhawk and Crusader bombers against Dong Hoi. For President Johnson rarely moves, or moves only with great reluctance, until he has 60 to 70 percent public (or Congressional) support for a chosen course of action.

The climate of public opinion began to change for the President on Christmas Eve. That day, in downtown Saigon, brazen Viet Cong agents bombed an American officers' billet in broad daylight. Indignation back home ran high.

Johnson met again with his advisers, but failed to take any direct reprisal. At this some hawks in the Pentagon despaired. Then, in February, the company of Viet Cong guerillas trained their captured, American-made 88-mm. mortars on the barracks at Pleiku and laid down a barrage that rattled the teletype machine in the White House, 8,500 miles away. (Before the day was over eight GI's had been counted dead and 108 wounded.) "The decision-making process was not complicated—it was almost automatic," said an official who saw Johnson work that afternoon.

But even for a man who had made careful preparations to prosecute a frustrating war more vigorously, and who now must have realized that he had a consensus-making incident, the process of striking back was long and probably painful. With all nonessential traffic shut down, a torrent of facts and advice funneled into the White House—from CincPac in Hawaii (reporting the readiness of the three Navy carriers in the South China Sea), and from the President's blue-ribbon team in Saigon: General Westmoreland, Ambassador Taylor, Deputy Ambassador U. Alexis Johnson (a top career diplomat), and Mac Bundy, who happened to be in South Viet Nam on a four-day fact-finding mission.

In Bundy's absence, Bill Moyers, normally more concerned with The Great Society than with problems abroad, took over as chief of staff at the White House. Jack Valenti, another domestically oriented staffer (and an ex-bomber pilot), got quick interpretations of military cablese for the commander in chief. During the afternoon another harbinger of crisis—a telltale line of long, black Cadillacs—formed in West Executive Avenue outside the President's office.

Inside, National Security Council Secretary Smith commandeered a phone in the office of Mrs. Juanita Roberts, Johnson's No. 1 secretary, halfway between the President's office and the Cabinet Room, established an open line to the U.S. Communications Center in Saigon—and held it for five hours. The circuit had no "scrambler," but officials at both ends managed to get by with double-talk that would have baffled an enemy monitor.

After collecting all available facts on the predawn situation in Viet Nam (including reports that Viet Cong guerillas had attacked two other South Vietnamese bases during the night), the President began issuing orders. The response to Pleiku, he decreed, must be (1) prompt, (2) adequate, and (3) joint, i.e., carried out in conjunction with South Vietnamese forces.

McNamara and Wheeler quickly presented three alternate attack plans to the President. The option they preferred called for simultaneous, coordinated raids by South Vietnamese, U.S. Air Force and Navy planes on two targets: the guerilla training

and staging area at Dong Hoi and a military communications center at Van Linh, both just north of the 17th parallel. When Johnson approved this option, orders were flashed to Saigon and Pearl Harbor to prepare the attack. But the President insisted on an endorsement of the plan by what the State Department calls the "country team"—Taylor, Westmoreland, Alex Johnson, and, in this case, Mac Bundy.

It was 7:15 p.m. when Cyrus Vance, back at the Pentagon, got word from Bundy, in Saigon, via scrambled phone, that Taylor had received assurances of South Vietnamese participation and that the "country team" had unanimously recommended an air strike on North Viet Nam. At this point, as commander in chief, President Johnson could have given the "go" sign for an air attack and gone to dinner. But he decided on two more steps before going ahead: (1) he would call a meeting of the National Security Council to get final approval of the attack plan he, McNamara and Wheeler had agreed on; and (2) he would get the South Vietnamese government's approval of this *specific* plan.

At 7:25, giving just 20 minutes' notice, the President called a meeting of the National Security Council for 7:45 p.m. Some participants in the afternoon discussion who had ventured out of the White House for dinner didn't get back in time for this extraordinary session. To this assembly the President made it plain he thought the time had come to strike back—to implement his October decision. "I've had enough of this," he said, clutching the latest Pleiku casualty report. This time he got unanimous approval of the targets picked by McNamara and Wheeler—even from such officials as Under Secretary of State George Ball and Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield and others who had urged restraint in the past. Now he was waiting only for approval of the plan by the South Vietnamese government, whose Air Force was assigned to attack Van Linh. (As it turned out, Saigon's land-based Skyraiders were turned back by weather which obscured their target.) During the wait there were other problems to be discussed again—the probable responses of Hanoi, Peking and Moscow; the possible evacuation of American dependents from Saigon and the effect their withdrawal might have on South Vietnamese morale; the language to be used in a statement, the next morning, announcing and justifying the raids.

"You can't imagine how many orders have to be given, how many things you've got to think about on an operation like this," one White House staffer said later. "It was our first really big crisis with Johnson, and I think we served him well."

A few minutes after 9 word came through that the South Vietnamese government had approved the Dong Hoi-Van Linh plan and was ready to go. Tension had mounted as the "go" order was delayed. But McNamara, who had been routed out of a sickbed by the crisis, thought of a detail he hadn't covered. "Could I ask for a couple of minutes to say one more thing?" he inquired. "I'd hug you if you'd take two minutes more," said President Johnson, reprieved a little longer from giving the order that would send American pilots over hostile territory. The ensuing laughter broke the tension.

After McNamara had said his piece—four months after Johnson's decision to bomb and six hours after the first flash from Pleiku—the President was now prepared to make his move. Somehow, even in the crowded room, one Presidential aide was reminded of Harry S. Truman's recollection that "to be President of the United States is to be lonely, very lonely at times of great decisions."

"You'd better get going, Bob," the President said quietly to McNamara. Then he walked back to the mansion to spend a sleepless night awaiting the results of the first attack.

EVER-LENGTHENING SHADOW

Like most institutions, the White House staff is the lengthening shadow of a man. Every President shapes it to suit his own taste, temperament, and style of operation. It is closer to the President, physically and spiritually, than any of his other advisory groups—his Cabinet, his National Security Council, his military and economic advisers, or even his cronies. Though it is basically an anonymous organization, some of its members are more influential in affairs of state than Cabinet officers whose names are household words. Collectively, it is more influential in shaping his Presidency than any other body of counselors.

Members of the President's staff are extensions of the President's eyes, ears, and will; they are his political antennae, legmen, and ghost-writers; they are conservators of his time and energy; they help him determine and articulate policy.

U.S. Presidents discovered, long before Harry Truman said it, that "No one man can fill the Presidency." But they got little help from Congress, which has a traditional, almost pathological fear of strengthening the Executive. It wasn't until passage of The Reorganization Act of 1939, branded a "dictator bill" by its opponents, that the President—then Franklin Roosevelt—was authorized to consolidate and regroup agencies within the executive branch subject only to Congressional veto. The Act also gave FDR his now famous six administrative assistants with a "passion for anonymity."

This landmark law not only made the President the head of government in fact as well as name, it laid the foundation for the explosion of his staff into a brigade 40 times the size of the corporal's guard that worked for Hoover and bigger than the entire U.S. Army under Washington. Partly in compliance with Parkinson's Law, and partly out of necessity, it has proliferated into a bureaucracy of some 1,600 workers that is now overflowing not only the White House but four other buildings.

As befits a Texan, Lyndon B. Johnson's White House staff is the biggest and best paid in U.S. history. Its hard core consists of 250 workers in what the federal budget calls the "White House Office," jammed into the west wing, presciently built by TR in 1909, and the east wing, added by FDR in 1942. The other 1,350 are in the Executive Office of the President, which now houses a congeries of elite agencies: the Bureau of the Budget, the National Security Council, the Council of Economic Advisers, the National Aeronautics and Space Council, the Office of Economic Opportunity, the Office of Emergency Planning, and more. The Executive Office personnel are largely quartered in the adjacent 95-year-old Executive Office Building, an ornate, spacious structure that, in happier days, contained the entire State, War, and Navy Departments.

Johnson's lengthening shadow began to take shape in Parkland Hospital at Dallas, Texas, on November 22, 1963, minutes after Kenneth O'Donnell, appointments secretary to President Kennedy, first addressed him as "Mr. President"—to inform him that President Kennedy was dead.

On Kennedy's death the new President automatically inherited JFK's grief-stricken staff, a mixture of Ivy League intellectuals and tough politicians rated by some White House buffs as the most capable in modern history. But President Johnson, like his 35 predecessors, wanted around him men of his own choosing, men with whom he felt comfortable.

"Get me Jack Valenti," he told a friend before leaving the hospital to ride head down on the back seat of an unmarked police car to Love Field. And so Jack J. Valenti, a Houston ad man who had married LBJ's former secretary, Mary Margaret Wiley, the preceding summer, and who had ridden in the doomed Dallas motorcade as the Vice-President's guest, became the first post-assassination addition to President Johnson's staff.

At Love Field, where he took his oath of office aboard the curtained, heavily guarded Presidential jet, "Air Force One," he picked up another trusted Texan, Bill D. Moyers, for the return trip to Washington.

As one of two reporters who made that nightmarish flight back to the capital on "Air Force One," I saw at first hand the importance of total rapport between a President and the men serving him. Inevitably and understandably, the top Kennedy aides aboard—O'Donnell, Congressional Liaison Chief Larry O'Brien, and Dave Powers, JFK's court jester—spent most of the two-hour-and-twelve-minute flight in the rear cabin, keeping vigil over his bronze casket with the dazed, blood-spattered Jacqueline Kennedy. So deep was their shock—and their loyalty—that some Kennedy men, though they stayed on the payroll, never performed a full day's work for Johnson after Dallas.

"I need your help more than Jack Kennedy did," the President told the Kennedy Administration holdovers before the Kennedy funeral—and he did. Kennedy men proved invaluable to President Johnson in his swift, sure-handed take-over. It was President Kennedy's speechwriting alter ego, Ted Sorensen, who wrote Johnson's first, eloquent "let us continue" speech to Congress. It was President Kennedy's astute budget director, Kermit Gordon, who helped Johnson in his first major task (and the proudest achievement of his first year in office)—cutting

JFK's last budget, then soaring past the 101-billion-dollar mark, to a breathtaking 97.9 billion dollars.

But by mid-1964, with the departure of half a dozen Kennedy holdovers, the White House staff began to think, talk, act and react like Lyndon Johnson. "The President wants men around him who will cry when they see an old lady fall down in the street," Jack Valenti told me, trying to explain the yardstick by which Johnson measured his men. "He doesn't want cold intellectuals, without commitment to his programs. . . ."

Kennedy's intellectuals were not the only staffers to depart during the transition period. Late in the 1964 Presidential campaign, Johnson was stunned to learn that his oldest and most trusted aide, Walter Jenkins, had been arrested and forfeited bond on a charge of making "indecent gestures" to another man in the washroom of the Washington Y.M.C.A., just two blocks from the White House. The President's first reaction was angry disbelief; Jenkins, fatigued from overwork, had been "entrapped," he insisted. Privately, President Johnson threatened an investigation of "other people in this town," presumably Republicans, after the election. But when he learned Jenkins had been arrested five years earlier in the same washroom and on the same charge, he sadly asked for, and quickly got, the resignation of a man who had been a close personal friend as well as his No. 1 staff aide for 20 years. Now Jenkins' name is never mentioned in the White House, except when a staffer inadvertently says, "When Walter was here. . . ."

It was not until 1965, after the start of his first elected term, that Johnson achieved, by attrition and replacement, a staff lineup that pleased him. The President, usually sparing in praise of his subordinates, then suddenly became lyrical about them. He gave all his top men pay raises and a public commendation, calling them "one of the ablest and most broadly experienced and, I hope, most harmonious and most dedicated" staffs ever to serve a President.

At the same time a few faint lines of authority became visible. It was not a setup that could be diagrammed, except perhaps by Rube Goldberg. "The President just isn't a flow-chart man," one aide explained. "We do what he tells us, never mind the rank and titles." The organization that emerged was neither as rigid as Ike's, with a neatly pyramided chain of command, nor as freewheeling as Kennedy's, where it was virtually every man for himself. It bore a little resemblance to the "disorderly house" of the President's idol, Franklin Roosevelt, but was, Johnson said, "built on the Truman model."

To 10 top lieutenants President Johnson gave the rank of "Special Assistant" and salaries of $28,500 a year. He accorded the same title with a salary of $30,000 to JFK's holdover legislative liaison chief, Larry O'Brien, who submitted his resignation but agreed to stay on until the President's 1965 legislative program was launched. "All are of equal rank and all report to me," Johnson decreed.

The President's top men were divided into two categories, "specialists" and "generalists." The specialists are men with day-to-day operational duties in a single field. The generalists are what the President calls "my triple-threat men," or mixing his sports metaphors, "switch-hitters"—multipurpose staff officers who have special areas of competence but may be used on any problem that crops up. "We throw people into the line where we need them," Johnson says, boasting of his staff's versatility.

The specialists in Johnson's original lineup—each with a small staff of his own—were McGeorge Bundy, national security affairs; George E. Reedy, press secretary; and O'Brien, shepherd of the President's program on Capitol Hill. Reedy, a veteran Johnson staffer of 15 years, took a leave of absence in July, 1965, to undergo foot surgery, and O'Brien left the White House in September to become Postmaster General.

