

# IN MEMORIAM

## General Andrew Goodpaster

*Presidential Adviser and Contributor to National Reconnaissance*

U.S. Army General Andrew J. Goodpaster died May 16 at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. He was 90 (Washington Post, 2005). As White House staff secretary during the Eisenhower administration (1953-1961), Goodpaster proved indispensable as a liaison between the President and the covert group of scientists and program managers who developed the first high-altitude and space-based reconnaissance systems. The 1950s collaboration among the White House, the Central Intelligence Agency, and engineers in private industry culminated in the development of the U-2 high-altitude reconnaissance aircraft, the Corona photoreconnaissance satellite, and, in 1960, what would become the National Reconnaissance Office (Pedlow & Welzenbach, 1998). Goodpaster's essential supporting role in these developments figured prominently at the NRO's celebrations of Corona. He gave one of the featured talks when the NRO observed its 35th anniversary at the Smithsonian Institute in May 1995.

Known during his White House years as Eisenhower's alter ego, Goodpaster arranged and attended Oval Office meetings with luminaries like Edwin Land—inventor of the Polaroid instant camera and member of the Technological Capabilities Panel—James Killian, who chaired the President's Science Advisory Board, and U-2 Project Manager Richard Bissell

(Pedlow & Welzenbach, 1998). Drawing on his World War Two and postwar reconstruction experiences, Goodpaster advised his commander in chief on matters of national and military security. At the beginning of national reconnaissance's modern evolution, Goodpaster contributed to many discussions about new capabilities. Specifically, he briefed Eisenhower on Corona's development. His memoranda often constituted the only official record of decisions made in Oval Office discussions. The Corona project was such a closely held secret, and Eisenhower was so desirous to retain plausible deniability of his knowledge of its existence, that when Bissell submitted the final project proposal in 1958, Goodpaster's memorandum for the record—rather than an official signature—confirmed the President's approval (Oder, Fitzpatrick, & Worthman, 1988).

Andrew Jackson Goodpaster was born February 12, 1915, in Granite City, Illinois. He originally desired to teach math, but money difficulties forced his withdrawal from McKendree College in Lebanon, Illinois, and he subsequently secured an appointment to the US Military Academy at West Point, New York. After being commissioned in 1939, he served in an engineering battalion in World War Two, earning the Distinguished Service Cross for leading his soldiers over a minefield under enemy fire. When the war ended,

he returned to the US and enrolled at Princeton University, where he earned master's degrees in engineering and international relations, as well as a doctorate in international relations. He became special assistant to the chief of staff of Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) from 1950-1954. At SHAPE, Goodpaster assisted Eisenhower, the NATO commander during some of those years, beginning a close working relationship that carried through Eisenhower's two presidential terms and beyond (Washington Post, 2005).

After his years at the White House, Goodpaster served on the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the 1960s, advocating for a stronger U.S. military presence in Vietnam. In 1968, he advised a six-person U.S. team at the Paris peace talks with North Vietnam, and finished the year as General Creighton W. Abrams' deputy commander of U.S. forces in Vietnam. For the following five years, Goodpaster oversaw NATO forces as the supreme allied commander before retiring in 1974. He later returned to active duty to take the commandant post at West Point, his alma mater. In 1984, he received the Medal of Freedom (Washington Post, 2005).

In recent years, General Goodpaster held academic and research center appointments at the Eisenhower Institute in Washington, the Institute for Defense Analyses in Alexandria, and St. Mary's College of Maryland (Washington Post, 2005).

## References

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