

## The First Year of the Office of National Estimates The Directorship of William L. Langer

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*At the head of this manuscript Sherman Kent noted, "A personal memorandum for the historical record of the Office of National Estimates composed from memory 20 years after the fact." For years access to this memoir, written for the History Staff in 1970, was limited to Kent and to the Chief and Deputy Chief Historian. Originally classified Secret, this work is published here for the first time.*

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Professor Langer was an old friend. My first experience in government work, also my first in intelligence had begun largely under his auspices in the fall of 1941. Those were the days of the formation of the Research and Analysis Branch of the Office of the Coordination of Information (later the OSS). Langer, during the first year and a half, was R&A's inside man and from the point of view of the research staff was more of an influence than James Baxter, the director.<sup>1</sup> Sometime in early 1943 he succeeded Baxter in the title job. For a bit more than four years I had been a section and division chief under him.

And so coming back to Washington in 1950, to intelligence, to the old South Building to work for Bill Langer again was like reliving a dream. However in the new job my office—still on the same floor of the same building—was about 50 yards west of where I had begun in 1941. That was one new thing; another and more important one was that now Langer was the head of an intelligence estimates office as opposed to an intelligence research operation.

There was a similarity in the way he approached both. It lay in his drive and his rigorous insistence upon the standards of scholarly excellence for which he was renowned at Harvard and throughout the community of the world's modern historians.

Langer was a driver. At one time in his academic career, so his Harvard colleagues said, he had driven himself well into nervous exhaustion, perhaps even mild psychosis. In any event, he had had to take a

<sup>1</sup>[Editor's Note: James Phinney Baxter III, President of Williams College and (like Langer) a leading diplomatic historian. The Editor has added footnotes to identify persons mentioned in this essay.]

considerable sick leave. What he did for himself, he did for his lieutenants. He expected their best and was quick to perceive when he was being shortchanged. On these occasions he was direct and disagreeable—very. In fact he had the reputation of not having to be very much shortchanged to show an abrasiveness that terrified and hurt. Although he was capable of the utmost in kindness and graciousness (a salute to me which he uttered to our Princeton consultant group at the time of my retirement from the Agency in 1967 is the most touching memento I have ever received), he probably showed the other side of his nature more frequently. Back in the R&A days someone observed to one of my close associates that Langer

sure must be an able man because it was a cinch that it was through ability alone that he had arrived, not, for example, through his personal charm.

His voice was nasal and often grainy, his enunciation carried a hint of lisp on the “st” sound (it wasn’t “faw Crith thake,” but more like “faw Christh sthake”), and pervading all were the flat “a” and the unpronounced final “r” so characteristic of certain Bostonians. His sentences rolled along in a gentle sing song until they approached their end, when they came out with a bang. He was something of a master of the spoken language; he was fully aware of his eloquence and he enjoyed its exercise.

The combination of his manner of speaking, his gift for diction, and his humor caused him to say some of the funniest things I have ever heard uttered. Such as “Shirm (short for Sherman) James Claaak has gone through life exuding a miasthma of disthapproving and disthgrun-tled gloom” or “Faw Christhs sthake, Shirm, whatsth youah gripe about Megaro, you’ve only had im faw a coupla months; Christh, I’ve had him faw a decade.” (Clark and Megaro were of the R&A Branch and two men whose personalities offered certain difficulties.)

But when he wished to be serious, or annoyed, or positively irked, the same eloquence produced something that inflicted third-degree burns and left scar tissue that some victims never lost.

Already I may have written more of this spiny characteristic than true justice would warrant, but make no mistake it was there.

As a scholar he had of course achieved a top rating and justifiably so. The drive that he showed as an administrative chief was a talent transferred from the “attaque” of his scholarly writing. When he got into a subject matter, God help it; he ripped its clothes off irrespective of difficulties. He must have consumed all the relevant books in the Widener

Library and almost without regard to the languages in which they were written. He expected the same performance from his serious students, and he carried his canons of perfection and the attitudes of the senior professor to the bosom of US Government intelligence work.

