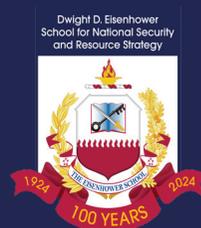




# Solarium at 70

Project Solarium's Influence on  
Eisenhower Historiography and  
National Security Strategy

Walter M. Hudson



## **Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy**

National Defense University

Originally established in 1924 as the Army Industrial College, this institution was the first school of its kind with study focused completely on issues of industrial mobilization for military purposes. In 1946, the school began its tradition as a joint institution, changing its name to the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, with Army and Navy personnel participating in departmental duties. The school transformed again in 2013, formally to be known as the Dwight D. Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy.

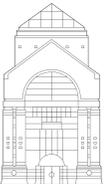
Under the guidance of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Eisenhower School Commandant and faculty educate and prepare senior military officers, government civilians, selected representatives from the private sector, and international officers for national security challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As part of this education and preparation, the Eisenhower School examines technological advances, new strategic and operational concepts, the latest developments in the private sector, emerging economic trends, and evolving global developments.

Solarium at 70



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Walter M. Hudson



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Cover: President Dwight D. Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles at the White House, December 11, 1957 (Everett Collection Historical/Alamy).

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# Contents

Acknowledgments.....	vii
Executive Summary .....	ix
Introduction .....	1
Solarium and the Eisenhower Presidency.....	6
Solarium After the Eisenhower Presidency: The Early to Mid-1960s.....	8
Eisenhower Proto-Revisionism and the Beginnings of Alternative Interpretations .....	13
Eisenhower Revisionism and Solarium’s “Discovery” .....	18
Eisenhower Revisionism and Solarium: Interdisciplinary Interpretations.....	32
Diffusion: Solarium Beyond Revisionist Scholarship.....	41
The Stages of Solarium.....	49
Concluding Observations.....	55
Notes .....	57
About the Author .....	67



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## Executive Summary

Project Solarium was a national security exercise that took place in 1953 during the first months of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidency, taking its name from the White House solarium, where Eisenhower and his Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, conceived it. According to many scholars, Project Solarium highly influenced Eisenhower's strategy, and it has come to be regarded as an outstanding example of strategic planning and foresight—indeed as a standard for other American Presidential administrations.

Yet this understanding of Project Solarium emerged gradually over the decades. Most of its associated documents remained classified for over 30 years. Various interpretations by journalists, historians, political theorists, national security professionals—and by some of Project Solarium's actual participants—as well as shifting political and social contexts helped to shape that understanding.

Understanding Project Solarium means, therefore, to sift through and analyze these interpretations as well. Doing so reveals how strategic ideas emerge over time in a variety of intellectual communities of practice that are often quite different from the community where those ideas originated.



Solarium at 70



## Introduction

During 6 weeks in the summer of 1953, in the basement of the National War College at Fort Lesley J. McNair in Washington, DC, three task forces rigorously analyzed positions that had been assigned to them at the direction of President Dwight D. Eisenhower. Task Force A, chaired by George Kennan, analyzed the Cold War strategic approach of containment, the very approach Kennan had formulated while serving in the previous administration, under Harry S. Truman. Task Force B, chaired by Major General James McCormack, USAF, analyzed the approach that could be termed “line in the sand”—an approach that set forth a certain global line that if the rival Soviet Union crossed with belligerent activity, a significant American military response could very possibly follow. Task Force C, chaired by Vice Admiral Richard Connolly, USN, analyzed the notion of “rolling back” apparent communist/Soviet gains through a variety of means and methods, to include military and covert action.



Eisenhower held the Project Solarium exercise in the basement of the National War College, under the rubric of the “First National War College Round Table Seminar,” in 1953 (National Defense University)



The White House Solarium, where Project Solarium was first discussed in May 1953 (Library of Congress)

On July 16, 1953, the three task forces briefed President Eisenhower and other senior administration officials on their findings. According to many accounts, Eisenhower provided significant strategic guidance at that meeting. Further work followed by the National Security Council (NSC) under the direction of Robert Cutler, who served as Eisenhower's assistant for national security affairs. In October 1953, the administration produced a document called NSC 162/2, which many scholars believe contains the nucleus of what has been termed Eisenhower's "New Look" strategy.

The work of these task forces and subsequent responses by Eisenhower and other administration officials has become known as Project Solarium (hereinafter Solarium). Solarium was an in-depth national security exercise that took place in 1953 during the first months of the Eisenhower Presidency. It took its name from the White House solarium, where Eisenhower and his Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, had a meeting that was the project's genesis. As directed by Eisenhower and senior members of his administration, Solarium was designed to map out a

long-term and coherent approach to national security strategy. Each of the task forces, composed of a variety of government officials and private-sector individuals with expertise in military, intelligence, and economic matters, was asked to analyze a particular position and to offer recommendations regarding it.

According to many scholars, Solarium highly influenced Eisenhower's strategy, usually termed the New Look. This strategy stressed nuclear weapons over conventional forces as a more cost-effective means for the United States to respond to national security threats of any sort. It also sought to contain—though not to outright defeat or roll back—communist control where it was already established. It was also in significant ways a repudiation of the more urgent, militarized, and economically expansive strategy promulgated by the Truman administration in a national security council paper known as NSC 68.<sup>1</sup>

Virtually from its inception, the New Look was studied in detail, and either criticized or praised. Solarium only much later became the subject of significant



President Eisenhower in conversation with Secretary of State John Foster Dulles (left) and then Ambassador-designate to the Soviet Union Charles E. Bohlen, on April 2, 1953 (Everett Collection/Alamy)

study and, ultimately, the subject of praise and admiration. In recent years especially, Solarium has come to be regarded as an outstanding exemplar of strategic planning, and as a standard especially for American Presidential administrations to emulate.

Yet this understanding of Solarium as a masterful display of strategic foresight has emerged only gradually over the decades since 1953, via a variety of interpretations. Most of the actual documents related to Solarium were classified and inaccessible to researchers for more than 30 years. A major contributing factor to those various interpretations that enhanced Solarium's reputation has been the declassification of the Solarium documents themselves in the mid-1980s, as well as a multitude of other archival documents.

Solarium's declassification does not fully explain its increased reputation. A variety of interpretations by journalists, historians, political theorists, national security professionals, as well as commentary by some of Solarium's actual participants, all furthered that reputation. And those interpretations occurred within larger intellectual, political, and cultural contexts. Significantly, the Eisenhower Presidency itself, once considered somewhat unfavorably by Presidential scholars, historians, and intellectuals in general, was reexamined in the late 1970s and early 1980s. This "Eisenhower revisionism" helped to inform and influence interpretations of Solarium. And those same interpretations in turn informed and influenced Eisenhower revisionism.

Eisenhower revisionism occurred within changing social and political contexts. Eisenhower left office in 1961 and throughout much of the 1960s, the reputation of his Presidency remained low. However, the Vietnam War, Watergate, 1970s stagflation, and a perceived crisis in America's ability to handle either foreign or domestic affairs provided a larger framework of experience through which scholars subsequently reinterpreted the Eisenhower Presidency. Subsequent political and social events, including the end of the Cold War in the 1990s and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan in the 2000s and 2010s, provided other social and political contexts to evaluate that Presidency.

To understand what Solarium means, therefore, involves a study of the memories, understandings, and most important, interpretations of the event in different

intellectual communities. Ironically, the Presidential administrations themselves had few memories and understandings, and no interpretations. Solarium as an idea, approach, or process was not codified for future use, nor was it engaged with in an “official” capacity by any Presidential administration, including Eisenhower’s own administration itself.

And most of American society remained unaware of Solarium, given that it was classified for so long. Even in academic and national security communities, from the 1950s to the 1970s, very little was known or written about Solarium. But the declassification of Solarium’s documents in the mid-1980s, itself prompted by the previous declassification of other Eisenhower administration documents as well as by the then-burgeoning field of Eisenhower revisionist studies, led to awareness of Solarium, first by historians and political scientists, and years later by national security commentators and practitioners.

The purpose of this study, thus, is not simply to provide yet another interpretation of Solarium, whether about its purpose, design, or impact, but rather to reveal what the various understandings and interpretations of it have been, and how they emerged, and even changed over time. It is a study not only about strategic ideas but about how such ideas spread among intellectual communities of practice that analyze and, in some cases, produce strategic thinking.

This study therefore especially engages with the considerable field of historiographic literature on the Eisenhower Presidency in general, as well as on Solarium in particular. Historiography is the domain where, as Hayden White asserts, “the imaginary, the possible, must contest with the real, the actual.”<sup>2</sup> It is the intellectual space where factual evidence and interpretation of that evidence meet. That interpretation is filtered by the context of the interpreter. As Hans-Georg Gadamer notes, “[A]ll reading involves application”: those who read texts are themselves part of the constructed meanings.<sup>3</sup> Readers/interpreters of events contribute to events’ interpretations via those readers/interpreters’ own contexts. Today’s understanding of Solarium is a culmination of those interpretations and their contexts.

## Solarium and the Eisenhower Presidency

Following its completion in the late summer and early fall of 1953, Solarium was scarcely referred to again during the Eisenhower Presidential years. Its documents were classified and locked away. There were no other references to it within the administration, and it was not codified or made part of what might be called the official institutional memory of Eisenhower's Presidency. There were other efforts that similarly relied on significant expert knowledge, such as the Technology Capabilities Panel that produced the 1955 Killian Report and the Security Resources Panel that produced the 1957 Gaither Report. But Solarium's example did not appear to have influenced them in any significant degree. For example, the Security Resources Panel that produced the 1957 Gaither Report bore only superficial methodological resemblance to Solarium. Eisenhower was not much involved in it; it was nowhere nearly as supervised or as tightly controlled as Solarium had been; and leaks about its findings to Congress and the public at large caused Eisenhower considerable consternation and led him to doubt the effectiveness of the Security Resources Panel.<sup>4</sup>

Yet while Solarium was highly classified, word about it still got out. The first public mention of Solarium appeared in an article in the March 1956 issue of *Fortune* magazine. Along with *Time* and *Life*, *Fortune* was one of the flagship magazines of Henry Luce's publishing empire. Luce, who had coined the phrase "American Century" in 1941, was himself a noted anti-communist and strong Eisenhower supporter.<sup>5</sup>

Entitled "The Eisenhower Shift, Part III," the *Fortune* article was written by Charles J.V. Murphy, a veteran journalist who had had a long professional relationship with Luce. As the title indicated, the article was the third in a series by Murphy that traced the Eisenhower Presidency's "shift" in strategic priorities from Truman's. Murphy placed special emphasis on Eisenhower's efforts in balancing military and economic considerations, noting his "instinctive concern for the economic considerations that also bear upon national strength." He pointed out Eisenhower's apparent success—due in large measure, no doubt, to his stature—in somewhat reducing the perceived runaway defense spending of the Truman

administration, and he described the various efforts of Eisenhower and his chief subordinates—Dulles, Cutler, and others—to formulate the New Look.<sup>6</sup>

And it was within this context that Murphy noted the “historic conference in the White House solarium, late on the afternoon of May 8, 1953,” during which it was decided that a set of possible strategies would be studied to determine which was the “effective alternative” to that of the Truman administration. Murphy went on to describe the three options explored: a course A, which was a continuation of Truman’s containment; a course B, which was to “draw a line around certain threatened areas . . . and serve notice on the [Soviet Union] that a violation . . . would invite general war”; and a course C, which would give the United States the “initiative” and “subject Russia to intense political and economic pressure.”<sup>7</sup>

The article was not completely accurate. For example, it cited Lieutenant General James “Jimmy” Doolittle as leading one of the three task forces. He did not, though he did lead the effort on developing their charters and protocols. But the article got essential facts correct about the location (the “secluded precincts” of the National War College) and the timespan involved (“several intense weeks”). Murphy also concluded that what was ultimately decided on was in fact an amalgamation of the findings of Task Forces A and B—essentially a reiteration of containment that would fill gaps in the current strategic system with a few alliances.<sup>8</sup>

Murphy’s article became a valuable source and point of reference for subsequent scholars. National security scholar Glenn H. Snyder referred to it in the first significant study of Eisenhower’s strategy, published in 1962.<sup>9</sup> But nothing else appeared publicly about Solarium during Eisenhower’s Presidency, and Murphy’s article itself had little scholarly weight.<sup>10</sup> Though, undoubtedly, Murphy received his information from well-placed administration officials, the article was unsourced and unreferenced, and it appeared in a publication—*Fortune*—aimed at a business audience, not at academics or national security professionals.

And although Eisenhower remained popular with the public throughout his Presidency, criticism began to accumulate—especially during Eisenhower’s second term—that he was especially disengaged from international affairs, and that he relied entirely on Dulles, his secretary of state, to handle them. For example, in the 1956 book *The New Isolationism*, Norman Graebner—then a professor at Iowa

State University—consistently referred to “Dulles’s policies” rather than Eisenhower’s. Near the end of the book, Graebner juxtaposed “Dulles’s policies” with Truman’s and noted “Dulles’s persistent failures to achieve his purposes abroad.”<sup>11</sup>

Such criticism and attendant decline in Eisenhower’s reputation occurred primarily among academics, journalists, and other members of the American knowledge class of the era.<sup>12</sup> Among many—perhaps the majority—in that class, Eisenhower was regarded as a mediocre President at best, and far inferior to their choice in the 1952 and 1956 elections, Governor Adlai Stevenson of Illinois.<sup>13</sup> Columbia University, where Eisenhower served as President from 1947 to 1951, was especially a locus of Eisenhower detractors. As Irving Gellman pointed out, many there regarded Eisenhower as merely a military man who lacked a higher degree, and who during his tenure at Columbia was generally indifferent to the university; distracted by extensive travel and consultations with officials both at national and international levels; and subject to failing health.<sup>14</sup> It was little wonder, then, that any notion that Eisenhower was capable of strategic innovation such as Solarium would have almost certainly been drowned out in the increasing chorus that he was something of an ineffectual “caretaker” President.

