Rep. Rivers: Military Spokesman Hopes To See McNamara Revolution Upset

While the task of maintaining civilian control of the military falls most directly on the President and the Secretary of Defense, the Congress shares this responsibility. With this in mind, consider the role of the House Armed Services Committee, one of the congressional bodies primarily responsible for military affairs, and particularly that of its chairman, Lucius Mendel Rivers. The committee's jurisdiction embraces draft legislation, defense research and development, and many other military matters. With a new and untried Secretary of Defense in office and with the Vietnam war at a critical stage, the importance of Rivers and his committee is greater than ever. Rivers has denounced the administration's prosecution of the war, saying that "civilian strategists in Washington have tied [General] Westmoreland's hands with the manacles of slow escalation."

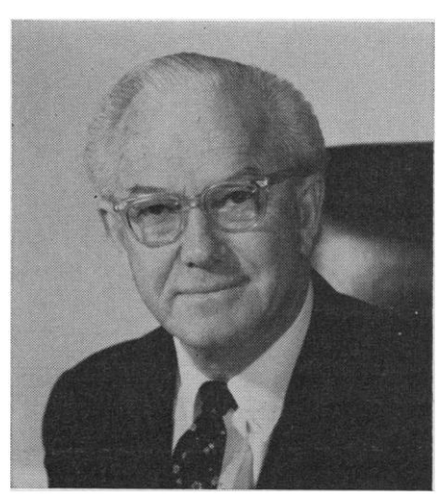
Moreover, Rivers clearly would like to see undone much of the revolution in Pentagon management through which Robert S. McNamara, during his 7 years as Secretary of Defense, tightened civilian control over the armed services. Clark M. Clifford, the new Secretary, will find his honeymoon with the Rivers committee to be brief if he adopts, as he has indicated he will, the McNamara management techniques as his own.

A 62-year-old South Carolinian easily identified by his florid rhetoric and ducktailed antebellum hair style, Rivers wields significant power. His committee reviews the defense budget and recommends spending ceilings; these are specified for numerous individual items, from purchases of ships and tanks to the money earmarked for research and development. For the most part, the committee approves the fund requests as submitted, but there are always exceptions. Often the committee calls for major expenditures favored by one or more of the services but disapproved by the Secretary of Defense.

For instance, last year the committee recommended almost doubling the development funds McNamara had requested for the Air Force's advanced strategic aircraft project. It also had Congress authorize the spending of $83 million to provide two new Navy frigates with nuclear propulsion—which the admirals, but not McNamara, felt was worth the high cost over conventional power.

Whenever the administration refuses to spend such unrequested funds, as it often has, it is accused of ignoring the will of Congress and of neglecting new defense technology. While charges of this sort usually seem of negligible political effect, such an accusation occasionally causes the administration deep concern. For example, in 1966 and even earlier, the Congress, at the urging of Rivers and others, appropriated money to initiate procurement of an operational antiballistic missile (ABM) system.

Supported by the President, McNamara, who questioned the value of the ABM and feared it would only intensify the arms race, rejected this congressional mandate, though he continued an ambitious R&D effort for the ABM. However, by last September the heat apparently had become too great. McNamara announced an administration decision to undertake a limited ABM deployment, which some observers felt would be directed more at campaign missiles than at any warheads the Chinese or Soviets might launch.



L. Mendel Rivers

In certain policy areas, especially those having to do with military personnel and housekeeping, Rivers and his committee can write legislation which the administration has no choice but to follow. Legislation governing the Selective Service system is a good example. In the draft-law revisions of last year the influence of the House and Senate committees on armed services was decisive. Key recommendations by a presidential panel—such as those to end most student deferments and to institute a lottery system for selecting inductees—had little chance of adoption over the opposition of Rivers and his colleagues.

The new draft law, as prepared by the congressional committees, made the deferment of undergraduates mandatory (such deferments had been at the discretion of local draft boards) and gave the President wide discretionary authority in the matter of graduate deferments. Rivers contends that the President has the authority to resolve the crisis now threatening most graduate schools, which expect the draft to cause new enrollments to drop by 50 percent or more next fall. Accordingly, he refuses to consider further revisions of the draft law this year.

In 1965, shortly after becoming committee chairman, Rivers pushed through a $1-billion military pay bill, a measure authorizing a sum twice as large as the one the administration had proposed. In an apparent effort to offset the cost of the big pay bill, his committee first tried to cut defense R&D funds by more than $500 million, though it was later persuaded that this would be folly.