It was not that he was merely rough and demanding on the staff of the new ONE—he was just as rough on his peers of the Board of National Estimates. In the beginning at least, I don't think he considered them his peers. A sharp little incident developed about this discrepancy of view of which there will be no written record save this one. It involved a contretemps between Langer and Maxwell Foster, a member of the Board.<sup>2</sup>

Foster's training was in the law and after a successful practice in one of the ranking Boston firms, he had gradually disengaged in behalf of the study of semantics. During the war, with I. A. Richards he had, *inter alia*, translated some operations manuals of the US Navy into Basic English, so that Chinese naval officers who had learned Basic could apply the manuals to the relevant equipment and make it work. Communication, as it is now called, was Foster's passion, and William Jackson, knowing Foster and knowing the importance of the language within which intelligence pronouncements were made, had (presumably) got General Smith to appoint Foster to the Board.<sup>3</sup>

To me Foster was one of the most engaging men ever. He was bright, studious, light-hearted, and was loaded with a great feeling for human companionship. He also had one of the sharpest minds I had ever observed and a great power over the written and spoken word. His years in the intellectual discipline of the law and his serious avocation in semantics made him a critic (within bounds) of splendid discernment and great vigor. The trouble was that he knew practically nothing more than the next gifted amateur about the substance of the NIEs. There is no doubt in my mind that this lapse was a strength, nor no doubt that it was also one of the reasons why Bill Jackson had wanted him on the Board.

No mention of Foster can convey the man without a notice of his eccentricities, the most obtrusive of which was his habit of never going bareheaded. On the street he of course wore a hat, he also wore it indoors; he wore it in his office, my office, anybody's office—except perhaps General Smith's office; he wore it at committee meetings and at lunch if he felt at home. He'd wear it in a friend's house and even in a stranger's after he felt himself to be among sympathetic souls. He had special hats to wear in his own premises and even a night cap that he'd

<sup>2</sup>[Maxwell Foster served on the Board only six months and resigned in June 1951.]

<sup>3</sup>[William Harding Jackson was Deputy Director of Central Intelligence, October 1950 to August 1951; Lt. Gen. Walter Bedell Smith, USA, was Director of Central Intelligence, October 1950 to February 1953.]

tie under his chin (I know because he shared my apartment with me for a fortnight). There were other quirks, most of which showed a disinclination to try to meet the conditions of present-day life—like driving in traffic or finding a place to live; they were as deep but not as obvious as this hat business.

To Foster the Board of National Estimates was a sort of Supreme Court composed of a half-dozen justices and Langer, the chief justice. In Foster's view Langer had no more power over the substantive findings of the Board than the chief justice had over those of his brothers on the court. *Exactly* how Langer felt about this I do not know, but I think that *whereas Langer might reluctantly acknowledge that the views of Sontag or Hoover should be given serious consideration, he surely did not feel that way about Foster's.*

To Langer—so it would seem to me—Foster's background and training did not entitle him to such a view. And around this issue arose the incident. It came when Langer abruptly overruled some dissidents on a substantive issue in one of the NIEs under consideration and among the dissidents was Foster. When the meeting was over Foster was hopping; he came to my office and took me with him to Langer's office for the showdown. We knocked and entered and Foster opened with an incisive statement of the case: "The Board was a committee of equals and Langer's view did not, indeed should not, prevail simply because he was chairman." I do not recall the details of either the give or take, but being sure of the thrust of Foster's message as I have put it above I am also sure of Langer's reply. It was that General Smith had appointed him to write national estimates and that General Smith held him personally responsible for what they said. In a sentence that was it. But voices were raised in anger and I do not know what might have happened next had not a secretary entered the room. Things quieted, Foster and I left, Foster was fuming.

I write this for many obvious reasons, the most important of which is the first-hand experiences I had regarding Langer's view of his own job description. A more modest man could not possibly have answered Foster regarding Langer's view of his own job description. A more modest man could not possibly have answered Foster as Langer had, and most men would not have been willing to accept the full load of responsibility with which General Smith had allegedly burdened Langer. The fact that Langer was willing to even contemplate assuming personal responsibility for the sort of judgments and reasoned speculations on subjects of highest national importance with which the NIEs were laden says much of his quotient of self-confidence.