## Solarium After the Eisenhower Presidency: The Early to Mid-1960s

Solarium did not have any influence on Presidential strategy-making when John F. Kennedy succeeded Eisenhower. Certainly, Kennedy and his supporters were not averse to using teams and committees of experts as Eisenhower had done with Solarium. After all, Kennedy’s accession to the Presidency was accompanied by the rise of the RAND Corporation and other think tanks. Indeed, in the 1960s, credentialed intellectuals had much more expansive roles in government.<sup>15</sup>

A variety of committees, task forces, and think tanks provided Kennedy with a plethora of reports. For example, the Brookings Institution, a prominent think tank, worked with McKinsey & Company, the premier consulting firm, to provide a detailed study on the various departments in the executive branch.<sup>16</sup> Walt Whitman Rostow, who had worked in the Eisenhower administration as well as in academia and who would serve in multiple roles under Kennedy and

later as National Security Advisor under Johnson, even proposed the creation of Solarium-sounding “action teams” in a November 1960 memorandum. These teams—no fewer than 15 of them—would “translate into action terms certain major, urgent problems” that were almost entirely in military and foreign policy.<sup>17</sup>

Yet Rostow’s idea showed no indication of being influenced by Solarium, and there is no record of these “action teams” being attempted during Kennedy’s Presidency. Indeed, nothing done under Eisenhower regarding strategy and planning carried much weight. This is apparent in the correspondence of McGeorge Bundy, Kennedy’s National Security Advisor, in the first months of the administration. Bundy’s memoranda were replete with references to reorganizing a presumably dysfunctional NSC process. In January 1961, Bundy wrote that the Eisenhower NSC system was “ripe for reorganization.” The inherited processes were “too big, too formal, and too paperbound to do the immediate or the planning work you want.”<sup>18</sup>

Eisenhower’s national security processes were largely dismantled under Kennedy.<sup>19</sup> A key academic work that influenced that dismantling was then-Columbia professor Richard Neustadt’s 1960 book *Presidential Power: The Politics of Leadership*.<sup>20</sup> Neustadt’s book argued that the President’s power rests in his ability to persuade, and that accordingly, the President needed fluid and flexible methods to influence everyone around him. Neustadt was extremely critical of Eisenhower’s approach. Eisenhower imparted “superficial symmetry and order.” His excessively formalized system caused him typically to become “the last man in his office to know tangible details and the last to come to grips with acts of choice.”<sup>21</sup> Compared to Franklin Roosevelt, who received high marks, Eisenhower had a system that was “disastrous for his hold on personal power” and that “often left him helpless.”<sup>22</sup> His staff system tended to “smother, not enhance” the needed competing voices to ensure a full range of options.<sup>23</sup>

There was likewise considerable low regard toward the substance of Eisenhower’s national security strategy in the Kennedy-Johnson years, exemplified by the views of Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara. In April 1964, a few months after Kennedy’s assassination, and when McNamara was at the height of his reputation and influence, he harshly criticized Eisenhower’s New Look strategic approach.

Noting that Eisenhower believed that “fiscal security was the true foundation of military security, and his belief that fiscal security was threatened by further increases in the federal budget,” McNamara decried how, under Eisenhower, the “Treasury Department and not the Defense Department established the size of the defense budget.” Eisenhower’s “complete reliance” on nuclear weapons—driven in large part by saving costs—was strategically flawed: “[I]t did not stop Communist political and military aggression,” and instead was in “a true sense, a bankrupt strategy.”<sup>24</sup>

Such disregard and even disdain in official governmental circles was exceeded only by the feeling toward Eisenhower throughout the American knowledge class, which carried over and even intensified its disdain from the previous decade. Nowhere was this more prominently displayed than in Richard Hofstadter’s Pulitzer Prize-winning *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*, published in 1963. According to Hofstadter, Eisenhower was “conventional in mind, relatively inarticulate, [and] harnessed to the unpalatable Nixon.” Eisenhower’s successive victories over Adlai Stevenson, a “politician of uncommon mind and style, whose appeal to intellectuals overshadowed anything in recent history,” were taken by American intellectuals as “their repudiation by America.”<sup>25</sup> Comparatively, Kennedy “proved what perhaps should not have to be proved again—that the reading of books, even the writing of books, is hardly a fatal impediment for a President.”<sup>26</sup>

Eisenhower’s reputation did no better in the hands of contemporary historians in the early 1960s. Assessments ranged from faint praise at best to outright condemnation at worst. Herman Finer’s 1964 *Dulles Over Suez: The Theory and Practice of His Diplomacy* portrays American policy during the 1956 Suez Crisis as “Dulles’s policy.”<sup>27</sup> Finer dismissed Eisenhower’s foreign policy credentials as well as his actual abilities. He noted that Eisenhower’s role as NATO Supreme Commander was “hardly a school where the complex, subtle power relationships, traditions and expectations of over hundred sovereign nations . . . could be adequately learned.”<sup>28</sup> Instead, throughout the Suez Crisis, Eisenhower was “inevitably and exceptionally reliant on Secretary of State Dulles,” and it was Dulles who “insisted on the exclusive and absolute command of every policy, every decision, and every action that concerned foreign affairs.”<sup>29</sup>

Regarding Solarium itself, it was scarcely found in published accounts throughout the 1960s. One of the few places where it was discussed was in a lengthy volume entitled *Strategy, Politics and Defense Budgets* (1962) that contained a detailed and scholarly account of both the Truman and Eisenhower administrations' strategic approaches, as well as one of the first, if not the first, academic examinations of Solarium in print.<sup>30</sup> Relying on the 1956 *Fortune* article as well as anonymous interviewees, co-author Glenn Snyder provided a fairly accurate account of Solarium. He referenced the preliminary work by Eisenhower's team in determining the procedures and the approaches that the three task forces would take. Snyder also opined that Eisenhower and senior officials were "pretty much in favor of the first alternative—a continuation of the policy of 'containment'—with some slight modification in the direction of the second alternative." Snyder further noted that the "failure to incorporate any part of the third alternative marked the end of the policy of 'liberation,' so highly touted during the campaign of 1952."<sup>31</sup>

Snyder's summation of Solarium would not go unnoticed; renowned Cold War scholar John Lewis Gaddis referenced it in his groundbreaking *Strategies of Containment* two decades later.<sup>32</sup> And Snyder, though writing well before any notion of Eisenhower revisionism, granted Eisenhower higher marks than was common in the early 1960s. Snyder's explication of Solarium was one of the pieces of empirical evidence that showed how Eisenhower played a much more active role in creating the New Look than was commonly believed at the time, and that demonstrated how Eisenhower was attuned particularly to "the economic dangers of excessive military spending."<sup>33</sup>

Nevertheless, too much should not be read into Snyder's account. He did not cite Solarium as an example of Eisenhower's strategic foresight or as a creative, multifaceted strategic effort. The notion of three task forces was treated as a bureaucratic process. Eisenhower's role in the exercise was cursorily handled—he briefly appeared in one closing line about Solarium: "Late in July, the reports were sent to the President." But per Snyder's telling, Eisenhower himself apparently did little with the reports or the task force findings. Rather, they were turned over to Cutler's NSC Planning Board "with instructions to take the best ideas from all of

them and incorporate them into a single basic policy paper.” In Snyder’s recounting, Eisenhower’s role regarding even this prosaic directive was unclear.<sup>34</sup>

The second significant reference to Solarium that appeared in the 1960s was in Robert Cutler’s memoir, *No Time for Rest* (1966).<sup>35</sup> Here Cutler provided perhaps the first presentation of Solarium from an insider’s point of view. He described Solarium’s genesis—largely the product of Dulles, who sketched out the three alternatives; Cutler; and other key administration figures, Walter Bedell Smith and C.D. Jackson, who proposed the idea of the task forces to Eisenhower in the White House solarium. In Cutler’s account, Eisenhower did come up with names to serve on the task forces, including Andrew Goodpaster for Task Force C, and Eisenhower also suggested that General Jimmy Doolittle be put in charge of the committee to work out the various protocol arrangements, tasks, and responsibilities of the project.<sup>36</sup>

Still, Cutler did not describe the inner workings of Solarium, nor did he discuss in any detail the presentation of the task force reports to Eisenhower and other members of the administration or their reception. In fact, his descriptions of the Eisenhower NSC seemed not so much about a dynamic strategic process, but rather a restatement of what Cutler had previously referred to in writing and congressional testimony as Eisenhower’s “policy hill.”<sup>37</sup> Critics—including those in succeeding Presidential administrations—viewed the “policy hill” as a difficult peak where decisions were tortuously elevated to be approved, and then sent clumsily down to be executed. Without additional understanding or context, Solarium in Cutler’s account looked less like a creative exercise in strategic planning and more of a bureaucratic set piece of a Presidential administration that was, in the mid-1960s, still held in somewhat low regard.<sup>38</sup>

In an effort at reputational rehabilitation, Eisenhower published his own account in the early 1960s. His first volume, *Mandate for Change, 1953–1956* (1963), sought to counter the notion of a passive and disengaged chief executive. It also spent a considerable amount of time on foreign policy and national security matters. Eisenhower devoted a specific chapter to the New Look and a section on the reorganization of military organizational structures.<sup>39</sup> Nonetheless, Solarium was not mentioned in the memoir nor even vaguely hinted at. The

Solarium documents remained classified throughout the 1960s, and it is possible that Eisenhower himself was therefore reluctant to discuss it. Regardless of Eisenhower's motivations in not referencing it, given the barest awareness of Solarium in the public sphere and Eisenhower's own lack of acknowledgment, Solarium did not diminish the negative perceptions of Eisenhower's Presidency during the initial post-administration years.

## Eisenhower Proto-Revisionism and the Beginnings of Alternative Interpretations

In the last years of the 1960s and first years of the 1970s, the first inkling of a reappraisal of the Eisenhower Presidency—what might be called an Eisenhower proto-revisionism—appeared. Much of this reexamination of Eisenhower's Presidency was done by journalists and based less on specific empirical evidence and more on informed speculation. It was a product of the fast-changing times, as external events shifted interpretive frameworks. Events in the late 1960s in particular—the escalation of the Vietnam War; the election of Richard Nixon, Eisenhower's Vice President, as President in 1968; and Eisenhower's death in March 1969—all called forth reevaluations that anticipated the fuller academic revisionism of later years. During those years, there were also new understandings of how political action took place, and a firsthand account of Solarium was also provided by George Kennan, one of Solarium's key participants.

Journalists were the first to pick up on the notion that there was more to Eisenhower than met the public eye. Murray Kempton's article "The Underestimation of Dwight D. Eisenhower" in the September 1967 issue of *Esquire* magazine depicted an Eisenhower more cunning and analytical than commonly believed. Indeed, in Kempton's words, such stealth and cunning made up the core of his being. Eisenhower never truly showed his intentions fully and "[n]o thought was to be uttered unguarded." The Vietnam War appeared obliquely in Kempton's article, by way of implicit contrast: Kempton wrote about Eisenhower's "cold intelligence" analyzing the French efforts at Dien Bien Phu, inferring that Eisenhower was too intelligent to have blundered into Vietnam the way his successors did, and that

his hidden calculations and machinations had something to do with this sort of disaster avoidance.<sup>40</sup>

Garry Wills contrasted Eisenhower with his Presidential successors, including his former Vice President, in *Nixon Agonistes: The Crisis of the Self-Made Man*, that described Eisenhower as a “master of the essentials,” as one who knew “how to deal with experts . . . and not to be intimidated by them,” and as a President who, *pace* Neustadt, did not need displays of persuasion to achieve his goals: he “found the secret of suggesting strength withoutrodomontade.”<sup>41</sup> And in a sort of Eisenhower eulogy, Richard Rhodes’s piece in *Harper’s* magazine in 1970 was a particularly telling proto-revisionist piece. As Rhodes wrote: “No one seems to have understood [Eisenhower] was a brilliant man. He was not an intellectual and perhaps that fact confused people of the intellect who assume intelligence must breathe the air of the salon.”<sup>42</sup> And by the time of Rhodes’s piece, America’s Vietnam involvement had moved from foreign policy blunder to seeming political and moral catastrophe. Eisenhower, to Rhodes, evoked a better time—and a better war—in contrast: “We know from Vietnam what a cynical command fighting an ill-conceived war for a less than righteous cause can do to an army. We know from My Lai. Will we ever be able to determine the part that Eisenhower’s courage and humility contributed to make World War II relatively more humane?”<sup>43</sup>

Without much specific empirical data, these journalists intuited a sense of hiddenness and of withholding in Eisenhower. And such subtler forms of political action and persuasion became subjects of considerable study in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In the latter sixties, Richard Neustadt, so influential in the Kennedy administration with his earlier study of the Presidency, moved from Columbia to Harvard and its new John F. Kennedy School of Government. There, he and other scholars, among them Ernest May and later Graham Allison, developed the so-called case study approach to contemporary history. Specific moments in Presidential administrations were analyzed and deconstructed to reveal a multiplicity of interpretations. The method particularly relied on interviews with key participants to provide fuller contextual revelations. Doing so brought in increased subjectivity and participant bias, but it also provided understandings that archival documents alone could not provide.<sup>44</sup>

In particular, the Kennedy School “May Group” rejected the prevailing view that “rational actors” worked out policy decisions that could be quantitatively assessed and even predicted. Instead, they focused on competing institutional imperatives and on the bargaining and bureaucratic politicking that occurs behind closed doors.<sup>45</sup> Graham Allison’s *The Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (1971) was probably the most famous example of this approach.<sup>46</sup> The central idea of the book was that the “rational actor” model must be supplemented by two other models—one that focused on organizational imperatives (model II) and one that focused on the bureaucratic politics of backroom deal-making (model III). Model II emphasized that policy actions are not determined by policy rationales themselves, but by “large organizations functioning according to regular patterns of behavior.” In other words, the organization’s context, structure, and standard operating procedures and patterns determined its output as much as rational calculation did. Model III’s bureaucratic politics examined “perceptions, motivations, positions, power and maneuvers of the players.”<sup>47</sup>

Allison’s groundbreaking analysis opened a new way to look at strategy and strategic thinking. Leaders might not be so overt in their actions and respond in subtler forms; strategy and policy should not be viewed as simply a collection of inputs and outputs, but as part of a deeply complex context-driven process that held an array of actors who participated in the process with different motivations and intents. *Solarium*, still being classified and relatively inaccessible, was still years away from being subject to such in-depth analysis. Nonetheless, by the early to mid-1970s, much intellectual groundwork was laid so that when *Solarium* became known, a wide range of interpretations came forth that portrayed strategy-making in the Eisenhower administration as something far more complex, intricate, and even creative than previously imagined.

*Solarium* references were indeed quite rare in the 1970s. The first significant one came from George Kennan in the second volume of his memoirs. This volume discussed the years 1950 to 1963, which included Kennan’s time as ambassador to the Soviet Union and the beginning of his career at the Institute of Advanced Study at Princeton. In Kennan’s comments on *Solarium*, he noted that it was still at a high level of classification and stated that he was “not sure how much I am

authorized to reveal about it.”<sup>48</sup> Kennan discussed his leadership of Task Force A and writes that in the end, “it was the concept propounded by my team that received the Presidential approval.”<sup>49</sup> He offered little more than this short description—he did not even describe the purpose of his own team’s effort, much less that of the other two task forces. And his only description of the subject presented by his team’s findings to Eisenhower and other senior administration officials was of Kennan getting his “revenge” on Secretary Dulles, who had earlier dismissed him from the State Department peremptorily. As Kennan described, Dulles was now “saddl[ed] . . . inescapably, with my policy.”<sup>50</sup>

Yet while Kennan’s description of Solarium was brief, it became influential. The notion of Eisenhower as essentially “adopting” Kennan’s view of containment has become a standard Solarium interpretation: John Lewis Gaddis, Kennan’s official biographer, noted in his biography of Kennan that historians essentially agreed that this is what happened.<sup>51</sup> And Solarium’s discussion in Kennan’s memoirs was followed by a meditation about Eisenhower that portrayed the President as complex and subtle. Kennan called him “enigmatic” and “difficult” to understand. He saw Eisenhower as someone who “seldom reflected any serious intellectual preoccupations” and as “a lost man, socially, in civilian life.”<sup>52</sup> Yet he also wrote that any impression that Eisenhower was “intellectually and politically superficial” was “quite erroneous” and notes that Eisenhower was actually “a man of keen political intelligence and penetration, particularly when it came to foreign affairs.”<sup>53</sup> Kennan’s ultimate conclusion was not that Eisenhower lacked intelligence and ability, but that he had an “unwillingness to employ them except on the rarest of occasions.”<sup>54</sup>

Kennan’s analysis of Eisenhower notably failed to draw the apparent linkage between Solarium—an exercise that engaged in long-range, in-depth strategic thinking—and Eisenhower himself, who seemingly directed the very process. Years later, Kennan himself would in fact be much more forthright about Eisenhower’s role in Solarium. But that Kennan did not make the connection in his 1972 memoirs is not particularly surprising. Solarium hardly had the reputation that it would later acquire. Archival documentation (which would include much of the declassified Solarium documentation) was still inaccessible. And Eisenhower



George F. Kennan, former Ambassador to the Soviet Union, testifies about the Vietnam War before the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1966 (Warren K. Leffler/Library of Congress)

revisionism, with its depiction of an active, engaged Eisenhower orchestrating and directing events, was likewise still a few years away.

