

Dedication of New Operations Center for DEFSMAC



by Mark Clesh

In April, with great pride and appreciation, we are dedicating the Defense Special Missile and Astronautics Center's (DEFSMAC) new Operations Center to the memory of Charlie Tevis.

Thirty-six years ago in 1962 Charlie Tevis was certain of one thing; it was a most unusual fall night in Washington. Normally he would have been in bed, but he had received a phone call from the White House and was asked to meet President John F. Kennedy at the National Photographic Interpretation Center as soon as possible. While a million things raced through Charlie's head, the speed of his car at the time wasn't one of them. It wasn't long before one of D.C.'s finest pulled him to the curb. Charlie's excuse, "I must meet the President at a building near the Washington Navy Yard," was one the officer hadn't heard before, so he was offered an escort. They arrived in short-order at a dark building with an empty parking lot. This skeptical police officer was getting pen and ticket book ready when a large black limousine swung into the lot and stopped next to Charlie. Then-Attorney General

Robert Kennedy stepped from the limousine, welcomed Charlie with a hand shake, and said, "Please follow me." As they disappeared into the dark building, they left behind one bewildered policeman.

For Charlie Tevis, this was the way the Cuban Missile Crisis began that night in October 1962. Two years later, this expert on missile and space systems would be selected by the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) to be the first director of DEFSMAC.

Prior to DEFSMAC, various organizations tasked and supported collection assets independently from similar efforts by other collection facilities and agencies. As a result, the Intelligence Community was subject to collection program duplication, conflicting reporting, and frequent instances of missed collection opportunities. The Deputy SECDEF asked the Assistant SECDEF and the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) to jointly review the related programs of Department of Defense (DoD) components from September 1963 through February 1964. The analysis of the review indicated the need for

more efficient effort through improved management procedures. Additionally, with the exception of those defense collection activities that operated under the cognizance of the Director, National Security Agency (NSA), the management of defense collection activities did not provide the supervision required to ensure adequate operational and technical performance.

As a result of the review, this newly formed center, established at Fort Meade, Maryland, was made the DoD focal point for real-time mission operations, analysis, and reporting of specialized worldwide all-source intelligence data. It was to provide time-sensitive alerts, initial event assessments, and mission support to national agencies, national command authorities, Unified Commands, and field-deployed sensor platforms and stations.

Those first DIA and NSA employees came together to create DEFSMAC on June 1, 1964, and a number stayed on to develop a center of excellence on missile and space activity. Those first DIA personnel were skilled intelligence analysts with backgrounds well versed in rockets and satellites. Early DIA and NSA personnel helped form a cadre of all-source analysts who were called upon throughout the

Cold War to derive details from first-ever launches of military and reconnaissance payloads as well as developmental missile systems.

DEFSMAC is currently comprised of two directorates, Operations and Intelligence. Within these two directorates are eight elements that range from the 24-hour watch operations to language support. Throughout most of DEFSMAC's entire existence, about 100 people have made-up the organization. However, recent NSA reorganizations have brought more analysts and tasks into the organization, which now stands at approximately 230 people.

The move of approximately 80-90 DEFSMAC people to new spaces had been planned for several years. The problem was finding space inside the already crowded NSA facility and refurbishing it to our specifications. Once identified, a great deal of planning had to go into the movement of lines, equipment, computers, personnel, etc. Through the determination and logistics skills of Tom Horwath, the Center was able to continue its quality service to the community. Our upgrade into a state-of-the-art facility is a reality, and we stand at the threshold of our next 33 years. ■



Charlie Tevis at DEFSMAC's 25th Anniversary