On numerous occasions he underscored this concept of his personal responsibility. For example, in those early days he was always in the chair, whether the meeting was one of our own or a gathering of ourselves with other men from the Agency or whether it was with the representatives of the other (IAC) intelligence agencies. No matter what, if Langer were in the building, he would be physically in charge. Sometimes of course he would be called away, and when he left he might ask Sontag or Hoover or Montague or me to carry on.<sup>4</sup> We would frequently get several paragraphs of text "coordinated" in his absence, but to no avail. As soon as he came back he would resume, not where *we* had left off, but where *he* had left off. It was as if what had happened in his absence just did not count. I will not try to explain the attitude, let me just say it was there and that it did not make things easy for any of us.

Raymond Sontag perhaps suffered most. In the academic world he would have been bracketed with Langer. He too was a modern diplomatic historian of very fine attainments. He had been a leader of his department at Princeton before he accepted the best paid and perhaps the most prestigious professorship open to our country's historians. It was the Ehrman chair at the University of California at Berkeley. Sontag had written less than Langer and was probably less well-known. Knowing them both, I fancy that Sontag, in his bones, considered himself Langer's junior. In all events, this is the way he acted. No matter that he was as well informed as Langer, as thoughtful and imaginative, no matter that he was a much more adept draftsman, he would incline his head in resignation when Langer was abrupt if not downright unkind or brutal. There was never any fighting back in public, and I rather doubt that there was in private.

Every once in a while Langer would acknowledge Sontag's gift for composition with "Jeeesus Ray, where are you going to put all thosth Wuuueds you just knocked out" or "Jeeesus Ray, where do you get all thosth good ideasth." But these minor messages of congratulation were so comparatively rare that I imagine all of us remember them.

The relationship between Calvin Hoover and Langer was completely different. It probably derived as much as anything from Calvin's having been trained as an economist and having achieved great national eminence in the field. Langer was not going to lock horns on an economic matter with him. Also they had been together in the old R&A Branch and had a warm friendship untingured by the sort of hidden rivalry that obtained between Langer and Sontag. Hoover had written an

<sup>4</sup>[Raymond Sontag was Ehrman Professor of History, University of California, Berkeley; Calvin Hoover was a professor of economics at Duke University; Ludwell Montague was a former professor of history at the Virginia Military Institute and Chief of the Intelligence Staff, Office of Research and Evaluation, Central Intelligence Group, 1946-1947.]

extremely good book about Hitler and another about the Soviet Union, but his approach had been that of an old-style doctor of political economy rather than that of a straightaway historian. But Langer was rough upon occasions even with Hoover, and he, like the rest of us, took it without public remonstrance. Hoover had it in him to be aroused and when he was (unlike Sontag) he would air his grievance to us in private in a mix of blazing anger and laughter and jest.

DeForest Van Slyck and Ludwell Montague were special cases.<sup>5</sup> Both had served in the O/RE [Office of Reports and Estimates] of CIA writing the pre-November-1950 national estimates; both were accomplished practitioners of the art and knew ten times as much about it as the rest of us put together. But there they were, the veterans, outnumbered and outranked by the newcomers. I think we in our innocence annoyed them, and the way Langer ran things must have been doubly hard to take. On our part, we got a bit miffed at being treated too often as new boys and second formers by these two sixth-form senior prefects. But no matter, we held their talent and experience in high regard and I think they did admirably in getting used to us so speedily.

Van for years had suffered from bad health, and the outlay of nervous energy necessary to chair a meeting was beyond the tolerance of his stomach. He would try it every once in a while and would invariably end up in a spasm of painful nausea. So when Langer relaxed things to the point of licensing his colleagues to chair meetings, Van would duck the opportunity. His great knowledge of the substantive issues and the clarity with which he perceived the mandatory inner logic of a properly composed paragraph made his contribution to our product an outstanding one. Langer fully appreciated his great gifts for composition and respected his tenacity, and, of all of us, Van probably emerged from the Langer period with least grief.

