ESSENCE OF DECISION

Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis

SECOND EDITION

GRAHAM ALLISON **PHILIP ZELIKOW**

The essence of ultimate decision remains impenetrable to the observer—often, indeed, to the decider himself. . . . There will always be the dark and tangled stretches in the decision-making process—mysterious even to those who may be most intimately involved.

John Fitzgerald Kennedy

I have come across men of letters who have written history without taking part in public affairs, and politicians who have concerned themselves with producing events without thinking about them. I have observed that the first are always inclined to find general causes, whereas the second, living in the midst of disconnected daily facts, are prone to imagine that everything is attributable to particular incidents, and that the wires they pull are the same as those that move the world. It is to be presumed that both are equally deceived.

Alexis de Tocqueville

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Dedication

To Elisabeth and Paige

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Preface

The decision to revise a best-seller in political science that has been in print continuously for over a quarter century requires justification. First, the historical evidence about the Cuban missile crisis has grown dramatically, stimulated by a series of oral history conferences and declassification efforts and culminating in 1997–1998. With publication of heretofore classified documents in the relevant volumes of the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series published by the Department of State (which must be used in conjunction with the Berlin and arms control volumes for the Kennedy administration published earlier in the 1990s); exploration of central files from the Soviet government in Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali's book, "One *Hell of a Gamble": Khrushchev, Castro, and Kennedy 1957-1964*, and finally, transcription and publication of the secret tapes of the Kennedy Administration's deliberations during the crisis by Ernest May and Philip Zelikow in *The Kennedy Tapes: Inside the White House During the Cuban Missile Crisis,* the most important evidence about the crisis is now available This new evidence shows a number of explanations in the original edition to have been incorrect, and others insufficient. For the coauthors of this revised edition of *Essence,* the most pleasurable part of the endeavor has been to see how this new evidence glistens when examined through alternative conceptual lenses. This book is the first analytical synthesis of all that evidence. Students of this event will notice, perhaps with some surprise, that despite the many books written on the missile crisis, the explanations for key choices and events in the crisis deserve, and get, a fresh interpretation in this book.

Second, analytical and theoretical scholarship from which the core arguments in the original edition of *Essence* drew have advanced: in studies of international affairs; in the disciplines of political science, economics, sociology, social psychology, organization theory, and decision analysis; and in important new applied arenas including public policy and business. The first edition engaged central questions in each of these arenas and has

subsequently been engaged by authors in each. Beneath these debates lies the fundamental question to which the original edition offered a provocative answer: *How should citizens try to understand the actions of their government?* Not surprisingly, the original statement of the argument became a lightning rod for wide-ranging criticism and debate, not only in political science but in many other fields. Some of the earliest critiques made good points that have stood the test of time. Though we believe the fundamental structure of the book was and is sound, we have listened to the critics and, thanks in part to their help, the basic explication of the theoretical models has been materially revised. We have also benefited from a generation of new scholarship (and a few fresh looks at some older works) and have attempted to clarify these fields of work and the models. While it is obviously not possible to take full account of all theoretical and analytical scholarship bearing on these arguments since the original edition, the earlier statement of the argument has been enriched and extended in several dimensions.

Third, managers in government, business, and the nonprofit sector have found the argument in the original edition more valuable than its author had anticipated. The book has been used in graduate schools of government and public policy, business, and other professional training programs where the objective is preparation for practice, rather than theory. At Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, it has served as a text in the political and institutional analysis curriculum for almost a quarter century. Philip Zelikow was drawn to the potential for revision during the five years that he chaired this core course. Use of more abstract concepts and propositions to provide perspectives and checklists for practitioners who must stretch beyond explanation to prescription constitutes an important extension of the work that deserves more focused attention.

Finally, the author of the first edition, Graham Allison, has of course learned a great deal from students, colleagues, and critics. Leading a large organization in the federal government, he had opportunities to apply the frameworks. But not until a partnership emerged with a (then) Harvard colleague trained as a historian who had served in the White House and then taught from *Essence* for a number of years, did the idea of attempting the challenge of revision become credible.

Readers of the original edition will find the central argument of this edition familiar. Though most of the text is new, the basic structure of the book remains unchanged. Three conceptual chapters each state and develop a conceptual model or lens through which analysts can explain, predict, and assess situations, especially in the arena of foreign affairs, but also across the wider array of governmental actions. Each of these chapters is followed by an account of the Cuban missile crisis that uses the conceptual lens from the prior chapter to analyze the crisis. In explaining the central puzzles of the Cuban missile crisis through each alternative lens, the authors have attempted to take account of all the evidence now available, including published material and unpublished primary sources.

Applications of the models have been updated with illustrations from recent events, mostly from foreign affairs, but noting analogues in domestic policy as well. Each of the theoretical chapters extends the original model to incorporate subsequent theoretical advances. For example, Model I now incorporates insights from psychology, rational choice, and game theory to clarify variants of the model. Model II capitalizes on recent developments in organizational studies, sociology, political science, and business to emphasize ways in which organizations first enlarge and then constrain capabilities. Model III draws upon recent public policy studies and some lessons learned from government experience to clarify the significance of individual players' performance in policymaking. Throughout, we have also attempted to take account of more subtle ways in which today's post-Cold War setting requires not just new illustrations, but also adjustments in the conceptual models. For example, the shift from Cold War clarity to cacophony has reduced the influence of shared conceptions of values and interests, thus increasing the salience of existing bureaucracies and energetic interest group advocacy. Changes in technology like CNN have combined with new rules of the game to make the Kennedy Administration's week of secret deliberations during the missile crisis appear almost antique in Washington today. That week of reflection proved essential in shaping the more measured and subtle strategy chosen. Today, if an analogous threat were discovered, an American president would expect a leak within forty-eight hours, and thus feel forced to make quicker, less considered decisions. Similarly, lessons from the missile crisis for current policy issues, from risks of nuclear war or dangers presented by the

proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, to the management of foreign policy and leadership in post-Cold War foreign policy, have been drawn more explicitly.

Our aims in this book remain the two stated in the preface of the original edition. On the one hand, we examine the central puzzles of the Cuban missile crisis. Many accounts of the crisis have been offered, appropriately so. It remains the defining event of the nuclear age and the most dangerous moment in recorded history. Lessons drawn from the crisis, or interpretations of it, continue to shape the thinking of American leaders, and others, about risks of nuclear war, crisis confrontation, and foreign policy.

On the other hand, we explore the influence of unrecognized assumptions upon our thinking about events like the missile crisis. Answers to questions like why the Soviet Union tried to sneak strategic offensive missiles into Cuba are powerfully affected by basic assumptions we make, categories we use, our angle of vision. But what assumptions do we tend to make? How do these assumptions channel our thinking? What alternative perspectives are available? This study identifies the basic frame of reference used by most people when thinking about foreign affairs. It also outlines two alternative frameworks. Each frame of reference is, in effect, a "conceptual lens." By comparing and contrasting the three frameworks, we see what each magnifies, highlights, and reveals as well as what each blurs or neglects.

The structure of this book reflects our dual objectives. Three conceptual chapters sketch three rough-cut frames of reference. These chapters are separated by three case studies, each of which uses one of the frames of reference in searching for answers to the major questions of the Cuban missile crisis. By addressing central issues of the crisis first from one perspective, then from a second, and finally from a third, these chapters not only probe more deeply into the event, uncovering additional insights; they also demonstrate how alternative conceptual lenses lead one to see, emphasize, and worry about quite different aspects of events like the missile crisis.

On the one hand, substantive instance; on the other, conceptual argument. Today we must confess that we are no longer certain where one begins and

the other ends, or, indeed, which is the head and which the tail of this coin. But we are certain about the impulse that led us to pursue these two aims jointly.

This book attempts to address the entire community of foreign policy observers, which comprises both "artists" and "scientists." For the artists, the appeal of the conceptual chapters may be minimal. Like "spinach and calisthenics," they will be palatable to the extent they stimulate new insight into old problems, clearer perception of additional facets, and better substantive studies. But for the social scientists, the theoretical chapters constitute the contribution: making explicit the implicit conceptual frameworks within which investigations proceed and spelling out some of the systematic implications of alternative models. In attempting to address both audiences simultaneously, we open ourselves to the objection that the cases lack the subtlety and craft of "art," whereas the theoretical chapters display little of the system and rigor of "science." How justifiable such criticism may be is left to the reader's judgment. But there should be no ambiguity about the reasons for our attempt.

If a common ground exists between the artists and the scientists, that ground is explanation. Neither art's appreciation of the uniqueness of occurrences nor science's grasp of occurrences as mere instances of more general propositions is limited to explanation. But central to both enterprises is an attempt to understand and explain why events occurred. The artist may appear (to the scientist) overly fascinated with nuance and randomness that would be better treated as extraneous fluff around common, recurring elements. The scientist may seem (to the artist) to ride roughshod over relevant, particular details in the quest for generality. But the achievement of neither group in the foreign policy community justifies arrogance toward, or neglect of, the other's work. Thus, our attempt to produce explanations and, in the same book, to formulate systematically the concepts and propositions in terms of which the explanations are produced, seems appropriate.

However wide the gulf between artists and scientists, in the end both should be humbled by awareness of the insight expressed in the epigraph: "*The essence of ultimate decision* remains impenetrable to the observer—often,

indeed, to the decider himself. . . . There will always be the dark and tangled stretches in the decision-making process—mysterious even to those who may be most intimately involved."[1]

A Reader's Guide

When the original edition of this book was being written, a colleague offered wise advice. Rather than musing about a general unknown reader, or trying to write for everyman, he suggested instead choosing four or five real people and letting them stand for the circle of readers to whom one was writing. The advice proved quite helpful. It is thus instructive to identify these individuals—in general terms—and to state, briefly, our hopes in writing for each.

The first two "representative readers" are a *colleague* and a *student.* The colleague is a professional analyst of foreign policy and international relations; the student, a bright college sophomore. For the colleague the chapters on the missile crisis should provide new material, a fresh look at the central issues, and an illustration of the general argument. More ambitiously, the conceptual chapters try to (1) provide a comprehensive overview of the product of analysis in various areas of foreign policy and international relations; (2) present a set of categories that can be used in judging this product; (3) undermine popular assumptions both about the nontheoretical nature of foreign policy analysis and about the rampant disjointedness of efforts in various substantive areas of foreign policy; (4) challenge the basic categories and assumptions within which most analysts think about problems of foreign policy; and (5) sketch two sharp, provocative alternative conceptual frameworks. The basic outline of the general argument can stand on its own feet. (Indeed, a number of other scholars have used the alternative models in their own studies.) But, strictly speaking, the argument is unfinished. It remains an invitation to our colleague, and to the reader: please join the debate.

For the student or citizen, the chapters on the missile crisis are meant to make persuasive an unhappy, troubling, but inescapable fact about this world. No event demonstrates more clearly than the missile crisis that with respect to nuclear war there is an awesome crack between *unlikelihood* and

impossibility. Especially in the aftermath of the Cold War, most people would like to imagine that the nuclear sword of Damocles has been carefully lowered and put away, even if it has not been hammered into a plowshare. But in fact the superpower nuclear arsenals and stockpiles, even if diminished, are still in the U.S. and Russia today and will remain there for the foreseeable future (highly enriched uranium having a half-life of three quarters of a million years). While the adversarial competition between the U.S. and Soviet Union that led to the missile crisis has now faded, other nuclear risks have arisen. For reasons that will become evident in the conceptual chapters, the risk of one or more nuclear weapons exploding on American soil may even be greater now than during the last decades of the Cold War. Furthermore, the theoretical chapters, especially the summaries of various areas of the literature, should acquaint the interested student with what serious analysts do and with what their analyses have produced. But the chief attraction, we hope, will be to bring her or him to the frontiers of analysis of foreign policy, and indeed of all public policy.

Third and fourth are a *regular reader* of foreign policy articles in *The New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, Financial Times,* or other serious newspaper and a *journalist.* In considering their interests and tastes, we found less difference between these two individuals and the first two readers than we had first imagined. Thus we hope that both the layman and the journalist will find the entire study relevant, for some of the same reasons. Some of them, of course, will find the summaries of the literature and more formal considerations in each of the conceptual chapters too academic. If so, they can skip the conceptual chapters, except for the introductory sections and statements of each paradigm.

Fifth is the spouse of one of our colleagues, *an intelligent person not especially interested in foreign affairs,* and thus a good stand-in for "general readers." After reading an earlier draft of the manuscript, a colleague recommended it to his spouse with the advice, "Read the introduction and then just read the alternate chapters on the missile crisis." These chapters can be read simply as an unfolding of the evidence about this crucial event from three alternative vantage points. The general reader should be forewarned, however, that this path will not leave him with a confident

account of "what really happened." Indeed, if we have been successful, it should lead him to become interested in the issues to which the conceptual chapters are addressed.

