

1966

The National Security Council; Jackson Subcommittee Papers on Policy-Making at the Presidential Level

R. W. Bates

U.S. Congress. U.S. Senate. Committee on Government Operations

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review>

Recommended Citation

Bates, R. W. and Government Operations, U.S. Congress. U.S. Senate. Committee on (1966) "The National Security Council; Jackson Subcommittee Papers on Policy-Making at the Presidential Level," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 19 : No. 3 , Article 10.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol19/iss3/10>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu.

U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on Government Operations.
*The National Security Council; Jackson Subcommittee Papers
on Policy-Making at the Presidential Level.* New York:
Praeger, 1965. 311 p.

In his introduction, Senator Jackson, the editor of these papers, reviews the reasons which dictated the study of United States national policy-making, and summarizes the results of the study. The principal findings indicate that the subcommittee does not feel that major reorganization is the answer to any problems in the policy-making machinery—real or imagined. They discount arguments for super-cabinet positions, uphold the right and necessity of each President to exercise considerable freedom in the organization of his executive family to suit his individual quirks and requirements, and emphasize the importance of executive responsibility and privilege. They further de-emphasize the worth of rule by committee and deplore the proliferation of committees in government, uphold the position of the Secretary of State as the President's chief advisor on national security matters, stress the importance of a high-level career civil service corps, and support the selection of top officials on the basis of ability alone, regardless of Party affiliation. The major issues investigated and an expansion of the findings are then presented in the form of excerpts from reports issued by the subcommittee between 12 January 1960 and 15 November 1961. These conclusions are further supported by excerpts from the record of expert testimony heard by the subcommittee, and by basic government documents bearing on the questions involved.

The book is well organized and adequately indexed and documented. In spite of the vintage of the testimony and documents presented, the work provides excellent primary source material for current studies concerning the National Security Council and Presidential policy and decision-making. Military readers will be particularly pleased with the attitudes expressed concerning executive responsibility, and the necessity for "committee killing" operations. Until a more up-to-date report on this vital subject is available from an equivalent source, this book will remain an important document.

R.W. BATES
Commander, U.S. Navy