Montague on the contrary was an excellent chairman and a great craftsman in the art of the interdepartmental meeting. His prior experience with the legendary uncooperativeness of the intelligence community in the production of the pre-Smith estimates made him doubly aware of the benefits of the new deal and an effective user of the powers that came to our office with General Smith's incumbency. I never really knew the nature of Monty's relationship with Langer, but I always felt it smoother and easier than that of some of us others. Monty had a soldier's deference to the command and Langer knew a splendid technical expert when he saw one.

<sup>5</sup>[DeForest Van Slyck was a former history professor at Yale and investment banker before joining the Central Intelligence Group in March 1946.]

Our two military men (our quiet, charming, and thoughtful Vice Admiral Bieri and our not quiet and not thoughtful, but doubly charming withal, Lieutenant General Huebner) were a good thing.<sup>6</sup> They were sufficiently remote from the day to day business (they never chaired a meeting, for example), their backgrounds and view of the job so different from the rest of us that they were, in a way, surrounded in an insulation of their own making. I suspect that Admiral Bieri was well impressed by Langer's and Sontag's and Hoover's knowledge and that he arranged things so that he never had to enter a controversy to which they were party. He knew what was going on, but he seldom gave an overt sign of it. On the other hand, if some one were pointedly to ask his view, he would give it—and a good one it would usually be.

Part of the trouble with both of our military men was their status on the payroll. Both were retired officers with good retirement allowances, both feared (probably with justice) making any kind of a financial arrangement with a civilian agency which would get the bookkeepers in the navy and army accounting offices to start worrying about the possibility of double compensation. Once they did, it would seemingly take an act of Congress, if not an act of God, to get things squared away again. Hence they leaned over backward to avoid the appearance of regular—let alone formal participatory—employment in the Agency. This reluctance was probably reinforced, especially in the case of General Huebner, by the fact that most of the subject matter of the NIEs was something wholly unfamiliar. Admiral Bieri's staff experience gave him a much wider area of sensitivity to the work of the office, and had he so desired or dared he could have served more fully. Huebner, on the other hand, gloried in the image of the professional fighting officer and of being a soldier's general. Like General Smith he had entered the Army as a private and had held all ranks through lieutenant general, and forget not that he had commanded the *Big Red One* in the Normandy landings and then had gone on to be a corps commander.

Huebner did make a great contribution to the early work of the ONE, not necessarily in the way he understood the big issues of the military estimates but rather in the way he dealt with the officers who came to our meetings from the intelligence components of the Army, Navy, and Air Force. No one in our office, in the beginning, was an officer on active duty; no one wore the uniform; comparatively few of us had had any real experience with the military or with military intelligence narrowly construed. Van Slyck and Montague yes and so for a few members of the

<sup>6</sup>[VAdm. Bernard Bieri, USN, served on the Board of National Estimates, 1951-1953; Lt. Gen. Clarence Huebner, USA, was a former commander of all US forces in Europe.]

staff who had worked on estimates in ORE (Cline, Komer, perhaps others, Cooper, Matthias, but surely not Langer, Sontag, Hoover, Foster, and myself nor most of the staff).<sup>7</sup> This matter was well known in the Pentagon, and the fact that service intelligence deeply resented (and had for years) a civilian intelligence outfit's intrusion upon the area of its "primary responsibility" often resulted in some very unhelpful attitudes on the part of military representatives at our coordination sessions. General Huebner was our not so secret weapon.

When a senior colonel from Army or Air Force intelligence would give us a display of bad temper or try to dress up his service's policy choice as intelligence, Huebner would be at him with "God damn it son, what in hell are you talking about." Sometimes our general's points would be well taken and sometimes not at all, but the result was usually the same; the officer in question knew power when he heard it and if he did not relinquish his substantive decision, he at least stopped being obstructionist and rude. I think we all blessed our general for his towering stature as a combat officer and his willingness to make common cause with civilians who to him were second-class citizens by definition.

Again what Huebner thought of Langer, I know not. He probably understood Langer's assumption of full responsibility for the findings of the NIEs and was in no way put out at the way he handled his job. After all this was what a commander had to do. If there had ever been a real ruction about Langer's concept of his job (which apart from the Foster incident, there never was) I'm sure Huebner would have tried to stay out of it, and if he had had to get in would have taken Langer's side. As for what Langer thought of Huebner, I imagine his attitude would be close to the one I have shown above to be my own: great liking for this delightful human, great respect for the swath he cut among the military, and a full comprehension that our general was just plain appallingly unprepared for the duties of a member of the Board.