A Note on Sources

As John F. Kennedy warned with explicit reference to the Cuban missile crisis, "Any historian who walks through this mine field of charges and countercharges should proceed with some care." Our discussion of the missile crisis makes use of all information in the published record. As the footnotes attest, the amount of information available and archived is extraordinary. We have also been privileged to have interviews and conversations with most of the high-level participants in the crisis and many individuals who have spent time reminiscing with the central participants. We have interviewed a number of people who were involved in the lower-level operations of the U.S. and Soviet governments during the crisis. For their patience and consideration, as well as their information, we are most grateful.

Acknowledgments

The origins of this book go back at least to the spring of 1966, when several Harvard faculty members began meeting to discuss the impact of "bureaucracy" on "policy"—the gap between the intentions of the actors and the results of governmental action. The "May Group," as it came to be known after the chairman, Ernest R. May, included Morton H. Halperin, Fred C. Ikle, William W. Kaufmann, Andrew W. Marshall, Richard E. Neustadt, Don K. Price, Harry S. Rowen, and Graham Allison as *rapporteur.* That group hooked Allison on the problem, supplied him with more ideas than he could assimilate, and provided constructive criticism of every successive attempt to formulate what became the general argument of this book. Since Zelikow later taught for years jointly with Neustadt and May, the book still represents to a large extent the most recent but still unfinished "Evolving Paper" of that group. The group later met in the late 1960s and early 1970s as the Research Seminar on Bureaucracy, Politics, and Policy of the Institute of Politics in the John F. Kennedy School of

Notes

1. John F. Kennedy, "Preface," to Theodore Sorensen, *Decision-Making in the White House: The Olive Branch and the Arrows* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963).

OCTOBER 1962

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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Introduction

The Cuban missile crisis stands as a seminal event. History offers no parallel to those thirteen days of October 1962, when the United States and the Soviet Union paused at the nuclear precipice. Never before had there been such a high probability that so many lives would end suddenly. Had war come, it could have meant the death of 100 million Americans and more than 100 million Russians, and millions of Europeans as well. Other natural calamities and inhumanities of history would have faded into insignificance. Given the odds of disaster—which President Kennedy estimated as "between one out of three and even"—our escape seems awesome.[1] This event symbolizes a central, if only partially "thinkable," fact about our existence in the nuclear age.

The missile crisis is among the most studied episodes in modern history. Nonetheless, even the central questions have eluded satisfactory answers:

Why did the Soviet Union place strategic offensive missiles in Cuba? For what purpose did the Russians undertake such a drastic, risky departure from their traditional policy? Given the repeated American warnings that such an act would not be tolerated, how could Khrushchev have made such a major, potentially fatal, miscalculation?

Why did the United States respond with a naval quarantine of Soviet shipments to Cuba? Was it necessary for the United States to force a public nuclear confrontation? What alternatives were really available? What danger did the Soviet missiles in Cuba pose for the United States? Did this threat justify the president's choice of a course of action that he believed entailed a realistic chance of disaster? Did that threat require more immediate action to disable the Soviet missiles in Cuba before they became operational?

Why were the missiles withdrawn? What would have happened if, instead of withdrawing the missiles, Khrushchev had announced that the operational Soviet missiles would fire if fired upon? Did the "blockade" work, or was there an "ultimatum" or perhaps some "deal"? Why did the Soviets remove the missiles rather than retaliate at other equally sensitive points—Berlin, for example?

What are the "lessons" of the missile crisis? What does this event teach us about nuclear confrontations and the risks of nuclear war? In the aftermath of the Cold War, what does it imply about crisis management and government coordination? Is this a model of how to deal with adversaries?

The tens of thousands of pages of relevant evidence now finally accessible to students of this crisis pose a serious challenge in themselves. Simply reading carefully all the evidence is an assignment requiring many months. We two have made a best effort to take full advantage of the storehouse of declassified documents, memoirs, oral histories, interviews, and even the formerly secret tapes of most of the White House deliberations in offering an analysis of the missile crisis. Here, the missile crisis also serves as grist in a more general investigation. But the central premise of this study is that satisfactory answers to questions about the missile crisis will require more than additional information and analysis. Real improvement in our answers to questions of this sort depends on greater awareness of what we (both laymen and professional analysts) bring to the analysis. When answering questions like "Why did the Soviet Union place missiles in Cuba?" what we see and judge to be important and accept as adequate depends not only on the evidence available but also on the "conceptual lenses" through which we look at the evidence. A primary purpose of this study, therefore, is to explore the fundamental yet often unnoticed choices among the categories and assumptions that channel our thinking about problems like the Cuban missile crisis.

The General Argument

When we are puzzled by a happening in foreign affairs, the source of our puzzlement is typically a particular government action or set of actions: Soviet emplacement of missiles in Cuba, American troops being sent to the

Persian Gulf, Germany ceding sovereign control over its currency by adopting the Euro, the failure to defend the UN-declared "safe havens" in Bosnia. These occurrences raise obvious questions: *Why* did the Soviet Union place missiles in Cuba? *Why* were 500,000 American soldiers in the Persian Gulf? *Why* did Germany give up the Deutsche-Mark? *Why* did the United Nations do so little to defend Srebrenica in July 1995? In pursuing the answers to these questions, the serious analyst seeks to discover why one specific state of the world came about—rather than some other.

In searching for an explanation, one typically puts himself or herself* in the place of the nation, or national government, confronting a problem of foreign affairs, and tries to figure out why one might have chosen the action in question. Thus, analysts have explained the Soviet missiles in Cuba as a way of defending Cuba against American attack. U.S. troops went to Saudi Arabia to undo and deter aggression. Germany joined its European Union partners in a common currency to advance the cause of European integration. The United Nations failed to act in Bosnia because member nations involved lacked the will to resist Serb aggression.

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* Hereafter in this book we will generally follow convention in using "men" and "he" generally to refer to *homo sapiens,* females and males alike.

In offering (or accepting) these explanations, one is assuming that governmental behavior can be most satisfactorily understood by analogy with the purposive acts of individuals. In many cases this is a fruitful assumption. Treating national governments as if they were centrally coordinated, purposive individuals provides a useful shorthand for understanding policy choices and actions. But this simplification—like all simplifications—obscures as well as reveals. In particular, it obscures the persistently neglected fact of government: the "decisionmaker" of national policy is obviously not one calculating individual but is rather a conglomerate of large organizations and political actors. What this fact implies for analysts of events like the Cuban missile crisis is no simple matter. Its implications challenge the basic categories and assumptions with which we approach events.

More rigorously, the *argument* developed in the body of this study can be summarized in three propositions:

> **1.** *Professional analysts of foreign affairs and policymakers (as well as ordinary citizens) think about problems of foreign and military policy in terms of largely implicit conceptual models that have significant consequences for the content of their thought*[†]

† In attempting to understand problems of foreign affairs, analysts engage in a number of related but logically separable enterprises: (1) description, (2) explanation, (3) prediction, (4) evaluation, and (5) recommendation. This study focuses primarily on description and explanation and, by implication, prediction.

In thinking about problems of foreign affairs, professional analysts as well as ordinary citizens proceed in a straightforward, informal, nontheoretical fashion. Careful examination of explanations of events like the Soviet installation of missiles in Cuba, however, reveals a more complex theoretical substructure. Explanations by particular analysts show regular and predictable characteristics that reflect unrecognized assumptions about the character of puzzles, the categories in which problems should be considered, the types of evidence that are relevant, and the determinants of occurrences. Our first proposition is that bundles of such related assumptions constitute basic frames of reference or conceptual models in terms of which analysts and ordinary laymen ask and answer the questions: What happened? Why did it happen? What will happen? Assumptions like these are central to the activities of explanation and prediction. In attempting to explain a particular event, the analyst cannot simply describe the full state of the world leading up to that event. The logic of explanation requires singling out the relevant, critical determinants of the occurrence, the junctures at which particular factors produced one state of the world rather than another.[1] Moreover, as the logic of prediction underscores, the analyst must summarize the various factors as they bear on the occurrence. Conceptual models not only fix the mesh of the nets that the analyst drags through the material in order to explain a particular action; they also direct

the analyst to cast nets in select ponds, at certain depths, in order to catch the fish he is after.

> **2.** *Most analysts explain (and predict) behavior of national governments in terms of one basic conceptual model, here entitled Rational Actor Model (RAM or Model I).*

In spite of significant differences in interest and focus, most analysts and ordinary citizens attempt to understand happenings in foreign affairs as the more or less purposive acts of unified national governments. Laymen personify actors and speak of their aims and choices. Theorists of international relations focus on problems between nations in accounting for the choices of unitary rational actors. Strategic analysts concentrate on the logic of action without reference to any particular actor. For each of these groups, the point of an explanation is to show how the nation or government could have chosen to act as it did, given the strategic problems it faced. For example, in confronting the problem posed by the Soviet installation of strategic missiles in Cuba, the Model I analyst frames the puzzle: Why did the Soviet Union decide to install missiles in Cuba? He focuses attention on certain concepts: goals and objectives of the nation or government. Finally, the analyst invokes certain patterns of inference: if the nation performed an action of this sort, it must have had a goal of this type. The analyst has "explained" this event when he can show how placing missiles in Cuba was a reasonable action, given Soviet strategic objectives. Predictions about what a nation will do or would have done are generated by calculating the rational thing to do in a certain situation, given specified objectives.

> **3.** *Two alternative conceptual models, here labeled an Organizational Behavior Model (Model II) and a Governmental Politics Model (Model III), provide a base for improved explanations and predictions.*

Although the Rational Actor Model has proved useful for many purposes, there is powerful evidence that it must be supplemented by frames of reference that focus on the governmental machine—the organizations and

political actors involved in the policy process. Model I's implication that important events have important causes, i.e., that monoliths perform large actions for large reasons, must be balanced by the appreciation that (1) monoliths are black boxes covering various gears and levers in a highly differentiated decisionmaking structure and (2) large acts result from innumerable and often conflicting smaller actions by individuals at various levels of organizations in the service of a variety of only partially compatible conceptions of national goals, organizational goals, and political objectives. Model I's grasp of national purposes and of the pressures created by problems in *inter*national relations must confront the *intra* national mechanisms from which governmental actions emerge.

Organization theory provides the foundation for the second model, which emphasizes the distinctive logic, capacities, culture, and procedures of the large organizations that constitute a government. According to this Organizational Behavior Model, what Model I analysts characterize as "acts" and "choices" are thought of instead as *outputs* of large organizations functioning according to regular patterns of behavior. Faced with the fact of Soviet missiles in Cuba, a Model II analyst frames the puzzle: From what organizational context, pressures, and procedures did this decision emerge? He focuses attention on certain concepts: existing organizational components, their functions, and their standard operating procedures for acquiring information (for example, about American strategic forces or intentions), defining feasible options (for example, sending proven but mediumrange ballistic missiles to Cuba vs. building new intercontinental-range missiles), and implementation (for example, actually installing missiles in Cuba without being discovered). The analyst invokes certain patterns of inference: if organizations produced an output of a certain kind at a certain time that behavior resulted from existing organizational structures, procedures, and repertoires. A Model II analyst has "explained" the event when he or she has identified the relevant Soviet organizations and displayed the patterns of organizational behavior from which the action emerged. Predictions identify trends that reflect existing organizations and their fixed procedures and programs.

The third model focuses on the politics of a government. According to this model, events in foreign affairs are characterized neither as unitary choice

nor as organizational outputs. Rather, what happens is understood as a *resultant* of bargaining games among players in the national government. In confronting the problem posed by Soviet missiles in Cuba, a Model III analyst frames the puzzle: Which results of what kinds of bargaining among which players yielded the critical decisions and actions? He focuses attention on certain concepts: the players whose interests and actions impact the issue in question, the factors that shape players' perceptions and *stands*, the established procedure or *"action channel"* for aggregating competing preferences, and the *performance* of the players. The analyst invokes certain patterns of inference: if a government performed an action, that action was the resultant of bargaining among players in this game. A Model III analyst has "explained" this event when he or she has discovered who did what to whom that yielded the action in question. Predictions are generated by identifying the game in which an issue will arise, the relevant players, and their relative power and bargaining skill.