## Eisenhower Revisionism and Solarium's "Discovery"

Eisenhower revisionism arose in particularly troubled times in American politics. There was a pervasive sense in the late 1970s that the American Presidency was in deep crisis and suffering from what appeared to be systemic dysfunction. In a later version of one of the seminal Eisenhower revisionist works, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, Fred I. Greenstein reflected on the political context in which the revisionism arose: he noted the apparent "fragility of recent presidencies" that included "a politically crippled Lyndon Johnson . . . a politically discredited Richard Nixon", along with Gerald Ford, who "had failed to be elected in his own right," and with Jimmy Carter, whose Presidency was "on the ropes."<sup>55</sup> By the late 1970s, Eisenhower was, in Greenstein's words, "the only post-Twenty-second Amendment President to be elected to and complete two terms."<sup>56</sup> Retrospectively, compared to the previous almost 20 years, Eisenhower's years seemed relatively calm and even-keeled.<sup>57</sup>

Within this uneasy context, the event that triggered the first wave of Eisenhower revisionism was the opening of key documents—the so-called Ann Whitman files—in the Eisenhower Archives in Abilene, Kansas, in 1977. While the Archives had first opened in 1962, it was only after Eisenhower's death in 1969 that there were significant shipments of documents from his home in Gettysburg to Abilene. The declassification of several source documents took several years.<sup>58</sup> The Archives themselves garnered a significant reputation, described as "superb," with not only a "monumental collection of documents" but also a knowledgeable staff to aid scholars.<sup>59</sup>

Even more important, the primary sources—in their thoroughness, detail, and precision—provided unmatched breadth and depth. Much of this can be credited to Ann Whitman, Eisenhower's personal secretary throughout his Presidency. Whitman was a committed professional in her handling and organizing of material and in her devotion to Eisenhower and the Presidency. The Whitman files,



Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, nearby the Eisenhower Museum and his boyhood home, in Abilene, Kansas (Chris Haden/Shutterstock)

containing information that she had collected and collated, contained a wealth of documents, to include Whitman's own meticulous minutes.<sup>60</sup>

Such archival documents provided significant revelation. Greenstein wrote that he experienced the "shock of nonrecognition" when he reviewed the Whitman files.<sup>61</sup> Eisenhower came across in the richly detailed archival material as active, engaged, and dominant, both intellectually and politically. In contrast to Neustadt's *Presidential Power* and in implicit agreement with the work from the Kennedy School's May Group, Greenstein indicated that the evidence about Eisenhower's Presidency showed the deliberate *opposite* of what Neustadt claimed was essential. Eisenhower masked his power of persuasion publicly to pursue his goals, often privately and even secretly: Eisenhower *consciously* created an image of a somewhat detached President to serve a political goal.<sup>62</sup> Additionally, the archival data detailed the process by which Eisenhower administration strategies were formulated and its policies produced. Notwithstanding the complaints of the agonies of "policy hill," those processes appeared to be "model[s] in administrative



Ann C. Whitman, personal secretary to President Eisenhower and future Chief of Staff to Vice President Nelson Rockefeller, at her desk, September 18, 1958 (U.S. Navy)

efficiency.”<sup>63</sup> What had appeared at the time to be sluggish and excessive appeared retrospectively as prudent and thorough.

Other early revisionist works similarly reversed standard understandings. Richard Immerman, a key revisionist who would later be one of Solarium’s most significant interpreters, delved extensively into the Whitman files in his groundbreaking 1979 article, “Eisenhower and Dulles: Who Made the Decisions?” Interestingly and tellingly, this article was published in a journal devoted to political psychology.<sup>64</sup> Immerman dissented from the standard treatment of Eisenhower as a passive leader. Such assessments of Eisenhower as a bystander, acquiescent President were based on secondary literature.<sup>65</sup> Calling the Whitman files a “bonanza,” and using its daily calendars, detailed minutes, and transcripts of conversations, Immerman revealed a very different picture about Eisenhower and Dulles than had been portrayed, and argued that Eisenhower was, often, the dominant figure in the Eisenhower-Dulles relationship.<sup>66</sup>

Work such as Greenstein's and Immerman's suggested that more could be learned about Eisenhower's strategic approach via a close examination of his national security system's organizational and institutional processes. During revisionism's first years, two scholars in particular, Douglas Kinnard and Anna Kasten Nelson, provided such an inspection, even if neither had access to Solarium's still-classified documents.

In *President Eisenhower and Strategy Management* (1977), Kinnard demonstrated how Eisenhower deployed his political skill and national security expertise to drive his own particular strategic vision at the outset

of his Presidency.<sup>67</sup> Kinnard contended that Eisenhower achieved remarkable strategic coherence and unity within and beyond the administration—by 1954, with the official publication of the New Look, there was essential agreement about the strategy not only within the administration, but with the general American public, and even internationally with Western European allies.<sup>68</sup>

This sort of unified strategy obviously implied a well-controlled and managed strategic process. In Kinnard's view, Eisenhower brought to the Presidency "logical guidelines for designing and employing a security establishment."<sup>69</sup> In other words, Eisenhower deliberately sought after a process that not only created a particular strategic output—especially the policy that ultimately was termed the New Look—but a process that itself had value and purpose in myriad other ways,



Richard Immerman, Professor and Edward Buthusiem Distinguished Faculty Fellow in History Emeritus and Emeritus Marvin Wachman Director of the Center for the Study of Force and Diplomacy at Temple University (Courtesy Wilson Center)

regardless of the specific policies that followed. What created Eisenhower's unifying vision was not simply the hyperformalized "policy hill" structure made known by Cutler. As Kinnard noted, the NSC was not so much a decisionmaking body as it was an "ideal forum to achieve consensus, coordination, and to give an impetus to the implementation of decisions."<sup>70</sup>

In her influential 1983 article "'The Top of Policy Hill': President Eisenhower and the National Security Council," Anna Kasten Nelson delved into Eisenhower's NSC structure, noting that his NSC setup was more intricate and nuanced than Cutler's own heavily bureaucratized depiction.<sup>71</sup> Eisenhower did indeed establish a formalized NSC process, with the NSC Planning Board and NSC Operations Coordinating Board as policy hill's two "slopes." But Eisenhower also used his own channels within the White House and used Dulles and his State Department actively in complementary and reinforcing ways. Nelson revealed that it was not a case of matters simply ascending policy hill's slopes to be decided and then descending to be implemented, but instead there was a triangular, linked system that involved the aforementioned NSC system, run by Cutler, where position papers were clarified and policies hashed out in meetings; the separate White House system, largely run by Andrew Goodpaster, Eisenhower's staff secretary and military liaison, where Eisenhower sought out a variety of points of view and often unilaterally acted; and Dulles's State Department, which handled all diplomatic activities and was the face of American policy to other nations.<sup>72</sup> Indeed, as Nelson pointed out, this was a system that not even some of its main figures fully understood (hence Cutler's own incomplete description) and was made clear only when archival materials became available in the 1970s and 1980s.

Scholarship such as Kinnard's and Nelson's offered a reconceptualization of Eisenhower as a strategist, with especial emphasis on his focus on planning and procedure—on strategic process as much as strategic policy. This emphasis on process was in fact one of the most salient features of Eisenhower revisionism—to such an extent that revisionist critics would respond that whatever the merits of Eisenhower's processes, they could not mask substantive policy failings.<sup>73</sup> Kinnard and Nelson set the stage for an examination of *all* aspects of that process—with

Solarium, still classified, a major part of that process waiting to be much further explored.

Prior to Solarium's declassification, one significant interpretation of the exercise did appear during the first wave of revisionist scholarship, even if it was not considered part of Eisenhower historiographic literature. In *Strategies of Containment* (1982), John Lewis Gaddis provided one of the first—and to date one of the most significant—interpretations of American Cold War strategy. Gaddis's sweeping analysis of Cold War strategies as "operational codes"—as relatively coherent patterns throughout Presidential administrations—was influential and enduring.<sup>74</sup>

A Presidential strategy as an enduring code implied that long-range planning rendered such a code viable. And Gaddis treated Solarium not simply as a set piece, but as an "elaborate planning exercise . . . designed to consider all available options and decide upon the most appropriate course of action."<sup>75</sup> Gaddis interpreted Solarium as fundamentally *instrumental*, as output-directed. Its purpose was to produce a strategic deliverable: the New Look itself, manifested most prominently in NSC 162/2. Yet Gaddis was somewhat ambiguous about what precisely from Solarium eventually went into the New Look. Gaddis noted Kennan's assertion that it was Kennan's own containment policy that was adopted by Eisenhower. But Gaddis also pointed out that what became known as the "New Look" amalgamated various portions of all three task forces' recommendations.<sup>76</sup>

Gaddis's two interpretations of Solarium—first, of the exercise as fundamentally directed at producing the specific New Look strategy, and second, of its leading to an adoption of containment, though also in combination with other task forces' noncontainment elements—were lasting ones. And Gaddis's interpretation was further important in that Solarium itself, although not portrayed as the centerpiece of Eisenhower's strategy, was nonetheless given prominent mention as part of his assessment that gave Eisenhower strong if qualified praise. Noting that Eisenhower was not necessarily a strategic "genius," Gaddis went on to say, "Still, his strategy was coherent, bearing signs of his influence at almost every level, careful, for the most part, in its relation of ends to means, and on the whole, more consistent than detrimental to the national interest."<sup>77</sup> Admitting that this was a "modest claim," Gaddis nevertheless contrasted it sharply with

the Kennedy-Johnson strategy of flexible response that led to “clumsy overreaction, not coordination but disproportion, not strategic precision, but in the end, a strategic vacuum”—an indictment in particular of American national security strategy prior to and during the Vietnam War.<sup>78</sup>

Solarium’s declassification and revelation to the academic world did not occur until the mid-1980s. Much of the credit can be given to the work of historian William Pickett, who had been a graduate student of Robert Ferrell, editor of *The Eisenhower Diaries*, another seminal revisionist work.<sup>79</sup> In Pickett’s recounting, Ferrell told him to decamp to Abilene and research at the Eisenhower Archives, which he did for several months during the 1982–1983 academic year while on sabbatical. Though Pickett knew little about Solarium, after seeing the Solarium folders—“each one frustratingly empty except for red redacted notices”—he submitted a Freedom of Information Act request for all the documents to be made available to researchers.<sup>80</sup>

The entire process took 2 years, and in 1985, Pickett received the task force reports and related documents at his home in Indiana. Although it is unclear how his request was processed, it was done so in conjunction with the publication of shorter Solarium reports and documents in a volume of the *Foreign Relations of the United States*, published in 1984.<sup>81</sup> After reviewing the documents, Pickett wrote an article that would appear months later in the newsletter of the Society of Historians for Foreign Relations.

Pickett’s article, “The Eisenhower Solarium Notes,” was the first significant analysis of Project Solarium in its own right. Referring specifically to the “newly declassified notes” that he had received, Pickett noted that the Solarium documents would revise “earlier interpretations of Dwight D. Eisenhower’s strategy in the Cold War.”<sup>82</sup>

Pickett interpreted the strategy that emerged from Solarium neither based on “deterrence through reliance on a capacity for a massive nuclear retaliation . . . nor . . . [reliance] on conventional containment.” Instead, Pickett viewed Eisenhower’s strategy as “much more complex.”<sup>83</sup> The key to decoding Solarium could be found in the document titled the “Proposed New Basic Concept,” prepared by the NSC on July 30, 1953, that encapsulated the Solarium deliberations. Pickett contended that

this document essentially amalgamated the task force reports into what became known as the New Look in five strategic recommendations:

- ◆ build a strong retaliatory offensive capability, a mobilization base, and a continental defense
- ◆ create strong, independent, and self-reliant nations friendly to the United States, centered on Japan and Germany
- ◆ confine the granting of foreign assistance to regional alliances in the Far East and Western Europe (elsewhere, such aid should be “selective and limited”)
- ◆ make publicly known the areas that, if Soviet forces were to move on them, would be considered as initiating “general war” between the United States and the Soviet bloc
- ◆ take selective “aggressive actions of a limited scope . . . to eliminate Soviet-dominated areas within the free world.”

Pickett linked each of the task forces’ recommendations to a respective part of this fivefold strategy: Kennan’s Task Force A reflected in the first three recommendations; Task Force B’s “bright line” approach in the fourth; and Task Force C’s “roll-back” in the fifth.<sup>84</sup>

Pickett thus highlighted several aspects of Eisenhower’s New Look that were underappreciated, even amid revisionist scholarship. First was the deliberateness behind Eisenhower’s strategy. The above strategic findings were not merely a recitation of canned speeches or talking points but were based on Solarium’s detailed reports that contained a wealth of data, all combed over by teams of professionals. Second was that Solarium’s reports were not cast aside as interesting but ultimately irrelevant thought exercises; instead, they were apparently actualized soon thereafter in a significant policy document. Third, Solarium did indeed reiterate significant parts of the prior Truman administration’s policy, especially Kennan’s containment ideas, yet did so in a more thorough and multidimensional way: one prominent factor that the task forces addressed was the “long term nature of the Soviet threat through concern for the effect of the cold war on the [W]estern economies.”<sup>85</sup>

Pickett's analysis was groundbreaking in that it helped establish Solarium as a significant point in the formulation of Eisenhower strategy. Implicit in Pickett's analysis of the task force reports and the July 30 Basic Concept was not simply "massive retaliation" or even the New Look per se, but a differently formulated geopolitical "code," a strategy broader in scope that went beyond pure "threat-based" assessment to a deeper type of assessment that linked economic, military, and diplomatic actions together in a way that elaborated on containment's basic propositions. And in so doing, Pickett's Solarium discovery and his analysis of it left room for further revelations and explications. What occurred behind the scenes in the initial meetings by senior leaders and later in the task forces themselves? What would further exploration of this elaborate strategic exercise uncover?

One advantage that Solarium had over older historical events was that many of its key participants were still alive well into the 1990s and even into the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. Dulles died in 1959 and Eisenhower in 1969, but several key participants—in the task forces especially—had been relatively young in 1953. Many would go on to have distinguished careers and were often interviewed as part of oral history projects, which was also a key May Group method to get beyond the surface of official memoranda and delve into deeper questions.<sup>86</sup> During the interview discussions, Solarium would sometimes come up, though its meaning and significance in those interviews varied based on circumstance and historical context.