On many occasions, Huebner added to the joy of life with some outrageous notion or utterance. There was the time when he adopted the view that the tactic which Soviet air defense would use to neutralize the US bomber superiority would be to have their fighters crash our bombers in midair. When the cost of this tactic, in terms of the losses of Soviet fighter pilots, was adduced as an argument opposed he would brush it aside with the remark that the Russians were animals who had no regard for human life, even that of their own pilots. We had this crash-tactic

<sup>7</sup>[Dr. Raymon S. Cline was later the Deputy Director for Intelligence (DDI), 1962-1966; Robert W. Komer later headed the Civil Operations and Rural Development Support (CORDS) program in Vietnam; Chester L. Cooper became Assistant Deputy Director for Intelligence (ADDI), 1963-1965; Willard Matthias rose from the National Estimates Staff to become a member of the Board of National Estimates.]

business on every possible occasion, and only through the low cunning of my more artful colleagues was it kept out of the early NIEs on Soviet military matters.

When Huebner got serious about something like this, he spoke with great force and a good amount of effortless profanity. He would stare at his audience and narrow the window of his eyes. It seemed as if he contrived the ominous effect by closing them from the bottom. It gave me the feeling of fear I would have should I try to stare down a cobra.

Once at a full board meeting there had been talk of someone's mistake and Huebner in a genial and philosophical mood pushed back his chair a bit and expansively addressed his colleagues like this:

God knows we all make mistakes. Look at Christ himself. When he came to choose apostles he chose thirteen and one of them turned out to be a son of a bitch. They had to hang him.

Some of us irreverent ones were well pleased at our general's interpellation, but Sontag, who was a converted Roman and overloaded with the convert's zeal, later confessed that he was so appalled that he could not figure what to do or say, so did and said nothing.

A parenthesis—There is documentary evidence that General Smith had at least considered Huebner as the Chairman of the Board and perhaps also chief of the office. Maybe he made his pitch and Huebner begged off for reasons of the financial complexities which would be involved; more likely he never got to the point of making the formal offer. In this case Bill Jackson was probably the restraining influence. But whoever dissuaded General Smith from the Huebner appointment earned his year's salary in that five minutes. But there is no use in getting steamed up over this might-have-been because I am sure that no matter how hard General Smith might have tried, Huebner's resistance would have worked. Huebner knew that this sort of work was not his dish and he was not a man to take on an impossible task at the end of a long, successful, and honorable career in the Army.

How General Smith chose Langer is another matter. Maybe the documents will show, but my guess is what follows.<sup>8</sup>

Langer had had a great success as director of OSS's R&A Branch. After he had signed off in the early winter of 1946 (R&A had by then been transferred to the State Department) and returned to his historical studies, he was once again summoned. This time it was to take command of his old outfit but at one echelon up in the State Department hierarchy. The new job was at the assistant secretarial level and his title the

<sup>8</sup>Already (2 Feb71) I know that most of this is wrong. Montague had found the documents to show that General Donovan probably played a key role in Langer's appointment.

*Special Assistant for Research and Intelligence*, a position that became vacant with the resignation of Alfred McCormack (April 1946).<sup>9</sup> Langer agreed to take it while the State Department searched for a permanent appointee. As things turned out he held it for longer than he had bargained for (some six months or more).

During this time, one of his most useful lieutenants was W. Park Armstrong, an able citizen whom McCormack had brought in with him from the Pentagon. When Langer left, Armstrong continued as a aide to William Eddy, the permanent Langer replacement, and when Eddy left a couple of years later, Armstrong succeeded him as the Department's chief intelligence officer.

As Smith and Jackson were looking for a director for the new ONE to be, it was natural that one or both would have talked to Armstrong. Obviously they would like to appoint—if possible—someone who had the approval of a potent civilian intelligence chief. A good guess—unsubstantiated thus far in the documents—is that Armstrong recommended Langer without reservation. His voice would have carried great weight.