The original generalists were Bill D. Moyers, staff coordinator, responsible for the legislative program; Jack J. Valenti, speech editor and general factotum; Horace W. Busby, Cabinet secretary and part-time foreign affairs expert; Richard N. Goodwin, chief speechwriter, expert on poverty, art, conservation and urban problems; Douglass Cater, authority on health, education and welfare with a minor in foreign affairs; Lee C. White, special counsel; Harry C. McPherson, a lawyer-utility infielder; and W. Marvin Watson, appointments secretary. Moyers proved himself a good pinch hitter, as well as switch-hitter, when he took on the job of press secretary as an added duty after Reedy was granted his leave of absence.

This staff reflected Lyndon Johnson's partiality to Texans and to young, deferential men; five of the 11 were from Texas and the staff's average age, in mid-1965, was just 40. But Johnson's men possessed more talent—and more credentials—than any generalization about young Texans would imply. All, in fact, as President Johnson has said, were "men of exceptional ability." Four were lawyers, three held masters' degrees, one was a Harvard dean, and one an ordained Baptist minister. Three had taught at the college level, and at least two gave up incomes of more than 75,000 dollars a year to help Johnson move toward The Great Society. Not surprisingly, for a President who is an almost compulsive talker, nine of the 11 could double as speechwriters. And as several of the original group have left—among them, Goodwin, Busby and Reedy—others have come in who have equally impressive credentials.

A♣ THE LBJ WAY ♣A

At the White House, work days start early and run far into the night. One of the biggest problems for President Johnson's aides is that the President works a two-shift day. He begins his first watch by getting on the telephone in his bedroom at 7 or 8 o'clock in the morning and winds it up at about 2 p.m., when he leaves his office for a walk (or a swim) and lunch. After lunch he takes what he calls a "real" nap, shifting into pajamas. Then he showers, puts on fresh clothes, and returns to his office at about 4 p.m., when most government workers are beginning to wilt. The second shift may then run until 8 or 9 p.m. "It's like starting a new day," Johnson has said of the surge of energy that follows his midafternoon shower, "but at 5 in the afternoon I sometimes feel sorry for the poor Cabinet officers and other people I call in here who have been tied to their desks all day."

The President's five secretaries (there were two for Ike and JFK) have adjusted to his unorthodox routine by organizing themselves into two shifts. But his overworked aides—the top staff officers—are expected to be available at *all* times. Moyers, Valenti and Watson usually report to the President in his living quarters at about 8 a.m. They bring overnight intelligence reports—military and political—and get back the "night reading" they handed the President the night before. The papers bear brief notations: "OK/LBJ," "Have him see me," or perhaps just check marks opposite the "Yes" or "No" options inscribed on a covering memo by an aide. Good staff men must be prepared to discuss, at that unearthly hour, the contents of at least four morning newspapers—*The Baltimore Sun* (LBJ's favorite), *The Washington Post, The New York Times* and *The New York Herald Tribune*. They must also be prepared to brief the President on the callers on his schedule for that day—what they want, whether they are obligated to the President, and myriad other details down to personal habits.

The President's men have long since forsworn lunch dates outside the White House, though the newsmen and lobbyists who would like to entertain them are legion. In his first year, one close Presidential adviser tried eating out twice; the first time a message to return to the White House was awaiting him when he arrived at his chosen bistro, and the second time he got only as far as the soup course before being recalled. The alternative for staffers is lunch at their desks, or in the White House "mess," a Navy-operated basement dining hall.

Even starting for home at 8 p.m., 12 hours after reporting for duty, provides no assurance of a getaway. The chauffeured black Mercury sedans in which the top staff men ride to and from work (one of the emoluments of office) are equipped with two-way radios in case the boss wants to recall or divert them. At home, the top men have white telephones connected directly to the White House switchboard. "It's real George—George Orwellian, that is," one LBJ adviser confided after several night calls from the President.

Another problem for staffers is the fact that President Johnson is a perfectionist, bluntly intolerant of sloppiness in work or personal appearance. He likes to be surrounded by neat, trim, well-groomed people. He once sent a secretary to a "charm" school to improve her appearance. He keeps a watchful eye on the waistlines of his male subordinates.

With all his demands on aides, the President fiercely resents the cliché that he is a "slave driver"—just as he resents the popular notions that he is "folksy" (he hates the word) and that he has "telephonitis" (he will not pose for pictures with a phone

in his hand). Some of his workers defend him on the slave-driver charge. "The kind of people who work for the President would be working 12 or 15 hours a day wherever they worked," Moyers insists. "Most of us are self-drivers."

One of the few status symbols among White House staffers is the "PL," or private line. Moyers, Bundy, Valenti and Watson have PL's directly from the President's 24-button telephone console. When he picks up his green phone and pushes a button, bypassing the White House switchboard, they know who's buzzing.

President Johnson does not operate with the open-door policy followed by President Kennedy, whose top aides walked in on him at will. Neither does he insist, as President Eisenhower did, on all problems being funneled to him through a Sherman Adams-like chief of staff. To take up a problem with the President, his top staffers and Cabinet officers call Marvin Watson, his appointments secretary, and arrange a time.

This raises the question that has nagged at every President since the evolution of the modern White House staff system under FDR in 1939: which problems should go to the President and which should be handled by his staff?

Ideally, the staff operates as a funnel rather than a buffer, expediting rather than obstructing the flow of information to the President. But it must be a funnel with a fine-screen strainer. A hint of the magnitude of the filtering job can be gained from the mail count alone: in 1964, 2,491,300 pieces of mail arrived at the White House, compared to 653,000 pieces in 1960. In addition there were 3.5 million incoming phone calls, compared to 2 million in President Eisenhower's last year. The pressure on the President to see callers is fantastic. Some days as many as 50 members of Congress demand time on the green carpet in his oval office. (Congressional callers are rarely carried on the President's published appointments calendar for a simple reason: if he admits he has seen one Senator from, say, Utah, then the other demands equal time.) Then there is the pressure to crown Azalea Queens and Cherry Blossom Princesses, to greet the Teacher of the Year, the Boy of the Year, the Big Brother of the Year, and to launch fund-raising drives for numberless charities that feel they cannot collect money without a Presidential blessing. Strangely, protected as he was by his staff, President Eisenhower was a patsy for such promotion stunts. President Kennedy ducked most of them. President Johnson and his staff have delegated many time-consuming ceremonial functions to Vice-President Humphrey.

One thing Johnson's staff has to a greater degree than Ike's or Kennedy's is that "passion for anonymity" prescribed by FDR for his "selfless six" administrative assistants. In fact, old Washington hands agree it is the most inconspicuous, self-effacing White House team in modern history. On LBJ's whole roster there is not a man with the wintry officiousness of Sherman Adams, the volcanic temper of Jim Hagerty, the sartorial flamboyance or irrepressible humor of Pierre Salinger. To upstage Lyndon Johnson would be almost impossible; but his men seem to *prefer* lingering in his long shadow. And the President likes it that way; the President likes his aides anonymous.

A♦ FIRST AMONG EQUALS ♦A

"That boy," President Johnson told reporters one day with an eye on a young staff member, "has a bleeding ulcer. He works for me like a dog, and is just as faithful. He never asks for anything—but for more work. In the last year he has put together the most comprehensive legislative program ever sent to Congress in the history of this Republic. He won't go home with that bleeding ulcer until 9 or 10 o'clock. I don't know what I'd do without him."

The "boy" the President referred to, of course, was Bill Don Moyers, at 31 an ordained Baptist minister, a journeyman liberal, the youngest of the President's Special Assistants and the *Wunderkind* of the Johnson Administration. Though Lyndon Johnson has never accorded him any rank, insisting that all his top aides are equal, Moyers is generally acknowledged to be more equal than the others. He is, in fact, the bellwether and coordinator of the staff, its chief administrator, anchor man on domestic issues, an increasingly important adviser in foreign affairs, and—in a pinch—the President's Press Secretary.

As molder of the President's legislative program—the man to whom task forces, Cabinet officers and speechwriters submitted their ideas—he is more nearly the architect of The Great Society than any other man save the President himself. He is, according to one LBJ friend, the President's "good angel, representing his conscience when there's a conflict between conscience and expediency."

He is, in short, the most special of the Special Assistants.

Despite all these credentials, Moyers, a slight, bespectacled, scholarly-looking, 160-pound six-footer, looks more like Clark Kent than Superman.

Mild and soft-spoken, Moyers never asserts the greater authority the President has tacitly bestowed on him. In fact, he rarely invokes the name of the President. Where other staffers, in transmitting a Presidential order, say, "The President wants . . . ," Moyers simply says, "Let's do it this way." To other staffers and Cabinet officers alike, this is just about as binding as a Presidential edict.

Moyers, whose quiet manner is antithetical to Lyndon Johnson's in most respects, bears one striking similarity. He is a consensus worshiper.

"He can sit down with three people when they are miles apart in their thinking and get an agreement on what our policy ought to be," says the President, who places great store in that kind of talent.

With these rave notices, Moyers seems almost too good to be true. But the fact is he has been getting such unmixed paeans almost since he was born in Hugo, Oklahoma, the son of an odd-jobs man, on June 5, 1934. Early on, his family moved to Marshall, Texas. At Marshall High his faculty adviser recalls vividly that he "worked like a house afire," compiling a 93.83 scholastic average. He also wrote school news for the town daily, *The Marshall News-Messenger*.

The *News-Messenger* job was more than an avocation. At the paper, cub reporter Moyers became self-supporting at 14, covered police and City Hall at 15 and was named sports editor at 17. The job also resulted in Moyers' changing his given name: christened Billy Don, he dropped the "y" when he got his first by-line. "'Bill' seemed more dignified," he says today.

At North Texas State College (now University) in Denton, Moyers continued at the same breathless pace. Then, at the end of his sophomore year, in the spring of 1954, he wrote a letter that changed his life.

The letter, to Lyndon B. Johnson, asked the powerful Senator from Texas whether he had a job for a college student as a summer replacement in his office. Impressed by the letter, Johnson checked with the publisher of the *News-Messenger* and got such a resounding endorsement that he hired Moyers sight unseen.

At the end of the summer, as Moyers was preparing to return to Denton, Senator Johnson proposed that he transfer to the University of Texas, at Austin. There, the Senator pointed out, Moyers could work part time at the LBJ radio-TV station and pick up some courses not offered at North Texas State. Moyers readily accepted a job as assistant news editor at KTBC—the salary enabled him to marry his teen-age sweetheart, Judy Davidson—and since then his wagon has been hitched, with few interruptions, to Lyndon Johnson's high-speed steamroller.

At KTBC the "part-time" job turned into a 50-hour work week on three jobs—news, continuity and traffic—now handled by eight employees and a computer.

At the University, Moyers always seemed "tired and pale," according to one journalism instructor. But this did not prevent him from winning, at the beginning of his senior year, the top scholarship for male undergraduates in the School of Journalism (his grade average: 2.77 out of a possible 3.0). He graduated with highest honors in 1956 and then, with an assist from LBJ, went to the University of Edinburgh for a year on a Rotary International Fellowship.

When he returned to the U.S., Moyers enrolled at the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, to study theology and ethics. In December, 1959, two weeks before Moyers got his Bachelor of Divinity degree, he got a call from the Texas Senator, who by then was planning his unannounced campaign for the 1960 Democratic Presidential nomination. LBJ, who had kept close track of his onetime mail clerk, wanted Moyers to rejoin his staff immediately

At the age of 25 then, Moyers became at the same time an

ordained Baptist minister (he still preaches occasional guest sermons in Washington area churches) and a trooper in one of the roughest, bitterest, no-holds-barred political battles of this century—the Kennedy-Johnson fight for the Presidential nomination. When that struggle ended at Los Angeles, with JFK the victor and LBJ his surprise running mate, Moyers became liaison man between the two camps. Mr. Johnson, not an easy man to please, was so satisfied with his work that within three months he raised his salary from $10,000 to $15,000 a year.

After the election, Moyers wangled a breakfast at the Mayflower Hotel with R. Sargent Shriver, JFK's brother-in-law and the Peace Corps director-designate. Moyers left the Mayflower an associate director of the Corps, which turned out to be the most popular innovation of the Kennedy Administration.

He was named Deputy Director of the Corps in January, 1963, at the age of 28—perhaps the youngest man ever to receive a Presidential appointment requiring Senate confirmation. This was the post he held at the time of Kennedy's assassination. Afterward, Moyers stayed on the Peace Corps payroll for months, insisting he was on temporary duty, "just filling in a chink" at the White House. Meanwhile, Johnson kept pushing more work into the chink. Moyers has never returned to the Peace Corps since, except to clean out his desk.

The variety of chores handled by Moyers is staggering. On a given day he may confer in depth with as many as three Cabinet officers on such divergent and complex subjects as water pollution, juvenile delinquency and fair labor standards legislation. Between conferences he may brief a group of visiting editors on the aims of The Great Society, settle a jurisdictional dispute between two government departments and answer complaints from half a dozen members of Congress. I was sitting in his office one night after such a day and was astonished to hear him pick up the phone and offer an ambassadorship to a diplomat. "You can have either Prague or Belgrade," he said. The caller said he would let him know.