A central metaphor illuminates the differences among these models. Foreign policy has often been compared to moves and sequences of moves in the game of chess. Imagine a chess game in which the observer could see only a screen upon which moves in the game were projected, with no information about how the pieces came to be moved. Initially, most observers would assume—as Model I does—that an individual chess player was moving the pieces with reference to plans and tactics toward the goal of winning the game. But a pattern of moves can be imagined that would lead some observers, after watching several games, to consider a Model II assumption: the chess player might not be a single individual but rather a loose alliance of semi-independent organizations, each of which moves its pieces according to standard operating procedures. For example, movement of separate sets of pieces might proceed in turn, each according to a routine, the king's rook, bishop, and their pawns repeatedly attacking the opponent according to a fixed plan. It is conceivable, furthermore, that the pattern of play might suggest to an observer a Model III assumption: a number of distinct players, with distinct objectives but shared power over the pieces, could be determining the moves as the resultant of collegial bargaining. For example, the black rook's move might contribute to the loss of a black knight with no comparable gains for the black team, but with the black rook becoming the principal guardian of the palace on that side of the board.

A single case can do no more than suggest the kinds of differences among explanations produced by the three models. But the Cuban missile crisis is especially appropriate for the purposes of this study. In the context of ultimate danger to the nation, a small group of men weighed the options and decided. Such central, high-level, crisis decisions would seem to be ideal grist for Model I analysis. Model II and Model III are forced to compete on Model I's home ground. Dimensions and factors uncovered by Model II and Model III in this case should therefore be particularly instructive.

Broader Implications

At the suggestion of colleagues who have used this book in professional school courses as well as undergraduate instruction, we state here at the outset five further "big ideas" that emerge by implication and illustration in the chapters that follow.

First, our central argument can be applied broadly in arenas beyond foreign affairs. Understanding that ordinary explanations, predictions, and evaluations are inescapably theory-based is fundamental to self-consciousness about knowledge.[2] This insight is especially important in professional training where individuals learn to apply a theory or approach, for example, in law, economics, or business. Similarly, the Rational Actor, Organizational Behavior, and Governmental Politics models can be applied beyond foreign policy to the domestic policy of national governments; state and local governments; nongovernmental organizations like the United Nations or Red Cross; schools, universities, and hospitals; business enterprises; and other aggregate actors whom one encounters in normal, everyday life.

The proposition that what you see does not necessarily equal what you get can be confusing, even disturbing. Nonetheless, if we are successful, the chapters that follow will persuade the reader that categories and assumptions he has been using comfortably, unselfconsciously matter more than he suspected. As economists consider why an Indonesian economy that grew at a rate of more than 10% per annum for two decades crashed in 1998, declining at a rate of more than 15%; or lawyers consider whether an individual is likely to be convicted of perjury; or business leaders assess

investment opportunities using present value calculations, each inevitably proceeds within the terms of one set of categories and assumptions, rather than others. The more powerful or comfortable the frameworks being applied, the more painful the recognition that it is not the whole truth. (For theorists, the proposition is that these categories and presumptions cannot be tested within the theory.)

Concepts like "state actor," "perjury," or "GNP" clarify some dimensions of the buzzing confusion one faces, on the one hand, as they inescapably distort or limit one's grasp of other dimensions of the phenomena, on the other. Consider the table on which the book you are now reading is resting. Through normal lenses with 20-20 vision, it appears to be a solid object. This means that if placed on the table, the book will rest there stably. But imagine examining the same table under an electron microscope. What would one see? Mostly empty, unoccupied space—space through which neutrons can pass with minimum effect.

Second, because simplifications are necessary, competing simplifications are essential. When explaining, predicting, evaluating, or planning, one should in principle consider all significant causal factors at all critical points in the process that leads to the occurrence in question. But because most explanations or predictions are offered in realtime, where both analysis of the question and attention to the answer is limited, simplification and shorthand are necessary. Concepts and theories, especially ones that do real work, become accepted, conventional, and efficient for communicating answers. Particularly in explaining and predicting actions of governments, when one family of simplifications becomes convenient and compelling, it is even more essential to have at hand one or more simple but competitive conceptual frameworks to help remind the questioner and the answerer what is omitted. They open minds a little wider and keep them open a little longer. Alternative conceptual frameworks are important not only for further insights into neglected dimensions of the underlying phenomenon. They are essential as a reminder of the distortions and limitations of whatever conceptual framework one employs. Like the first point, this is a general methodological truth applicable in all areas of life, especially relevant where professionals have learned a theory or language that allows them to sort, analyze, and communicate findings readily.

Third, while this book focuses principally on explanation, inferences that come from explanations and prediction (or betting), the central arguments have important implications for an array of related assignments, including: (1) *evaluation* or appraisal of actions by individuals, institutions, or aggregates; (2) *prescription* of what is to be done; and (3) *management* of a sequence of actions, by oneself or by a group, to achieve a chosen objective. The basic logic of explanation requires one to identify both specific circumstances in the case in question and generalizations from prior experience about instances of this kind. This allows one to understand why the event was (or is) to be expected, given this combination of circumstances and regularities. Predictions or bets about future events are, in effect, the logical flipside of explanations. Further assignments including evaluation and prescription require more than explanation. But each rests on a foundation of judgments about the causal process involved—judgments that differ significantly depending on which of the conceptual models informs the assessment.

Fourth, the conceptual and historical analysis developed in this book has important implications for the current foreign policy agenda. These begin with the fundamental question of risks of nuclear war. In the aftermath of the Cold War, should Americans continue to be concerned about the risk of nuclear weapons exploding on American territory? On what grounds can individuals like former Senator Sam Nunn and Senator Richard Lugar conclude that the risks of one or a dozen nuclear weapons exploding on American soil is now higher than during the Cold War? Why do states acquire nuclear weapons, for example, India and Pakistan in 1998, but not South Korea or Sweden? What are the prospects of nuclear war between new nuclear states, for example, India and Pakistan, or Israel and a potential nuclear weapons neighbor like Iran, Iraq, or a terrorist group? From actions the president of the United States and the chairman of the Soviet Union actually took in 1962, the crisis lets us examine a dozen plausible sequences of events and actions that end with nuclear weapons exploding on American and Soviet cities.

Beyond nuclear issues, sensitivity to causal factors illuminated by each of the models should inform a fundamental rethinking of national security strategy, foreign policy, and the role of the United States (and other nations)

in the post-Cold War environment. An era that continues to be called by what it comes after—the post-Cold War era—rather than what it *is,* may best be considered an "era of confusion."[3] The reasons for confusion are not difficult to identify.

For most of the second half of the twentieth century, containment of expansionist Soviet or Chinese Communism provided the fixed point for the compass of American engagement in the world. In 1990 the Cold War ended in a stunning, almost unimaginable victory that erased this fixed point from the globe, an erasure sealed by the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991. Most of the coordinates by which Americans got their bearings in the world have now been consigned to history's dustbin: the Berlin Wall, a divided Germany, the Iron Curtain, captive nations of the Warsaw Pact, Communism on the march, and finally the Soviet Union itself. In the aftermath of this avalanche of events, American foreign policy, as well as the foreign policy of most of the other great powers, mostly drifts. In ways eerily analogous to the years after World War I, the intermission between two world wars, national policymaking in all the major powers—the U.S., Great Britain, France, Germany, Japan, China, Russia—is principally preoccupied by affairs at home. But when serious rethinking begins about American interests, American capabilities, and American policy, hard questions should be asked not only in Model I terms but from Models II and III perspectives as well. Analysts must reexamine not only trends in international conditions, but also the appropriateness of Cold War institutions (from the Department of Defense and intelligence community to the IMF).

Fifth, an admonition we have offered to students in our courses in which this book has been used has wider application. *When considering abstract or theoretical claims or arguments, translate them into common sense.* Commonsensical analogues in one's own direct experience will never be precise equivalents. But commonsense counterparts can help dispel the fog that clouds too many minds when students and others attempt to come to grips with abstractions or theories.

One strength of Model I is that when considering the Chinese or Mexican choice about human rights or trade, one can imagine being in that

government's shoes and asking what one would do. Students who find Model II mysterious should think about their own direct experience, for example, in dealing with the college registrar, or the phone company—particularly when one is frustrated by forms and procedures that feel ill-suited to one's own specific case. Model III becomes more credible as one thinks about analogous group decisionmaking processes, from a couple deciding where to vacation (when one prefers the ocean and the other the mountains) to clubs' choices about the location, music, and refreshments for a party. Similar commonsense analogues can help one appreciate both the insights and the limits of the prisoner's dilemma in game theory, alliance formation or defection, or liberalism's claim that the character of a state's government matters.

Consider a mundane example our students have found useful: namely, explaining what the members of a seminar or study group ate for dinner last night—in an instance in which they all ate together. Model I begins with the proposition that the members of the group ate what they wanted. It seeks to explain what they ate by identifying their preferences, perhaps across various dimensions: price, healthiness, ethnicity, calories, etc. Model II starts with organizations and routines. The key organizations here are those that served up the information, options, and food. If, for example, we know that the group went to the Chinese restaurant nearby, most of the rest of the story about the meal is explicable in Model II terms. The menu from which they chose consists of entrees for which the restaurant has established routines, including recipes and ingredients. The likelihood that they ate hamburgers or pizza is nil. They had information about prices, but probably not calories or sodium count. Model III focuses on competing preferences and processes for aggregating among them. For example, if the professor took the group to dinner, she most likely chose the restaurant. If, on the other hand, the members made that choice, then how that selection occurred becomes critical. Once at the local Chinese restaurant, did they share dishes family style or order individually? If shared, did each select a dish for the table? If so, the sequence of choices matters, since if one chose chicken, the second was more likely to choose beef or shrimp.

Turning from explanation to forecast, consider what the group will eat next week (assuming it eats together). Ask what the university will do about

some current burning issue, or what form UN action will take in the crisis of the day. By putting on each of the alternative lenses in turn, the analyst should become accustomed to the differing sets of causal questions each model thrusts into the foreground, thereby enriching and refining explanations of the past, revealing key gaps in understanding the present, and illuminating the large and small choices that seem most likely to shape the future.

Notes

1. For the purpose of this argument one of the authors (Allison) accepts Carl G. Hempel's characterization of the logic of explanation: an explanation "answers the question '*Why* did the explanandum-phenomenon occur?' by showing that the phenomenon resulted from certain particular circumstances, specified in *C1, C2 . . . Ck, in accordance with the laws L1, L2,. . . Lr.* By pointing this out, the argument shows that, given the particular circumstances and the law in question, the occurrence of the phenomenon *was to be expected;* and it is in this sense that the explanation enables us to *understand why* the phenomenon occurred." Carl G. Hempel, *Aspects of Scientific Explanation* (New York: Free Press, 1965), p. 337. While various patterns of explanation can be distinguished, e.g., Ernest Nagel, *The Structure of Science: Problems in the Logic of Scientific Explanation* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1961), satisfactory scientific explanations exhibit this basic logic. Consequently prediction is essentially the converse of explanation. The other author (Zelikow) does not believe that this paradigm from the philosophy of science carries over into the philosophy of history. It is history—not replicable scientific experimentation on objective phenomena—that provides the empirical base for explaining the human choices aggregated in government actions. Critiquing Hempel's logic, see the essays by Isaiah Berlin, Maurice Mandelbaum, and especially William Dray conveniently compiled in *The Philosophy of History*, ed. Patrick Gardiner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974). History can usefully draw attention to plausible possibilities, suggesting scrutiny and questions, but cannot provide laws of

government behavior. Empiricism "ekes out the narrowness of personal experience by concepts which it finds useful but not sovereign; but it stays inside the flux of life expectantly, recording facts, not formulating laws." William James, *Some Problems of Philosophy* [1911], ed. Henry James, Jr. (New York: Longman's, Green & Co., 1948), pp. 98-100; see also John Dewey, *The Quest for Certainty: A Study of the Relation of Knowledge and Action* (New York: Minton, Balch & Co. 1929), pp. 207-08, 228; John Ziman, *Reliable Knowledge: An exploration of the grounds for belief in science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), pp. 42-56, 158-86; Hilary Putnam, *Pragmatism: An Open Question* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1995), pp. 7-23 (defending William James); and the concept of "colligation" in Clayton Roberts, *The Logic of Historical Explanation* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), pp. 55-88.

2. For a fundamental account of why, see Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe, 3rd ed. (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1973).

3. See Report of the Commission on America's National Interests, "American National Interests," Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard University, 1996.

1
Model I: The Rational Actor

When confronted by a puzzling international event, how does one proceed? Let the reader consider, for example, how he would respond to the assignment: "Explain the Soviet installation of missiles in Cuba." The typical analyst or citizen begins by considering various aims that the Soviets might have had in mind—for example, to probe American intentions, to defend Cuba, or to improve their bargaining position. By examining the problems the Soviets faced and the character of the action they chose, the analyst eliminates some of these aims as implausible. When he is able to construct a calculation that shows how, in a particular situation, with certain objectives, he could have chosen to place missiles in Cuba, the analyst has explained the action. (Indeed, the statement "I can't understand [or explain] why the Soviets did such and such" points to an inability to balance an action with a plausible calculation.) The attempt to explain international events by recounting the aims and calculations of nations or governments is the trademark of the Rational Actor Model.