Harold K. Johnson, for example, had served as a member of Task Force C, and eventually rose to become the Army Chief of Staff during the Vietnam War. Interviewed in 1972 at Carlisle Barracks, Johnson noted that he was one of six students "assigned to a White House study project called Project Solarium." Other than mentioning that it previewed "military policy and national military strategy," however, nothing else was discussed about it—the interviewer quickly passed over it to other aspects of Johnson's year at the National War College.<sup>87</sup> Similarly, a 1973 interview of Charles Bonesteel, who had served on Task Force A, and who would later become commander of all U.S. and allied forces in Korea, revealed little. Bonesteel was involved with some of Solarium's initial organization, and he worked with the National War College commandant in a very "hush-hush" manner. He

noted as well that he was on the task force that dealt with containment, which to him was the only “realistic” option. Beyond that, nothing further was said about the event by either interviewer or interviewee.<sup>88</sup>

In short, in neither the Johnson or Bonesteel interviews was there any notion that Solarium was of any historical moment or strategic significance. There was not much reason to think that it was. The exercise was still highly classified in the early 1970s; key archival documents remained unopened and unexamined; and both interviews preceded the first wave of Eisenhower revisionism. Furthermore, neither Johnson nor Bonesteel had been high-ranking officials during the Eisenhower administration: they could provide little overarching context.

But there was one Solarium member whose oral histories would prove highly significant. Andrew Goodpaster, Eisenhower’s staff secretary and military liaison from 1954 onward, was an army officer of particularly high reputation who had been personally requested by Eisenhower to serve in the White House.<sup>89</sup> In his role as staff secretary, he prepared the national security agenda and assiduously recorded what occurred during the various meetings that implemented that agenda. Goodpaster’s memoranda, particularly of national security meetings, have been described as “so precise, so replete with idiomatic expressions, that researchers believe that they can recover not only the president’s words, but also the tone and manner in which he spoke.”<sup>90</sup>

Goodpaster was also a key participant in Solarium, and given his duties in the Eisenhower White House, he provided rich understanding of it. In a series of interviews over the years, he offered insights that furthered revisionist scholarship, and especially helped to place Solarium within the context of Eisenhower’s strategic thinking and design. Goodpaster’s accounts became almost as important as the Solarium documents themselves. In short, he became Solarium’s foremost interpreter.

Goodpaster’s first recorded interview occurred in 1967, as part of a Columbia University oral history project. Goodpaster brought up Solarium when discussing his early associations with Eisenhower. He discussed the “three sub-groups” that made up the task forces.<sup>91</sup> He established that, although Dulles had prompted the exercise, it was “right down the line of the general approach that General



General Andrew Goodpaster, USA, on July 1, 1969, the date of his assumption of command as Supreme Allied Commander Europe (Courtesy NATO)

Eisenhower normally made to his problems.” He also elaborated on the underlying purpose of the exercise, which was not simply to produce a specific policy result, but to “deepen the understanding of [national security] matters on the part of the principal advisors, some whom had had very limited experience in these fields . . . so as to develop a kind of understanding, and so as to take a step beyond rather superficial and sometimes sweeping policy proposals.”<sup>92</sup> Goodpaster thus illuminated an alternative understanding of Solarium. Solarium had a purpose beyond a specified policy outcome. Instead, a key purpose was to educate and thereby to influence administration officials on Eisenhower’s strategic approach and priorities.

Thirteen years later, in 1980—and amid revisionist scholarship—Goodpaster was interviewed along with other prominent Eisenhower administration officials, to include Ann Whitman and Gordon Gray, a prominent national security official during the administration. Goodpaster in this interview was even more emphatic about Solarium’s significance and Eisenhower’s role in it. He referred to an assertion apparently made by George Kennan that, during the summary of the task force reports at the assembled July 16 meeting, Eisenhower showed his “intellectual ascendancy over every man in the room” in summarizing and encapsulating the task force findings “for something between a half hour and forty-five minutes, completely extemporaneous.”<sup>93</sup> Goodpaster further stated that Solarium was an example of how Eisenhower would “initiate leadership” but of a “somewhat broader kind and at somewhat deeper level . . . he provided a style and a sense of what we’re reaching for and wanting in the world.”<sup>94</sup>

In a 1982 interview, Goodpaster explained that Solarium was Eisenhower’s “means of forging a single controlling idea that would dominate his administration. Having done that, it was no longer necessary for him then to try to influence every decision that was taken.”<sup>95</sup> Solarium “aligned” the administration to an approach that was essentially cautious and that ultimately limited “rollback” as a viable strategic option. Indeed, Goodpaster noted in this interview that the reason Eisenhower put him on Task Force C was precisely to moderate the task force’s “rollback” recommendations.<sup>96</sup>

These recountings seemingly proved the May Group's idea that interviews provided insights that the four corners of memoranda could not. Two major points emerged from the Goodpaster oral histories. The first was the linking of Eisenhower to Solarium in a way that demonstrated his strategic acumen. It was revealing that the Kennan-attributed statement about Eisenhower's "intellectual ascendancy" was first heard from Goodpaster (though Goodpaster would later repeat it in Kennan's presence without Kennan's objection). The statement was itself an important part of revisionist scholarship—Eisenhower showed both leadership and intellectual dominance in how he synthesized Solarium's details into a strategically coherent picture.

The second point to emerge was Goodpaster's expansion of Solarium's significance and meaning. He viewed it not as a set piece, nor even as an instrument that led to NSC 162/2, however significant that might have been. Instead, he portrayed Solarium as offering what might be called differing strategic modalities. Solarium may have proximately led to the New Look, but it also educated senior officials. Solarium may have had an instrumental policy purpose, but it also was a method to set strategic conditions or even establish a strategic *gestalt*—a framework with an established "single controlling idea."

Goodpaster's interviews furthered the idea that Solarium was not only about the New Look policy of NSC 162/2. In 1988, he and two other distinguished panelists participated in a symposium at Princeton that discussed Solarium in a wide-ranging way, considering its recent "discovery" of a few years prior. Goodpaster was joined by George Kennan and Robert Bowie, who had served as Director of the Policy Planning Staff at the State Department (Kennan's old position) under Eisenhower and had knowledge of Solarium's inner workings. Key Eisenhower revisionist scholar Richard Immerman served as moderator, and other prominent scholars such as John Lewis Gaddis were in attendance. The most public examination of Solarium to date, it proved important enough to be reprinted 16 years later as a monograph.<sup>97</sup>

The interview covered a variety of topics related to Solarium. Goodpaster reasserted Kennan's "intellectual ascendancy" remark, now with Kennan present, and Kennan did not demur.<sup>98</sup> Kennan highlighted Solarium's secrecy and commented

that “[Y]ou have no idea how this was protected; nobody knew about it that whole summer despite the fact that fifty to a hundred people were involved in it.”<sup>99</sup> Goodpaster noted that Solarium still was not fully declassified, and speculated that it was because of Task Force C’s “significant covert operations section.”<sup>100</sup>

The panelists also delved into the workings of the task forces themselves. Kennan pointed out that his task force had leeway regarding its assigned containment position and “where we disagreed with it to say that we disagreed; or where we were in accord with it, to say so and base our paper accordingly.”<sup>101</sup> Goodpaster remarked that his task force somewhat moderated its assigned rollback position—it rejected the notion (taken from NSC-68) of a “year of maximum danger” for the United States, a sort of point of no return that had to be avoided.<sup>102</sup>

All the participants agreed that Eisenhower’s association with Solarium was substantial. Goodpaster noted how Eisenhower personally assigned individuals to the task forces “by name[,] and g[ave] his reasons for doing so.”<sup>103</sup> Bowie portrayed Eisenhower as having “full confidence in his own judgment” in matters related to military spending. Bowie further pointed out that afterward Eisenhower gave neither the Joint Chiefs nor Secretary of Treasury George Humphrey (who had repeatedly argued for significantly reduced military spending) everything they wanted.<sup>104</sup>

These and other reflections on Solarium were interesting. They also underscored the multifacetedness of the exercise. Solarium was indeed at least in part an exercise whose purpose was instrumental, and the eventual strategy in the form of NSC 162/2 did result. But the participants also noted that singular purpose could be overemphasized, and that Solarium had other motivations. Bowie, for example, pointed out that Solarium did not *directly* produce any strategy or policy. He noted that the “whole thing was turned over to the NSC planning board.” Other intervening events, such as the *Sequoia* exercise that the Joint Chiefs undertook on military structure and strategy, were part of the process that produced NSC 162/2. Solarium, while significant, was by no means the only input into the New Look.<sup>105</sup>

Instead, what the interviewees stressed as significant were Solarium’s other strategic modalities. In Kennan’s view, what was most useful about the exercise was its clarifying of “the general outlook of a new political administration and to prod

a lot of people in the Washington bureaucracy, military and civilian, into taking a new look at the things we had been trying to do, and to see whether they could not improve on our previous performance.”<sup>106</sup> Per Kennan, the strategy-making process could possibly yield new perspectives on intractable problems; the purpose, in other words, was in the process itself. Thinking about strategic problems could generate new perspectives to understand and manage, if not solve them.

Bowie brought out an aspect of Solarium that was like what Goodpaster had discussed in his 1967 interview. Using Solarium, Eisenhower wanted to “educate the people who were going to be involved in any way, he wanted them to hear arguments, he wanted them to learn the background by hearing these experts expound it, and by having the reports, and then he wanted them to hear him say, ‘This is the way it’s going to be.’”<sup>107</sup> Similar to Goodpaster’s aforementioned educational purpose, the goal was a bit more pointed in Bowie’s view: not only to educate but also for administration officials to hear the President himself render final judgment. It was a way to seek, and virtually to compel, consensus. If Solarium was indeed formulation of strategy at the highest levels—an exercise in grand strategy—it was not simply a strategy against an opponent. Strategizing, per Bowie’s description, also faced *inward*. It involved and sought to influence, via education and even assimilation, those who would implement and execute the strategy.

## Eisenhower Revisionism and Solarium: Interdisciplinary Interpretations

Academic conferences on the Eisenhower Presidency such as the Princeton symposium were, by the late 1980s and early 1990s, regular occurrences—one historian pointed out that what had been initially revisionist had become mainstream.<sup>108</sup> Revisionist scholars focused on Eisenhower’s innovations. He was the first President to designate a national security advisor (even though that role would change significantly over the years) and a chief of staff.<sup>109</sup> The notion of “policy hill” was particularly emphasized, and Solarium, as might be expected, likewise stood out.

Yet not all scholars were enthralled by Eisenhower’s seeming strategic acumen. So-called post-revisionists of the late 1980s and 1990s argued that too much

emphasis was placed on process and not enough on policy and policy outcomes. For all the thoroughness of policy hill and events such as Solarium, Eisenhower still made suboptimal and even poor policy decisions. He failed to engage in hard thinking over Vietnam, for example; his “penchant for clandestine diplomacy” and his “stout support of unsavory, anti-communist tyrants” weakened America’s relationship, especially with the decolonizing and developing world.<sup>110</sup>

The most trenchant criticism—and one that included an examination of Solarium—came out in 1989 at the height of Eisenhower revisionism’s first wave. Historian H.W. Brands argued that—contrary to revisionist claims that Eisenhower was a superior strategist—Eisenhower had failed on virtually all counts in dealing with the vexing strategic problems of his era. He was slow to realize the catastrophic impact of nuclear weapons, and he fundamentally lacked the ability to control the bureaucracy that “made policy in his name.”<sup>111</sup>

As part of his critique, Brands examined Solarium, and he found it somewhat wanting. Task Force B, for instance, never defined with much clarity where the line of demarcation was that would possibly trigger general war if the Soviets crossed it.<sup>112</sup> And it was Task Force B, not Kennan’s Task Force A, that Brands argued was the most significant, because it dealt with the crux of Eisenhower’s strategic dilemma, and it provided to Eisenhower an apparent solution as to how to control nuclear escalation, prevent the breakout of general war, and control defense budgets.

But the resulting New Look that Solarium apparently produced quickly ran into problems, since the Soviets soon began to accelerate their own nuclear weapons program. Eisenhower in turn let the policy drift. He permitted nuclear build-up but without a meaningful strategy other than to employ nuclear saber-rattling, often for what appeared to be terrifyingly small gains, such as with the islands of Quemoy and Matsu in the Taiwan Strait. Solarium, by this account, thus failed in its goal of producing a clear and cogent national security strategy.<sup>113</sup>

Brands’s was a militarily inflected critique that focused on the nuclear aspect of the New Look. It was one of many sophisticated interpretations of Solarium that proliferated in the 1990s and the early 2000s. But was Solarium limited to being viewed in a purely militarized fashion, and as the New Look’s proximate cause? In seeming answer to Immerman’s request for more in-depth analysis and further

synthesis, several scholars offered wide-ranging, interdisciplinary, and expansive interpretations of Eisenhower's grand strategy and of Solarium's relationship with that strategy. And in many of these interpretations, the instrumentalist view of Solarium—of Solarium as an exercise that was created to produce the specific New Look strategy of NSC 162/2—was significantly deemphasized, and other strategic purposes and modalities were examined.

Richard Immerman's 1990 article "Confessions of an Eisenhower Revisionist: An Agonizing Reappraisal" was perhaps the first and among the most sophisticated and thorough to make conceptual sense of both Eisenhower revisionism generally and Solarium specifically.<sup>114</sup> In Immerman's view, an analysis that sought to integrate strategic process and strategic substance was needed. Further scholarship needed to "connect these dimensions and instruments of policy that have heretofore been examined in relative isolation from each other."<sup>115</sup>

For Immerman, the Great Equation—more so than the New Look—was the controlling idea, was Eisenhower's real, sought-after goal. The Great Equation, as Eisenhower described it, involved a balance among military, economic, and moral power, with the added notion that if any of those three went to zero or near-zero, the others did accordingly. It was the essence of Eisenhower's approach, and according to Immerman, it was based on ideas and concepts that Eisenhower had formulated before he came into office, or even before he decided to run for political office. Not simply a foreign policy or even a national security strategy, it was an overarching principle within which both strategy and policy operated.<sup>116</sup>

The Great Equation may have transcended strategy, but it needed a strategic approach all the same. And it was Solarium that served as "fundamentally an extension of Eisenhower's beliefs as well as his leadership."<sup>117</sup> That is, it was in Solarium that the Great Equation idea manifested itself. Eisenhower sought a strategic framework that would protect America and its way of life, but not at an excessive cost; that would not seek to overthrow communism in direct and costly fashion, but to subvert it more subtly; and that counseled patience and prudence over notions of quick, decisive victory. Solarium, according to Immerman, was a way to impart, and even to impose, the Great Equation vision: the exercise was an

illustration of how “he orchestrated his policymaking process” to make sure that he obtained the results he wanted.<sup>118</sup>

Solarium produced what amounted to a cut of a Great Equation-inflected strategy. While Solarium’s results did translate into the New Look document, NSC 162/2, what was more important is that Solarium was the mechanism that Eisenhower used to impart his Great Equation vision. Immerman went so far to say that Eisenhower “stacked the deck so that Solarium would produce the results he wanted.”<sup>119</sup> Although the evidence that Immerman relied on was circumstantial, he pointed out—for example—that Eisenhower deliberately chose Kennan to lead Task Force A, because he wanted his more subtle and less militarized version of containment, over the more hawkish approach of Paul Nitze, the principle architect of NSC-68. And indeed, Task Force A’s set of controlling ideas—for example, the dismissal of notions of a Kremlin-initiated first strike as paranoiac delusion and the description of America as fundamentally sound and more powerful than the Soviet Union—even though mostly drafted by Kennan, were equally reflections of Eisenhower’s own cast of mind.<sup>120</sup>

Other aspects of Solarium indicated this vision. For example, Eisenhower deliberately chose Goodpaster to be a moderating force for Task Force C’s rollback position.<sup>121</sup> And Immerman also pointed out that, contrary to conjectures that Solarium was a debating forum for competing ideas, one idea in particular—that of a “preventive war” that might entail a first nuclear strike with the Soviet Union, and what would have been elaborated on in a “Task Force D”—was quietly abandoned early in the process. Ultimately, such a notion had no place in a Great Equation vision that stressed moral and spiritual force.<sup>122</sup>

And implicit in Immerman’s analysis of Solarium’s role in imparting Eisenhower’s Great Equation framework and vision was that it did not do so simply by producing a singular document. Solarium was just as much a strategic *event* in its totality, as it was as in a result of the specific document NSC 162/2. It was the sum of Solarium’s parts that imparted the vision. It did so via the selection of the task forces and the task force reports themselves; via Eisenhower’s powerful synthesis on July 16 to the administration officials present; and finally via the machinery of the NSC’s bureaucratic processes. In essence, Solarium was, in its method, a

total work of strategy—of experts and closed-door sessions, of reports and briefings, of discussions and expositions—in the way it relayed a strategic vision in its manifold parts.