Rivers clashed with McNamara on a wide variety of issues. As Secretary of Defense, McNamara epitomized the thoroughgoing rationalist. Rivers, on the other hand, is clearly a romantic of the horse cavalry school. He often speaks and acts on impulse. On 24 January, shortly after the seizure of the *Pueblo* by the North Koreans, Rivers declared, "I would have gone to war yesterday." He has had little patience with the systems approach to Pentagon decision-making, and has tended to view McNamara's systems analysts as young usurpers without a decent regard for "military judgment." Rivers has, with good reason, interpreted McNamara's management innovations (to which cost-effectiveness analysis and "planning and program budgeting" have been central) as designed to put the effective power of

decision on major defense questions in the Office of the Secretary.

In his criticism of McNamara's and the Johnson administration's prosecution of the Vietnam war, Rivers has been at his most acerbic. Speaking on the House floor on 20 February, he said:

> On the one hand, he [General Westmoreland] has an Ambassador advising him what to do; and, on the other hand, he has a Secretary of Defense ordering him what to do. . . . It's time we developed a military plan and a timetable for winning the war in Vietnam.

On 29 February, Rivers was questioned by a reporter about the plight of the Marines besieged at Khesanh. "It's unmoral, unwarlike, unchristian, and un-everything else not to permit [those] 5000 men to use tactical nuclear weapons and destroy the forces around them," Rivers was quoted as saying. Later, an aide softened this statement somewhat. Rivers meant, the aide explained, that, if the Marines are faced with annihilation, the President should authorize the use of nuclear weapons to save them. It was by no means the first time Rivers, a fast talker whose words frequently flow in erratic fashion, had complained that his views were wrongly reported.

Most members of the Armed Services Committee have one or more defense installations in their home districts, but Rivers' district, consisting of Charleston and several neighboring counties, is armed to the teeth. Its installations include a naval station and shipyard, a Polaris missile plant, a mine warfare center, an Army depot, and an air base. Rivers has said he brought in "90 percent" of the installations; while this claim is not to be wholly credited, he is indeed a diligent worker for his constituents and an adept string-puller. (Whatever Rivers' success in overcoming certain personal habits for which he has been criticized, he is now regarded as one of Capitol Hill's hardest-driving committee chairmen. He still enjoys a good time, however, and he has not, it is clear, kicked the habit of going on flying junkets to inspect U.S. bases abroad.)

Rivers was first elected to Congress in 1940 when, as a young lawyer, he had the good luck to run against an opponent named Alfred H. von Kolnitz at the very time German panzer divisions were racing across Europe. Rivers had little influence in the House until, by virture of seniority, he succeeded to the committee chairmanship in 1965, upon the retirement of Representative Carl Vinson of Georgia. Vinson, a beloved but authoritarian figure, kept his own counsel and ran the committee to suit himself. He admired McNamara and generally protected him from the congressional sticks and stones.

Rivers has not attempted to dominate the committee in the Vinson manner. The committee, consisting of 23 Democrats and 17 Republicans, is now run partly through a bipartisan policy committee (or "junta," as it is sometimes called) of ten senior members. Of Rivers' senior colleagues, the two reputed to carry the most weight in committee affairs are F. Edward Hébert of Louisiana and Porter Hardy, Jr., of Virginia. Hardy's special subcommittee on national defense posture has recommended a major escalation of the U.S. military effort in Vietnam. Hébert indicates that nuclear weapons should be used in Vietnam, if this should be necessary for a U.S. victory. "I like my Scotch like a Russian loves his vodka, but if I'm willing for our kids to fight in Vietnam, I can't do any less than risk my own life by throwing the Bomb, if that's necessary," he told a *Science* reporter last week.

The Armed Services Committee's senior Republican, Representative William H. Bates of Massachusetts, says he and Rivers have close, cooperative relations and generally agree on issues. From a standpoint of partisan advantage, Bates and the other Republicans on the committee have no reason to be displeased with Rivers. For even if Rivers were chairman of the Republican National Committee he could scarcely be attacking administration defense policies with greater vigor.

"This War Is Too Serious To Be Left To Civilian Leadership"

A cartoonist's view: Rivers the super hawk.

A POINT OF VIEW

President Lyndon B. Johnson, excerpt from remarks on 1 March at the NASA Manned Space Flight Center, Houston, in announcing a new Lunar Science Institute to be initially operated by the National Academy of Sciences and Rice University.

I spent almost 38 years in the Nation's Capital. In all of that period of time, I have voted for thousands of bills and I have written a few. But the one legislative enactment that I suppose I am proudest of is the bill that I wrote and introduced that made possible NASA, that brought into existence this great facility and others in the program throughout this nation. . . .