As it is exemplified in academic literature, policy papers, the press, and informal conversations, most contemporary thought about public policy, especially foreign policy, proceeds within this conceptual model. A widely cited explanation of Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait is provided by two scholars on military affairs at King's College in London, Lawrence Freedman and Efraim Karsh. They conclude that Iraq's leader, Saddam Hussein, would never have resorted to such a desperate measure "if Iraq's economic condition had not been so dire. . . . By adding Kuwait's fabulous wealth to the depleted Iraqi treasury, Saddam hoped to slash Iraq's foreign debt and launch the ambitious reconstruction programmes he had promised his people in the wake of the war with Iran." The conquest, they add, would also have lifted Saddam's national prestige and given him "a decisive say in

the world oil market. In short, in one stroke his position would be permanently secured."[1]

How do they reach this conclusion? In Sherlock Holmes style, they examine Iraq's situation, especially its indebtedness. They conclude that from the time Saddam Hussein began massing troops near Kuwait and sharpening his demands, he intended to invade and occupy the entire country, not just the islands or oil fields that were nominally in dispute. They do this by magnifying several salient characteristics of the Iraqi military preparations and highlighting some of Saddam Hussein's earlier statements. Their explanation presents an argument that interprets Iraqi behavior as a value-maximizing choice by Saddam Hussein.

How do analysts explain the coming of the First World War? According to Hans Morgenthau, the First World War had its origins "exclusively in the fear of a disturbance of the European balance of power." Before World War I, the Triple Entente (Britain, France, Russia) was a delicate counterweight to the Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy). If either bloc could have gained a decisive advantage in the Balkans, it would have achieved a decisive advantage in the balance of power. "It was this fear," Morgenthau says, "that motivated Austria in July 1914 to settle its accounts with Serbia once and for all, and that induced Germany to support Austria unconditionally. It was the same fear that brought Russia to the support of Serbia, and France to the support of Russia."[2]

How is Morgenthau able to resolve this problem so confidently? By imposing on the data a "rational outline." The value of this method, according to Morgenthau, is that "it provides for rational discipline in action and creates that astounding continuity in foreign policy which makes American, British, or Russian foreign policy appear as an intelligible, rational continuum . . . regardless of the different motives, preferences, and intellectual and moral qualities of successive statesmen."[3]

Deterrence of war is a cardinal issue in the literature of international relations. An economist, Thomas Schelling, is the acknowledged dean of modern strategic theorists. His classic, *The Strategy of Conflict*, formulates a number of propositions about the dynamics of deterrence in the nuclear age. One of the major propositions concerns the stability of the balance of terror:

in a situation of mutual deterrence, the probability of nuclear war is reduced not by the balance (numbers of forces of the two sides) but rather by the *stability* of the balance. A balance is stable if neither opponent, in striking first, gains the advantage of destroying the other's ability to strike back.[4] Thus by the late 1960s or early 1970s, U.S. and Soviet nuclear forces had reached numbers and acquired warning and control systems that produced a stable balance of terror. In contrast, nascent Indian and Pakistani nuclear arsenals have not reached a stable balance, and war is therefore more likely.

How does Schelling support this proposition? His confidence in it derives not from an inductive canvass of a large number of previous cases, but instead from two calculations. In a situation of balance but vulnerability, there are values for which a rational opponent could choose to strike first, e.g., to destroy enemy retaliatory capabilities. In a "stable balance," however, each can respond to a first strike by inflicting unacceptable damage. This capability guarantees deterrence since no rational agent could choose a course of action effectively equivalent to national suicide. Whereas most contemporary strategic thinking is driven *implicitly* by the motor upon which this calculation depends, Schelling explicitly recognizes that strategic theory does assume a model. The foundation is, he asserts, "the assumption of rational behavior—not just of intelligent behavior, but of behavior motivated by a conscious calculation of advantages, a calculation that in turn is based on an explicit and internally consistent value system."[5]

What is telling about these examples are the similarities among analysts of various styles when they are called upon to produce explanations. Each assumes that what must be explained is an action, i.e., behavior that reflects purpose or intention. Each assumes that the actor is a national government. Each assumes that the action is chosen as a calculated solution to a strategic problem. For each, explanation consists of showing what goal the government was pursuing when it acted and how the action was a reasonable choice, given the nation's objective. This cluster of assumptions characterizes the Rational Actor Model. In most respects, contrasts in the thinking of Morgenthau and Schelling could not be more pointed. Recognition of the extent to which each employs Model I, however, highlights basic similarities among Morgenthau's method of "rational reenactment" and Schelling's "vicarious problem solving," and family

resemblances among Morgenthau's "rational statesman" and Schelling's "game theorist."

In spite of considerable differences in emphasis and focus, most contemporary analysts (as well as citizens) proceed *predominantly*— albeit most often implicitly—in terms of this framework when trying to explain international events. Indeed, the assumption that occurrences in foreign affairs are the *acts of nations* has been so fundamental to thinking about such problems that the underlying model has rarely been recognized: to explain an occurrence in foreign policy simply means to show how the government could have rationally chosen that action. In this sense, the frame of reference can be called the "classical" model.[6]

To prove that most analysts think largely in terms of the classical model is not our purpose. Rather, this chapter attempts to convey to the reader a grasp of the model and a challenge: let the reader examine the literature with which he is most familiar and make his own judgment. The first section of this chapter attempts to clarify the concept of rational action—the essence of this conceptual model—by considering briefly the more rigorous theoretical models of action used in economic, game, and decisionmaking theory. Some readers will prefer simply to think of this model as an attempt to understand the behavior of governments by analogy to the behavior of individuals making calculated, rational choices, and will thus prefer to skim this section. The second section formalizes this conceptual model as an analytic paradigm, distilling the essence of the classic approach and summarizing the core questions a Model I analyst asks when seeking to explain or predict an action. The third section illustrates the classical model in a rapid tour of major works in the study of foreign policy and international relations. The final section discusses variants of Model I and shows how they are derived by thickening one or more of the key elements in the core paradigm.

A Rigorous Model of Action

This chapter's introductory illustrations suggest the breadth of the influence of Model I in the literature of foreign affairs. To see how deeply this framework is ingrained in our thinking, it is useful to consider the language used in writing or speaking about international events. We speak of

occurrences not as unstructured happenings but rather as "the Israeli *decision* to attack," "the Chinese *policy* toward Taiwan," and "American *action* in the Persian Gulf." To summarize the relevant aspects of a state of the world as a nation's "decision" or "policy" is—at least implicitly—to slip into the rational actor framework. *Decision* presupposes a decider and a choice among alternatives with reference to some goal. *Policy* means the realization in a number of particular instances of some agent's objectives. These concepts identify phenomena as actions performed by purposeful agents. This identification involves a simple extension to governments of the pervasive everyday assumption that what human beings do is at least "intendedly rational." This everyday assumption of human purpo-siveness is common in the social sciences. As Seymour Martin Lipset has noted, "The major assumption in the social sciences generally . . . is that people seek ego gratification—that this is their goal or end."[7]Thus economics, political science, and, to a large extent, sociology and psychology study human behavior as purposive, goal-directed activity.

But what does it mean to conceive of behavior as "action"? When one studies behavior as goal-directed or thinks of activity as "intendedly rational," what do these notions entail? A rigorous model of this concept of rational action has been formulated in economics, decision, and game theory. The model's rigor stems from its assumption that action constitutes more than simple purposive choice of a unitary agent. What rationality adds to the concept of purpose is *consistency:* consistency among goals and objectives relative to a particular action; consistency in the application of principles in order to select the optimal alternative. Rationality "denotes behavior that is appropriate to specified goals in the context of a given situation."[8]

Classical "economic man" and the rational man of modern formal decision theory and game theory make optimal choices in narrowly constrained, neatly defined situations. In these situations, rationality refers to an essentially Hobbesian notion of consistent, value-maximizing *reckoning* or adaptation within specified constraints.[9] In economics, to choose rationally is to select the most efficient alternative, that is, the alternative that maximizes output for a given input or minimizes input for a given output. Rational consumers purchase the amount of goods, A, B, and C, etc., that maximizes their utility (by choosing a basket of goods on the highest

possible indifference curve). Rational firms produce at a point that maximizes profits (by setting marginal costs equal to marginal revenue). In modern decision theory, the rational decision problem is reduced to a simple matter of selecting among a set of given alternatives, each of which has a given set of consequences: the agent selects the alternative whose consequences are preferred in terms of the agent's utility function which ranks each set of consequences in order of preference. In an uncertain world, the decision analyst maximizes expected utility. Game theory employs the same logic and highlights the ways in which actor A's best choice depends on B's choice. But after analyzing that dependence, at the point of choice, A is also an expected value maximizer.[10]

The core concepts of these models of rational action are:

1. *Goals and Objectives.* The interests and values of the agent are translated into a "payoff" or "utility" or "preference" function, which represents the desirability or utility of alternative sets of consequences. At the outset of the decision problem, the agent has a payoff function which ranks all possible sets of consequences in terms of her or his values and objectives.[11] Each bundle of consequences will also contain a number of side effects. Nevertheless, at a minimum, the agent is expected to be able to rank in order of preference each possible set of consequences that might result from a particular action. Some theories place a greater emphasis on such formal ranking than others.
2. *Alternatives.* The rational agent must choose among a set of alternatives displayed before her or him in a particular situation. In decision theory, these alternatives are represented as a decision tree. The alternative courses of action may include more than a simple act, but the specification of a course of action must be sufficiently precise to differentiate it from other alternatives. (Though many models stylize such alternatives as *the* policy options, closer examination of the components of public policies have identified multiple layers of calculations and choices translating interests into operational objectives.[12])
3. *Consequences.* To each alternative is attached a set of consequences or outcomes of choice that will ensue if that particular alternative is

chosen. (Variations are generated at this point by making different assumptions about how accurately the decision maker estimates the consequences that follow from the choice of each alternative.)

4. *Choice.* Rational choice consists simply of selecting that alternative whose consequences rank highest in the decision maker's payoff function.[13]

These categories formalize the concept of rational action that underpins economics, decision, game theory, and political science, as well as the less structured notion that underlies our everyday assumption of human purposiveness both in individual behavior and in national foreign policy. *Rationality refers to consistent, value-maximizing choice within specified constraints.* Applications of this model of purposive action are considerable and instructive. The model permits decision and game theorists to structure problems of choice. In economics, this model constitutes the fundamental assumption of consumer theory and the theory of the firm. As Anthony Downs has noted, "Economic theorists have nearly always looked at decisions as though they were made by rational minds. . . . Economic theory has been erected upon the supposition that conscious rationality prevails." The implications he draws from this assertion are directly on target: "The traditional [economic] methods of prediction and analysis are applicable. . . . If a theorist knows the end of some decisionmaker, he can predict what actions will be taken to achieve them as follows: (1) he calculates the most reasonable way for the decisionmaker to reach his goals, and (2) he assumes this way will actually be chosen because the decision maker is rational."[14]

The assumption of rationality also provides impressive explanatory power. As John Harsanyi, one of the most insightful theorists of rationality, has stated: "The concept of rational behavior is often a very powerful explanatory principle because it can account for a large number of empirical facts about people's behavior in terms of a few simple assumptions about the goals (or ends) people are trying to achieve." How does the social scientist apply this concept? Again to quote Harsanyi:

> From the point of view of a social scientist trying to explain and predict human behavior, the concept of rationality is important mainly because, if a person acts rationally, his behavior can be *fully explained* in terms

of the goals he is trying to achieve. When we say that Napoleon's strategy in a particular battle was rational, this means that his strategy choice can be explained essentially by pointing out that was the best strategy for him to choose in terms of his military objectives at the time.[15]

Nevertheless, precisely because the theory of rational action allows the analysts to get inside the agent's calculations and thus have a sense that he understands and can explain what was done, it can be powerfully misleading. It can lead the analyst to believe that what is doing the work in his or her explanation or prediction is the general assumption of rationality when, in fact, most of the heavy lifting is being done by further, more specific, assumptions or evidence about the agent's objectives, the agent's conceptualization of the situation, and the agent's assessment of benefits and costs. The scholar who has contributed most to our understanding of the conceptual geography of rational behavior in recent decades is Herbert Simon.

