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President's Security Assistant Walking Repository of Secrets

By LOUIS CASSELS
UPI Correspondent

Washington — (UPI) — If real-life Washington were like a sov movie, Gordon Gray would be followed everywhere he goes by a platoon of bodyguards.

Gray is a walking repository of America's top military and diplomatic secrets. He knows just about everything that's worth knowing about this country's defense potential, its latest weapons, its international commitments and its strategic plans for coping with any crisis that may arise in the global struggle with Communism.

Keeping up to the minute on such matters is part of his job as President Eisenhower's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs.

Gray is a gentle-mannered North Carolinian who looks like, and once was, a college president. He was director of the Office of Defense Mobilization until July 23, when he was called to the White House staff to succeed Boston banker Robert D. Cutler as the President's right hand man in the field of national security.

Dislikes Publicity
Like Cutler, Gray has a strong distaste for personal publicity. He consented to an interview with the stipulation that the talk would not be about him, but about the vital piece of government machinery that he supervises on behalf of the President.

This machinery is called the National Security Council. It was created by the Armed Forces Reorganization Act of 1947 to coordinate all of the government's activities — in the military, diplomatic, economic, foreign aid, propaganda and intelligence fields — that affect national security.

in the Cabinet Room of the White House but may also hold special meetings during an international crisis.

Its regular members are the President, Vice President, Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Director of Central Intelligence, and the Director of the Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization. Others who often sit in by invitation of the President are the Secretary of the Treasury, the Attorney General, the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission and the Director of U.S. Information Agency.

Contrary to popular impression, the Council has no authority to make decisions about U.S. policy. No votes are ever taken. Its function is merely to advise the President, who retains sole responsibility under the Constitution for all decisions.

Ike Makes Decisions

"The Council's role is to expose our major national security problems to full and vigorous discussion from all angles," Gray explained. "In his meetings, the President can hear what may be complete agreement, partial agreement, or strongly opposing views on national policy. But the decisions are always made by the President."

Gray's job is four-fold. First, he does the spadework for Council deliberations by meeting twice weekly with the so-called "Junior Council."

The real name of this group is the National Security Council Planning Board, and its members are deputies or assistants to the officials on the Council itself. With Gray as chairman, they go over the problems to be discussed at Council sessions, prepare preliminary "position papers" outlining agreements or disagreements and sometimes draft proposed policy statements.

Prepares Agenda
Gray's second task is to prepare the agenda for Council meetings. This is a big respon-

sibility since it means that he decides what specific current or future problems are to be brought to top-level consideration.

Third, he serves as a sort of moderator at the Council meetings, keeping the discussion going and making sure that all points of view are brought out fully.

His final responsibility is to prepare the "record of action" for Council meetings, which summarizes the issues presented and the President's decisions. Careful wording of this record is vitally important since it becomes the official statement of executive policy, binding on all departments and agencies.

To keep abreast of all factors affecting national security, Gray has to spend two or three hours every night doing his "homework" which consists of reading top-secret intelligence reports, diplomatic messages and even research progress reports on new weapons.

He meets with the President several times a week.

Gray, still sandy-haired and youthful at 49, admitted that he sometimes finds his responsibilities a little awesome.

"I've never been quite sure I was up to this job," he said.

Served Many Posts
But if Gray isn't qualified for the post, it is hard to think who would be. He has served in a wide variety of government posts under both Democratic and Republican administrations. In the Truman administration, he was Assistant Secretary, Under-Secretary and then Secretary of the Army. He also served as Special Assistant to President Truman on foreign economic policy.

Gray left Washington in 1950 to become president of the University of North Carolina. In 1955 he returned at President Eisenhower's request to become Assistant Secretary of Defense. He subsequently served as director of the Psychological Strategy Board (now extinct), and as

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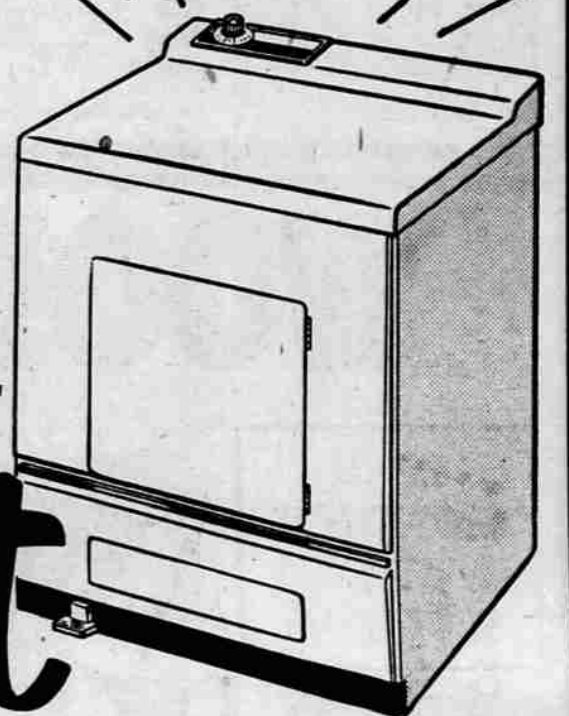
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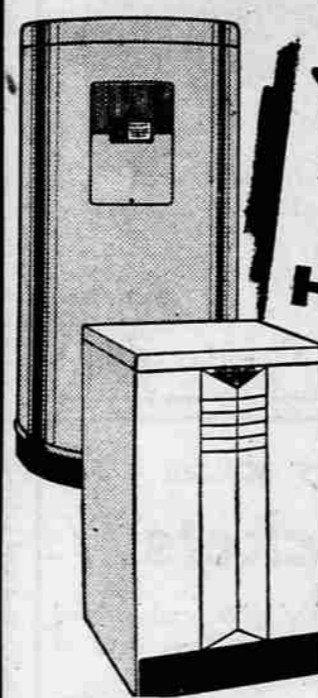
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