I am certain that as future generations look back on our incredible decade, they will be unanimous in their belief that the treasure that we have dedicated to sending man to explore the stars was the most significant and important investment ever made by any people.

You will have to go through some heartbreaks and some headaches. There will be little men with poison pens, without vision, who will seek to scrub your great efforts. But they will not prevail. We may have to reduce some of the plans that we have, but we will not forget you. We will not stop our work. We will proceed.

The Armed Services Committee is an assemblage of remarkably like-minded people, a fact which strengthens Rivers' influence by enabling him to go to the House floor with near-unanimous legislative recommendations. The committee's solidarity seems to derive from the attraction this body has for House members who have either a strong affinity for military affairs or major defense installations in their districts, if not both. Even on a subject as controversial as the draft, only five of the committee's 40 members dissented from the committee recommendations last year for draft-law revisions. The dissenters held that "in time of war, student deferments are unconscionable."

The most aggressively outspoken of the committee's few nonconformists is Otis G. Pike, a Long Island Democrat. Following the announcement last November of the Secretary's pending resignation, Pike, in a floor speech, praised McNamara and observed that, while it was true McNamara had gotten along poorly with Congress, a major reason for this was the Secretary's "low tolerance for stupidity."

One of the considerations that undoubtedly led President Johnson to name Clark Clifford as McNamara's successor is the excellent reputation Clifford enjoys on Capitol Hill. Yet there is a real chance that Clifford and the Rivers committee may soon be at loggerheads. Rivers and his senior colleagues plainly hope to see important changes at the Pentagon. As one committee member puts it, "I think you're going to see a deemphasis of systems analysis and more reliance on common sense. The whiz kids have been too active."

However, McNamara leaves behind him the large staff of civilian officials which he assembled, and it will carry on the new ways. Moreover, General Earle G. Wheeler, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and an officer whom Rivers and his colleagues identify with the McNamara policies, continues in office.

In any case, Clifford has no desire to see the power of his office weakened at all. Indeed, in 1960 Clifford was a member of an advisory panel which recommended that the military departments be abolished and that the Secretary of Defense directly administer all of the armed forces. In testifying recently before the Senate Armed Services Committee, he indicated that McNamara's performance had convinced him that no such reorganization is necessary.

Clifford comes to the Pentagon at a time when many civilian officials in the Pentagon are favoring, not an escalation, but a de-escalation of the Vietnam war. If he and the President should conclude that de-escalation is the wiser course, nothing is more certain than that Rivers and the more vocal members of his committee will howl in protest.—LUTHER J. CARTER

RECENT DEATHS

William E. Bennett, 61; professor of physics, State University of New York at Buffalo; 12 January.

Matthew N. Chappell, 67; professor emeritus of psychology, Hofstra University; 10 February.

S. Leonard Doerpinghaus, 42; associate professor of biology, Agnes State College; 19 January.

Alton Goldbloom, 77; professor emeritus of pediatrics, McGill University; 2 February.

Wendell H. Griffith, 72; first director of the Life Sciences Research Office, Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology and professor emeritus of biochemistry, University of California, Los Angeles; 5 February.

Marshall C. Guthrie, 88; former assistant surgeon general, U.S. Public Health Service; 29 January.

Don D. Jackson, 48; director of the Palo Alto Mental Research Institute; 30 January.

Stanley Levey, 52; associate professor of biochemistry in the department of surgery, School of Medicine, Case Western Reserve University; 19 November.

Earl R. Moses, Sr., 67; professor emeritus of sociology, Morgan State College; 20 February.

Mervin E. Oakes, 75; retired associate professor of biology, Queens College; 19 February.

Kenneth N. Ogle, 65; emeritus head of the section of biophysics, Mayo Clinic; 22 February.

Julius A. Schlakman, 63; associate professor of science, Montclair State College; 1 February.

Manasseh G. Sevag, 70; emeritus professor of microbiology, University of Pennsylvania; 26 November.

Walter F. Shenton, 81; former chairman of the mathematics department, American University; 26 February.

Hertha Sponer-Franck, 72; former professor of physics, Duke University; 17 February.

Pitirim A. Sorokin, 79; professor emeritus of sociology, Harvard University; 9 February.

Samuel Steinberg, 76; former dean of the college of engineering, University of Maryland; 10 February.

David H. Wenrich, 82; professor emeritus of zoology, University of Pennsylvania; 31 January.

Kimball Wiles, 54; dean of the college of education, University of Florida; 1 February.