Simon's fundamental distinction contrasts "comprehensive rationality" on the one hand, and "bounded rationality" on the other. In *comprehensive rationality,* the actor is assumed to have a utility function that consistently ranks all alternatives the actor faces and to choose the alternative that achieves the highest utility. Uncertain about the consequences, the actor is assumed to choose the alternative with the highest expected utility. Comprehensive rationality assumes nothing about the content of the actor's objectives, only that whatever those objectives, the actor has reviewed *all* alternatives and accurately assesses *all* consequences in making *the* value-maximizing choice. In contrast, *bounded rationality* recognizes inescapable limitations of knowledge and computational ability of the agent. Thus each of the generic terms in the core concept of rational action—objectives, alternatives, consequences, and choice rules—are further specified in bounded rationality by further assumptions, or empirical evidence about the specific actor. Rather than labeling actors who misperceive a situation as "irrational," the model accepts the values, beliefs, and stereotypes of the decisionmaker, irrespective of the accuracy of his views.[16]

Simon underlines the difference between comprehensive and bounded rationality as follows. To deduce the comprehensively rational choice in a

given situation, "we need to know only the choosing organism's goals and the objective characteristics of the situation. We need to know absolutely nothing else about the organism." In contrast, to deduce the boundedly rational choice in the same situation, "we must know the choosing organism's goals, the information and conceptualization it has of the situation, and its abilities to draw inferences from the information it possesses."[17]

Both concepts of rationality are evident in the work of political scientists in recent decades, behavioralists and empiricists employing bounded rationality models, and other theorists—including many rational choice scholars—utilizing comprehensive rationality. But as Simon demonstrates, conclusively in our view, attempting to rely on comprehensive rationality models to explain or predict action in the real world depends critically on further, often unrecognized, "auxiliary assumptions that are introduced to provide limits to that rationality, assumptions about the process of decision." Thus we concur with Simon's conclusion that "to understand and predict human behavior, we have to deal with the realities of human rationality, that is, with bounded rationality. There is nothing obvious about these bounds; there is no way to predict a priori, just where they lie."[18]

When analysts offer explanations about the real world, sparse assumptions of comprehensive rationality are thus thickened—whether analysts recognize this explicitly or not. Sometimes this thickening involves additional stylized assumptions that impose on the situation an economist's or strategist's definition of one or more dimensions of the problem, for example, assuming that firms maximize profits or states maximize power. Sometimes the model's core concepts are specified further by adducing evidence about the particular actor, its perceptions of the situation in question, and its calculations. Such empathetic reconstruction is also a central concept in the philosophy of history.[19]

The RAM is thus applied in foreign affairs across the spectrum in which more and more information is supplied, or assumed, about the agent. In the "thinnest" case with the least information, the agent is a *notional state* in the international system ("the state wanted . . ."), empowered with comprehensive rationality. As "thickness" increases with more specification, information, and context, the agent can become a *generic* state (classified by

regime type; for example, a democracy); or an *identified state* ("the United States wanted . . ."), perhaps highly identified in place and time; and, if the leader's personal values and views become central, the agent becomes a *personified state* ("the Clinton administration wanted . . ."). This matrix is depicted in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1
Application of the Rational Actor Model
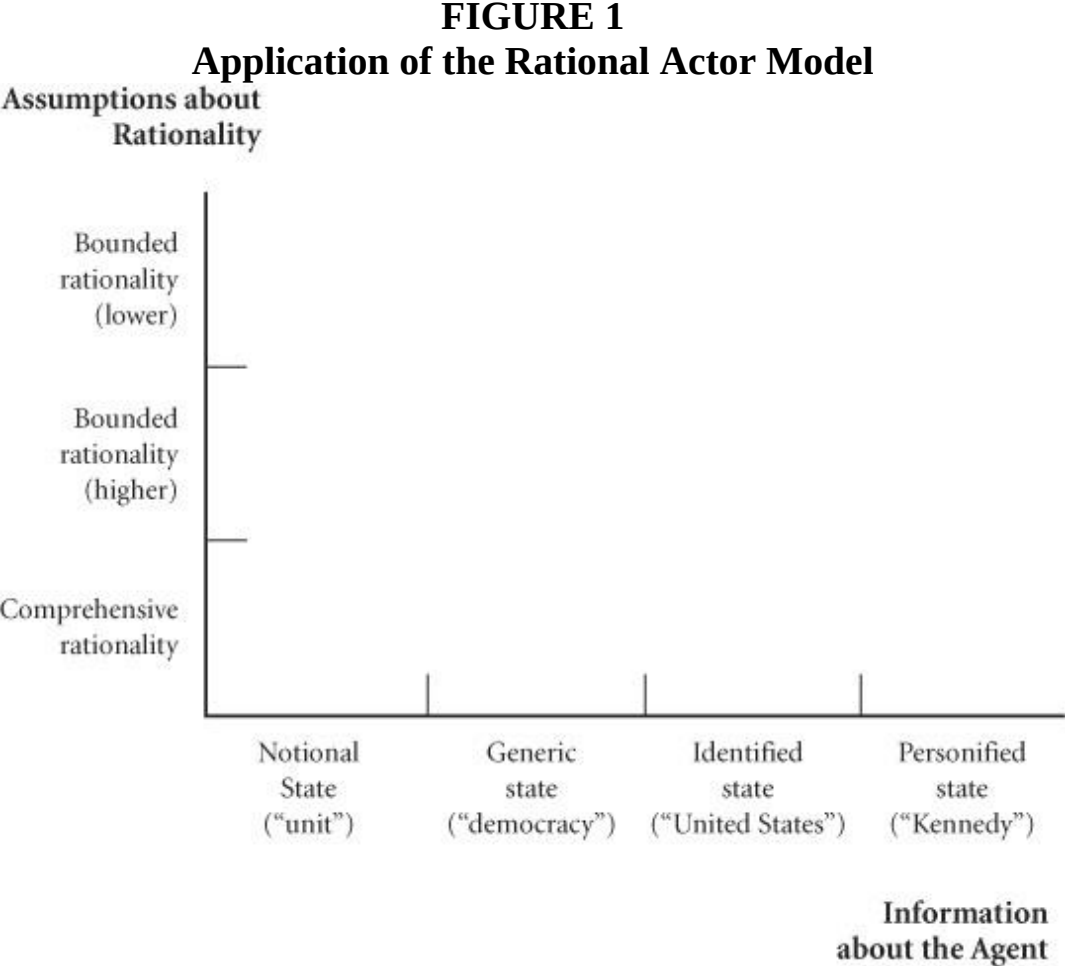
In the most parsimonious case, the actor is any state, the notional state: state A. This state's actions are explained or predicted in terms of the objective conditions it faces, combined with the four variables in the concept of rational action alone: objectives, options, consequences, and choice. For example, the analyst imagines (or encounters) an event, say the initial test of nuclear weapons by this state's neighbor. The question is: how will (or did) state A respond? To choose between "negatively" and "positively," the analyst needs only a modest increment of information about the state's objectives, for example, that it seeks survival first, or survival and power.

With only one more layer of information (or assumption), the analyst encounters an event in the real world, for example, the Indian nuclear test, and produces an explanation in terms of the state's goals (e.g., security), the objective conditions in which it found itself (e.g., facing potential threats from China and perhaps Pakistan in an era in which nuclear weapons are technically possible), and a calculus of choice among feasible options. It is striking how much work can be done by assuming a simple, plausible objective function (e.g., the state seeks security and power), analyzing the environment the state faces, and considering what it might do, or did do. Had American analysts made just such a calculation in the spring of 1962, they would have seen that with the buildup of American strategic nuclear forces, the Soviet Union faced a widening window of vulnerability; that given its technical capabilities at that moment, reducing that threat by building up its own ICBM force would take several years; that it had a surplus of shorter range missiles that could not reach the U.S. from Soviet bases but could if based in Cuba; and thus that it would be more inclined towards what would otherwise appear an unacceptably risky venture.

As each of the basic concepts of the core model are further specified, either by assumption or by evidence, this model serves as the motor of a *generic* state, for example, a democracy. It is asserted that such a state has more specific goals (peaceful relations with other democracies), or is more inclined to favor some options (cooperation with other democracies). With added layers of information, analysts model an *identified* state, sometimes one whose political culture or history produces proclivities in perception or misperception that inclines it toward options (e.g., offense vs. defense), or estimates of consequences (for example, an "operational code"). In the employ of still others, especially diplomatic historians, particular circumstances of a state may be described in such fine detail that it becomes extraordinarily difficult to identify which factors are most important in explaining X, rather than Y. The *personified* state, Khrushchev or Clinton, moves yet a further step along this spectrum.

This basic model can be made still more complex by introducing (1) uncertainty and (2) strategic interaction. Characterization of the rational actor's choice in a world of uncertainty about estimated consequences of options requires further information, or assumptions, about the actor's attitude toward risk. Is the agent cautious, or alternatively, a risk taking

gambler? Moreover, in many situations nation A's best choice depends on nation B's choice. Recognition of this fact highlights the significance for A of communication, signaling, commitment, and bargaining aimed at manipulating B's information and choices. Translation of strategic interaction into the language of game theory, and consideration of stylized games like prisoner's dilemma or chicken, can make these dimensions of the decision problem vivid. Unfortunately, a major finding of game theorists' analysis of complex choices is that they are unpredictable, as discussed below (p.46).

A Rational Actor Paradigm

By using the concepts of the more rigorous models of action, we can sharpen the general characterization of Model I that emerged from our examination of the literature. Formulation of Model I as an "analytic paradigm"—in the technical sense of that term developed by Robert K. Merton for sociological analyses—highlights the distinctive thrust of this style of analysis.[20] According to Merton, a paradigm is a systematic statement of the basic assumptions, concepts, and propositions employed by a school of analysis. The components of the paradigms formulated in this study include the basic unit of analysis, the organizing concepts, the dominant inference pattern, and, simply for illustrative purposes, several of the propositions suggested by the paradigm. Weaker than a satisfactory theoretical model, these paradigms nevertheless represent an important step in that direction from looser, implicit conceptual models. To articulate a largely implicit framework as an explicit paradigm is, of necessity, to caricature. But caricature can be instructive.

> **I.** *Basic Unit of Analysis: Governmental Action as Choice.* Happenings in foreign affairs are conceived as actions chosen by the nation or national government. Governments select the action that will maximize strategic goals and objectives. These "solutions" to strategic problems are the fundamental categories in terms of which the analyst perceives what is to be explained.

II. *Organizing Concepts*
A. *Unified National Actor.* The nation or government, conceived as a rational, unitary decision maker, is the agent. This agent is anthropomorphized as if it were an individual person with *one* set of preferences (a consistent utility function), *one* set of perceived choices, and a *single* estimate of the consequences that follow from each alternative.
B. *The Problem.* Action is chosen in response to the strategic situation the actor faces. Threats and opportunities arising in the international strategic "marketplace" move the nation to act.
C. *Action as Rational Choice.* The components include:
1. *Objectives.* National security and national interests are the principal categories in which strategic goals are conceived. While analysts rarely translate strategic preferences into an explicit utility function, they do focus on major objectives and combine them intuitively.
2. *Options.* Actions for advancing objectives constitute the options.
3. *Consequences.* Enactment of each alternative course of action will produce a series of consequences. The relevant consequences constitute benefits and costs in terms of strategic goals and objectives.
4. *Choice.* Rational choice is value-maximizing. The rational agent selects the alternative whose consequences rank highest in terms of his goals and objectives.

III. *Dominant Inference Pattern.* If a nation or its representatives performed a particular action, that action must have been selected as the value-maximizing means for achieving the actor's objectives. The RAM's explanatory power stems from this inference pattern. The puzzle is solved by finding purposes the action serves.

IV. *General Propositions.* In arguing for explicitness about the categories in which analysis proceeds, this study emphasizes the importance of being serious about the logic of explanation. Consequently, the propositions upon which explanations depend need to be formulated clearly.

The basic assumption of preference-maximizing behavior produces simple propositions central to most RAM explanations. The general principle can be formulated as follows: the likelihood of any particular action results from a combination of a state's: (1) relevant values and objectives, (2) perceived alternative courses of action, (3) estimates of consequences (which will follow from each alternative), and (4) net valuation of each set of consequences. This yields two intuitively evident but powerful propositions.

A. An increase in the perceived costs of an alternative (a reduction in the value of consequences that will follow from an action, or a reduction in the probability of attaining fixed consequences) *reduces* the likelihood of that action being chosen.

B. A decrease in the perceived costs of an alternative (an increase in the value of consequences that will follow from an action, or an increase in the probability of attaining fixed consequences) *increases* the likelihood of that action being chosen.