The appointments of Sontag and Hoover were beyond peradventure at Langer's initiative. He had known both for years and had—as I have noted—served with Hoover in OSS when the latter was a member of the Board of Analysts of the R&A Branch. Had I been in Langer's spot, these were the very two men I would have gone for first. Both had the sort of knowledge, stature, and talent that I would have been looking for. I know not what the documents will show of the appointment of Hoover, but I know that there will be few documents for that of Sontag. After Langer had cleared the matter with General Smith and/or Jackson, he simply called Ray in California. Ray accepted on the spot and with unbelievable speed sold his house and moved his family east. His motivations as doubtless those of Calvin Hoover were a desire to serve the country in a desperate moment. Both men gave up much to come to the harried atmosphere of wartime Washington.

Foster's appointment was almost certainly on Jackson's recommendation. Jackson—as I've said—knew Foster and admired him. Foster's not being a professor was much in his favor. Jackson liked professors all right, but he wanted a mix on the Board, especially he wanted some businessmen. His taste in this matter became very clear to me one time when he was talking to me about the group of consultants he planned to assemble to review the substantive work of the Board. He said he wanted to get some businessmen "to cross examine you professors, give you a hard

<sup>9</sup>[Alfred McCormack became Special Assistant to Secretary of State James Byrnes after serving as Director of the US Army's Military Intelligence Service.]

time, put you on the spot.” This was not unnatural, for he himself was a businessman who had had great success in wartime military intelligence work.

Foster, for all his experience as a businessman’s lawyer, had about as little of the stereotype of the man of affairs as you could find. To this extent Jackson’s aim to have the talents of the business life represented on the Board was obviously not fully realized.

As to my own appointment, I think I owe it largely to Jackson. He had reviewed my *Strategic Intelligence* for the *New York Times* Book Review and before turning it in had graciously asked me to come to New York to talk about the draft review. He made quite clear his intention not to be influenced by any of my possible objections. I met him at his club and we had a pleasant hour during which he confessed that he was pleasantly surprised that the book “had smelled so little of the lamp.” (I remember this for I’d never heard the expression before.) The review was a good one to my taste.

I had met Jackson once before this while I was in R&A in the State Department and once after at a cocktail party in New York. But it was unquestionably the book that brought me to mind.

I must confess that with the outbreak of the war in Korea, I rather expected to be asked to return to intelligence work, and by September with no invitation I began to think that some of my run-ins with the Security people in the State Department had blighted my record. (The “run-ins” were occasioned by State’s rule that non-American citizens could not serve in the Department, and a few of my best staffers were German Jews who had not yet gotten through the US naturalization process. My defense of them got me bad marks with some State Department officers.) In October 1950 (I think) Jackson called me in New Haven and asked me to come to Washington to talk about a job in the Office of National Estimates to be. Now that I was in demand, my pleasure was very considerably dimmed by a reluctance to leave my family and Yale (I’d just begun a new course in the history of the world since 1900 and had a class of almost 200). I told Jackson as much and then, either at that time on the phone, or later in Washington he came up with a compromise solution. In the compromise to which General Smith agreed, I would come to work as soon as possible, stay on full time until the end of the University’s Christmas vacation—a matter of say six weeks, return to Yale and finish the academic year. Then come June, I would rejoin the Board of National Estimates and commit myself to the summer, and the next full year. The idea was that I would succeed Langer as head of the office. This sounded good to me, my wife, who liked the thought of coming

back to Washington—the chairman of my Department, and my dear friend, Whitney Griswold, the University president.<sup>10</sup>

I came down on a Saturday night train, and Jackson was kind enough to meet me at the station, buy me breakfast, and warn me in guarded tones not to be put off by the General who like to bark more than bite. He then drove me to the familiar Administration building at the 25th and E Street campus. We entered and sat in a room on the southeast corner. Pretty soon General Smith bounced in. He laid it right on the line. I had some quite honest doubts about my abilities to handle the job: the estimates business was not intelligence research which I knew so well and besides I had let the great turmoil of international affairs roll by unheeded for three years as I applied myself to the history of the 18th and 19th Centuries. I tried to express to General Smith a certain want of confidence to deliver. He interrupted me with a remark to the effect that he did not make a practice of coming to his office on Sunday mornings to interview people who he did not think would make the grade. He also dropped the remark that he had asked General Gruenther (Alfred M.) about me and that Al (whom I had served at the National War College) had given me good marks. I said, yes sir.<sup>11</sup>

In fairly short order I came to work, nominally as a consultant to the DCI, actually as a pro tem Board member. My plan to work until early January 1951 and leave was agreed to by General Smith and Jackson. Then came the Chinese Communist intrusion into the Korean battle.