Moyers is generally in charge of speechwriters, and in a pinch can turn out a text in passable Lyndonese himself. He attends all meetings of both the Cabinet and the National Security Council, and since early 1965 has regularly pulled duty on overseas crises.

During the Selma racial crisis, when, for strategic reasons, the President couldn't confer directly with Alabama's George Wallace but it was imperative for the White House to know the Governor's intentions, it was Moyers who sounded him out by phone and then maintained contact through the crisis.

"He's in everything," President Johnson has said of his overworked, uncomplaining staff coordinator, and no one has yet figured out a better job description.

Moyers' duodenal ulcer, which his doctors believe to be hereditary, has not bled since January, 1963, when he was hospitalized for two weeks, then put on a strict soft-food diet. At the Peace Corps Moyers sipped as many as four strawberry milkshakes a day and nibbled at custards between meals. The White House basement canteen offers no such delicacies; he now eats a pint of ice cream a day and says his ulcer is "under control."

Impressive as the statistics are on Moyers' ability, he would not rank so high as he does in the estimate of White House insiders if he were not, as one of them puts it, "a stand-up guy." Puffing silently on a pencil-thin Reina Isabel cigar (he smokes five a day) and doodling geometric designs, he can listen silently as the President develops an idea for 10 minutes and then softly, in an almost ministerial tone, begin to dissect it. Lyndon Johnson, sometimes short-tempered and a formidable antagonist even before he acquired the massive dignity of the Presidency, has yielded more than once to his junior assistant's reasoning.

Moyers proved himself adroit at dealing with newsmen, too, when suddenly pressed into service as President Johnson's press secretary. In his first news briefing he startled the White House press corps—accustomed to "I don't know" answers from George Reedy—by picking up a phone and calling the President direct to get an answer to a reporter's question. The consensus was that Moyers, with his crisp, informative answers, couldn't help but improve the President's image and press relations. It seemed doubtful, however, that even Moyers could carry both the press job and his other manifold duties indefinitely.

To ease the burden, after moving Moyers into the press office (an assignment Moyers called "hopefully temporary"), Johnson added another $28,500-a-year Special Assistant to his staff to help put together his 1966 legislative program. He is Joseph A. Califano, 34, Brooklyn-born, an honor graduate of Holy Cross with a Harvard law degree. When drafted by Johnson, Califano was working in the Defense Department and known as the Pentagon's chief troubleshooter. More important from LBJ's point of view, Califano is very knowledgeable on a pet Johnson project—the billion-dollar race to get an economically-feasible supersonic jet transport plane into commercial service before Britain and France.

Meantime Moyers, who lives with his wife and three young children in a split-level in suburban Virginia, remains a paradox of power. In a capital noted for its jealousy toward those at seats of power, it is still hard to find anyone who dislikes him.

K♠ LITTLE STATE DEPARTMENT ♠K

When "Air Force One" touched down at Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland, at 5:59 p.m. on November 22, 1963, after its swift return trip from Dallas, following President Kennedy's death, the first government official to confer with the new President of the United States was McGeorge Bundy, who had been John F. Kennedy's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs. In the eerie shadows cast by the glare of TV lights, the pink-cheeked former Harvard dean, looking more like a GS-12 civil servant than a top government official, moved through the ranks of bewildered Cabinet officers, agency heads, FBI agents and Secret Servicemen, to make his first official report to the new chief of state.

Bundy had been attending a budget conference at the Pentagon with Defense Secretary Robert McNamara and Budget Director Kermit Gordon when word that President Kennedy had been shot reached Washington. Bundy sped to the White House and took charge. While McNamara ordered U.S. armed forces around the world (including 10 Polaris submarines under the seas) into a state of readiness, Bundy placed the CIA on a worldwide "intelligence alert" to watch for any suspicious act by the Communists. He also radioed the numbing news from Dallas to the jet transport carrying Secretary of State Rusk and five other Cabinet officers across the Pacific for a meeting with the Japanese Cabinet in Tokyo. His message caught the plane —one of the President's fleet of four 707 jets—one hour out of Honolulu and turned it around for a frantic, flank-speed return to Washington. Bundy then prepared several position papers on the world situation for the new President and raced to Andrews AFB.

In Washington that night, as newsmen took stock of the new "Johnson Administration," most were sure Bundy would be among the first, if not the first, of the Kennedy appointees to leave the White House. No two men in public life, it was generally agreed, had less in common than the crisp, intellectual, ascetic Bundy—the personification of a Boston Brahmin—and the garrulous, practical, folksy Johnson—a Texan to the core.

The trouble with this line of reasoning was that it ignored three factors: (1) Bundy had an ingrained sense of public duty; (2) he liked his job as "dean of the world"; and (3) in three years of National Security Council meetings, Lyndon Johnson had developed a powerful respect for the man John Kennedy once called "indispensable." As a matter of fact, within a few weeks Johnson was calling him "invaluable" and shoving more work his way.

Under President Johnson the nature of Bundy's job changed, but not his loyalty. This, it turned out, was not just to the late occupant of the White House, but to the President of the United States. Some Kennedy appointees who never warmed to Lyndon Johnson had difficulty understanding this concept. "Mac is a turncoat," one member of the Irish Mafia muttered to me a few weeks after Bundy, with a little soul-searching, had made a smooth transition to the new order. It was as if Bundy had violated the canons of a cult. Even Bobby Kennedy (though *he* stayed on as Attorney General for nine months) seemed to resent Bundy's adaptability.

In Bundy's family the tradition of public service goes back at least to the American Revolution and his father, Harvey Hollister Bundy, a prosperous Boston lawyer, served as Assistant Secretary of State to Henry Stimson in the Hoover Administration and as Stimson's assistant when he was Secretary of War under President Roosevelt.

Stimson and a later Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, were

frequent callers at the Bundy home on Beacon Street. "Diplomacy and world affairs were part of the household conversation," recalls Bundy's older brother, William, who married Acheson's daughter and is now an Assistant Secretary of State. "We felt close to what was going on." Predictably, "Mackie" entered Dexter School in Brookline at the age of eight, one class behind John F. Kennedy. A whiz kid, he took top honors in both sports and studies, moved on to Groton, where he was first in his class, and to Yale, where he was the first student in history to get three perfect scores on his entrance examinations.

Bundy entered World War II as an Army private, left it as an aiguilletted military aide to Admiral Alan G. Kirk. He was with Kirk on the flag bridge of the U.S.S. "Augusta" during the Normandy invasion. When Bundy joined the Harvard faculty in 1949 as a lecturer in government (his course: The United States in World Politics), friends thought he had found his métier. He glittered on the lecture platform and advanced in academic rank (without bothering to get even a master's degree). He also married well—Mary Buckminster Lothrop, the pretty associate director of admissions at neighboring Radcliffe.

At 34, just four years after joining the faculty, Bundy was jumped over hundreds of senior professors to the post of Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences—the No. 2 job at one of America's oldest and proudest universities. In this role he made some enemies. "He pays no attention to what the other fellow may think," Professor Charles R. Cherington, who taught government under Bundy, told an interviewer after Bundy left the campus. "He's as cold as ice and snippy about everything." But he also made some important friends—among them Harvard Overseer John F. Kennedy. They sat next to each other during the Harvard commencement early in the 1960 campaign. As a result of that encounter Bundy, who had been a Republican, helped organize, but did not join, an egghead advisory panel—the group of scholars at Harvard and M.I.T. that fed ideas to JFK during and after the 1960 campaign.

When Bundy arrived in Washington as Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, he inherited a title carried over from the Eisenhower Administration, but created an entirely new job. Where his predecessor, Gordon Gray, had seen President Eisenhower three or four times a week, Bundy conferred with President Kennedy four or five times a day. He became a channel of communication between the President and all government agencies involved in maintaining national security. Bundy also took over the job of running the highly secret and often controversial National Security Council that was created by Congress in 1947 "to advise the President with respect to the integration of domestic, foreign, and military policies relating to the national security."

The only statutory members of the council are the President, the Vice-President, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense and the Director of the Office of Emergency Planning, but its sessions are often attended by as many as a dozen other officials—at the President's invitation. At the conclusion of each meeting all papers left on the Cabinet table—including Mac Bundy's doodling pad—are burned.

Bundy has a string of beige-carpeted, tastefully decorated offices, plus a map-lined, top-secret Situation Room in the White House. Communications from all over the world, arriving through State, Pentagon and CIA facilities, pour into the Situation Room around the clock by teletype, scramble phone, and pneumatic tube. (There are three clocks over the teletype machines—one on Greenwich time, one on Washington time, and the third on "President's time," wherever he may be. During crises the Greenwich clock is sometimes shifted to Moscow or Saigon time.)

Bundy commands a staff of a dozen bright, mostly young, and well-paid subordinates recruited from such places as the Pentagon, the State Department and "the Agency" (CIA), and bristling with M.A. and Ph.D. degrees. Each of the "Bundy group" has an area of expertise—the Far East, Africa, Latin America, nuclear testing, the United Nations—but assignments change frequently, as crises erupt.

The hand of Bundy is seldom seen by the public, but occasionally his role in shaping policy can be documented. He has admitted, for instance, that his part in President Kennedy's Bay of Pigs disaster was "not very constructive. . . . We were just freshmen, and as freshmen you don't go in and say, 'Dammit, Mr. President, you're not getting the right kind of information.'" In President Kennedy's second Cuban crisis—the missile confrontation—it was Bundy who made the showdown possible. After a two-week gap in aerial reconnaissance photography, he broke a jurisdictional dispute between the CIA and the Strategic Air Command as to which agency would conduct vital U-2 flights over the island, siding with SAC. The first pictures made by SAC produced the evidence of missile installations that triggered Kennedy's "get out" order to Soviet Premier Khrushchev. In the ensuing crisis Bundy got high marks for his guts and stamina from all participants (except, of course, the Russians and Cubans).

This does not mean that Bundy is committed to confrontation as the only way of dealing with the Communists. At times he has been an equally fervent advocate of accommodation. The President has said of him: "Every minute he's gone we get problems."

Under President Johnson, Secretary of State Rusk's authority has been subtly enhanced at the expense of Bundy. There have been fewer complaints about White House "meddling" in foreign affairs from the State Department, which sometimes forgets that the President is the government's chief foreign-policy officer. Outwardly, Bundy and Rusk, basically fellow egg-heads, get along well. Old hands at the State Department are now more fascinated by the obvious rivalry between Bundy and Under Secretary of State Ball—both potential candidates for Rusk's job—than by the Rusk-Bundy relationship. They are now more concerned about incursions into their policy-making area by Defense Secretary McNamara than they are about the activities of the boyish-looking 46-year-old Bundy.

Though his views have been criticized (Alaska's Senator Ernest Gruening habitually calls him "George McBungle"), Bundy has never been accused of tailoring his views to please the President. While generally one with President Johnson on objectives, Bundy has frequently differed with him on methods. In the Dominican crisis, while agreeing that U.S. intervention was necessary, Bundy (and Moyers) argued against the President's introducing the Communist threat in his televised reports on the situation until there was sufficient evidence to document that threat. The result was that President Johnson gave no hint of his fears of a Communist takeover until two days after intervening and did not make his outright charge that "Communist conspirators" had taken over the revolution until four days after intervention.

At his modern walnut desk, cluttered with cables stamped "secret" and "urgent," Bundy has little time for small talk. Swiveling from side to side in a low-backed leather chair, and occasionally waving a triangular draftsman's ruler to emphasize a point, he marshals facts and logic with the cold detachment of a mathematical scholar (which he is) explaining a problem in freshman algebra.

In conversation he smiles readily, but it is a quick-fading smile. He thinks, moves and talks quickly, slowing up only occasionally to turn a resonant or pungent phrase. While listening he fixes his callers sternly, blue eyes peering intently through light shell-rimmed glasses. Some White House colleagues have put him down as an overbearing intellectual snob—a cold and humorless Univac. Others, after penetrating the glacial exterior, sometimes over a bourbon on the rocks or a martini, have found him witty and charming, a man who enjoys the thrust and parry of good conversation. He rarely attends cocktail parties, preferring evenings at home with his wife and "my troops"—four precocious sons.

THE SWITCH-HITTERS

"We are like a basketball team," Bill Moyers once said of President Johnson's White House staff. "To the spectator in the stands, what goes on down on the floor may look haphazard, with men moving back and forth in all directions. But each player on the court knows how to handle the ball, and what he's doing, and what the others are doing. There's no quarterback on the field to call signals. All our orders come from the coach—the President. We all have one common goal—to put the ball through the hoop."

Inept as this metaphor may seem for a squad of superannuated and mostly overweight old grads—the President's Special Assistants—it is fairly descriptive of how President Johnson's staff operates. After Moyers, who is pivot man on domestic issues (if not captain of the team), and Bundy, who handles the ball

in foreign affairs, the coach has a bench full of virtuoso performers to call on. Oblivious to Moyers' basketball analogy, President Johnson calls them variously his "switch-hitters" and his "triple-threat men." The most versatile of these—or at least those with the most diversified duties—are a duo of Texans named Jack Joseph Valenti and William Marvin Watson. (A third "triple-threater" from Texas, Horace Wooten Busby, Jr., resigned last September to return to private business.)