Solarium was thereby given a scholarly interpretation that accorded in many ways with that of firsthand participants Goodpaster, Kennan, and Bowie. It was indeed far more than simply a proximate cause of the New Look's policy. It was how Eisenhower emplaced his Great Equation as the overarching framework that strategic approaches operated within. Moreover, via Solarium, Eisenhower sought not only to have administration officials be better educated about his priorities. He also consciously orchestrated the very process to *ensure* that they were. In so interpreting Solarium, Immerman took Greenstein's hidden-hand thesis to its furthest conclusion.

Immerman delved into the behaviors and motivations behind Solarium. Campbell Craig similarly offered a behaviorist interpretation of Eisenhower's strategic approach—akin to Allison's "model III" of backroom and covert politicking from *The Essence of Decision*—in his book *Destroying the Village: Eisenhower and Thermonuclear War* (1998).<sup>123</sup> Craig discussed Solarium, and contrary to other scholars, contended that Task Force B's emphasis on an especially focused nuclear strategy—not Kennan's Task Force A containment—was the most significant contribution. He further wrote that Solarium resulted in its "final form in NSC-162/2," though only after significant debate within the NSC in the late summer and fall after the task forces had completed their work.<sup>124</sup>

Craig's analysis accorded with the standard instrumentalist reading of Solarium. The difference was that Craig emphasized that Eisenhower's strategy did *not* terminate with the New Look of NSC 162/2. There were further iterations: NSC 5422/2, published in August 1954, acknowledged that the Soviets would obtain a substantial nuclear capability between 1956 and 1959 with the possible result of all-out war that would destroy civilization, rendering notions of limited war infeasible.<sup>125</sup> Even more important than these official strategic statements were Eisenhower's own personal, behind-closed-doors interventions into national security strategy that quietly removed the notion of limited war with the Soviets from ever being an option, given Eisenhower's Clausewitzian understanding that such war

would escalate uncontrollably.<sup>126</sup> Solarium, per Craig's reading, thereby had little ultimate impact on concrete manifestations of policy: its instrumental role in producing that policy had somewhat less influence than earlier scholarship portrayed.

Craig's deemphasis on Solarium's instrumental effect aligned with other interpretations of Solarium that stressed its other effects. Such interpretations became standard in the Eisenhower historiography of the 1990s and early 2000s. Immerman's request seemingly came to pass as interdisciplinary work about Solarium provided a range of perspectives that more often focused on Solarium's value as a strategic *process* in and of itself having value; as creating a larger strategic *framework* that allowed for shared strategic meaning and understanding among administration officials; and/or as forging a *sense of consensus* via its influence with those same officials.

In *Shaping and Signaling Presidential Policy: The National Security Decision Making of Eisenhower and Kennedy* (1998), Meena Bose used Richard Neustadt's work and offered a new interpretation of Eisenhower in a comparative study of Eisenhower's and Kennedy's approaches to policymaking.<sup>127</sup> In Bose's view, Solarium aided Eisenhower and his administration in thinking through the various strategic issues at work. Its essential worth was not in its production of a policy or strategy, or even as a plan. Its value lay, as Kennan had earlier noted, in the *process of planning itself*. It was, in Bose's words, "[h]ighly structured" and an "extensive decision-making process." It did not directly produce strategy, but rather "helped [Eisenhower] to establish what his military goals in his upcoming budgets should be."<sup>128</sup> Bose contrasted Eisenhower's approach with Kennedy's, quoting Kennedy's principal speechwriter Theodore Sorensen, who noted that Kennedy should have made more time for such "meditation and long-range planning."<sup>129</sup> Solarium, in essence, was a permission of time and capacity for reflection that could subsequently be operationalized in more specific policies or strategies.

Other interpretations focused on Solarium as producing a *framework* within which policies and even strategic approaches could operate. Richard Melanson, for example, contended that Eisenhower essentially amalgamated the three task force findings that finally configured into the most famous policy pronouncement of the New Look, NSC 162/2. Even more importantly, Eisenhower's amalgamation was

less for use as a policy instrument *per se* and more for establishment of a unified strategic framework for his administration through a series of propositions that became essential guideposts during the Eisenhower Presidency. While Melanson was not as concise as Goodpaster in the latter's notion of a "single controlling idea," Melanson asserted that Solarium's analyses produced four major propositions that organized the administration's strategy: first, a global war between the superpowers would be disastrous; second, a prolonged armed conflict would lead America to become in essence a garrison state; third, Americans would be highly resistant to any notion of a long-term occupation and reconstruction of Russia (even if America were successful in such a conflict); and fourth, Americans needed to be fully educated and aware of the cost, particularly for national defense, involved in a long-term competition with the Soviet Union.<sup>130</sup>

Solarium was even more extensively analyzed in Valerie Adams's *Eisenhower's Fine Group of Fellows: Crafting a National Security Policy to Uphold the Great Equation* (2006). Adams, in her reading of Eisenhower's national security strategizing in general and Solarium in particular, deemphasized Solarium as a proximate cause for the NSC 162/2 New Look policy. Solarium had other, more essential uses. "Rollback," for example, was effectively ended as a plausible administration policy, via Eisenhower's own manipulation of the process (such as his placing of Goodpaster on Task Force C to moderate its proposals). That task force's conclusions were subsequently used to counter any other options that argued for more robust military action. Quoting Bowie directly, Adams pointed out that the use of a team of experts who provided the task force recommendations allowed all within Eisenhower's administration to "understand the policy and get behind him." Solarium was an exercise in establishing both awareness and authority. It thereby helped to achieve *consensus* within the administration about general principles, even if it did not provide a final and lasting national security strategy in and of itself.<sup>131</sup>

Providing an integrated and detailed treatment of Solarium, Robert Bowie and Richard Immerman's *Waging Peace: How Eisenhower Shaped an Enduring Cold War Strategy* (1998) was a milestone in Eisenhower revisionist scholarship.<sup>132</sup> A unique blend of firsthand knowledge on the part of Bowie and historical expertise on the

part of Immerman, it became an oft-cited work about Eisenhower's strategy.<sup>133</sup> And while *Solarium* was not the only topic covered in the book, the authors presented it as a crucial part of—perhaps even the fulcrum point of—Eisenhower's grand strategy and Cold War strategy even after Eisenhower's Presidency.

Keeping with the scholarship of the period, according to the authors, *Solarium* only indirectly and circuitously yielded the New Look policy of NSC 162/2. There were many stations on the way: Cutler and the NSC planning board had to deal with many significant unresolved issues even after the task forces had finished and presented their findings.<sup>134</sup> Perhaps most significant was the debate between the Joint Chiefs and others in the administration who argued for a rapid and widespread military buildup, and Treasury Secretary George Humphrey and Bureau of the Budget Chief John Dodge, who countered that such a buildup would not be financially sustainable.<sup>135</sup>

Instead, the authors highlighted its other facets: *Solarium* was an "elaborate example of Eisenhower's method that underscored his commitment to strategic *process*—*Solarium* was less about yielding a direct output and more about 'staff[ing] out and rigorously examin[ing] three suggested approaches to national strategy.'"<sup>136</sup> In fact, *Solarium* was "*not* intended to resolve issues but to initiate the process of designing a long-range strategy."<sup>137</sup>

Even more significantly, it was through *Solarium* that the containment framework, initially proposed by Kennan and enacted by Truman (though in Eisenhower's opinion, excessively militarized by him via NSC-68), was reconstructed. While containment as the overarching Cold War "big idea" is nowadays taken for granted, it was on much more tenuous ground in the early days of the Eisenhower administration. After all, Eisenhower had run for election on a repudiation of "defeatist" Truman administration policies that seemingly ceded advantage to the Soviets. The "liberation" rhetoric of the campaign that sought to roll back communist gains was largely that of John Foster Dulles, but Eisenhower did sign on to at least some of its principles.<sup>138</sup>

Eisenhower nonetheless felt that "liberation" could not be fulfilled in its totality. Among other things, its complete implementation meant fearful urgency and great expense, and it was also here that Eisenhower's more moderate views differed

from those of his Secretary of State. To explain the dynamics of this conflict of ideas and visions, Bowie and Immerman examined Solarium's precursor event, which was the strategic conversation—perhaps debate—between Eisenhower and Dulles at the May 8, 1953, meeting in the White House solarium.

Dulles contended that time was not on the side of the United States and therefore what was needed was a version of what might be called an amalgamation of the positions of the future Task Forces B and C—a firmly drawn “line in the sand” that, if crossed by the Soviets, could commence general war; and a robust “roll-back” of ongoing communist gains. Eisenhower disagreed significantly: time was *not* necessarily running against America. And that while Eisenhower felt strongly that Truman's NSC-68 policy was flawed, misguided, and fiscally unsustainable, he did consider some version of Kennan's original containment idea viable. Rather than ruling outright, Eisenhower then called for an exercise/debate to sort out the three alternatives. With remarkable rapidity (by today's standards, certainly), the exercise took place just 2 months later and results were reported back shortly after the exercise's conclusion.<sup>139</sup>

Per Bowie and Immerman's account, Solarium's result very purposefully revitalized containment as the Cold War's conceptual framework. Eisenhower not only called for Task Force A's exploration of the concept. He actively worked to ensure that George Kennan himself, both containment's originator and its most eloquent proponent, led Task Force A. In fact, Bowie and Immerman contended that Eisenhower was behind the rejection of the initial choice to lead Task Force A—Paul Nitze, the principal author of NSC-68.<sup>140</sup> Even Kennan's own ideas that departed too dramatically from containment's basic principles were downplayed: his more radical proposals involving the neutralization of Germany were precisely the ones that got the least attention. Rather, what mattered was what could be called Task Force A's refinements and calibrations of containment. Such refinements and calibrations “rectif[ied] imperfections in [the inherited] strategy.”<sup>141</sup>

And these included parts from *all* the task forces—the “amalgamation” that nonetheless maintained containment as the controlling principle. These proposals included increased trade with nations behind the Iron Curtain; an extensive but not exorbitant military buildup; appropriate and targeted negotiations; and

shrewd and focused political and psychological warfare. In doing all this, “time favored the free world,” which was Kennan’s original containment vision—and, as it turned out, Eisenhower’s.<sup>142</sup>

In Bowie and Immerman’s reading, Solarium thus reestablished containment as the U.S. strategic framework. It suited Eisenhower’s centrist and even conservative vision—Solarium did not radically alter American grand strategy but harmonized the past and present of that grand strategy. And in its comprehensiveness, flexibility, and deliberately long-term view, Solarium offered a way forward. If a reconstituted containment could be the guiding narrative and framework for subsequent strategy and action, then chances of nuclear war could be reduced, while allowing for the possibility of the Soviet Union’s ultimate change or self-destruction. For the authors, Solarium provided the Cold War strategic framework that endured even beyond Eisenhower’s administration.

## Diffusion: Solarium Beyond Revisionist Scholarship

Bowie and Immerman’s work was a summative achievement in Eisenhower revisionist scholarship. And in the following century, revisionist understandings would spread into other domains. Solarium, too, would move out of “pure” revisionist scholarship and into a wider academic and intellectual world. It would diffuse into popular biographies and leadership studies of Eisenhower as an example of his strategic leadership. It would become a standard reference in any number of Cold War studies, as well as in more general strategic studies that ranged beyond Eisenhower’s Presidency. And such studies overlapped with the touting of Solarium in policy journal articles, and increasingly in the digital age, in policy blogs and policy webzine features that praised Solarium and argued for its contemporary application in U.S. strategizing. In some parts of the U.S. Government, Solarium-inspired strategic exercises and formulations did indeed occur.

