

# Insight and Outlook . . . By Joseph Kraft

## The End of the Establishment

THE DEPARTURE of McGeorge Bundy from the White House has been generally construed to mean the end of the Kennedy era. But to me it has a wider portent. It suggests the death of the Establishment as the dominant force in American foreign policy.



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Like most concepts served up by pop sociology, to be sure, the Establishment is a term easier to mouth than to define. Still it is generally true that the Establishment centers around men who have inherited money and confidence, absorbed liberal educations at eastern boarding schools and colleges, and acquired in the professions a taste and capacity for doing the state some service. Moreover, if the definition is imprecise, the historic role of the Establishment in recent times is not in doubt.

The Establishment came prominently onto the national scene in 1940 when, as Franklin Roosevelt put it, Dr. New Deal gave way to Dr. Win the War. At that time there entered Government almost all the men still prominently associated with the Establishment—John McCloy, Dean Acheson, Averell Harriman, Robert Lovett.

Their function was twofold. First, and least important, they provided for the direction of the war effort, a familiarity with the world abroad. Second and far more important, there was a political function.

THE MEN of the Establishment brought to a radical Democratic Administration ties with the business community and an impor-

tant section of the Republican Party. Their presence in the governing coalition worked to legitimize internationalism and to discredit isolationism. It made foreign policy—in a word that took on great significance at the time—bipartisan.

Thus through the war years, and for 15 years thereafter, the principal posts in defense and foreign policy were held down by men of the Establishment. For Administration after Administration, the Establishment was a tool to push and cajole the country and the Congress toward support of international programs and actions.

When Bundy joined the Kennedy Administration, it looked like another dose of the familiar medicine. A Republican and quintessential Establishmentarian, he seemed to commend himself for the usual reasons to a young Democratic President who needed to win the confidence of the Congress and the business community.

As it turned out, however, Bundy did not work for the Administration on the outside world. On the contrary, he worked for the Administration in its own bureaucracy. For both Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, Bundy's central and distinct service was to put in their hands, in a coherent and timely way, the elements for decision-making in foreign policy.

TO THAT END, he held the ring evenly among the competing bureaucracies of the State Department, the Pentagon and the Central Intelligence Agency. He identified for decision the chief issues and alternatives. He made known departmental biases and special interests. He brought to light viewpoints that were hidden inside the bureaucracy. Above all things, he kept

open for presidential decision, options that other parts of the Executive Branch were always trying to foreclose in their own interest. He was the perfect staff officer.

The role played by Bundy reflects a basic rearrangement in Government structure and in public opinion. As to the Government, there has grown up an immense national security bureaucracy. Not only the armed services, the intelligence community and the State Department, but practically every agency in town has expertise and a distinct approach in some corner of foreign affairs. On balance, it only because it grew up in the atmosphere of cold war, the national security bureaucracy tends to have vested interest in the military approach.

AS TO public opinion, isolationism is really and truly dead. Corporations, unions, religions, ethnic and charitable groups, universities and foundations and virtually every political organization and figure in the country are committed to this country's role as a world leader. There has grown up an immense foreign policy public. And in its approach to foreign policy it tends to put stress on its own special interests — trade, cultural relations, United Nations affairs, and, above all, settlement of disputes by political means.

The development of both national security bureaucracy and a large foreign affairs public marks the end of the special conditions that made the Establishment dominant in foreign policy. For the dispute between isolationism and internationalism is now over. With the resolution of that dispute, there passes the issue on which the men of the Establishment could weigh decisively in the political balance. That is why the

Establishment has produced no heirs.

It remains to be seen what group will generate the new leadership in foreign affairs. The choice seems to lie between the national security bureaucracy with its Cold War outlook, and the public audience with its emphasis on the non-military approach to foreign policy.

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