Besides their Texas birth certificates—which are gilt-edged credentials in Washington these days—Valenti and Watson have much in common to recommend them to the coach. They were successful businessmen—a recommendation not to be ignored with a President who courts business as LBJ does. Both hold masters' degrees in business administration. This doesn't hurt in a White House sensitive to the charge that it is short on academic types. They are shrewd politicians, glib talkers, moderately skilled writers and are fanatically loyal to LBJ and The Great Society.

Jack Valenti, 44, a short (five feet seven inches, 145 pounds), smart and handsome former Houston ad man, is easily the better-known of the switch-hitters, partly because he is the more gregarious and partly because he is a familiar figure on every first page and TV screen in America as the little man who is always at the President's elbow, whispering in his ear, at ceremonial functions. Early in his White House career, President Johnson chuckled at a description of Valenti as "more important than a valet and less important than an ambassador . . . [with] some of the functions of each—and many in between." There is still something of the manservant in Valenti's relationship to the President—he is the first to see him in the morning and often puts him to bed at night—but he has long since become more important than an ambassador.

During Lyndon Johnson's first year as President, Valenti was unquestionably the aide closest to him physically, attending him on a round-the-clock basis. As his appointments secretary, he was the traffic cop who decided who saw the President and when. "The most precious thing a President has is his time," Valenti once said, evaluating the importance of that job.

Valenti relinquished most of the doorkeeping job to Marvin Watson when Watson joined the staff early in 1965. But in the meantime Valenti had discovered half a dozen other jobs for himself. "He's the only man who sees every paper that crosses my desk," the President once told me. "He's really a Jack-of-all-trades. He takes over to my bedroom every night five or six big envelopes full of things I've got to read, things he has culled out as important or urgent. He's a good writer and an editor. He can dictate answers to 30 letters in an hour. He's one of the most talented men we have."

The key job Valenti carved out was that of White House editor-in-chief. Soon Mr. Johnson was bucking all Presidential speeches and statements over to him for final editing. One night I saw the President toss Valenti the draft of a balance-of-payments message to Congress (laboriously prepared at the Treasury Department) with one simple instruction: "Cut out the gobbledygook!" On another occasion he handed him a dry-as-dust farm message and told him, "Sex it up a little, Jack." In both cases Valenti rewrote them, or edited them down, into the short, punchy sentences Johnson prefers.

Valenti came by his talents the hard way. The grandson of Sicilian immigrants who arrived in Texas in the 1880's, he worked after hours as a theater usher for 10 dollars a week while attending high school. When he graduated at 15, with honors, his father was earning 150 dollars a month as a county tax clerk. "And I wanted to go to Harvard," Valenti remembers wistfully. Instead he got a job as an office boy and enrolled as a night student at the University of Houston. Ten years later, with time out for service as an Air Force B-25 bomber pilot in World War II, and with an A-minus average, he earned his degree as a bachelor of business administration.

After graduating from the University of Houston, Valenti got into Harvard's tough Graduate School of Business Administration, where he earned a master's degree in 1948. Back at the Humble Oil and Refining Company, where he had been an office boy, he was now installed as manager of advertising and sales promotion.

In 1952, with "spit, courage and baling wire"—and a promise of the Continental Oil Company account—Valenti and Weldon Weekley, a former University of Houston classmate, left Humble to start a new ad agency. Valenti, working as the "outside" man while Weekley ran the office, got more fat accounts and made friends of such Houston moguls as R.E. (Bob) Smith and Roy M. Hofheinz, millionaire builders of Houston's Astrodome, political kingmakers, and owners of a big chunk of the city. This, in turn, got Valenti into politics. He became a campaign manager and ad director for a succession of Smith-Hofheinz candidates. He also started writing a weekly column of musings for *The Houston Post.*

He had just been named the Outstanding Young Man of Houston when he first met Lyndon Johnson, at a reception for 20 rising young businessmen at Houston's Shamrock Hotel in 1956. Valenti was so impressed that he devoted his next *Post* column entirely to the then Senate majority leader.

Johnson saw plenty of hustling Jack Valenti from then on. He was waiting at the airport unfailingly when Johnson visited Houston. He worked for LBJ at Los Angeles in 1960. As a result, his ad agency got the Kennedy-Johnson campaign account in Texas. And as a further result, during the campaign, he met Johnson's secretary, Mary Margaret Wiley. After the election Valenti popped up in Washington to court—and eventually marry—Miss Wiley. Lyndon Johnson gave the bride away at a big June wedding in Houston in 1962.

With his sharp suits, ingratiating manner and riverboat gambler's drawl, Valenti was mistaken by many for a glib, opportunistic Texas "operator" when he first flew into Washington on LBJ's coattails. His huckster background did not inspire confidence among liberals who hoped for an LBJ "brain trust." But Valenti proved he could grapple with ideas as well as words. "He knows the substance, as well as the political implications, of every memo he puts in the President's night reading," one of his colleagues contends. "He's about as well informed as any man in Washington."

Valenti's only apparent vice is that he is *too* enthusiastic about his boss. This has led him into some purple prose that even his friends have found cloying. In one speech he described the moment of Lyndon Johnson's accession: "And suddenly, as though the darkness of the cave confided its fears to the trail of light growing larger as it banished the night, the Nation's breath, held tightly to its breast, began to ease and across the land the people began to move again." He concluded that stem-winder by saying, "I sleep each night a little better, a little more confidently because Lyndon Johnson is my President."

The speech, before an advertising men's convention in Boston, became a titillating conversation piece at Washington cocktail parties. Valenti was ribbed unmercifully, but was unabashed. "What the hell did they expect a Special Assistant to the President to do?" he asked. "Denounce the President?"

W. Marvin Watson, the handsome steel-company executive President Johnson brought in from Texas early in 1965 as his appointments secretary, is another multipurpose aide. Watson, then 40, a dark, green-eyed, squarely built 180-pounder whom the President calls "my front man," is as friendly as any Texan can be until he is asked about some callers on the President's schedule. If the caller is on LBJ's official Appointments Calendar, posted each night on the White House pressroom bulletin board, Watson is happy to confirm that he is in the building. "Call me anytime, my friend," he says. But if the caller is not on the *official* list (as most of the President's visitors aren't)—if he happens to be a controversial labor leader, a politician the President is secretly wooing, or anyone whose presence Mr. Johnson doesn't want advertised—a reporter might as well talk to the Great Polar Ice Cap as to Marvin Watson.

"Marvin is a hard-nosed, hard-shell, nondrinking, no-nonsense Baptist," a member of the White House staff reported a few days after Watson came to town. "He's all business and he gets things done. He is not afraid to make decisions, where some people around here are afraid to go to the bathroom without asking the President." The same aide predicted Watson would be chief of LBJ's staff within a year—"and that may be the best thing that ever happened here."

A native of the tiny sawmill town of Oakhurst, Texas, Watson first came to national attention during the summer of 1964 in Atlantic City, New Jersey, when he served as "coordinator" of the Democratic convention. Translated, this meant that Watson was running the show for LBJ. Whether the problem was credentials, seating, or just trying to keep the coronation from becoming a drag on TV, "Clear it with Marvin" became the law of the convention.

After the convention Watson went back to Texas long enough to get elected state Democratic chairman and to organize a campaign that swept two Republican congressmen and all but

one G.O.P. member of the state legislature out of office. Then, suddenly, in the last three weeks of the Presidential campaign he was on "Air Force One," smoothing things out for LBJ.

Watson has a bachelor's degree in business administration and a master's from Baylor University, and was a Marine sergeant in World War II. He was executive assistant to the president of the Lone Star Steel Company when the President asked him to come to Washington.

At the White House he is involved considerably more in politics than economics. In the tradition of Presidential appointments secretaries—Tom Stephens' role with Eisenhower and Kenny O'Donnell's with Kennedy were almost identical—he spends as much time on political troubleshooting as he does on arranging the President's schedule. He serves as White House liaison man with the Democratic National Committee, with Democratic governors and big-city mayors.

Physically, the appointments job is the most wearing of all staff assignments. Watson counts it a lucky day when he gets home to his wife, Marion, and three teen-aged children before 10 p.m. As schedule-maker he must be at the President's side when he gets up in the morning and as timekeeper he must accompany him everywhere he goes. President Johnson has called it the "get-me-to-the-church-on-time" job, and finds Watson "easy to be with all the time." Watson is equipped with both the stamina and the loyalty required for the task. "Marvin is as wise as my father and as gentle as my mother," the President once said of him, "and he is as loyal as another East Texan I know, Lady Bird." (Mrs. Johnson, a Watson fan, says she'd give $100,000 a year to have him run her business.)

K♣ THE PHRASEMAKERS ♣K

Standing in the gold-carpeted aisle of his big Presidential jet as it roared down a runway of Detroit's Willow Run Airport, Lyndon Johnson was as pleased with himself on May 22, 1964, as I have ever seen him. Perspiring heavily and in shirt-sleeves, he was oblivious, I'm sure, to the fact that he was violating a Civil Aeronautics Board regulation by standing during a takeoff. He also violated one of his own rules—against drinking during working hours—by ordering a light Cutty Sark and water.

What was on his mind—the thing that pleased him so much—was a speech he had just delivered. In the University of Michigan's vast football stadium at Ann Arbor, before a cheering crowd of 85,000, he had made his first formal exposition of The Great Society idea.

Six months to the day, and almost to the hour, from the time he became President, he finally had a program that bore a distinctive LBJ imprimatur. It was no longer Johnson's New Deal (or Better Deal, a phrase he toyed with briefly); it was not a retread Fair Deal; it was no longer the challenge of a New Frontier. His goal and his watchword from now on would be The Great Society.

The Great Society has provided work for more speechwriters and legislative draftsmen than any Washington project since the early days of the New Deal. In his first 18 months in office, the President sent more than 100 messages to Congress, issued numberless Presidential statements, and made a fantastic 606 speeches—an average of better than one a day. To help produce this Niagara of words the President, at various times, has pressed into service such diverse, public figures as the late U.N. Ambassador Adlai Stevenson, former Under Secretary of Agriculture Charles J. Murphy and John Kenneth Galbraith, former ambassador to India. He has also called upon Lady Bird for help, and once, in an emergency, drafted daugher Lynda Bird as a speech typist.

The brunt of the phrasemaking, however, has fallen on a handful of switch-hitting Special Assistants who double as ghostwriters while performing other White House staff duties. Since there is no subject on which Presidents are more sensitive, none can ever claim authorship of his work. All write facelessly under a single by-line, and all try to write in Lyndonese.

President Johnson's first No. 1 speechwriter after Dallas was the gifted Ted Sorensen, who had been President Kennedy's top writer for many years. Sorensen was the principal author of LBJ's first three major addresses. But when it became obvious that the President liked to work with more than one collaborator on the same speech, it became equally apparent that Sorensen would not stay. "Group authorship is rarely, if ever, successful," according to Sorensen. Though he has made some great speeches, President Johnson has not sounded the same since.

Nowadays, it's hard to tell who has written what for the President. With Bill Moyers as coordinator, conducting conferences on content, and Valenti as the arbiter of style, the President may throw a writing assignment to almost any member of his staff, depending on the subject. After the departure of Sorensen, Richard N. Goodwin, another Kennedy holdover, was LBJ's most active speechwriter. Then Goodwin decided to leave government service last September. Since that time the most prolific articulators of The Great Society have been Douglass Cater, Lee C. White and Harry C. McPherson.

Cater's orders when he came to the White House in May, 1964, at the age of 40, were to "think ahead," in both the domestic and foreign-policy areas. He spends most of his time on health, education and welfare problems (he also had a hand in writing the medicare message), but often tackles assignments in the national-security field.

Born in Montgomery, Alabama, Cater was at Harvard when the U.S. entered World War II. Barred from military service by a heart murmur, he joined the cloak-and-dagger Office of Strategic Services as a civilian, learned Russian and served as a researcher on the Soviet Union. After the war and graduate studies at Harvard, he signed on with the newly established *Reporter* magazine as its Washington editor. On periodic leaves of absence, he served as a Special Assistant to the Secretary of the Army, as consultant to the Director of Mutual Security, and as a speechwriter for Alabama's Senator John Sparkman, the Democratic Vice-Presidential nominee in 1952. Shortly after Mr. Johnson's heart attack in 1955, Cater visited the stricken Majority Leader at the LBJ Ranch on a magazine assignment. "There had been speculation," Cater recalls, "that Johnson was becoming a regional figure, the new leader of the nation's conservative forces." After talking with him, Cater reported that "his interests were still national interests"—a report that pleased LBJ. Four years later, when Cater was appointed to a one-year visiting professorship in public affairs at Princeton, Lyndon Johnson rose on the floor of the Senate to congratulate him—a tribute that pleased Cater.

Cater clinched his right to be called one of Jonhson's "professors" with one more year as a visiting professor, this time at Wesleyan University. There he produced a book, published in 1964, called *Power in Washington*, a subject that naturally caught the eye of the power-conscious President.