Solarium featured in multiple 21<sup>st</sup>-century popular biographies of Eisenhower. In Jim Newton’s *Eisenhower: The White House Years* (2011), the journalist author recalled Solarium as a “landmark, classified study” that essentially became the blueprint for [Eisenhower’s] presidency.<sup>143</sup> In his 2018 *Eisenhower: Becoming the Leader of the Free World*, Louis Galambos—a significant figure in Eisenhower

scholarship—referred to Eisenhower’s Cold War strategy as his “Solarium policy” that endured throughout his Presidency.<sup>144</sup> Reiterating Bowie and Immerman’s point, Galambos further contended that Solarium provided Eisenhower’s grand strategy, and the framework that Solarium established “continue[d] to work for the next thirty years, when the collapse of the Soviet Union at last removed from America and its allies the threat of mutual nuclear destruction.”<sup>145</sup>

Susan Eisenhower, a strategist herself as well as Eisenhower’s granddaughter, in her book *How Ike Led: The Principles Behind Eisenhower’s Biggest Decisions* (2020), which focused on his strategic leadership, saw Solarium as achieving multiple purposes just as prominent revisionists had argued. Solarium established a strategic framework, and it was also a “structured study” that permitted a variety of viewpoints and voices to be heard and shared.<sup>146</sup> At the same time, it was also a way for Eisenhower to impress—and even impose—his strategic vision on administration officials in that they were “co-opted” via Solarium’s detailed examination and Eisenhower’s continual reinforcement of its findings, or rather, his interpretation of them.<sup>147</sup>

In showing Eisenhower’s excellence as a strategic thinker and leader, Raymond Millen emphasized the quality of Solarium as strategic process in which the three teams “debated their approaches in NSC meetings,” and thereby through “iterative meetings” Eisenhower and national security experts “synthesized” Solarium into NSC 162/2.<sup>148</sup> In doing so, Eisenhower used Solarium for multiple purposes: to counter Dulles’s pessimism, to educate administration officials regarding the issues at stake, to foster a “sense of teamwork among NSC officials” and even to encourage the “Joints Chiefs of Staff (JCS) to think as a corporate body.”<sup>149</sup> Solarium’s popular reputation was such that by 2021, Derek Chollet, in his study of Eisenhower, George H.W. Bush, and Barack Obama titled *The Middle Way: How Three Presidents Shaped America’s Role in the World*, described Solarium as “unquestionably, the most heralded strategic review in U.S. history.”<sup>150</sup>

Solarium spread into overall Cold War historiography as well. Renowned Cold War scholar Melvyn Leffler, for example, provided his synthesis of the Cold War in his 2007 *For the Soul of Mankind: The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War*. Leffler considered Solarium a major strategic conceptualization

for Eisenhower during the early phase of his Presidency, though he noted how Solarium did not include potentially obvious options, such as a form of *détente*. Rather than some exploration of “best alternatives,” Leffler saw Solarium, per Immerman’s understanding, as much more about Eisenhower’s effort to influence administration officials and to craft and to control a master narrative within which his administration could conduct strategy.<sup>151</sup>

Solarium was even used as a hermeneutical key to the different rhetorical modes used by American strategists during the Cold War. In Ned O’Gorman’s *Spirits of the Cold War* (2011), he posited Kennan’s Task Force A containment approach within the rhetorical mode of American stoicism; Task Force B’s approach within the mode of evangelical messianism; Task Force C’s with adventurism; and Eisenhower’s apparent reconciliation of the task forces with American romanticism.<sup>152</sup> Fanciful or not, what the interpretation revealed was how Solarium could be viewed not simply as a policy-producing method, but as a way of crafting an overarching strategic narrative that encompassed the most deeply held, though not overtly expressed, notions of American Cold War strategy and policy formulation.

In Edward Kaplan’s *To Kill Nations: American Strategy in the Air-Atomic Age of Mutually Assured Destruction* (2015), Solarium was viewed as part of the national security debate regarding Cold War nuclear strategy, a debate within the U.S. military dominated throughout most of the early Cold War by the U.S. Air Force. Kaplan noted, for example, how Task Force A’s containment idea, while it fundamentally accepted nuclear deterrence, rejected the more aggressive air-attack strategy of Strategic Air Command commander General Curtis LeMay, who argued that the United States could outright win a nuclear war. Task Forces B’s and C’s far more vigorous approaches toward nuclear warfare were much more consistent with LeMay’s (and the Air Force’s) approach.<sup>153</sup> Kaplan agreed with the notion that Eisenhower essentially amalgamated the three task force approaches. Kaplan further speculated about why this occurred: containment could be seen as the overarching strategic framework, and within it the more vigorous approaches were not abandoned but contextualized as still possibilities even if not outright implemented—deterrence, after all, could be believable only if there were at least some potential nuclear weapons that could be used.

In a meticulous examination of Solarium's use of Cold War intelligence, Michael Gallagher produced one of the most detailed descriptions of the exercise. He provided the most comprehensive list of the task force members found in the scholarship—a list that included, as Gallagher pointed out, several members from the U.S. Intelligence Community.<sup>154</sup> Gallagher also contended that the intelligence relied on by the task forces was incomplete and inconclusive, as even Allen Dulles, the then-director of the Central Intelligence Agency, admitted. The various task force intelligence experts thus relied on their own speculations, and the resulting task force reports were somewhat less unified than sometimes portrayed. When Eisenhower requested that the task forces combine their findings, the task force members by and large resisted, and indicated that they would be unable to do so. As a result, Cutler's planning board had the unenviable task of merging the findings.<sup>155</sup>

Yet in Gallagher's view, this lack of unity did not invalidate Solarium—its purpose was less to produce a clear policy and more to generate what he called “productive dissent” and thereby, within prescribed limits, Solarium provided rigorous and thorough analysis:

*The process created decision advantage not by speeding up the rate at which Eisenhower's national security strategy was designed, but by slowing it down. It made the key issues, analyses, assumptions, and positions more transparent to all those involved. It forced the administration to pause and take a hard look at the course it was charting before sailing forward.*<sup>156</sup>

For Gallagher, it was this deliberate and structured focus on *process* that allowed Solarium's task force options to be explored both critically and creatively.

Solarium likewise made its way into general strategy studies. In *Grand Strategy in Theory and Practice: The Need for an Effective American Policy* (2015), William Martel referred to Solarium's meticulousness and thoroughness and viewed Solarium as a “model for how modern policy makers ought to develop grand strategy.”<sup>157</sup> On the other hand, Ionut Popescu's *Emergent Strategy and Grand Strategy: How*

*American Presidents Succeed in Foreign Policy* (2017) was a rare demurrer regarding Solarium's effectiveness. Popescu viewed Solarium as an effort in "grand" as opposed to "emergent" strategy. To Popescu, grand strategy seeks the "long-term, coherent plan to achieve the nation's highest goals," and is not only lofty but unachievable.<sup>158</sup> In contrast, emergent strategy, used far more often in business than national security strategy, is a "process of navigating through uncharted waters."<sup>159</sup> Strategy should be less about defined endstates and more about working through a "series of states, each not quite what was anticipated or hoped for, requiring a reappraisal and modification of the original strategy, including ultimate objectives."<sup>160</sup>

In Popescu's view, Solarium—despite its "surge in reputation"—was wanting in that the result, which included ever-escalating defense costs, was not what Eisenhower had intended: "Project Solarium did not deliver the kind of successful strategic performance expected by the Grand Strategy model."<sup>161</sup> Eisenhower would have been better off had he used an "emergent strategy approach . . . the president relied too much on his ability to accurately predict the connection between long-run U.S. economic growth, defense spending levels and budget deficits."<sup>162</sup>

This appeared to be at least refreshing in that Popescu's account was not another hagiographic description of Solarium. Yet it cut against the varied interpretations that had stressed what might be called "emergent" elements—after all, Solarium's purpose, at least according to some revisionist interpreters, more involved the working of process, the achieving of influence, and the establishing of a framing set of principles, rather than a hard-and-fast "strategy" that harkened back to the "instrumentalist" view of Solarium as the proximate cause of NSC 162/2 and the New Look. And it appears, rather, that Popescu's view of Solarium has remained exceptional. More typically, Hal Brands, Jr., in a recent study of the Cold War—*The Twilight Struggle: What the Cold War Teaches Us About Great-Power Rivalry Today* (2022)—called Solarium "canonical."<sup>163</sup> For Brands, the key to Solarium was less about producing a particular strategic end, as it was to create a "structured, competitive analysis" that forced the teams to "confront essential questions about the utility of nuclear weapons and the country's prospects in an indefinite competition."<sup>164</sup> It mattered less what precisely was adopted after all, because the President "knew, basically, what he wanted." Rather, the deeper purpose

of Solarium was to “stress-test policies that would guide America in a long Cold War.”<sup>165</sup>

Solarium’s rise in reputation in the 2000s corresponded with a perceived decline in the ability of the U.S. Government to formulate strategy. The end of the Cold War and the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan in the first decade of the century prompted laments about the state of American strategic competence. In 2008, Aaron Friedberg noted that the U.S. Government had “lost the capacity to conduct serious, sustained national strategic planning.”<sup>166</sup> A year later, Charles Moore wrote that “American strategic competence is in decline” and that “the United States is struggling to find the right balance of military force and other forms of power in its current wars, while peering into an uncertain future.”<sup>167</sup>

Solarium’s movement in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century from academic to policy journals can be seen in this context. Solarium’s burnished reputation, especially after the Cold War’s apparent successful conclusion, seemed to make it a possible remedy for strategic drift and shortsightedness. The seminal policy piece was by Michèle Flournoy and Shawn Brimley, who in 2008 published a call for a “new Project Solarium.”<sup>168</sup> The authors lamented a lack of a “truly effective strategic planning process” and asserted that “Today, the United States is engaged in conflicts that, whether by success or failure, will completely transform the broader Middle East and the [U.S.] role in the world; yet there is no integrated planning process from which to derive the vital strategic guidance to protect U.S. national interests and achieve national objectives.”<sup>169</sup> The authors saw Solarium’s value in far more than simply producing a policy outcome: in particular, Eisenhower “appreciated the benefits of disagreement and sought to institutionalize such a debate in an inclusive and integrative fashion.”<sup>170</sup> Furthermore, Flournoy and Brimley looked to Solarium as a model for “inspiration, design principles, and best practices.”<sup>171</sup>

But how to put into effect such inspiration, principles, and practices? Certainly, there were significant differences between the institutional and organizational contexts of Flournoy and Brimley’s day and Solarium’s. Solarium occurred in the early years of the Cold War, just a few years after the National Security Act that established the National Security Council and the Department of Defense. In the decades that had followed, the U.S. national security enterprise had vastly expanded

in scope and complexity. A plethora of strategic statements had become mandated by law, such as the National Security Strategy and the Quadrennial Defense Review (later replaced by the National Military Strategy). The National Security Council and the Department of Defense had both grown into much larger entities. Following the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Act, a far greater emphasis on joint and interagency cooperation was stressed, as well as a clearer line of authority from the President through the Secretary of Defense to various operational commands.<sup>172</sup>

Given this vast and more complex strategic ecosystem, the authors did more than simply suggest Solarium's re-creation. Instead, they disaggregated, as it were, Solarium's virtues into a series of strategic actions that would spread Solarium's benefits throughout the modern national security enterprise: a 4-year interagency National Security Review to develop a national security strategy and to identify capabilities; an interagency assessment of future security environment and development of objectives and priorities; a threat assessment and semiannual "over the horizon" reviews; an annual tabletop exercise; and the creation of an NSC senior director dedicated to strategic planning.<sup>173</sup>

Such a multiplicity of strategic actions underscored Solarium's various interpreted meanings. And the proposed strategic actions of Flournoy and Brimley, in their intricate linking of Solarium to various components in the contemporary national security enterprise, had both strengths and weaknesses. On the one hand, dispersing Solarium across that enterprise might thereby yield greater net value in the multitude of national security bureaucratic structures. On the other, so doing might diminish impact. For example, the full force of Presidential influence could likely be better served in a single event that the President ran personally, such as Eisenhower did at the July 16, 1953, meeting.

Even given possible drawbacks, Flournoy and Brimley's approach to recreating Solarium in the contemporary U.S. strategic milieu remain to this day the most sophisticated. Others followed their lead, if with less fullness and detail. Policy analysts, especially in what was then the newly emerging blogosphere, touted Solarium's virtues. One blogosphere commentator noted in 2012 how over "half a century later, the policies and processes of President Eisenhower take on a new and very wise aura," with Solarium especially singled out.<sup>174</sup> In 2014, veteran journalist

Marvin Kalb requested that then-President Obama convene his own Solarium. Kalb asserted that the original 1953 version “ultimately produced the anti-communist policy followed by one administration after another until December, 1991, when the Soviet Union collapsed and communism ceased to be America’s major foreign problem.”<sup>175</sup> Likewise, in 2014, another policy analyst touted Solarium’s adaptability and flexibility as a strategic process regardless of a strategic or policy outcome: it provided a “solid methodology [to] help ensure the integrity of any final decision that is made . . . [such] a methodology is reusable whereas a policy may not be.”<sup>176</sup>

Solarium’s reputation persisted into the 2020s. In 2022, policy analysts noted that “[a]rguably, the U.S. and its allies have not crafted a grand strategy” and called for a bipartisan and alliance-based “modern Project Solarium” to “forge a new grand strategy for today’s global threat environment.” The authors even proposed three Solarium-like alternatives to explore vis-à-vis China, the perceived major threat: defeat China; bifurcation/decoupling from China; or managed competition. In short, according to the analysts: “We need a new Solarium, now more than ever.”<sup>177</sup>

To date, despite the calls from policy analysts, no Presidential administration has attempted—as far as is known—another Solarium. Nonetheless, at lower reaches of the government, the exercise has inspired various efforts. For example, the Sergeant Major of the Army (SMA) has had two “NCO [noncommissioned officer] Solarium” conferences inspired by “Project Solarium . . . [the] effort [that] produced a U.S. national security document that laid the foundation for a Cold War policy that lasted for decades.” The conferences brought together dozens of senior NCOs at the Army’s Training and Doctrine Command, with various groups of NCOs ultimately providing recommendations to the SMA.<sup>178</sup>

Within Congress, the most notable effort has been the Cyberspace Solarium Commission, a bipartisan effort launched by the 2019 National Defense Authorization Act to examine cyberstrategy. Its inspiration was evident. Just as Solarium did, the commission broke into three teams to explore three strategic alternatives to cybersecurity: deterrence, persistent engagement, and efforts to seek establishment of international norms. The commission’s logo even displayed a microchip surrounded by five stars in honor of Eisenhower.<sup>179</sup> The result of the Commission’s

work, an approach named “layered deterrence” that was a “new approach to cybersecurity,” appeared to be an amalgamation of the work of the three teams, like the original Solarium. More than 75 recommendations were made to Congress.<sup>180</sup>

Some did take note of the differences between the commission and the original Solarium. One critic pointed out that the original Solarium was not sent to a fractious Congress of varying levels of expertise but went to a President with “deep strategic experience, who faced a true existential threat, not a [notional] one.”<sup>181</sup> Yet critiques that highlighted dissimilarities with Solarium in its original sense themselves seemed anachronistic. After all, decades of interpretations have revealed Solarium’s multiple purposes—to produce policy, to use expertise to influence policymakers, to establish a strategic framework or narrative, or even to serve as a methodological process that had value.

## The Stages of Solarium

The 70-year story of Solarium is an important one for historians and other academicians and national security specialists, including strategists and policymakers. What makes this story interesting and perhaps unusual is that typically such events are encoded in the institutional memories of the organizations in



U.S. Cyberspace Solarium Commission seal

which they occurred. Among those within the organization, such memories are considered shared bases of knowledge, especially to deal with difficult problems and crises. Institutional memory is of especial interest in contemporary social science literature, and particularly in strategy- and policymaking organizations. Supposedly, organizations that foster institutional memories make fewer strategic errors, increase their prospects for success, reform aspects of their organizations, and better understand how to retain knowledge. Institutions can do this in a variety of ways, via specified information repositories, via “handovers” to succeeding organizational elites, and through a variety of formal and informal procedures.<sup>182</sup>

Solarium, however, developed quite differently. The “history” of Solarium after the actual event in the spring and summer of 1953 is shown in the table.

Each one of the stages can be analyzed in terms of Eisenhower historiography; larger intellectual, political, and social trends; and the resulting interpretations of Solarium. In each stage, the relevant literature interacted with those trends. The interpretations that emerged were a result of that confluence. The interpretations themselves in turn initially influenced Eisenhower historiography, and later in turn influenced more general history as well. Eventually, those interpretations would move out of the academic world into the world of policy and strategy itself.

