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Lunched today with Senators Gurney, Robertson, Tydings, and Saltonstall, Mr. Clifford and Admiral Sherman. (After lunch, Judge Patterson and Mr. Sullivan came in.)

At the opening of lunch I made a hasty recapitulation of the present unification bill in the Congress. I said that I had the impression that while it might go through the Senate, it might have hard going in the House. I made these points: (1) that the Army and Navy had sent over the draft of a bill in February which was intended to express the meaning of the letter of agreement forwarded by Judge Patterson and myself to the President on 16 January. I said that the question of whether or not to try to incorporate the definition of functions and roles and missions by statute had been very carefully weighed and had been rejected and that the Marine Corps was aware that the Navy was going to place reliance on the Executive Order attached to the letter for the protection of naval aviation and Marine interests. (2) That the Marine Corps and Naval Air had their reliance on this protection seriously and gravely shaken by the testimony of General Eisenhower and Under Secretary Royall to the point where both felt they would have to have language in the statute to give them the protection they desired. (3) I stated that as far as I was concerned, I thought the thing of paramount importance was to get some bill through and a bill as closely as possible like the one which we had sent up. To my mind, I said the question of whether definitions of functions was included in the law or not was of no consequence but that (a) the Marines thought it felt very strongly that it should be in and (b) the White House felt equally strong that it should not be in. I placed my reliance on my own interpretation of the position to be held by the single Secretary of Defense which I believe was that shared by the President, namely, that he would exercise over-all and not detailed or definitive control of each Department.

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Senator Tydings asked whether or not the question didn't come down to this: whether the Administration of the two departments would not be satisfied with something 95% what they wanted rather than going full-out for the bill intact in which case they might get nothing.

Mr. Clifford stated his reasons for believing that it was of great importance that the law as enacted have loose rather than over-precise language so far as the missions of each of the Services is concerned.

Senator Saltonstall disagreed, saying that he would like to point out very closely and respectfully that the Marines occupied a unique and singular place in the hearts of the people and that whether or not Congress did anything about it, the people would. Tydings said it was not a matter of logic but of emotion, and that all that would be necessary, particularly in the House, would be for someone to get up on his feet when the bill was under debate and say that logical arguments about the bill were all very well but that after all "these young men, thanks to their traditions and their fighting history, were the troops that we needed to take Mount Suribachi."

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