President Johnson was already sizing up Cater as a possible addition to his staff when he got an early copy of the book. Leafing through it, he remarked to an aide, "He's pretty rough on Kennedy." A few pages later he added wryly, "And he's pretty rough on me, too." A few weeks later, Cater, at Wesleyan, got a summons to the White House. After breakfast with Moyers and Bundy, he saw the President, who signed him on as a Special Assistant to think beyond tomorrow.

Like other Presidential aides Cater is enthusiastic about working for Johnson and The Great Society, but laments the fact he gets precious little time with his wife Libby and four children. "Libby finds the hours frustrating, but we still maintain a homelife," he says. "She's reconciled to it, and I regard this as a valuable period in the education of Douglass Cater."

Lee C. White, the President's Special Counsel, has the same problem—too little time with his wife Dorothy and their five children. When he *is* home and his children ask him what he does for a living, he tells them simply: "I work for the President." That is much easier than trying to explain that he is the President's lawyer and resident expert on such problems as civil rights, crime, juvenile delinquency, drug addiction, natural resources, Puerto Rico, transportation, regional development, housing, rural electric cooperatives, stockpiling, Presidental pardons and commutations.

White, a quiet, balding 41-year-old Nebraskan, is probably the least conspicuous of the President's aides and, at the same time, the most general of his generalists, or switch-hitters. As counsel to the President, he must inspect, with a wary lawyer's eye, every piece of legislation, order and proclamation before it goes to the President for signature. Even acts of Congress based on Presidential requests must be closely scrutinized. For example, in June of 1965 Congress gave the President 50 million dollars he had asked for public works to repair damage caused by floods in the Northwest. But buried in the measure was a

clause that gave two Congressional committees the right to veto any specific project the President might order. Rather than yield to Congress any of President Johnson's executive prerogatives —and thus set a precedent—White recommended a Presidential veto. The President confidently returned the bill without his signature—and got it back later without the offending clause.

In his other role, as a phrasemaker and helper on the legislative program, White has probably worked on more messages than any other aide.

To make sure he would have another government-experienced lawyer around if White left, the President brought in a 35-year-old Texan, Harry C. McPherson, as a Special Assistant to understudy White and perform other duties. McPherson, tall, handsome and personable, had to resign a sub-Cabinet job as Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs to come to the White House. He liked his job at the State Department, but when President Johnson beckoned he came.

Like most Texans in LBJ's Inner Circle, McPherson started working for Johnson on Capitol Hill. In 1956 the Senate Democratic Policy Committee needed an assistant counsel. Lyndon Johnson, as chairman of the committee, approved the addition to the staff, "provided he's a Texan." McPherson a native of Tyler, Texas, and just out of the University of Texas law school, got the job.

In 1961, when Johnson left the Senate to become Vice-President, McPherson was promoted to General Counsel. He continued to work with the new Majority Leader, Mike Mansfield, and the Democratic Whip, Hubert Humphrey, on strategy and tactics, and moonlighted for Johnson. In 1963 McPherson left the Hill to become Deputy Under Secretary of the Army (International Affairs), then a year later—still performing odd jobs for Johnson on the side, and with Johnson's blessing—went over to State as an Assistant Secretary. President Johnson never loses track of a bright young staffer.

At the White House, one of McPherson's first assignments, even before he left the State Department payroll, was the Selma crisis. From that he switched to the counsel's office, where with White he helped in the drafting of two pieces of legislation that Selma produced—the Voter Rights Bill and a bill to curb the Ku Klux Klan. He has also worked on farm, textile and foreign-trade problems. With almost paternal pride, the President calls McPherson "a good boy . . . an adventurous man on ideas with a strong sense of social consciousness."

K♦ THE SALES MANAGERS ♦K

If Presidential popularity were a salable commodity and the White House were organized like a business—which, happily, it isn't—two of Lyndon Johnson's top aides would appear on the table of organization as his sales managers. One, his press secretary, is in charge of selling him to the public. The other, his special assistant for legislative liaison, is responsible for selling him (and his program) to Congress.

On the sales charts, both would appear to be spectacular successes. With the general public, in every poll in the land, President Johnson's popularity was astronomically high after his first year and a half in office. With Congress, he had chalked up more major legislative victories faster than any President in modern history.

Here the similarity between the jobs of the President's press secretary and his Congressional liaison chief ends. Because Lyndon Johnson is the way he is—sensitive to criticism, vain and unpredictable—the press secretary's post is one of the most nerve-wracking in Washington. The legislative liaison job is, by comparison, a sinecure. Inept at press relations, the President doesn't get along with many newsmen for very long—and is a favorite target of sniping pundits. Expert at Congressional relations, he gets along famously with most politicians—and gets just about everything he asks for.

In midsummer of 1965 President Johnson was looking for men to fill both jobs. His press secretary, George Reedy, a great, shaggy, gentle bear of a man, had taken indefinite leave of absence for medical reasons. His Congressional liaison man, Larry O'Brien, had resigned and was awaiting a successor. Bill Moyers, as previously noted, had taken over Reedy's embattled position as press secretary. But few insiders expected Reedy to return, or Moyers to keep the job permanently. These circumstances provided material for one of Washington's favorite games: speculating on who would get the Reedy and O'Brien portfolios.

Pending the new arrivals, a look at the job requirements and how the departing aides handled their assignments might be instructive to the new men. It might also answer the question, "Why are President Johnson's press relations so bad while his Congressional relations are so good?"

Actually, the President's relations with newsmen are more uneven than bad. There have been times, as when he first became President, that his Boswells not only admired him but felt a spirit of camaraderie with him. Those were the days—immediately after Johnson's masterful takeover—of naked swims together in the White House pool, of friendly *Kaffeeklatches* by the fireplace in his office and barbecues with beer at the LBJ Ranch. More often there has been hostility—over the President's evasive or misleading answers to questions at press conferences, his denunciations of both reporters and their papers, his passion for secrecy, and his congenital inability to stick to travel plans.

To reporters Lyndon Johnson is a frustrating paradox—the most accessible and yet the most thin-skinned of Presidents. He encourages contacts with them, then reacts indignantly when their stories don't come out all pro-Johnson.

The buffer between press and President in this off-again on-again vendetta—the man who absorbs punishment from both sides—is the President's press secretary. A friendly, pipe-smoking, contemplative man, Reedy got out of a hospital bed on March 19, 1964, to take the job. Some of his best friends think he should have stayed in bed. Reedy, who stands six feet three, weighed 277 pounds when Johnson became President. When he left the White House 16 months later he was down to 202 pounds—the 75-pound loss attributable partly to a stringent 1,000-calorie-a-day diet and partly, no doubt, to the cruel and unusual punishment to which press secretaries are subjected.

Though more erudite, Reedy was not so fast on his feet as either of his predecessors. He lacked the toughness of President Eisenhower's Jim Hagerty, whose glare intimidated reporters who asked embarrassing questions, and the quick wit of President Kennedy's Pierre Salinger (who stayed on for a time with LBJ). As a substitute for these defensive weapons, Reedy relied on circumlocution. Indeed, by the time Reedy felt compelled to leave his post, he had set a new White House record for referring his tormentors to other departments for answers to their questions ("I'll have to refer you to the Defense [or State] Department for the answer to that.")

Reedy rarely got a respite from the demands of his job. Even in his office toilet, which he hoped would be a place for "quiet contemplation," he faced news tickers of the Associated Press, United Press International, Agence France Presse and Reuters. When Reedy finally took leave it was a poignant moment for both him and the hardboiled reporters who cover the White House. In the fall of 1965, after a successful operation, Reedy returned to the White House but was assigned to a less exposed position in the east wing. His new job: to "background" newsmen on LBJ's program.

In contrast with his poor relations with the press, Johnson's relations with members of Congress have been superb. As Senate Majority Leader and as Vice-President, the gregarious LBJ was more popular and more effective on Capitol Hill than Jack Kennedy, who never quite belonged to the Senate Establishment. Some observers insist that Johnson acted as his own Senate Majority Leader, House Whip and Congressional liaison man in pushing first the Kennedy legislative program and then his own Great Society program through Congress. But Lyndon Johnson and Congressional leaders say his remarkable legislative record couldn't have been achieved so quickly as it was without the "White House lobby" on Capitol Hill—the legislative liaison team then headed by Larry O'Brien, lawyer and public-relations man who got into politics in his home town of Springfield, Massachusetts, at 15.

O'Brien, who had been director of organization for John Kennedy's Presidental campaign, had served as JFK's legislative liaison chief for three years when Lyndon Johnson took over. As evidence of the importance LBJ attaches to the liaison job, O'Brien was probably the first Kennedy staffer Johnson asked to stay on. "I need your help, now and from now on in," he told Kennedy's red-haired, bespectacled man on Capitol Hill while waiting aboard "Air Force One" for Judge Hughes to arrive and administer the Presidential oath. Before the Presidential jet touched down outside Washington they held their first strategy

conference—on a crippling amendment to the foreign-aid bill, which was to come up in the Senate just three days later. "People do what they have to do," explained O'Brien, who within a few hours of President Kennedy's burial changed from his funeral attire into a business suit and began a head count on the bill.

O'Brien also had an understanding with Johnson that he would stay on if he could work with the same authority he had had under President Kennedy.

As it turned out, President Johnson spent hours on the phone talking to individual lawmakers, used Vice-President Humphrey as a Congressional troubleshooter, and occasionally sent other members of his staff to the Hill on special missions. But misunderstandings between the two old pros—Johnson and O'Brien—were rare. Indeed, President Johnson's wooing of Congress—his frequent visits to the Hill, his innumerable conferences with the leaders of both parties—combined with huge Democratic majorities after the 1964 elections, so lightened O'Brien's workload that by early 1965 he complained to friends that his job was no longer challenging. Then 47, O'Brien submitted a letter of resignation. Johnson held the letter for months—then, in late August, promoted O'Brien to the Cabinet, naming him Postmaster General.

Under President Johnson, no matter who is in charge of his Congressional relations, the White House's contacts with all 535 members of the legislative branch will be close and frequent. Under the system that has evolved (Eisenhower was the first President to set up a Congressional liaison office within the White House), members of the liaison team fan out over Capitol Hill each day. A drawling North Carolinian, Henry H. Wilson, deals with southern members of the House, while Dave Bunn, a Coloradan, talks to those from the West and Midwest. Jake Jacobsen, a New Jersey-born lawyer from Texas, sees those from the Eastern states and, of course, Texas. A former Senate aide, Mike Manatos, keeps tab on all 50 Senators.

By the time a bill gets to the floor of either House for a vote, the White House nose counters know within two or three votes—with far greater accuracy than the Congressional leaders, in most cases—what the roll call will produce. If the Administration has votes to spare, Congressmen pressured into line against their better judgment may be "released" from their pledges of support.

The President seldom forgets favors—those done for him as well as by him. A Democratic Congressman with a record of solid support for the Administration or one who has voted right in the clutches, even when it hurt, can expect lots of attention from the White House—invitations to parties, pictures in friendly embrace with the President and, most important, an LBJ campaign appearance in his district the next time he faces the voters. A foot-dragging recalcitrant can expect poor committee assignments and little else.

Lyndon Johnson, the Great Persuader, does less arm-twisting by telephone than is generally supposed. With daily reports from the legislative liaison men on his desk, he saves himself for crucial situations where neither the Democratic Congressional leaders (with whom he meets weekly) nor his own salesmen can guarantee success. Then he opens up with all the weapons at his command—patronage, pressure and persuasion.

President Johnson's Congressional sales managers, who have seen him win votes from Congressmen they couldn't reach, know they have a great thing going for them. "Working for Johnson is like managing Joe Louis when he was at his prime," said one of them after passage of the education bill.

J♠ THE ANTIQUE CABINET ♠J

Of all the advisory bodies to which the President can turn for advice, the Cabinet—consisting of the government's 10 department heads—is the oldest and most prestigious. Many Presidents have also regarded it as the least useful.

Since his inauguration as an elected President, LBJ has tried doggedly to make use of his Cabinet as an organization. Its 10 members have met nearly every Monday around the long mahogany table donated to the White House years ago by another rich Texan, former Secretary of Commerce Jesse Jones. It has followed carefully prepared agendas. It has discussed nearly every problem confronting the nation, from underwithholding of income taxes by employers to overspending by U.S. tourists abroad. But while the meetings have served to keep the government's department heads apprised of what's going on in Viet Nam as well as at the Post Office, the judgment of most qualified observers is that the Cabinet, as an advisory body, is something less than influential; it is a throwback to the 18th century—a genuine antique. Cabinet officers *are* important—both as advisers to the President and administrators of huge departments—but not the Cabinet itself.

The most important and influential of President Johnson's Cabinet officers head the oldest departments. Secretary of State Rusk, Secretary of Defense McNamara and Secretary of the Treasury Henry H. Fowler are easily the Big Three of the present Cabinet. And of these, McNamara is far and away the most influential. Though a holdover from Kennedy days (as five of President Johnson's department heads are), he is the "strong man" of the Johnson Cabinet (every Cabinet has one), its heavyweight-champion adviser to the President.