### Classified Stage (1953–1985)

During this classified phase, understandings of Solarium were not first found in the institutions in which it occurred—that is, in the Presidency, the National Security Council, or the Department of Defense. In fact, for decades, any interpretation or understanding was highly limited and select, primarily (although not exclusively) because Solarium was a classified exercise. While other committees during the Eisenhower administration (such as the panels that produced the 1955 Killian Report and 1957 Gaither Report) did in some ways replicate the notion of consultation and expert advice, Solarium did not appear to have been a direct influence on them. Furthermore, succeeding Presidential administrations did not refer to Solarium or attempt to repeat something approximating it.

Where Solarium did appear to the public, it was in scattered locations. References were found in a business magazine (*Fortune*), in various memoirs, and in

Table.

Stages	Time period	Eisenhower historiography	Geopolitical/ social context	Interpretations
Classified	1953–1985	Presidency at low reputational ebb (1950s to the mid-1970s); beginnings of revisionism (mid-1970s to 1980s)	Cold War ongoing (and threat of nuclear war); Vietnam War and aftermath; Presidential scandals (Watergate)	Solarium not part of major historiography; briefly references in interviews; pure “instrumental” modality
Discovery	1985–1990	Peak revisionism	Cold War successfully concludes	Solarium first reading by historians and initial interpretations in interviews, etc.
Interdisciplinary	1990–2008	Revisionism, synthesis, and crossover into interdisciplinary approaches (e.g., political science)	Cold War ends; first post–Cold War era	Solarium opened to more interdisciplinary interpretations; wider understandings (Solarium as process, influence, framework/narrative)
Diffusion*	2000–present	Revisionism mainstream; popular/synoptic histories	War on terror; wars in Afghanistan/Iraq; return of Great Power competition	Solarium’s interpretations diffused into general history and national security studies; Solarium as inspiration in real-world events

\* Overlaps with interdisciplinary stage.

an occasional academic work. But *Solarium* was by no means an important part of interpreting the Eisenhower Presidency. And for the most part, those Presidential interpretations in the first wave of Eisenhower historiography were somewhat negative. The brief references to *Solarium* never provided any suggestion of a re-evaluation. Furthermore, the interpretation of *Solarium* was rather simplified: it

was an exercise that simply helped produce a specific policy, the New Look, manifested in NSC 162/2.

As Emile Durkheim has written, social facts are interpreted via “antecedent social facts”—that is, the social context in which those facts appear.<sup>183</sup> In the mid- to late 1970s, Eisenhower revisionism gradually arose, especially among contemporary American historians. It was a revisionism powerfully informed by several factors. The opening and the declassification of the Eisenhower Archives was a seminal event for historians. But Eisenhower revisionism was also informed by a larger social and geopolitical context. After the Vietnam War, Watergate, and a succession of seemingly failed presidencies, Eisenhower’s record appeared in a new light. During this period, Solarium remained classified and, while referenced from time to time, was still not discussed regularly as part of revisionist studies. Nonetheless, the revisionists’ focus, particularly on Eisenhower’s strategic processes, helped establish the conditions for the boom in interest when Solarium was subsequently “discovered” in the mid-1980s.

### Discovery Stage (1985–1990)

Of course, Solarium was not outright discovered in the mid-1980s. It had been known and referenced. But William Pickett’s receipt of the declassified task force reports, and his reporting of it to fellow historians did serve as a significant catalyst. Those reports and other declassified Solarium-related memoranda and other documents were a rich field that served as a set of what could be termed memory aids, per historian of memory Pierre Nora. They especially helped historians construct historical understandings of Solarium within the context of ongoing revisionism.<sup>184</sup> This, along with other notable factors, helped launch Solarium into historical consciousness: Solarium slotted into Eisenhower revisionism’s narrative, and the association of Solarium with that narrative was powerfully synergistic.<sup>185</sup> The declassification of Solarium’s documents in the mid-1980s was accompanied by Eisenhower revisionism’s own focus on strategic process, exemplified in the work of such historians as Douglas Kinnard and Anna Kasten Nelson. Solarium thus provided a powerful example of the revisionists’ argument about the superiority of Eisenhower’s strategic process.

Solarium also benefited from participant interpretation and understanding. A huge part of Solarium's renown is owed to what historians of memory call the "rehearsal" or retelling of the historical narrative via still-living participants.<sup>186</sup> In particular, Andrew Goodpaster served in multiple interviews as an ideal recounter of Solarium's importance. Goodpaster had an already established reputation and his powers of recall vividly recreated the milieu of the Eisenhower Presidency: he seemingly "rattle[d] off the details of these sessions [with Eisenhower] as if they were yesterday."<sup>187</sup> And Goodpaster's recollections highlighted Eisenhower's significance regarding Solarium: in the Goodpaster interviews, Eisenhower dominated the process throughout, and displayed his intellectual acumen, strategic foresight, and raw intelligence. Ultimately, an even more important "rehearsal" of Solarium's history occurred in 1988 at the Dulles Symposium at Princeton that featured a lengthy interview not only of Goodpaster, but also of George Kennan, the so-called father of containment, and Robert Bowie, a key Eisenhower policy official. The location and timing were fortuitous: at one of America's premier universities (Princeton), three key participants described Solarium in detail amid an already well-developed Eisenhower revisionism among historians.

Eisenhower revisionism flourished throughout the 1980s, and it only further benefited from what appeared to be the successful geopolitical outcome of the Cold War. Throughout the 1990s, revisionism, seemingly "vindicated" by real-world geopolitics, moved into more interdisciplinary venues. Social and political science models and approaches examined the Eisenhower Presidency, and Solarium was examined in far greater detail than before.

### Interdisciplinary Stage (1990–2008)

In the interdisciplinary phase, understandings of Solarium become more sophisticated. Ideas about Solarium moved beyond thinking of it as exclusively an output-producing, instrumental event that created a specific New Look policy in NSC 162/2. Solarium became a particular focus of study for other academic specialists who saw Solarium in different modalities: as a strategic event that emphasized process, to influence administration officials, and as a method to create a more general framework or narrative for the Cold War.

This crucial interdisciplinary phase highlighted how, paradoxically, Solarium's very hiddenness may have worked to its longer term reputational advantage. Solarium was not institutionalized within the Presidency (indeed, the nature of the office, with its regular turnover and concomitant desire to "start anew," may well have discouraged the long-term institutionalization of processes), nor was it promulgated by Eisenhower or any key leader as a model. Ironically, had Solarium been institutionally codified, it may have been subject to an institutional overemphasis on certain aspects of it, or even inaccurately interpreted. Formalized institutional memory processes can in fact deter those within the institution from recounting events accurately, given the possibility of bias or self-censorship.<sup>188</sup>

### Diffusion Stage (2000–Present)

The current stage of diffusion overlapped with the preceding interdisciplinary period. A variety of interpretations for Solarium occurred over the course of the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> that stressed its uniqueness and importance. Furthermore, Eisenhower revisionism by the early 2000s had become mainstream—Eisenhower began to be ranked among the most successful of U.S. Presidents, and the revisionist interpretation of Eisenhower as a prudent, thoughtful leader was further bolstered by not only the apparently successful resolution of the Cold War (which seemingly justified the "time is on our side" approach of the modified containment policy that Solarium advocated) but also, in the 2000s, by the difficult and less than ultimately successful prosecutions of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

A crossover of Solarium into national security and policy journals, therefore, seemed not much of a leap. Solarium, a long-range strategic exercise, bolstered by Eisenhower's own reputation, looked tailor-made to be a model that could address the seeming loss of strategic purpose and direction in U.S. national security strategy. Yet what made Solarium so especially appealing, as evidenced not only in the various policy journal articles that called for it anew, but also in the institutions that did enact some Solarium-inspired event, was its interpretive *flexibility*. The work of historians, political and social scientists, and others had opened a range of interpretations that provided a variety of what might be called strategic mod-

els that strategists and policymakers could utilize. The seminal article by Michèle Flournoy and Shawn Brimley was especially telling: influenced by Solarium, the authors proffered not simply Solarium's replication, but a series of strategic actions that would create Solarium's effects across the spectrum of the U.S. national security enterprise.<sup>189</sup>

## Concluding Observations

The 70-year history of Solarium in its various interpretations provides the basis for three observations.

First, as noted, Solarium's "afterlife" was deeply informed—and both biased and enriched—by several interpretations. The fact that it was relatively untouched by official uses and understandings (codified, for example, in typical "after action review" method) ironically may have opened it to a variety of interpretations from several disciplines. Policymakers, historians, and strategic analysts all must be aware of the costs and benefits of turning a strategic practice into official methodology. Doing so can be cost-saving and productive, but if turned into a routine, it can possibly be stultifying.

Second, and relatedly, Solarium's "utility," as it were, was not necessarily in its initially perceived purpose—as an exercise that generated a policy result, specifically NSC 162/2 and the New Look. A variety of interpretations yielded other purposes and methods. The larger point to be made is that strategic events should be subject to both deep historical readings and interdisciplinary interpretations. Solarium had significant advantages in this regard. Solarium benefited from the excellence of the Eisenhower Archives and the recordkeeping of key Eisenhower officials. It benefited from the availability of some of its participants, who were still living when it was "discovered" in the mid-1980s. And it benefited from an intellectual milieu in the historical academy that was open to exploring its dimensions from a variety of perspectives. Once again, policymakers, historians, and strategic analysts must be conscious of the need for such a milieu. In an increasingly digitized age where records can seemingly vanish in an instant, conscious and deliberate efforts should be made to categorize strategic work throughout administrations. Oral histories are a vital part of that effort, and scholars should be

encouraged to explore such work as soon as it reasonably can be made available in as objective a way as possible, recognizing, of course, that intellectual, social, and political contexts inevitably influence those understandings. Those contexts can neither be dismissed or ignored. They should be acknowledged.

Third, the strategic house has many mansions. There may be little agreed-on understanding of the definition of the word strategy, much less how strategy is formulated and created.<sup>190</sup> Yet multiform definitions and practices have their own virtues. *Solarium* has become an established part of Eisenhower historiography and has undoubtedly added luster to Eisenhower's strategic reputation. What the 70-year history of *Solarium* also reveals is that, in both its historiographic readings and its impact on national security strategizing, *Solarium* retains its appeal and fascination in large part because of the seeming variety of its purposes and meanings.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy During the Cold War*, revised and expanded (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 87–124.

<sup>2</sup> Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 4.

<sup>3</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Continuum, 2004), 335.

<sup>4</sup> Solarium and the other two panels are comprehensively and insightfully examined in Valerie Adams, *Eisenhower's Fine Group of Fellows: Crafting a National Security Policy to Uphold the Great Equation* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006).

<sup>5</sup> Charles J.V. Murphy, “The Eisenhower Shift, part III,” *Fortune*, March 1956, 110–112, 229, 232, 234, 237–238. For Luce’s friendship with Eisenhower, see Alan Brinkley, *The Publisher: Henry Luce and His American Century* (New York: Vintage, 2011), 370–379.

<sup>6</sup> Murphy, “The Eisenhower Shift, part III,” 110.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 234.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Warner R. Schilling, Paul Y. Hammond, and Glenn H. Snyder, *Strategy, Politics, and Defense Budgets* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962).

<sup>10</sup> The author’s own research about public discussion of Solarium during the Eisenhower administration’s years has not yielded evidence that any such discussion occurred.

<sup>11</sup> Norman A. Graebner, *The New Isolationism: A Study in Politics and Foreign Policy Since 1950* (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1956), 259, 262.

<sup>12</sup> The rise of an American “knowledge class” has been seen as an especially postwar phenomenon. For an early essay on its emergence, see George Stefansky, “Education of Postwar Americans,” *The Journal of Educational Sociology* 18, no. 1 (September 1944), 4–10.

<sup>13</sup> There are numerous references to Eisenhower being considered something of a mediocrity and even possibly dangerous among American artists and intellectuals during the period. The distinguished American poet Robert Lowell commented, in a letter to fellow poet Allen Tate, on Eisenhower’s 1952 election, “Ike is a sort of symbol to me of American’s unintelligent side—all fitness, muscles, smiles and banality. And Stevenson was so terribly better than one had a right to expect.” See Ian Hamilton, *Robert Lowell: A Biography* (New York: Random House, 1982), 197. In the Nobel Prize-winning American novelist Saul Bellow’s *Humboldt’s Gift*, the title character, poet Von Humboldt Fleisher, views Eisenhower’s 1952 landslide victory as a “personal disaster.” While fiction, Bellow’s novel was—among other things—an incisive reflection on America’s postwar intellectual milieu. See Saul Bellow, *Humboldt’s Gift* (New York: Avon, 1976), 116.

<sup>14</sup> Irwin F. Gellman, "Mr. President: How Judgments of Eisenhower in the White House Have Changed," *Prologue* 47, no. 3 (Fall 2015), 28, <https://www.archives.gov/files/publications/prologue/2015/fall/ike-presidency.pdf>. Excerpted from Irwin F. Gellman, *The President and the Apprentice: Eisenhower and Nixon, 1952–1961* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015).

<sup>15</sup> Bruce Kuklick, *Blind Oracles: Intellectuals and War from Kennan to Kissinger* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 1–15.

<sup>16</sup> John J. Corson, Managing Partner, McKinsey & Company, letter to Robert Calkins, President, Brookings Institution, November 21, 1960, Box 1075, Presidential Transition Papers, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, MA.

<sup>17</sup> Walt W. Rostow, Memorandum, "Action Teams: Military and Foreign Policy," November 17, 1960, Presidential Papers, President's Office Files, 1960 File, Digital Identifier: JFKPOF-064a-007-p0001, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, MA.

<sup>18</sup> McGeorge Bundy, Memorandum for the President, "The Use of the National Security Council," January 24, 1961, National Security Files, Box 405 (McGeorge Bundy Correspondence), John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, MA.

<sup>19</sup> In June 1961, National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy wrote to Kennedy that "[m]uch has been accomplished but much remains to be done," noting, for example, that "there is a clear need in the White House for a senior military advisor" and that the National Security Council (NSC) "should meet more regularly . . . and at fixed times." Despite these criticisms, Bundy never suggested that Eisenhower's processes had merit, even in modified fashion. Indeed, Bundy noted in the same June correspondence that Eisenhower's NSC Coordinating Board had been abolished and the NSC staff had been cut back considerably. See McGeorge Bundy, Memorandum for the President, "Current Organization of the White House and NSC for Dealing With International Matters," June 22, 1961, National Security Files, Box 405 (McGeorge Bundy Correspondence), John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, MA.

<sup>20</sup> Richard Neustadt, *Presidential Power: The Politics of Leadership* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1960).

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 158–159.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 158, 160.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

<sup>24</sup> Robert S. McNamara, recorded interview by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., April 4, 1964, 1–2, John F. Kennedy Library Oral History Program, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, MA.

<sup>25</sup> Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (New York: Vintage Books, 1963), 1–4.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 227.

<sup>27</sup> Herman Finer, *Dulles Over Suez: The Theory and Practice of His Diplomacy* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1964), 69–70.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>30</sup> Schilling, Hammond, and Snyder, *Strategy, Politics, and Defense Budgets*. For the discussion about Solarium (written by Snyder), see 406–409.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 409.

<sup>32</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy During the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).

<sup>33</sup> Schilling, Hammond, and Snyder, *Strategy, Politics, and Defense Budgets*, 516.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 409.

<sup>35</sup> Robert Cutler, *No Time for Rest* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1966).

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 309.