V. *Evidence.* The fundamental method employed in rational actor analysis is what Schelling has called "vicarious problem solving." Faced with a puzzling government action, the analyst puts himself in the place of the nation or government. Examination of the strategic characteristics of the problem permits the analyst to use principles of rational action to sift through both commissions and omissions. Evidence about details of behavior, statements of government officials, and government papers are then marshaled in such a way that a coherent picture of the value-maximizing choice (from the point of view of the agent) emerges.

It must be noted, however, that an imaginative analyst can construct an account of preference-maximizing choice for any action or set of actions performed by a government. Putting the point more formally, if somewhat facetiously, we can state a "Rationality Theorem": There exists no pattern of activity for which an imaginative analyst cannot write a large number of objective functions such that the pattern of activity maximizes each function. The problem for the good Model I analyst is therefore not simply to find an objective or cluster of objectives around which a story of value-maximizing choice can be constructed. Rather he must insist on rules of evidence for making

assertions about governmental objectives, options, and consequences that permit him to distinguish among the various accounts.

summarizes the core questions a Model I analyst seeks to answer in explaining a government action or estimating the likelihood of an action.

FIGURE 2
Model I: Simplified Core Questions

To explain (or predict) a phenomenon X (e.g., Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba, October 1962).

Assume:

- X is the action of a state.
- The state is a unified actor.
- The state has a coherent utility function.
- The state acts in relation to threats and opportunities.
- The state's action is value-maximizing (or expected value-maximizing).

Ask:

1. What threats and opportunities arise for the actor (e.g., the balance of strategic nuclear forces in 1962)?
2. Who is the actor (e.g., the Soviet Union, or its leader in 1962, Nikita Khrushchev)?
3. What is its utility function (e.g., survival, maximization of power, minimization of threat, etc.)?
4. To maximize the actor's objectives in the specified conditions, what is the best choice (e.g., Soviet installation of nuclear-armed missiles in Cuba)?

The Classical Model Illustrated

The Rational Actor Model is widely used in thinking about government behavior and international relations. Some scholars now recognize this use explicitly and say so. For others, reliance on the model's categories and assumptions remains implicit. Indeed, one of the challenges for students of academic writing in this area is not to be misled by the disclaimers scholars make, but to examine what they do. Our purpose in this section is to show how the paradigm is employed, sometimes more explicitly, sometimes

implicitly, by scholars of many diverse stripes to explain both historical and contemporary events.

Classical Realism

Since Thucydides wrote almost 2,500 years ago, the predominant approach in analyzing international relations has been the "realist" school of thought —as modern proponents have designated themselves. This school became prominent in both academic and policy circles in the period after World War II, when its advocates, including George Kennan, Hans Morgenthau, and others, advanced its claims against alternative approaches which they called "idealism," "legalism," or sometimes even "utopianism." Realists sought to counter Americans' native, naïve optimism by emphasizing the evil side of human nature. They maintain that, by nature, humans are motivated to seek domination over others, making politics among nations a struggle for power, and *realpolitik* policies the necessary prescription for survival.

The hard core of classical realism begins with two basic tenets from the RAM, namely: (1) that unitary states are the key actors in international affairs; and (2) that states act rationally, calculating costs and benefits of alternative courses of action and choosing the action that maximizes their utility. Beyond these, what is distinctive about realists are their assumptions that: (3) the international environment is a "jungle," as Thomas Hobbes explained, in which aggressive behavior by one beast towards others is normal in the absence of any overarching authority (making order or justice exceptions, not the rule); and (4) the dominant goals states pursue in political life are security and power. In explaining events from the Peloponnesian War in the fifth century B.C. through the countless wars that have followed, realists find the causes in intentions, fears, and perceptions of states. As Thucydides explains the Peloponnesian War: "The real cause I consider to be one which was formally most kept out of sight. The growth of the power of Athens, and the alarm which this inspired in Lacedaemon, made war inevitable."[21]

In the past generation, few exponents of this tradition have been more influential than George Kennan. Shortly before leaving government to begin his second career as a historian and essayist, the veteran diplomat delivered a

series of historic lectures at the University of Chicago.[22] Few summaries of America's modern diplomatic history have been as influential as the slim text of Kennan's Chicago lectures. Kennan's argument, in a nutshell, was that certain fundamental realities had always determined the security of the United States, that they would continue to do so, and that Americans ignored these immutable realities at their peril. For Kennan, realities included dependence on the position of Britain and its Empire in an earlier era and, later, dependence on a stable balance of power in Europe to prevent any power from dominating the Eurasian land mass. Thus the U.S. rightly entered World War II in Europe to defend these interests and after the war helped stabilize Europe with the Marshall Plan. Similar views had supported America's participation in the Second World War, influentially articulated by the Protestant theologian, Reinhold Niebuhr; a geographer, Nicholas Spykman; and the columnist and sometime government adviser, Walter Lippmann.[23]

Reflecting on his Chicago lectures decades later, Kennan made explicit the paradigm of rational action that informed his analysis. "Government is an agent," he wrote, "not a principal. Its primary obligation is to the *interests* of the national society it represents. . . ." These interests "are basically those of its military security, the integrity of its political life, and the well-being of its people." Government must reasonably identify these needs and then bring "one's commitments and undertakings into a reasonable relationship with one's real possibilities for acting upon the international environment."[24]

Hans Morgenthau, one of Kennan's contemporaries among political scientists examining international relations, championed classical realism. Morgenthau's major work, *Politics among Nations*, emphasizes the necessity of employing a framework when studying foreign policy. He states clearly: "To give meaning to the factual raw material of foreign policy, we must approach political reality with a kind of *rational outline*, a map that suggests to us the possible meanings of foreign policy." To explain national action in specific situations, the analyst must rethink the nation's problem and reenact the leaders' choice. Morgenthau provides explicit instructions.

> We put ourselves in the position of a statesman who must meet a certain problem of foreign policy under certain circumstances, and we ask

ourselves what the rational alternatives are from which a statesman may choose who must meet this problem under these circumstances *(presuming always that he acts in a rational manner)*, and which of these rational alternatives this particular statesman, acting under these circumstances, is likely to choose.[25]

Thus, while he found the great debate about the causes of the First World War interesting, Morgenthau confidently offered his own answer, as described at the beginning of this chapter.

To "classical realists" like Morgenthau, national interests, though influenced by the political and cultural context, were ultimately grounded in objective realities of power. With Kennan, he believed that rational, experienced statesmen could discern such objective realities. Respected statesmen, from Prussia's Frederick the Great to America's George Washington, wrote political testaments that distilled the timeless truths they had learned, for the benefit of future generations.[26]

Today, Henry Kissinger's recent bestseller, *Diplomacy*, extends this tradition. Former national security adviser and secretary of state Kissinger emphasizes the extent to which states (and statesmen) make their world, not the other way around. But the state choices are bounded by their "unique circumstances" and their histories, a history which—for America—he describes as a triumphant journey of "faith over experience."[27] Though he well knows the complexities of policy formation, Kissinger's explanations of states' actions portray unitary actors pursuing national objectives. Indeed, he praises statecraft that can "bridge the gap between a people's experience and [the statesman's] vision," unfettered by the morass of governmental politics.[28]

In the European tradition, Raymond Aron's *Peace and War: A Theory of International Relations* encompasses so wide a range of subjects and reveals such diverse interests that one hesitates to use it as an illustration. Nevertheless, it can be noted that much of his theory is dependent on the assumption of a rational, unified, national actor. *"The theory of international relations starts from the plurality of autonomous centers of decision* [national governments], *hence from the risk of war and from this risk it deduces the necessity of the calculation of means."*[29] Criticizing the attempts

of theorists such as Morgenthau to explain national action by reference to a single goal, Aron argues that governments pursue a spectrum of goals, tempered by "the risk of war [that] obliges it [the government] to calculate forces or means." His theory explores (1) the sociological influences on "the stakes of the conflicts among states, [and] the goals which the participants choose," (2) the international systems or diplomatic constellations in which states pursue these goals, and (3) the historical characteristics of the present international system. But the actor whose goals are sociologically determined and who must act in a particular international system is a rational, calculating national government. When explaining national actions, Aron focuses on the calculations of this actor, on "the logic of the conduct of international relations."[30]

Neorealism (Structural Realism)

The most prominent academic alternative to classical realism in American academic circles during the past two decades calls itself "neorealism" or "structural realism."[31] Members of this tribe have sought to distinguish themselves from earlier realists in two dimensions: first in the aspiration to be "scientific," and second in the stress they place on system-level variables. From Thomas Hobbes' insight that in the absence of an overarching authority an environment is "anarchic," neorealists attempt to deduce or infer significant consequences for the character of international life and the content of states' foreign policies. In Keith Shimko's apt summary, while "there is disagreement among neorealists about what exactly anarchy causes, there is agreement that anarchy causes it."[32] Classical realists employed a logic that depends on the motives or proclivities of states: bad things happen because of bad states or statesmen. By contrast, neorealists emphasize the logic of the situation: bad things happen when even good states find themselves in bad spots. For neorealists, tragedy, not evil, is the main story line. For example, as Robert Jervis explains the "security dilemma," a state that has no aggressive ambitions can nonetheless create fears among its neighbors just by strengthening its own defensive capabilities.[33] Particularly in cases where prevailing technologies make defensive and offensive capabilities virtually indistinguishable (for example, ICBMs or advanced fighter aircraft), innocent actions by one state may lead neighbors to react by increasing their own armaments. Thus a sequence of actions, each provoking

unintended responses from the other, can lead to conflict even in cases where none of the actors began with any hostile intent.

The leading proponent of neorealism is Kenneth Waltz, whose *Theory of International Politics* attempts explicitly to reduce the political realism of Morgenthau to a more rigorous, systematic theory of international politics. The essence of what Waltz calls "structural realism" is the proper identification of the international conditions in which nation-states live. Anarchy is the defining feature of that international environment. Waltz uses a thin description of what we earlier called "notional" states. In his theory, states are indistinguishable billiard balls except in one attribute. Differences in the relative aggregate power of states, measured objectively in terms of GNP, military capabilities, etc., are the decisive variable. From the general condition of anarchy, Waltz predicts "a strong tendency towards balance in the system. The expectation is not that balance, once achieved, will be maintained, but that balance, once disrupted, will be restored in one way or the other." From the fact that during the Cold War the U.S. and the Soviet Union represented roughly equivalent aggregations of power, he explains what he finds to be significant similarities in their behavior.[34]

What moves a state to react to a more powerful state, or an emerging hegemon, by "counterbalancing," that is, by greater exertions to enhance its own power or to align with an opposing group? While Waltz stretches to explain balances of power in terms of anarchy and power differentials alone, in the end he acknowledges that he requires an added assumption that states are "unitary actors who, at a minimum, seek their own preservation, and, at a maximum, drive for universal domination."[35] Because his ambition is to build a theory of international relations, not foreign policy actions, Waltz seeks to minimize the work done by his assumption of value-maximizing rational states. Indeed, in debates with critics, he seeks to deny (on several occasions) and minimize (on others) the explanatory and predictive implications of the theory he propounds for the behavior of states. Nonetheless, both in his original book, and in subsequent comment on it, he cannot resist deriving from the theory significant implications about the ways states respond to the power of other states.[36]

When confronting a more powerful state or group of states, what would a state do as predicted by Waltz's theory? First, Waltz expects it to do

everything it can to build up its own capabilities, for example, by acquiring nuclear weapons where feasible. Thus, he forecasted in 1993 that Germany and Japan would become nuclear weapons states "sooner" rather than later. Second, his structural realism leads him to expect a state to join a counterbalancing alliance with several other states in order to restore a balance of power. So, in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union, he also foresaw NATO unraveling, and one or more alliances aimed at containing American hegemony emerging.[37]

A generation of neorealist colleagues and fellow travelers share a cluster of core assumptions with Waltz, including the core RAM assumptions of a unitary state as principal actor, whose actions are rational in the sense of calculating costs and benefits and choosing the maximum expected value. They share his insistence on the importance of systems variables, specifically anarchy and real differences in power, as defining features of the environment in international politics. And they share a further assumption— some with greater self-recognition than others—about the content of the goals and objectives of the rational actors in the system: namely, that survival is their most important objective; that some (if not all) other states seek to dominate the others; and that states are inherently selfish and self-regarding in pursuit of survival and security, unwilling to depend on other states for their vital interests or to make any compromise in their own security to enhance the security or well-being of others. As Alexander Wendt's penetrating critique of neorealism, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It," shows, many neorealists' claims to deduce significant conclusions about international politics and foreign policy from the thinnest assumptions of anarchy plus a unitary rational actor fail. Most of the rabbits they pull out of the hat, however, were in fact slipped into the hat earlier, frequently without their recognizing it.[38] Though most neo-realists focus on features of the situation as the causal drivers of their analysis, Wendt shows that unacknowledged assumptions about objectives—for example, states being predatory rather than status quo—actually do most of the work in their explanation.[39]