A part of President Johnson's admiration for the former president of the Ford Motor Company is based, no doubt, on McNamara's Johnson-like drive. "The only man in my Cabinet that I can get at 7 o'clock in the morning at his desk is Bob McNamara," the President once confided to a group of Congressmen. Another part is based on President Johnson's respect for bigness and power. "The myth of McNamara is really true!" he exclaimed a few weeks after taking office. What struck him was the realization that McNamara, unlike any of his seven predecessors, "really runs" the monstrous Department of Defense, with its 50-billion-dollar-a-year budget, its fierce interservice rivalries, its 2.6 million uniformed personnel, its 900,000 civilian employees and its 160-billion-dollar inventory of ships, planes, missiles, tanks, guns and bases around the world.

McNamara's zest and talent for budget-cutting fitted into President Johnson's plans right from the start; the President's biggest savings have been in defense spending. So did McNamara's uncanny skill as an answer man. Where other Cabinet officers, under Presidential interrogation, asked for time, or turned to aides for assistance, the crisp Pentagon chief proved himself to Lyndon Johnson what Senator Barry Goldwater once called him, "an IBM machine with legs." He was not only fast with his facts and opinions at the White House, but a formidable Administration witness on Capitol Hill as well.

The "Stay-Comb Kid," as the President sometimes calls him, referring to McNamara's neatly-parted, never-ruffled hairdo, also has a toughness about him that appeals to Johnson—a quality not found in more politically oriented Cabinet officers.

McNamara's public image is that of a shrewd businessman—a cost-cutting production genius who made president of the Ford Motor Company at 44. The President, who invites him to weekends at Camp David oftener than any other government official, appreciates other qualities in his No. 1 military expert—his broad intellect and his dedication to public service at great personal sacrifice.

He often points out that McNamara, too, was once a Harvard professor and that he quit a 387,000-dollar-a-year job (with Texas hyperbole, LBJ puts the figure at $450,000), just 37 days after becoming president of Ford, to come to work for the government at $25,000, the salary of Cabinet officers in 1961.

McNamara's blunt manner has produced hostility in both the Pentagon and Congress. Generals charge that his computerized decisions ignore the "human factor" in military service. Democrats as well as Republicans sometimes refer to the struggle in Viet Nam as "McNamara's War." But his methods have produced the kind of lean, hard defense establishment, under firm civilian control, that President Johnson wants. The President would like McNamara to stay on forever as his Pentagon chief, and that might happen. "We are in a critical period, or I would not be here," McNamara once observed—and the end of that "critical period" isn't in sight. The President's enthusiasm for McNamara does not mean that he has downgraded Secretary of State Rusk. On the contrary, Rusk stands taller with Lyndon Johnson than he did with John Kennedy who, together with the "little State Department" at the White House had usurped some of Rusk's responsibilities.

Under President Johnson, with his firm belief in the use of "line officers" of the government, the soft-spoken, bland Secretary of State has emerged as a clearer and more forceful personality. He is still the first to acknowledge that the President "makes foreign policy," but he has, according to intimates, felt—and acted—more secure as the President's principal foreign-

policy adviser since Dallas. He still does not command so much of the President's time as Bundy or McNamara, but his status has been enhanced both in policy-making and in administering his far-flung 25,000-man department. More important, he is there when "the White House" decides.

Every Tuesday at 1 p.m., except during his frequent absences from the country, he sits down at lunch with the President, Bundy, McNamara and Moyers in the family dining room at the White House to look at both the "big picture" of the Cold War and to discuss such tactical questions as "targets for the week" in Viet Nam. (He also attends, of course, meetings of the National Security Council where both strategy and day-to-day operations are discussed with a larger group.)

Rusk, born on a Georgia tenant farm six months after Lyndon Johnson was born in a three-room Texas ranch house, also the son of a tenant farmer, has more in common with the President than any other of his national-security advisers.

Rusk holds credentials as a scholar, professor, and administrator that President Johnson also admires. He was a Phi Beta Kappa at Davidson College in North Carolina, a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford, a professor of government and Dean of the Faculty at Mills College in California before going into the Army. After World War II he gravitated to the State Department, where in the next six years he held an impressive variety of titles.

He left Foggy Bottom in December, 1951, to become president of the 518-million-dollar Rockefeller Foundation. That was where John Kennedy found him nine years later when he picked him over Mac Bundy for his Secretary of State.

If Rusk has ever felt any rivalry with Bundy since, he has done a masterful job of concealing it. On the surface their relationship is frictionless. Whether it would be if they were giving consistently opposite counsel—if they were not both "hard liners"—is another question.

Like McNamara, Rusk does not want for detractors. But where McNamara is criticized as too strong, the most common, generalized complaint against Rusk is that he is "weak." This testimony is not corroborated by subordinates in the State Department who have crossed the Secretary, or by Lyndon Johnson, who has disagreed with him on tactics if not on strategy.

"Rusk may not be a forceful public personality—like John Foster Dulles was, for instance—but he is dammed articulate and he makes his points well in a discussion with the President or anybody else," one Assistant Secretary of State told me. As for President Johnson, he has praised Rusk too often and too lavishly not to be believed.

The third of President Johnson's Big Three advisers from the Cabinet, Secretary of the Treasury Henry H. (Joe) Fowler, though he is an old and trusted friend, ranks among the President's top counselors largely because of the job he holds.

The elaborate procedure President Johnson went through in hiring Fowler was peculiarly Johnsonian:

Despite the fact Fowler had resigned less than a year before as Under Secretary of the Treasury to return to private law practice, the President ordered a full field check by the FBI on his friend of 20 years—a precaution he has taken on all prospective appointees since the Walter Jenkins case. With 46 favorable FBI reports in, at noon on March 18, 1965, the President called Fowler to his office. "Joe," he said, "if you were President who would you appoint to the Treasury job to succeed Doug Dillon?" Though taken by surprise, Fowler came up with the names of a few prospects and discussed their qualifications. The President let him talk awhile and then said, "Now, Joe, I'm not going to ask, I'm going to tell you something. I want you to go home to lunch and tell Trudye [Fowler's wife] that you are the best man for the Treasury job. Then I'll talk to you later in the day."

After lunch President Johnson invited several money-minded members of Congress to the White House. This time he asked if *they* had any ideas on who should get the Treasury job. Several names were thrown out. The President also mentioned Fowler, but said he didn't know whether he could get him. Fowler's name evoked favorable comments. "He's as good as you can get," said one of the conferees. The President gave no hint of his intentions as he thanked them and said good-bye.

An hour later he again summoned the ruddy, white-haired Fowler to the White House. "Joe," he said this time, "I want you to sit down and write out your biography. We'll need it for the press release announcing your appointment."

Fowler is 57 years old, a Yale law graduate and lifelong Democrat with experience in five government agencies before Treasury—the RFC, TVA, Federal Power Commission, War Production Board and Department of Commerce. A fiscal conservative, he is nonetheless sympathetic to the President's Great Society goals. Career Treasury men say he has a better grasp of monetary problems than any Secretary since Henry Morgenthau in the 1930's. And no matter what happens to the balance-of-payments situation, he can always point out to the President that he did his bit by not taking a scheduled vacation in Europe in the spring of 1965.

President Johnson's first Cabinet nominee—he had been in office 13 months—was John T. (Jack) Connor, 50-year-old president of Merck & Company, the New Jersey pharmaceutical firm, to succeed Luther Hodges as Secretary of Commerce.

Lyndon Johnson had first met Connor in 1956, when he was Senate Majority Leader, then got to know him better when Connor came to Washington as vice-chairman of the Business Council, an advisory panel of corporation executives Lyndon Johnson has wooed since the day he took office. The President noted Connor was not only a Phi Beta Kappa (at Syracuse) and a Harvard law graduate—both of which weigh heavily with the President—but had extensive experience in government. Another entry in his record also appealed to President Johnson: during the 1964 campaign he was co-chairman of the National Independent Committee for President Johnson and Senator Humphrey, the group of top-drawer businessmen who couldn't swallow Goldwater—and bought full-page ads to say so. President Johnson ordered the FBI to check Connor out.

After the election, Jack Valenti called Connor at his New Jersey home. Could Connor see the President the following Wednesday on an off-the-record basis? "Wondering what on earth he wanted to see me about," Connor agreed to come down. Before popping the question, President Johnson gave Connor a half-hour pitch. "The President is often accused of being quite an arm-twister," Connor recalled later. "Well, I can testify he didn't even put a hand on my arm, much less twist it. But he did appeal to my mind and to my heart and particularly to my patriotism, so here I am, and I will do the best I can."

Another Johnson Cabinet appointee—Attorney General Nicholas deBelleville Katzenbach—came by his job in the most unusual manner of all: he was recommended for it by one of President Johnson's least favorite Democrats, Senator Robert F. Kennedy of New York. This was on September 3, 1964, the day Bobby Kennedy came to the White House to resign as Attorney General in order to run for the Senate from New York. It was a week after the Democratic convention, at which Lyndon Johnson appointed Hubert Humphrey as his running mate, and nearly a month after the July 29 White House confrontation at which President Johnson told Kennedy he was out of the running for the Vice-Presidential nomination. When Kennedy tendered his resignation, the outgoing Attorney General asked President Johnson to let Katzenbach—then Robert Kennedy's deputy—fill out his term. Johnson agreed.

It was under this agreement, according to the President, that Katzenbach served as Acting Attorney General for 148 days—a period during which the President was criticized for not either giving Katzenbach full Cabinet rank or finding a new man.

After Lyndon Johnson's election he called Katzenbach in. "I told him I had several people in mind for the job," the President has related, "but I was interested in him, too. Did he want the job? He said, yes, he did. I asked him if he would be interested in another job—a job not in the Cabinet. He was willing to take that, too, and that pleased me. So I thought it over for a while—who would be best in what job—and just about decided that Katzenbach was my man. I decided to ask him down for dinner and talk to him again, and to talk to his wife. After we had dinner and talked awhile, I told him that I was pleased to offer him the appointment as my Attorney General. He was delighted. There never was any misunderstanding."

Thus, on January 28, 1965, Katzenbach became Attorney General on Robert Kennedy's recommendation—or in spite of it. Between September and January the President had satisfied himself the big, bald, 43-year-old former law professor was right for the job. Katzenbach not only had academic laurels—*magna cum laude* at Princeton, editor of the *Yale Law Journal* and a Rhodes Scholar—but had shown more physical courage than is usually required of the government's top legal officer. It was Katzenbach who led the embattled federal marshals at Oxford in 1962 when the University of Mississippi admitted its first Negro student, James Meredith. And it was Katzenbach who, in 1963, faced down Governor George Wallace at the door of the University of Alabama when that institution was desegregated.

Johnson named his fourth Cabinet officer—again taking official Washington by surprise—in July, 1965, when he drafted John W. Gardner, 52-year-old president of the Carnegie Corporation to head the sprawling Department of Health, Education and Welfare. To make room for Gardner, a California-born Republican and one of the most influential figures in American education, the President appointed the HEW Secretary he inherited from Kennedy, Anthony J. Celebrezze, to a federal judgeship in Ohio.

Johnson wanted a man of high professional standing in the education-social welfare field to run the 82,000-employee, hydra-headed monster of a department that would administer much of his Great Society program. Once his education and Medicare bills were passed (and he found a vacancy on the bench for Celebrezze), he didn't have to look far. Gardner, head of the nation's sixth largest foundation, had led the education task force Johnson appointed a year earlier and, just one week earlier, had chaired a two-day White House Conference on Education. In 10 years as head of the Carnegie fund, he had dispensed nearly 100 million dollars in the "pursuit of excellence" in education—a phrase popularized by JFK. To Johnson, an old schoolteacher who would like to be known as the "Education President," Gardner was the man who "wrote the book" on educational reform.

While still enjoying the good press he received for his nonpolitical appointment of Gardner, the President came up with a political beauty. Late in August he announced that he was naming Postmaster General John J. Gronouski, a holdover Kennedy appointee, as Ambassador to Poland. To take Gronouski's place in the Cabinet he named Larry O'Brien, his legislative liaison chief and the last surviving member of JFK's Irish Mafia on the White House staff.

When newsmen and politicians recovered from their surprise, however, they saw the logic of Johnson's maneuver. In giving an ambassadorship to Gronouski, the first Cabinet member of Polish extraction, the President had, as he noted, a new "bridge" to the Polish people. In O'Brien he had a Postmaster General in the tradition of FDR's Jim Farley—a genial Irish Catholic who had served as director of organization in two national campaigns and who knew just about every Democratic politician in the country above the rank of police magistrate.

Of the remaining three Cabinet officers, all holdovers from the Kennedy Administration, Secretary of Labor W. Willard Wirtz, an old law partner of Adlai Stevenson, is probably the most influential with the President. Wirtz got his first high marks from the President when he helped bring about, in the spring of 1964, a settlement of the five-year-old railroad featherbedding dispute that threatened to tie the nation's economy in knots.

Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall most certainly would not have been in the Cabinet if Johnson had been elected President in 1960. That year Lyndon Johnson was confident of carrying all western states to the Democratic convention in his hip pocket. Udall, then a 40-year-old Arizona Congressman, upset this plan by capturing all 17 of Arizona's convention votes for John Kennedy. Taking into account Lyndon Johnson's long memory, some Presidential aides thought Udall would be among the first Cabinet officers to leave after LBJ took over. Instead, Udall, an ardent conservationist and mountain climber, kindled a romance between President Johnson and the Great Outdoors, an affair in which Lady Bird Johnson is a willing accomplice. He also tied conservation into President Johnson's war on poverty and his plans for The Great Society. The result was that in the 1964 campaign Johnson spent almost as much time on conservation as on bread-and-butter issues, and Udall, a Mormon, was a key man in his western strategy. "Natural beauty" is still a favorite Lyndon Johnson speech topic.

Because he placed John Kennedy's name in nomination at the 1960 Democratic convention—and because his job is the most thankless in Washington—Orville Freeman, President Kennedy's Secretary of Agriculture, was also high on most pundits' lists of Cabinet officers who were not likely to last under Johnson. But the former Minnesota governor, who survived a Japanese sniper's bullet in the mouth during World War II and the Billie Sol Estes case in his second year as Agriculture Secretary, has proved more durable than some of his Cassandras. In his fight to preserve small family farms he has tangled with some of Johnson's top economic advisers. The economists consider such enterprises obsolete and would retrain their owners for nonfarm jobs. Johnson is keen for any program that would trim the huge farm-subsidy figure in his budget. But he is also high on Freeman, who is on good terms with the agriculture committee chairmen in both houses of Congress and still makes an impressive showing in farm-belt popularity polls. President Johnson considers Hubert Humphrey, another Minnesotan, as a "backup man" on farm policy.

THE INVISIBLE CABINET

The President's Invisible Cabinet is an impressive array of brainy advisers who are neither so close to the President as his White House staffers nor so publicized as Cabinet officers, but who perform, at times, more vital services than either.

Most members of the Invisible Cabinet are what the Budget Bureau calls "institutional" advisers, which means they head organizations created by Congress to advise the President. These "institutions," all a part of the Executive Office of the President, include—in addition to the Bureau of the Budget (with a staff of 480) and the Council of Economic Advisers (staff: 36)—the Office of Emergency Planning (325), the Office of Science and Technology (31) and the National Aeronautics and Space Council (22).

Of these, the Bureau of the Budget, created as an adjunct of the Treasury Department in 1921, then placed under the White House in 1939, is considered the most elite. It watches over the growth and operation of the entire federal government.

The government's fiscal year starts July 1, but the bureau's work on the budget that goes into effect on that date starts in April the year before. Nine months before the mammoth budget book goes to Congress and 15 months before it takes effect, the bureau collects from every branch, department and agency of the government estimates of what they would *like* to spend. (Original estimates for the 1965 budget, which LBJ trimmed to 97.9 billion dollars, ran to 122 billion dollars.)

With the requests in, bureau experts in each area covered by the budget go to work with fiscal officers of the departments concerned. Both sides start their negotiations on the unspoken assumption that department heads have asked for just what they need, but, at the same time, for more than they expect to get.

Few problems the budget director takes to the President are decided easily. Many involve delicate considerations of defense, national prestige, the aims of The Great Society—and nearly all have political overtones. How many millions of dollars and how much scientific man power should be allocated *now* for a nuclear-powered rocket that may someday hurtle beyond the sun? Has the time come to phase out an obsolescent multi-million-dollar nuclear-tipped tactical weapon? Should 3 billion dollars of the 4 billion spent each year to support farm prices go to farmers already rich from federal subsidies? Should AEC or the Department of the Interior have primary responsibility for finding an economic method of desalting seawater?

In such discussions the budget director must assume an Olympian detachment, marshaling the pros and cons for the President and recommending what is right for the country (and the President) rather than what will please NASA, Defense, Agriculture, Interior or the AEC.

As the new Olympian to succeed Kermit Gordon, who had served both Kennedy and LBJ well in the top budget post, Johnson called in another college professor, 40-year-old Charles L. Schultze, from the University of Maryland. Schultze had left the federal service only a few months earlier. He had served for two and a half years as assistant director of the Budget Bureau, in charge of nonmilitary domestic spending programs.

Schultze, a Ph.D. in economics, was a combat infantryman in World War II, earning a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart in Germany before he began collecting academic honors. A specialist in national economic policy who has concentrated on inflation and business cycles, Schultze is credited by his colleagues with much of the theoretical planning that went into the 1964 11.5-billion-dollar tax cut. In his own home, populated by his wife, Rita, and six children, Schultze is not the chief budget-maker. "I hand her the paycheck and she keeps it," he says. "She's good at it."

Sitting in with Schultze on many policy-making conferences with President Johnson is another "institutional" counselor, Gardner Ackley, the chairman of the President's Council

on Economic Advisers. Also a Ph.D. in economics, Indiana-born Ackley was chairman of the economics department at the University of Michigan (where he earned his doctorate in 1940) when named to the three-man advisory panel by JFK in 1962. Johnson promoted him to chairman in 1964 when Walter Heller, who had served under both JFK and LBJ, returned to teaching at the University of Minnesota.

The Council of Economic Advisers was created by the Employment Act of 1946, when both Congress and President Truman feared the reconversion of industry to a peacetime footing would create an army of unemployed. Its principal statutory function is to produce an annual Economic Report, which the President delivers to Congress each January 20. But it serves the President in many other ways. With voluminous studies of basic industries, it sets the Administration's "guidelines" on how much wages and prices can be raised without an inflationary spiral.

Under Ackley the CEA is ever vigilant for signs the economy needs stimulants. With the Gross National Product and personal income rising, consumer prices remaining relatively stable and unemployment slowly declining, most of Ackley's reports to Lyndon Johnson in his first 18 months as President were cheerful. The President (who checks the Dow-Jones closing average on the news tickers in his office each day) has devoured the statistics like manna. He has rarely held a press conference or Cabinet meeting without an opening statement—usually prepared by Ackley—on the radiant health of the growing economy.

A third and less important "institutional" adviser—but a member of the Invisible Cabinet nonetheless—is the director of the Office of Emergency Planning, former Governor Buford Ellington of Tennessee. Because of his close personal friendship with Johnson (he is a deer-hunting companion of the President at the LBJ Ranch), some White House staffers have touted Ellington as a "man to watch" in the Administration.

Although the authority of the agency has been diluted over the years, its director is still a statutory member of the National Security Council and—in a period of hostility between some southern state houses and the White House—Johnson has derived obvious comfort out of having a "mature and seasoned" former southern governor in his camp.

The President derives a different satisfaction out of having John W. Macy, Jr., chairman of the U.S. Civil Service Commission, as his chief adviser on government appointments. Macy, who divides his time between the CSC and the White House, is not only the kind of young crew-cut intellectual Lyndon Johnson likes to collect (Phi Beta Kappa and former vice-president at Wesleyan University) but he has recruited high-caliber appointees who have reflected credit on the Johnson Administration.

Macy was chairman of the CSC when Lyndon Johnson took office. At 46 he had behind him then a brilliant record in and out of government. President Kennedy brought him back to Washington as chairman of the CSC in 1961, but did not use him as an executive talent scout. Instead, he relied on the Democratic National Committee, old friends and members of his staff to find likely nominees when vacancies occurred in Presidential-appointment jobs.

After a year of working with a similar setup, Johnson decided there must be a better way to pick top government officials. Faced with a backlog of vacancies that accumulated during the election campaign, he called in Macy.

The President made his requirements clear. He wanted young men (35 to 50) with good academic backgrounds (Phi Beta Kappas especially welcome) and records of achievement in their chosen fields (including government). Macy was to find the best talent available, leaving political considerations entirely to the President.

Within a matter of days Macy established a pool of several hundred names of businessmen, educators, professional men and civil servants who were likely prospects for Presidential appointments. (The pool later grew to 25,000 names, with their qualifications computerized on punch cards.) For each post the President must fill, there is a "position file," outlining the job specifications. When vacancies occur, Macy presents the President with "blue books" detailing the qualifications of five or six possible nominees. To see what additional information can be turned up, the President then orders full field checks by the FBI on candidates who interest him.

Macy's mechanized headhunt has not only turned up good top-drawer appointees, such as Commerce Secretary Connor and CIA Chief Raborn, but has moved many highly qualified career men into sub-Cabinet policy-making jobs. Of Johnson's 265 major appointments in his first 18 months as President, nearly half went to career men, and surprisingly few went to political hacks. The President, who got yards of publicity on his early campaign to "get more women in government," has mildly rebuked Macy for not recommending more females. (On Macy's computer cards women usually fail to make the grade because of deficiencies in the "public service" area.) But the President still describes Macy with a Texas superlative: "He's the best there is."

Of all the government officials "discovered" by Macy, none came as a greater surprise to official Washington than retired Vice Admiral William F. (Red) Raborn. When President Johnson named the 59-year-old Navy hero to head the vast Central Intelligence Agency in April, 1965, he not only ended one of the longest executive-talent hunts in history but put an end to a Washington guessing game in which every contestant flunked.

Once his name was announced, however, Raborn's qualifications to head "the Agency," as it is discreetly called over Washington cocktails, and to join the President's Invisible Cabinet, became immediately apparent to all, or almost all. Texas-born (but not an old friend of Johnson's) and Annapolis-trained, Raborn had a distinguished career both as a Navy pilot and a bluewater sailor. In 1945, when a Japanese *kamikaze* ripped into the carrier "Hancock," Raborn, as executive officer, got the flight deck patched up in time to recover her air group as it returned from a mission. For this he got a Silver Star. Ten years later he took over the Navy's visionary 10-billion-dollar Polaris submarine missile program.

In the hunt for a successor to John McCone at the CIA, extending over several months after McCone asked to be relieved, some 42 names were discussed and discarded. The President wanted a man bright enough to be a spy master, tough enough to administer the agency's worldwide undercover operation and, he emphasized, polished and amiable enough to make a good impression on Capitol Hill.

John Macy finally placed Raborn's name at the top of a list of candidates he submitted to the President. President Johnson didn't bite at first. Macy then deftly placed a book on the Polaris program in the President's night reading. The President read the book and a few days later beckoned the old sea dog to his LBJ Ranch for introduction as Public Eye No. 1.

The problem with CIA, Dwight Eisenhower once observed, is that "success cannot be advertised, failure cannot be explained." An average of 2,000 top-secret messages a day pour into the agency—based on agents' observations, monitored radio broadcasts, photoreconnaissance by satellites, planes and submarines and the gleanings of an arsenal of other sophisticated, secret devices. Raborn's primary job is to keep the President posted daily, and sometimes minute by minute, on significant developments. He is responsible for a daily intelligence summary, delivered to the President's desk at 6 p.m. each evening. He attends all meetings of the NSC and *ad hoc* "crisis cabinet" sessions. He also sits as the President's representative on the U.S. Intelligence Board, which includes the heads of all government espionage agencies, military and civilian, and takes a look at long-range political and military developments that may affect the national security.

Beyond the President's "institutional" advisers, designated by law to counsel him, membership in the Invisible Cabinet is hard to define. There are eight agency heads whose budgets exceed that of the President's senior Cabinet officer, Secretary of State Rusk: NASA Director James E. Webb; Veterans Administrator William J. Driver; AID Director David E. Bell; Chairman Glenn T. Seaborg of the Atomic Energy Commission; R. Sargent Shriver, director of the Peace Corps and the Office of Economic Opportunity; Federal Aviation Agency Administrator William F. McKee; General Services Administrator Lawson B. Knott, and Housing and Home Finance Administrator Robert C. Weaver. Some of these—Webb, Bell and Shriver—are close to the President, but no one has suggested they rank in influence with Rusk or with Mac Bundy, who has a staff of only 49.

The truth is that for many membership in the Invisible Cabinet is a sometime thing. At times officials like David K. E. Bruce, U.S. Ambassador to Britain; Maxwell Taylor, former Ambassador to South Viet Nam; and Adlai Stevenson, the late Ambassador to the United Nations, have been more "in" than many regular Cabinet officers. In other situations relatively obscure advisers like Donald F. Hornig, head of the President's Office of Science and Technology, and Leonard Marks, director

of the U.S. Information Agency, assume the importance of Cabinet or Invisible Cabinet officers.

In the last analysis, several members of the Invisible Cabinet are consistently more influential than members of the anachronistic regular Cabinet and some have only brief moments of uncertain glory when the President values their judgment above all others. None, however, has the steady, pervasive, year-round, round-the-clock influence of one unpaid consultant: Lady Bird Johnson.

Compared most often to Eleanor Roosevelt in the pantheon of First Ladies who preceded her, Mrs. Johnson is, like President Roosevelt's wife, a tireless worker for many causes. She has campaigned hard to enlist support for the war on poverty, for Medicare, and to beautify the countryside.

With all her activities, Mrs. Johnson is a wife and mother to the core. She is in a real sense a Presidential adviser—the most omnipresent and perhaps the most suasive member of the Invisible Cabinet. Some friends of the Johnsons agree with the late House Speaker Sam Rayburn's judgment: "The smartest thing Lyndon ever did was to marry her."