Never before in my life had I so feared for the welfare of the country. To people on the inside like ourselves it looked as if the chances of losing virtually every soldier and all the equipment on the Korean Peninsula were about even or better than even. The US was confronted, as I saw it, with the prospect of a staggering defeat. Thus one day when General Smith took me aside and in a gentle way said something like “old man I’m going to have to ask you not to go back to Yale,” he was talking to one already convinced. I could not possibly have gone back to teaching history in these circumstances. My reply was to the effect that it was all right with me, but would he please square things with my wife and my president. He suggested that he would go to New Haven to see Griswold; I assured him that would not be necessary, that a letter would suffice.

In the end, he of course did write the two letters and more. It must have been he who arranged for a letter to Griswold which President Truman signed. I was in the clear with Yale, the matter of Mrs. Kent and the kids was not so easy for any of the four of us for the rest of 1951.

<sup>10</sup>[Alfred Whitney Griswold, a leading diplomatic historian, then President of Yale University.]

<sup>11</sup>[Gen. Alfred M. Gruenther retired from the US Army after serving as Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, 1953-1956.]

Early in January 1951 the front office put out a notice announcing that I was appointed Langer's Deputy, that is, Deputy Assistant Director for National Estimates. Maybe this was the occasion when my own bad times with Langer began. What else had bitten him I do not know, but he had been bitten and he was biting back. These were bleak times as I got the full blast of his sarcasm and even scorn. When my appointment as his deputy came up, he wondered out loud at one of our morning meetings what in the world did someone think he would do with a Deputy. It may be that he was being funny, but the way it was said made that construction pretty hard to believe. But there was some solace in the fact that giving gratuitous offense was not all that much of a rarity, even to worthies like Sontag and Hoover. I remember asking his secretary, Frances Douglas, who had been a friend of many years standing, what was the matter and she replying that she did not know, but that she felt that Dr. Langer "thought of me as an able man." But since I had gone through much the same sort of purgatory back in 1941 and 1942 and at the hands of this same man, I guess I had sense enough to figure that the present storm would pass even as it had once before. In all events I sat it out.

How General Smith felt about Langer I have no idea, except of course he must have been satisfied. With Bill Jackson, I think it was otherwise. I never complained to Bill, but I imagine that Max Foster did, and if he did it was upon the occasion of his departure in July 1951. I do know that Jackson told me late in the year that he looked forward to the time when I would relieve Langer.

In all events Langer left in early January 1952. His leave of absence had run out at Harvard and I believe President Conant was inviting him to choose between fishing or cutting bait.<sup>12</sup>

Of course, it might be that Langer had gotten wind of General Smith's intention to interpose a Deputy Director for Intelligence between the Assistant Directors of the overt offices and the DCI. If he did, it would be no surprise that he shied away from an arrangement wherein he, Archibald Cary Coolidge Professor of History at Harvard, would report to the boss through a boy lawyer—Loftus Becker.<sup>13</sup>

Langer's going coincided closely with the announcement of the new institution, the DD/I.

<sup>12</sup>[James B. Conant, President of Harvard University from 1933-1953, later served as US Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany.]

<sup>13</sup>[Loftus Becker was the first Deputy Director for Intelligence, 1952-1953.]

*Sherman Kent*

Whatever the personality clashes which resulted from Langer's leadership, his service to the institution of the National Intelligence Estimate and the standing of CIA was of highest importance. From the very start the NIE's showed the mark of his good sense, cool judgment, and clarity of thought. To the extent that this sort of speculative excursion in the unknown and the unknowable could be made to carry conviction, they did. By the time of his departure the NIE had already won its place as a valuable part of the national security policymaking apparatus.

10 December 1970