Most neorealists have found Waltz's parsimonious theory inadequate to account for much observed behavior of states. Thus they have explicitly thickened both the international conditions in which states find themselves,

on the one hand, and the disposition of states, on the other. For example, whereas Waltz attempts to explain the likelihood of war in terms of power differentials between states and groups of states, other scholars note that such risks are powerfully affected by changes in technology; for example, whether the prevailing technology favors the "offense," or alternatively, the "defense."[40] Stephen Walt goes further in insisting that analysis must take account of the *behavior* of states, not simply their aggregate power, in explaining who allies with whom and for how long. Walt argues that alliances form *not* in response to power imbalances, as Waltz maintains, but in response to imbalances of *threat.* Threat is operationalized in terms not only of objective military power, geographic proximity, and offensive or defensive orientation, but also by states' intentions and behavior. Thus Walt employs both an objective, and alternatively a subjective, interpretation of threat, and when explaining occurrences like the shifting pattern of alliances in the Middle East during the Cold War relies more on the latter than the former.[41]

Other scholars move still further beyond the boundaries of neo-realist theory by insisting that it is also necessary to take account of the *perceptions* and *beliefs* of states and their leaderships in order to explain and predict alliance patterns, war, and other interactions. Robert Jervis has taught generations of scholars the irreducible importance of perceptions and misperceptions in international politics. States tend to see what they expect to see as they assimilate new information in previously established images; concentrate only on information that is relevant to immediate concerns; misapply the "lessons of history"; imagine that other states' behavior is unrealistically centralized, planned, and coordinated; overestimate their own importance; and be unduly influenced by wishful thinking.[42] As Stephen Van Evera's analysis of the outbreak of World War I demonstrates, the major European powers' mistaken belief in the dominance of offensive military strategies (what Van Evera and Jack Snyder label "the cult of the offensive") was a critical factor driving rapid mobilization plans during the July crisis.[43] This belief proved profoundly wrong, since it took insufficient account of technological changes that had in fact made the defense dominant, as the bloody trench war demonstrated. But as he concludes: "The perception of offense dominance raises these same . . . dangers, even without the reality. If states think the offense is strong, they will act as if it were."[44] Variants of

structural realism, related approaches, and more distant cousins are analyzed graphically by Colin Elman in his insightful article, "Horses for Courses," from which we reproduce a chart, in modified form, as a footnote.[45]

International Institutionalism

International institutionalists take a further step beyond neorealism to focus on system-wide institutions and interactions as major causal factors, especially in explaining cooperation among states. They begin by noting dramatic increases in the number and importance of international institutions, like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or International Energy Agency (IEA), in the period since World War II, and the growing salience of economic and other transnational interactions.[46] Picking up where Ernst Haas left off, political scientists such as Robert Keohane, Joseph Nye, Stephen Krasner, Lisa Martin, and others have sought to demonstrate both how and why these institutions and processes matter.[47] Specifically, according to institutionalists, institutions matter as they affect (1) information available to state actors, and (2) transaction costs for cooperation among nations.

Consider, for example, the issue of a U.S.-led, multinational peacekeeping mission in Bosnia. Prior to creating this military force for Bosnia (labeled SFOR, then IFOR), the nations of NATO had already paid the fixed costs of these troops, their equipment and their training, as well as the airfields and army bases in central Europe that supplied and protected them. Their capacity for acting decisively was evident. Thus to establish a military force that could intervene in Bosnia required paying only the marginal costs, both in dollars and risks to lives, of the action. This facilitated an intervention that would otherwise have been highly unlikely. Consider, in contrast, the question of peacekeeping in Bosnia if the states had been forced to create this organizational capacity from scratch, or even to assemble it from units that had not previously been established in their own states, or had not learned to work together in the NATO context. If in the absence of international institutions, there would have been no intervention in Bosnia, then these institutions constitute, at least in this case, a crucial causal variable in explaining state behavior. The fact that the institutions were

originally created with quite different purposes in mind (i.e., containing the Soviet Union) is incidental.[48]

The leading proponent of the international institutionalist approach, Robert Keohane, is admirably clear in stating explicitly what this approach assumes, what variables it explores and how, and what lies beyond the scope of the theory. International institutionalists start from the core RAM (a unified state actor that is rationally value-maximizing in context). "Institutionalist theory assumes that states are the principal actors in world politics and that they behave on the basis of their concept of their own self-interests."[49] Institutionalists acknowledge the importance of the structural factors employed by neorealists (anarchy and the distribution of power).[50] But institutionalists insist that a further layer of system-level factors, namely international institutions, are necessary to explain state action.[51] Keohane recognizes explicitly that this institutionalist theory is incomplete and thus insufficient to provide adequate explanations, since it treats the interests states pursue as beyond the theory or exogenous.[52] He concludes therefore that institutionalism (and neorealism as well) must be supplemented by a further theory of the state—a theory that addresses the origins of states' interests, specific objectives, beliefs, and perceptions.[53]

The simple analytics of the institutionalists' argument are perhaps clearest in Robert Axelrod and Keohane's article on "Achieving Cooperation under Anarchy."[54] Their question is: In an anarchic international environment with no superior authority to enforce agreements, when will rational, value-maximizing states nonetheless cooperate? (When will they take coordinated action that promises higher payoffs to each than any other option on which they could agree?) Axelrod earlier identified three features of situations in which actors find themselves that affect their propensity to cooperate: the "mutuality of interests" (that is, the extent to which each actor can achieve his own interests by acting cooperatively rather than competitively); the "shadow of the future" (that is, the extent to which actors value future payoffs from further interactions); and the number of players (cooperation becoming more difficult as the number of players increases).[55]

Against this backdrop, Keohane and Axelrod show how the institutional context in which states interact can alter the payoffs to each state, lengthen

the shadow of the future, and enable multi-person games to be broken down into subordinate games with smaller numbers of players. As Lisa Martin's analysis of sanctions during the Falklands War of 1982 illustrates, Britain's membership in the European Community allowed it to secure the cooperation of its European partners in renewing sanctions against Argentina by linking this action to other issues, specifically Britain's contributions to the Community's budget. By linking these issues, Britain expanded the interests the parties shared in the combined decision and also lessened concerns about cheating (since further occasions on which a cheater could be punished proportionately were assured). The institutional setting facilitated bargaining across disparate issues that would otherwise have been much more difficult to negotiate.[56]

"Weak theory leads to ambiguous predictions," as Keohane says.[57] Nonetheless, weak or conditional predictions are better than no predictions, and Keohane does not shrink from explicit recognition of the predictable consequences of his theory. For example, institutionalists and realists make radically different predictions about the future of Europe, and in particular the prospects for the European Union (previously called the European Community) and NATO. John Mearsheimer, a realist critic of institutionalism, wrote in 1990, "the Cold War provided a hothouse environment in which the EC [European Community] could flourish. If the Cold War ends and the stable order it produces collapses, the EC is likely to grow weaker, not stronger, with time."[58] In that same year, he also wrote "it is the Soviet threat that holds NATO together. Take away that offensive threat, and the United States is likely to abandon the Continent, whereupon the defensive alliance it headed for 40 years may disinte-grate."[59] Addressing Mearsheimer's predictions directly, Keohane holds that institutionalist theory would lead to "just the opposite" expectation. In his 1995 discussion of "the promise of institutionalist theory," he and Martin note that "both NATO and the European Community, now the European Union (EU), are expanding their memberships and are hardly in decline."[60] His 1993 article is more precise: "I am willing to predict that the EC will be larger and have greater impact on its members' policies in the year 2000 than it was when the Berlin Wall came down in November, 1989."[61]

Liberalism[*]

Among the most significant developments in recent studies of international relations is liberalism's rediscovery of the empirical generalization that democracies never (or very rarely) go to war against other democracies. Debates about definitions aside, this is a powerful and significant finding. As one of the leading international relations scholars, Jack Levy, has noted, "the absence of war between democracies comes as close as anything we have to an empirical law in international relations."[62] Scholars who have focused on special features of liberal democracies, and are thus often grouped under the label of "liberalism," have been at the forefront of efforts to explain why this regularity holds.

The placement of liberal theories within Model I may seem surprising. Since these theorists focus principally on liberal democracies, they clearly recognize pluralism in domestic politics. States' objectives, beliefs, and inclinations towards action are shaped by their political regime, for example, whether they are democracies or dictatorships. The state is then analyzed as a unitary actor with this description. The rational actor that chooses to make war, or alternatively peace, is thus not any state, but rather a state with a specific character. As one liberal theorist, Zeev Maoz, argues, "the presumed causal mechanisms that prevent democracies from fighting each other— namely, the structural constraints on the use of force imposed on democratic executives, emphasized by the structural model of the democratic peace, or the tendency of democracies to externalize norms of peaceful conflict resolution, emphasized by the normative explanations of the democratic peace—challenge the core assumptions of the realist paradigm."[63] Many liberal theorists argue that a state that venerates individual rights, political and economic pluralism, and political and economic cooperation in its governance is likely to reflect these values in its external behavior as well, showing respect for the rights of nations, regard for international law, and readiness for cooperation rather than conflict. Conversely, dictatorships or revolutionary governments are presumed to reflect those authoritarian, warlike, or revisionist values in their policies.

Two centuries ago the German philosopher Immanuel Kant's "Perpetual Peace" outlined the conditions of international and domestic politics that he believed would lead to the "ever-widening pacification" of international life.[64] Kant's analysis is subtle and complex, but simply stated, his conditions for peace are three. The first and most important specifies the domestic political regimes of states: peaceful nations must be "republics." By republics, Kant meant not electoral democracies, but rather states in which citizens have rights and governments depend on the consent of the governed. In republics, the public would oppose wars because they would not want to bear the cost of fighting. As Kant argued:

> If the consent of the citizens is required to decide that war should be declared, nothing is more natural than that they would be cautious in commencing such a poor game, decreeing for themselves all of the calamities of war. Among the latter would be: having to fight, having to pay the costs of the war from their own resources, having painfully to repair the devastation war leaves behind, and to fill up the measure of evil, load themselves with a heavy national debt that would embitter peace itself.

Kant's second condition focuses on economics: republics should have market economies aimed at improving citizens' well-being. Assuming an international division of labor through free trade, economic interdependence would tighten. Benefiting from these arrangements, citizens should be more reluctant to break the ties of trade. In Kant's view, through commerce "a peaceful traffic among nations was established, and thus understanding, conventions, and peaceable relations were established among the most distant peoples." Although skeptics point to counter-examples like World War I, which occurred despite unprecedentedly high levels of international commerce, the argument continues.[65]

Third, Kant argued that international peace would result from the expansion of a "pacific union" among republics. This would begin with mutual respect and peaceful resolution of disputes among fellow republics. Thereafter, the pacific union would widen as other states observed the benefits republics enjoyed and sought to join. By gradual extension, peace would become global and finally perpetual.

When Kant wrote in 1795, only a handful of republics met his conditions. But the central tenets of his analysis appear more prescient in the light of the past 200 years. Modern scholars focus on democracies (states in which leaders are selected in free and fair elections), instead of what Kant called republics; and on "liberal" states in which the state and fellow citizens respect others' basic individual rights. Unlike Kant, who saw republican government, respect for liberal rights, and economic interdependence as naturally mutually reinforcing, contemporary students of this phenomenon have sought to separate these elements. They debate definitions and borderline cases such as the Spanish-American War of 1898 (i.e., America, despite being a democracy, apparently starting a war). Nonetheless, most scholars who have examined the evidence conclude that the absence of war between democracies is statistically significant, not the result of random chance or factors other than shared democracy.[66]

Recent analysis of the democratic peace hypothesis has further specified the basic proposition. First, as Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder have shown, during the transition to democracy states are actually *more* likely to make war.[67] As the right to vote expands and mass political involvement rises, leaders may be tempted to mobilize support by calling for aggressive international ventures. Second, as John Owen argues, it is the liberal political beliefs and institutions, not the democratic electoral process, that does most of the work in the democratic peace hypothesis.[68] Fareed Zakaria agrees, demonstrating that it is critical to distinguish two importantly different concepts confounded by most Western use of the term "democracy." Democracy is defined in terms of the process by which a government is selected: if selected by relatively open, fair, competitive elections, it qualifies as a democracy. In contrast, "constitutional liberalism" is defined not by how the government is selected, but rather by the extent to which the society and its institutions protect individuals' basic rights (to life, property, freedom of speech, and religion) and the rule of law. As Zakaria puts it provocatively, "the democratic peace is actually the liberal peace."[69] Not only are democracies peaceable only toward one another, and as likely to fight non-democracies as any other state would be, but illiberal democracies fight democracies and non-democracies alike.