J♣ OUTSIDE INSIDERS ♣J

Every President since Washington has had friends outside his official family to whom he turned for counsel, comfort and the carrying-out of delicate tasks.

Predictably, Lyndon Johnson's handful of friends outside the executive branch who are more "in" with the President than most top officials bears little resemblance to John Kennedy's (mostly wealthy Eastern prep-school and college classmates) or Dwight Eisenhower's (mostly golf-happy millionaire businessmen). Most of them met Johnson during New Deal days when he, as a young Congressman and protégé of Franklin Roosevelt, and they, as legal technicians in the alphabetized bureaucracy of the 1930's, were on the way up. With Lyndon Johnson's friends there is no athletic or recreational bond, such as tennis, poker, golf or sailing. All have one hobby: politics.

Five of LBJ's most trusted Washington friends are trained in the law: Abe Fortas, an Under Secretary of the Interior under FDR and who Johnson named last summer to the Supreme Court; Clark M. Clifford, who was Special Counsel to President Truman; James H. Rowe, Jr., the first of FDR's six Administrative Assistants "with a passion for anonymity"; Thomas G. Corcoran, who as "Tommy the Cork" was a key member of FDR's "brain trust"; and Dean Acheson, who was Truman's Secretary of State. Three are Texas lawyers: Governor John Connally, a onetime member of Johnson's Senate staff; Homer Thornberry, former Congressman for LBJ's home district, now a Johnson-appointed federal judge; and Albert Wadel Moursund, a Johnson City neighbor and principal trustee of the Johnson family's extensive holdings. One is a New York lawyer: Edwin L. Weisl, Sr., Democratic National Committeeman for the state.

This leaves William S. White, a Washington syndicated columnist, as virtually the only intimate friend of the President outside the government who is not a lawyer. White, a Texan, met Johnson in 1933 when the latter was a skinny secretary to Representative Richard M. Kleberg, a Texas cattle baron. The same age as the President, White was then an Associated Press "regional" correspondent on Capitol Hill, covering the Texas delegation. White later joined *The New York Times*, then became an independent columnist. In 1964, before the Presidential campaign, he wrote a Johnson biography, *The Professional*, which turned out to be the friendliest if not the most accurate study ever made of his complicated companion. White's column is now read avidly by other Washington newsmen watching for nuances in the President's thinking. Fairly or not, though sometimes more conservative than LBJ in outlook, it is regarded on most issues to reflect the White House "line."

How important are the outside insiders?

"Generally speaking," one of the President's close friends told me, "we're not very important. The President likes to think out loud, and most of his friends are good listeners. But you can't give good advice unless you know what's going on, and none of us has the information he has."

The romantic idea of clandestine meetings of influential "Kitchen Cabinets," of Svengali-like powers behind the throne, will probably persist as long as there are Presidents. As messengers, fixers and advisers on purely political questions, wise, discreet friends will always be valuable to Presidents. But in a nuclear age when decisions in both foreign and domestic affairs must be made on the basis of complex evidence, adduced by experts, their power is certainly waning.

J♦ PERPETUAL MOTION ♦J

Lyndon Johnson and Vice-President Hubert Horatio Humphrey enjoy one of the most durable, fruitful partnerships in American politics today. It was not forged at Atlantic City in 1964—when the President, after a week-long pretense of studying all possible contenders, flew to the Democratic convention to "recommend" Humphrey as his running mate. Rather, it was kindled in 1953 when Johnson, just elected leader of the Senate Democrats (then a minority) looked around the chamber for a hardworking, authentic representative of the Northern, liberal wing of their party. He wanted a man he could do business with—to speak for that group as Georgia's Senator Richard Russell did for the Southern bloc.

He found his man in Hubert Humphrey, who had come to the Senate the same year as Lyndon Johnson (1949), and who by then was living down his early reputation as a fast-talking "fireball," ready and eager to speak on any subject at any time. At first Mr. Johnson wooed Humphrey, often pursuing the Minnesotan to his office rather than summoning him. Slowly the Great Persuader won him over to the idea that the two Democratic factions must collaborate if they were ever to wrest control of the Senate from the Republicans who rode in on Dwight Eisenhower's 1952 landslide. Humphrey learned that it was possible "to have manners without sacrificing convictions." After the Democrats won control of the Senate in the 1954 elections and Lyndon Johnson became Majority Leader, their friendship matured into a working partnership. Humphrey's drive and energy, like President Johnson's, were (and still are) legendary.

Every President since Harry Truman has declared his intention of making something of his Vice-President, whose only Constitutional duties are to preside over the Senate (which he rarely does), cast a tie-breaking vote when necessary and succeed to the Presidency in the event of the President's death. With Humphrey, Johnson has topped all of his predecessors in assigning work to his understudy. At last count Humphrey was wearing about 10 hats. His first and most important job, in the minds of both the President and Humphrey, is his assignment as the President's "field marshal" on Capitol Hill. "I have no authority up here," Humphrey says, "but I've got a lot of goodwill, and I have a few due bills out. When I need them I collect them."

As evidence of the priority he assigns to his job as legislative troubleshooter, Humphrey spends far more time in his ornate Capitol office, off the Senate chamber, than he spends in his "downtown" office, a suite once occupied by FDR (when he was Assistant Secretary of the Navy) in the Executive Office Building. At his Capitol Hill desk, under a huge crystal chandelier, Humphrey holds forth each legislative day with an endless procession of lawmakers.

With the precision of a certified public accountant, he can tell at any given instant the prospects for passage of any of the Administration's bills catalogued in a black looseleaf notebook on his desk. Backing up the White House's legislative liaison team, he sends to the President each Monday that Congress is in session a leatherbound "Vice-President's Weekly Legislative Report."

Humphrey's second most important hat, he feels, is the one he wears as coordinator of the Administration's entire civil rights program. Here the President uses the Senate's former "Mr. Civil Rights" as a lightning rod as well as a mover and shaker. During the Selma crisis, when Negro civil rights leaders were outraged by an Alabama judge's refusal to sanction their march on Montgomery, it was Humphrey who soothed them and counseled patience until the court order could be overturned by legal process. Humphrey is also overseer of the Peace Corps, coordinator of the war on poverty, chairman of the Space

Council, a member of the National Security Council, liaison man with big-city mayors, a farm-policy adviser and a ceremonial stand-in for the President.

Despite a long-standing friendship, relations between any President and Vice-President can be delicate. The Vice-President must be just what the President wants him to be, no more or less. Beyond his token Constitutional duties, the powers of the Vice-President derive only from the President. One top Johnson adviser insists "there has never been a moment's misunderstanding" between the two men on this point, adding: "Hubert understands perfectly both the potential and limitations of his job." Friends of Humphrey don't quite agree on the flat assertion there has *never* been a misunderstanding. They report that Humphrey, long accustomed to producing and airing new ideas, had an uncomfortable "cooling-off" or "shakedown" period in his new, constricting job.

Since his shakedown period, Humphrey's only complaint, according to intimates, is that the President sometimes hands him assignments faster than he can handle them. "He'll be working on two priority problems for the President," one friend confided, "when the phone rings and it's Johnson with two more."

A♠ ALL THE WAY WITH ISAIAH ♠A

No President ever assumed the office under such harrowing circumstances—after witnessing the murder of his predecessor—and none ever took over so swiftly and surely as Lyndon Johnson. While his critics may deny he has provided the "wise, just, enlightened and constructive" Administration he promised in his first Presidential address to Congress, no one has ever questioned who is running the store.

For good or bad he has labored so mightily in both foreign and domestic affairs, in fact, that at times there have seemed to be two or three lookalike Johnsons running the country. Take the morning of Friday, March 26, 1965, for example. On that day home television viewers must have suspected he was using stand-ins as he appeared on their screens in three different roles—all before lunch. In this brief interval, he was seen congratulating Congressmen on the imminent passage of Medicare legislation, welcoming two astronauts to Washington and, in a cold and solemn mood, calling for an investigation of the Ku Klux Klan.

If that morning was rugged for reporters (it was) and rough on TV fans of soap operas and quiz games (who saw their favorite shows preempted), it was even more demanding of the President's overworked staff. Every move a President makes requires tenfold exertions by his staff. His schedule—the events he will participate in—must be carefully checked from every angle. But the capability of a staff is not calibrated alone by its skill at making things run smoothly for the President. If it were, the President would need only to surround himself with politically attuned technicians.

For membership in a Johnson advisory circle, there are other requirements. Total loyalty, the willingness and the stamina to work 70 hours a week, acceptance of anonymity (Cabinet officers excluded), real dedication to The Great Society, and the ability to get along with people (including LBJ) are among them. Extra virtues, highly regarded but not obligatory, are a willingness to listen to the President talk endlessly and an ability to write in Lyndonese. Implicit in any employment by the President is the acceptance of his belief that the way to run a government is by consensus, or, in the spirit of Isaiah, by reasoning together until a consensus is reached. Where the Johnson campaign slogan was "All the Way with LBJ," the unwritten motto of the Johnson Administration is: "All the Way with Isaiah."

The evidence that President Johnson's advisers meet his *special* requirements—as loyal, rugged, industrious, faceless, friendly and dedicated workers—is overwhelming. All have learned the LBJ Way, the way of Isaiah. (A few also have learned painfully the rest of that famous passage from Isaiah—the part the President never quotes. The words after "Come now and let us reason together" are: "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land . . . but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured by the sword, for the Lord hath spoken.")

In his innermost circle, the White House staff, about half are Texans, by birth or adoption. Their loyalty has been tested over more than a decade while they worked for him on one payroll or another. Most were for Lyndon Johnson long before the Los Angeles convention that unexpectedly made him Vice-President and eventually, unpredictably, President. These are the people with whom he is most comfortable. And, contrary to popular belief, most are happy under his demanding but paternalistic command. Many can remember a time when Lyndon Johnson helped them with personal problems or paid a hospital bill. Most have eaten at his family table, both in Texas and at the White House. He once slipped two $100 bills into the vacation-pay envelope of a worn-out staffer with a note appended: "Don't spend this for anything worthwhile." There is loyalty down as well as up in Lyndon Johnson's unchartable chain of command.

On intelligence and judgment Johnson's advisers measure up to any group assembled by any President since FDR's "brain trust." He still has half of the brilliant Cabinet assembled by President Kennedy. Most of the men he has brought in as replacements and to fill out the ranks in his staff and Invisible Cabinet are first rate by any method of reckoning—on educational backgrounds, academic honors, or professional attainments. Johnson's boasts about Harvard degrees, Phi Beta Kappa keys and Ph.D.'s, though often tasteless, are justified.

As for imagination and creativity, Johnson aides point to the Great Society program as evidence they are encouraged to brainstorm. One aide estimates that about half of the memos that go to the President are on subjects he has asked about and that of the other half, 90 percent are suggestions from members of the White House staff. "If you have an idea, you can be a janitor, a valet or a press secretary, but he'll look at it," says Liz Carpenter, Mrs. Johnson's press secretary.

More difficult to probe is the question of whether President Johnson's aides are candid with him, or whether the President discourages honest reporting by the ancient practice of blaming the messenger who brings bad news. Happiness, for President Johnson, is a newspaper in which he dominates page one and there is not a word of criticism of him on the editorial page. But White House staffers say he dislikes having Pollyannas around him and insists on reports from them with the bark on.

If Johnson's advisers met all other tests the crucial question about them would still remain: are they yes-men? Here, because of Johnson's domineering nature and low flash point, close observers of the President have more misgivings than on any other aspect of his advisory apparatus. Is it possible for a man so sensitive to criticism to tolerate dissent in his own circle of advisers? Can a man who has expressed contempt for deviationists in his own party encourage freethinking and rethinking on issues where he has already committed himself?

Most members of the President's staff have denied to me, privately and convincingly, that he stifles dissent. They cite both domestic issues and overseas crises on which there has been spirited debate. All confirm that Johnson usually hears out his advisers before making his views known. This technique, they argue, assures free discussion and also minimizes the possibility of sycophantic aides siding automatically with the President. Some have minor reservations about the LBJ decision-making process: *after* Johnson begins to talk, it is difficult to get a word in edgewise; after his decision has been made, critical afterthoughts are all but *verboten*. What comes through clearly is that President Johnson, a formidable debater, forges a consensus after hearing the arguments. "The President is impatient with stalling, hesitation, or any kind of shuffling in front of the decision door," says Valenti. "He wants that door opened quickly, and activity to move through."

Whether the President moves through that "decision door" too quickly, or too slowly, on good advice or bad, depends in large measure on the men around him—his Inner Circle of White House advisers, his Cabinet, his Invisible Cabinet and his cronies. This dependence will increase in more than direct proportion as the problems of a disorderly planet grow more complex and insoluble. The achievement of The Great Society, the maintenance of peace and prosperity—the success or failure of the Johnson Administration—will hinge more on the wisdom and competence of the President's advisers than history may ever acknowledge. History, and the voters, will rightly hold Lyndon Johnson alone accountable for his decisions. But the information his subordinates bring him, their translation of the facts, the quality of advice they offer, and even their conservation of his apparently limitless energy, will provide the framework in which the President alone must decide —Charles Roberts