<sup>37</sup> Robert Cutler, “The Development of the National Security Council,” *Foreign Affairs* (April 1956), 441–458, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/development-national-security-council>.

<sup>38</sup> See, for example, Henry M. Jackson, “How Shall We Forge a Strategy for Survival?” address to the National War College, April 16, 1959, reprinted in *Organizing for National Security: Selected Materials* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1960), 152–156.

<sup>39</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Mandate for Change, 1953–1956* (New York: Doubleday, 1963), 445–458.

<sup>40</sup> Murray Kempton, “The Underestimation of Dwight D. Eisenhower,” *Esquire*, September 1, 1967, 108–109, 156.

<sup>41</sup> Garry Wills, *Nixon Agonistes: The Crisis of the Self-Made Man* (New York: First Mariner Books, 2002). The first edition of Wills’s book, much of it based on his reporting of the 1968 Presidential election, came out in 1970.

<sup>42</sup> Richard Rhodes, “Ike: An Artist in Iron,” *Harper’s* 241 (July 1970), 70–77.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>44</sup> Kuklick, *Blind Oracles*, 91–155. Neustadt and May would later write the influential *Thinking in Time*, a work that applies some of the May Group methods to make historical events useful for strategists and policymakers. See Richard E. Neustadt and Ernest R. May, *Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision Makers* (New York: The Free Press, 1988).

<sup>45</sup> Kuklick, *Blind Oracles*, 155.

<sup>46</sup> Graham Allison, *The Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1971).

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>48</sup> George F. Kennan, *Memoirs: 1950–1963* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 181.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 182.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> See, for example, John Lewis Gaddis, *George Kennan: An American Life* (New York: Penguin, 2011), 487.

<sup>52</sup> Kennan, *Memoirs*, 185.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 186.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> Fred I. Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency: Eisenhower as Leader*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), vii.

<sup>56</sup> Fred I. Greenstein, "Eisenhower as an Activist President: A Look at New Evidence," *Political Science Quarterly* 94, no. 4 (Winter 1979–1980), 576.

<sup>57</sup> Stephen G. Rabe, "Eisenhower Revisionism: The Scholarly Debate," in *America in the World: The Historiography of American Foreign Relations Since 1941*, ed. Michael J. Hogan (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 301.

<sup>58</sup> Robert H. Ferrell, ed., *The Eisenhower Diaries* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co, 1981), footnote on xvi.

<sup>59</sup> Rabe, "Eisenhower Revisionism," in Hogan, *America in the World*, 301.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, viii.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>63</sup> Norman A. Graebner, "Preface," in *The National Security: Its Theory and Practice, 1945–1960*, ed. Norman A. Graebner (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), vi.

<sup>64</sup> Richard H. Immerman, "Eisenhower and Dulles: Who Made the Decisions?" *Political Psychology* 1, no. 2 (Autumn 1979), 21–38.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> Douglas Kinnard, *President Eisenhower and Strategy Management: A Study in Defense Politics* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1977), 23.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 134.

<sup>71</sup> Anna Kasten Nelson, "'The Top of Policy Hill': President Eisenhower and the National Security Council," *Diplomatic History* 7, no. 4 (Fall 1983), 307–326.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 312–318.

<sup>73</sup> For example, for a critique of Eisenhower's handling of the Quemoy-Matsu crisis of 1954–1955, see Gordon Chang, "To the Nuclear Brink: Eisenhower, Dulles and the Quemoy-Matsu Crisis," and H.W. Brands, Jr., "Testing Massive Retaliation: Credibility and Crisis Management in the Taiwan Strait," both in *International Security* 12, no. 4

(Spring 1988), republished in Sean M. Lynn-Jones et al., eds., *Nuclear Diplomacy and Crisis Management* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990), 200–255. For a critique of Eisenhower and his administration in the overthrow of the Arbenz government in Guatemala in 1954, see Blanche Wiesen Cook, *The Declassified Eisenhower: A Divided Legacy* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981), 218–292.

<sup>74</sup> Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment* (1982).

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 145–146.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 146.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 197.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 271.

<sup>79</sup> Robert H. Ferrell, ed., *The Eisenhower Diaries* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1981).

<sup>80</sup> William B. Pickett, email correspondence to author, November 5, 2022.

<sup>81</sup> Lisle A. Rose and Neal H. Petersen, eds., *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952–1954, National Security Affairs, Volume II, Part 1* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1984).

<sup>82</sup> William B. Pickett, “The Eisenhower Solarium Notes,” *The Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations* 16, no. 2 (June 1985), 1–9.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 5–7.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>86</sup> See Kuklick, *Blind Oracles*, 155–157, for a description of the May Group approach.

<sup>87</sup> Conversations among General Harold K. Johnson, Colonel Richard W. Jensen, and Lieutenant Colonel Rupert F. Glover, 1972–1973. See Harold K. Johnson Collection, Box 201, Series VI, Section IV, 5–6, Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, PA.

<sup>88</sup> Interview of Charles H. Bonesteel III by Lieutenant Colonel Robert St. Louis, 1973, Senior Officers Oral History Program, Project 73-2, Charles H. Bonesteel III Papers, Box 1A (Oral histories), Vol. II, 207–210, 245, Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, PA.

<sup>89</sup> Goodpaster’s service during the Eisenhower administration, and the reputation he gained while serving in it, are recounted in C. Richard Nelson, *The Life and Work of General Andrew J. Goodpaster: Best Practices in National Security Affairs* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016), 117–166.

<sup>90</sup> Rabe, “Eisenhower Revisionism,” in Hogan, *America in the World*, 301.

<sup>91</sup> Interview of Andrew J. Goodpaster by Ed Edwin, “Eisenhower Administration Project, Andrew J. Goodpaster,” Oral History Research Office, Columbia University, April 25, 1967, Oral History no. 37, The Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS, 12.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> Joint Interview of Andrew Goodpaster, Ann Whitman, Raymond Saunier, Elmer Staats, Arthur Burns, and Gordon Gray by Hugh Hecló and Anna Kasten Nelson, "The Eisenhower White House," June 11, 1980, Oral History no. 508, The Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS, 2.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>95</sup> Interview of Andrew J. Goodpaster by Malcolm S. McDonald, April 10, 1982, Oral History no. 477, The Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS, 14.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>97</sup> See John Foster Dulles Centennial Conference, "The Challenge of Leadership in Foreign Affairs," February 27, 1988, "Project Solarium: A Collective Oral History." This was later republished as William B. Pickett, ed., *George F. Kennan and the Origins of Eisenhower's New Look: An Oral History of Project Solarium*, Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies Monograph Series, Number 1 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>108</sup> Shirley Warshaw, "Introduction," in *Reexamining the Eisenhower Presidency*, ed. Shirley Anne Warshaw (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1993), xiv.

<sup>109</sup> Bradley H. Patterson, "Eisenhower's Innovations in White House Staff Structure and Operation," in Warshaw, *Reexamining the Eisenhower Presidency*, 35, 51.

<sup>110</sup> Rabe, "Eisenhower Revisionism," in Hogan, *America in the World*, 324.

<sup>111</sup> H.W. Brands, "The Age of Invulnerability: Eisenhower and the National Insecurity State," *The American Historical Review* 94, no. 4 (October 1989), 989.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 969.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 966–969.

<sup>114</sup> Richard H. Immerman, "Confessions of an Eisenhower Revisionist: An Agonizing Reappraisal," *Diplomatic History* 14, no. 3 (Summer 1990), 319–342.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 323.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 327.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 337.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 335.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 337.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 338.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 337–338.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 337.

<sup>123</sup> Campbell Craig, *Destroying the Village: Eisenhower and Thermonuclear War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 53–70.

<sup>127</sup> Meena Bose, *Shaping and Signaling Presidential Policy: The National Security Decision Making of Eisenhower and Kennedy* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 1998), 7.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>130</sup> Richard A. Melanson, “The Foundations of Eisenhower’s Foreign Policy: Continuity, Community, and Consensus,” in Warshaw, *Reexamining the Eisenhower Presidency*, 52.

<sup>131</sup> Adams, *Eisenhower’s Fine Group of Fellows*, 67–68.

<sup>132</sup> Robert R. Bowie and Richard H. Immerman, *Waging Peace: How Eisenhower Shaped an Enduring Cold War Strategy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

<sup>133</sup> See, for example, Adams, *Eisenhower’s Fine Group of Fellows*; Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment* (1982); and Michèle A. Flournoy and Shawn W. Brimley, “Strategic Planning for National Security: A New Project Solarium,” *Joint Force Quarterly* 41 (2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2006), 80–86.

<sup>134</sup> Bowie and Immerman, *Waging Peace*, 142.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 187–188.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 257.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.* Emphasis added.

<sup>138</sup> See, for example, John Robert Greene, *I Like Ike: The Presidential Election of 1952* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2017), 148–149, 176–177.

<sup>139</sup> Bowie and Immerman, *Waging Peace*, 124–125.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 127.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 128.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>143</sup> Jim Newton, *Eisenhower: The White House Years* (New York: Anchor Books, 2011), 3–5.

<sup>144</sup> Louis Galambos, *Eisenhower: Becoming the Leader of the Free World* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018), 201.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 204.

<sup>146</sup> Susan Eisenhower, *How Ike Led: The Principles Behind Eisenhower's Biggest Decisions* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2020), 169.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 171.

<sup>148</sup> Raymond Millen, "Cultivating Strategic Thinking: The Eisenhower Model," *Parameters* 42, no. 2 (Summer 2012), 57.

<sup>149</sup> Raymond Millen, "Eisenhower and U.S. Grand Strategy," *Parameters* 44, no. 2 (Summer 2014), 37.

<sup>150</sup> Derek Chollet, *The Middle Way: How Three Presidents Shaped America's Role in the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), 52.

<sup>151</sup> Melvyn Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind: The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007), 125.

<sup>152</sup> Ned O'Gorman, *Spirits of the Cold War: Contesting Worldviews in the Classical Age of American Security Strategy* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2011), 2–6.

<sup>153</sup> Edward Kaplan, *To Kill Nations: American Strategy in the Air-Atomic Age of Mutually Assured Destruction* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015), 116–118.

<sup>154</sup> Michael J. Gallagher, "Intelligence and National Security Strategy: Reexamining Project Solarium," *Intelligence and National Security* 30, no. 4 (November 2014), 461–485.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 478.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 482. Emphasis added.

<sup>157</sup> William C. Martel, *Grand Strategy in Theory and Practice: The Need for an Effective American Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 256–257.

<sup>158</sup> Ionut Popescu, *Emergent Strategy and Grand Strategy: How American Presidents Succeed in Foreign Policy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017), 5–6.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, 3, quoting Lawrence Freedman, *Strategy: A History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), xi.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>163</sup> Hal Brands, *The Twilight Struggle: What the Cold War Teaches Us About Great-Power Rivalry Today* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2022), 183.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, 184.

<sup>166</sup> Aaron L. Friedberg, "Strengthening U.S. Strategic Planning," *The Washington Quarterly* 31, no. 1 (Winter 2007–2008), 47.

<sup>167</sup> Charles P. Moore, "What's the Matter With Being a Strategist (Now)?" *Parameters* 39, no. 4 (Winter 2009), 5.

<sup>168</sup> Michèle A. Flournoy and Shawn W. Brimley, *Strategic Planning for National Security: A Project Solarium for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, The Princeton Project Papers (Princeton: The Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, 2006). A shortened version by the authors also came out the same year in *Joint Force Quarterly*. See Flournoy and Brimley, “Strategic Planning for National Security.”

<sup>169</sup> Flournoy and Brimley, *Strategic Planning for National Security*, 1.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>172</sup> For an overview of the U.S. national security system in its modern institutional form, see Roger Z. George and Harvey Rishikof, eds., *The National Security Enterprise: Navigating the Labyrinth*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2017).

<sup>173</sup> Flournoy and Brimley, *Strategic Planning for National Security*, 14–19.

<sup>174</sup> J. William deMarco, “Wondering Where the Lions Are: Eisenhower and the Peace of Solarium,” *Mastermind Century Group*, September 8, 2012, <https://m100group.com/2023/04/12/wondering-where-the-lions-are-eisenhower-and-the-peace-of-solarium/>.

<sup>175</sup> Marvin Kalb, “American Foreign Policy: Obama Should Summon His Own ‘Project Solarium,’” *Brookings*, July 18, 2013, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/american-foreign-policy-obama-should-summon-his-own-project-solarium/>.

<sup>176</sup> Tyler Nottberg, “Once and Future Policy Planning: Solarium for Today,” Eisenhower Institute at Gettysburg College (2014).

<sup>177</sup> James P. Farwell and Michael Miklaucic, “The U.S. Needs a New Solarium for a New Grand Strategy,” *The Diplomat*, June 18, 2022, <https://thediplomat.com/2022/06/the-us-needs-a-new-solarium-for-a-new-grand-strategy/>.

<sup>178</sup> See “NCO Solarium II,” November 17, 2015, <https://www.army.mil/standto/archive/2015/11/17/>.

<sup>179</sup> See, for example, “Cyberspace Solarium Commission: About,” Cyberspace Solarium Commission, <https://www.solarium.gov/about>.

<sup>180</sup> Angus King and Mike Gallagher, co-chairs, *Cyberspace Solarium Commission: Executive Summary* (Washington, DC: Cyberspace Solarium Commission, March 2020), 1–2. While the commission was sunsetted in 2022, it has been “rebooted” as a nonprofit organization and remains active. See Lauren C. Williams, “The Legacy of the Cyberspace Solarium Commission,” *NextGov*, December 30, 2021, <https://www.nextgov.com/cyber-security/2021/12/legacy-cyberspace-solarium-commission/360244/>.

<sup>181</sup> James Andrew Lewis, “Cyber Solarium and the Sunset of Cybersecurity,” Center for Strategic and International Studies, March 13, 2020, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/cyber-solarium-and-sunset-cybersecurity>.

<sup>182</sup> Heidi Hardt, *NATO’s Lessons in Crisis: Institutional Memory in International Organizations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 2, 7–8, 9–10.

<sup>183</sup> See, for example, Emile Durkheim, “Methods of Explanation and Analysis,” in *Selected Writings*, ed. Anthony Giddens (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 73–74.

<sup>184</sup> See Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire,” *Representations*, no. 26, special issue, “Memory and Counter-Memory” (Spring 1989), 7–24. “Modern memory is, above all, archival. It relies entirely on the materiality of the trace, the immediacy of the recording, the visibility of the image.” *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>185</sup> See John Lukacs, *Historical Consciousness: The Remembered Past* (Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1994), 88–127: “Facts are not independent; no Fact ever stands by itself; a Fact is not separable from other Facts. . . . [T]he value of Facts may depend on their relationships even more than on their accuracy.” *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>186</sup> Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan, “Setting the Framework,” in *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 15.

<sup>187</sup> David Rothkopf, *Running the World: The Inside Story of the National Security Council and the Architects of American Power* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2005), 70.

<sup>188</sup> Hardt, *NATO’s Lessons in Crisis*, 39.

<sup>189</sup> Flournoy and Brimley, *Strategic Planning for National Security*, 14–19.

<sup>190</sup> See, for example, Beatrice Heuser, *The Evolution of Strategy: Thinking War From Antiquity to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 1–35.

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