For Michael Doyle, the modern rediscoverer of Kant's hypothesis, liberalism is a philosophy, or worldview, that must be understood in terms of its rich intellectual history.[70] But as a theory of foreign policy and international relations, the central proposition of liberalism can be simply stated. It is that *state structures matter:* the structure of their domestic governments and the values and views of their citizens affect their behavior in international affairs. In Doyle's words: "States are inherently different 'units' differentiated by how they relate to individual human rights." In his formulation, liberals "distinguish Liberal from non-Liberal societies, republican from autocratic or totalitarian states, capitalist from communist, fascist, and corporatist economies." The principal implication is that: "These differences are then reflected in differences in international behavior." As he writes: "how states do behave is affected by their values. . . . Power and politics are purposive activities. What politicians want to do shapes what they wind up doing . . . even if the outcome is not quite what they hoped it would be."[71]

There are three distinct traditions in liberal theory. One strand, associated with John Locke, focuses on the social values of leaders and their respect for the rights of others (as in Zakaria's argument). Another concentrates on the effects of commercial cooperation and interdependence, as did Adam Smith and Joseph Schumpeter. A third strand is Kant's republican liberalism.[72] Each differs in expectations about the relative importance of causes (individual rights, economic freedom, and representative government) and the specific consequences for international behavior. Nonetheless, this family of scholars is easily distinguished from realists or institutionalists by the priority each gives to the institutions and processes of domestic governance.

Andrew Moravcsik has taken an important step forward in attempting to formulate liberalism in paradigmatic terms as a coherent competitor to realism and institutionalism.[73] In this formulation, "liberal IR theory elaborates the insight that state-society relations . . . have a fundamental impact on state behavior and world politics." The central proposition: "Societal ideas, interests, and institutions influence state behavior by shaping state preferences, that is, the fundamental social purposes underlying the strategic calculations of governments."[74] Moravcsik recognizes that the

formulation of what he seeks to generalize as a "state-society" or "social purpose" based theory of international relations should include systematic analysis of the array of non-liberal regimes: dictatorships, oligarchies, authoritarian, and totalitarian regimes.[75] He is also clear that once shaped, state preferences become the basis for the rational, value-maximizing calculations of the leaderships of governments and thus the actions of governments in international affairs.[76]

A professor who became President proved to be among the most influential liberal theorists. Woodrow Wilson is often scorned by realists, who find his worldview naïve. Henry Kissinger decries its emphasis "on principle, not power; on law, not interests," advocating collective security systems dependent upon the hope that all nations will "unite against aggression, injustice, and presumably, excessive selfishness."[77] Nonetheless, Wilson argued vigorously that the spread of Anglo-American ideals would prove so influential that, while traditional European power rivalries might persist, with the decline of empires they would become increasingly irrelevant.[78] The hope for world security, according to Wilson, lay in democracy, self-determination, and international norms for free trade and the peaceful settlement of disputes. In the final decades of this century, Ronald Reagan, George Bush, and Bill Clinton sounded (and often acted) much more like Woodrow Wilson than like realpolitik leaders analyzing a global chessboard.[79]

Strategy, War, and Rational Choice

As Robert Keohane has remarked, "among current scholars in international relations and foreign policy, there is one recurring refrain: 'Schelling said it first.'"[80] Diplomatic historians reflect intuitions and expectations of educated laymen, albeit in a more informed, coherent, and consistent form.[81] Strategic theorists attempt to distill these histories and clarify the underlying logic. Thus the literature of strategy is especially instructive for illustrating reliance on the Rational Actor Model.

Schelling's *Strategy of Conflict* remains unchallenged as the finest formulation of the principles of contemporary strategic theory.[82] According to Schelling, strategy analyzes and explains the maze of national actions and

reactions as more or less advantageous moves in a game of interdependent conflict. Whether in attempting to deter Iraq from attacking Kuwait or the U.S. from attacking Iraq, nations act in situations of tempered antagonism and precarious partnership. Each nation's best choice depends on what it expects the other to do. Strategic behavior seeks to influence another actor's choice by working on his expectations of how his behavior is related to one's own.

Schelling's analysis of deterrence is summarized above. By reducing interactions to the essential core RAM ("conscious calculation of advantages . . . based on an explicit and internally consistent value system"), he clarifies the critical importance of (1) information (on the basis of which he acts), and (2) interdependence (my best choice depending on his choice). Either in seeking to deter the Iraqi government from attacking Kurds in northern Iraq, or in inducing Russia to comply with the IMF economic program, the challenge is to orchestrate one's own actions, commitments, threats, promises, and warnings to affect the target country's appraisal of its situation and the probable consequences of compliance or defiance.[83] Subsequent, more formal game theoretic discussions of deterrence have restated Schelling's analysis, but have added few new insights or propositions.[84] Rigorous application of his insights to analyses that neglected them has made vivid how much difference information and interaction make.[85]

Among the many further issues of contemporary strategy Schelling addresses, his examination of limited conflict and signaling illustrate clearly the logic of his thinking. About these issues he sets forth the following propositions. First: all kinds of limited war become more probable between states as the impossibility of all-out surprise attack becomes evident. Second: limited war requires limits, i.e., mutual recognition of restraints. These tacit agreements, arrived at through partial or haphazard negotiations, require focal points that are qualitatively distinguishable from the alternatives and cannot simply be a matter of degree. Non-use of nuclear weapons is one such focal point. Third: explicit statements and actions of nations constitute strategic signals. Adversaries watch and interpret each other's behavior, each aware that his own actions are being interpreted, each acting with a consciousness of the expectations he creates. Thus the paradoxical regression in which I know that he knows that I know, etc.

What evidence is adduced to support these propositions? The assertion that limited wars are more likely to occur when the balance of strategic forces is so stable that adversaries do not fear escalation is supported by a chain of reasoning. In a strategic context, a rational opponent could by a first strike disarm an opponent, an act which might appear preferable to accepting loss in a limited war. According to this theory, Indian and Pakistani acquisition of such unstable and insecure nuclear forces should caution them, reducing their willingness to take actions in Kashmir that might lead to a fourth conventional war between them.[86] If the two parties should acquire secure second strike capabilities so that attack would mean *mutual* annihilation, each should become more willing to take risks and even pursue limited wars, since they would be less fearful of escalation that would provoke such catastrophic retaliation.

Confidence in the second proposition—limited wars will be limited only at obvious focal points—springs not from careful review of history's limited wars but rather from thinking about the inability of rational antagonists in various bargaining situations to come to an agreement at any other point. The third proposition—a conception of international politics as "essentially bargaining situations" in which alert, intelligent, coordinated nations speak and move in order to influence other nations by changing their expected payoffs—constitutes a highly refined, explicit statement of the basic RAM.[87]

As tension mounted in 1961 during the Berlin crisis (an episode discussed in more detail in Chapter 2), Schelling stepped from the realm of theory into the world of practical policy. He typed a short and influential paper for President Kennedy employing the concept of strategic signaling to reinterpret U.S. plans for first use of nuclear weapons. NATO's approved plan began with conventional defense of Berlin but recognized that this could be defeated by a determined Soviet adversary. At that point NATO planned to launch a major nuclear strike against attacking forces and their critical lines of supply, but stopping short of targets in the Soviet Union. Schelling urged instead that if nuclear weapons were to be used, the President use them only "to impress the Soviet leadership with the risk of general war . . . not mainly to destroy tactical targets but to influence the Soviet command." The critical target should be the mind of "the Soviets" in the first round of nuclear bargaining.[88]

A heavyweight among Cold War strategists, Herman Kahn, authored the best seller that introduced a generation of attentive Americans to the nuclear age: *Thinking about the Unthinkable.* [89] When he turned to limited wars, and specifically Vietnam, Kahn took as a point of departure Schelling's notion of a competition in coercive risk-taking. His objective was to formulate "general principles, more or less true for all the interaction of escalation and negotiation in which a fear of further escalation and a desire not to set undesirable precedents or to weaken desirable restraints are present.[90] Kahn stretches an escalation ladder of six thresholds and forty-four rungs as a backdrop for explaining actions and reactions in various scenarios. But what governs the movement from one frame of the scenario to the next? Plausible constructions of what unitary, value-maximizing actors would do are what move the analysis from frame to frame.

The character of Kahn's thought process is clearest in his discussion of how a state would actually fight a war—not only a war with conventional weapons but one involving nuclear weapons. Fears that a "fog of war" would accompany nuclear attacks on the antagonists' homelands have led some analysts to believe that mutual miscalculation and bureaucratic momentum would create chaos. But Kahn maintains that "there has been a systematic overestimation of the importance of the so-called 'fog of war'— the inevitable uncertainties, misinformation, disorganization, or even breakdown of organized units—that must be expected to influence central war operations."[91] His expectations about central war stem from his confidence in "dead reckoning." This term, borrowed from navigation, refers to the ability of a pilot or captain, by knowing his ship's starting point and environment and by reading its internal instruments, to determine where he is purely by mathematical calculation.

> The commander or decision-maker may know a good deal about how the war started and the basic conditions existing at the outbreak; or information may become available specifying these reasonably well, even though this information was not known before the war's outbreak. From this point forward, even though he is completely cut off from all information external to his own organization and forces, and perhaps even from much of that, he may still have enough of an idea of events

and their timetable, at least in outline, and a sufficient judgment of what the other side is trying to accomplish (through knowledge of its logistics, forces, doctrines, and other constraints) to "play" both sides hypothetically by dead reckoning.[92]

As Kahn notes, this concept of dead reckoning has much broader application. Having observed military decisionmaking more closely than most civilian analysts, Kahn argues that "what I am talking about really is one basic mode—perhaps *the basic mode*—of decisionmaking in any military headquarters." At a minimum, it is the motor that moves Herman Kahn's thinking.

The "scenario" and "war game" are illustrative concepts of contemporary strategic thinking that have become part of the tool kit not only of foreign policy analysts but in business decisionmaking, political campaigns, and beyond.[93] They also epitomize the Rational Actor Model. Another well-known Cold War strategist, Albert Wohlstetter, characterizes the method and scope of a prominent think tank's use of one gaming technique:

> RAND analysts, in conducting map exercises to determine the performance of alternative defenses, typically try some defense tactics and then attempt to figure the best means the enemy has available for countering this tactic; then they try another tactic, examine the possible countermoves again, and so on.[94]

What is distinctive about this approach? In Wohlstetter's words, it "attempts to introduce the enemy by letting him, in his best interest, do his worst to our forces and then seeing which of our forces accomplishes the job most effectively in the face of this best enemy attempt." The question of what the enemy will do is answered by considering the question of what a rational, unitary genie would do. (The same is true in analogous exercises analyzing an opponent in a political campaign, the target of a hostile takeover in business, or an opponent in a negotiation.)[95]

Contemporary strategists' refined version of the standard framework has considerable appeal to policy makers who must make decisions on the basis of partly read, partially digested, uncertain information. The RAM permits a

brief summary of the relevant aspects of a problem in terms that are familiar from ordinary language. The Secretary of Defense during the Cuban missile crisis, Robert McNamara, gave the commencement address at his alma mater, the University of Michigan, just four months before the crisis. His purpose was "to expose his audience to the way in which the United States planned its nuclear operations, explain the problems raised by the existence of other nations' nuclear capabilities, and underscore the vital but limited role of deterrence played by strategic nuclear forces." After rehearsing a series of fallacies, McNamara turned to the problems of surprise attacks and escalation: "Let us look at the situation today [1962]. First, given the current balance of nuclear power, which we confidently expect to maintain in the years ahead, a surprise nuclear attack is *simply not a rational act* for any enemy. Nor would it be rational for an enemy to take the initiative in the use of nuclear weapons as an outgrowth of a limited engagement in Europe or elsewhere. I think we are entitled to conclude that either of these actions has been made highly *unlikely*."[96]

On what did McNamara's confidence in the asserted unlikelihood of surprise attack or expansion to nuclear war rest? His argument proceeds in three steps. From a fact about the physical world—the United States has strategic superiority over the Soviet Union—he moved to a theoretical assertion within the model: given a standard rational calculus, a major element in which is enemy awareness of American nuclear superiority, there is little an enemy could hope to achieve by surprise attack or escalation. On the basis of this assertion, he draws an inference about the probability of an occurrence in this world, namely enemy warheads exploding on U.S. or European territory.

Three decades later, Secretary of Defense William Perry's 1996 *Report to the President and the Congress* employs identical logic in discussing deterrence in the post-Cold War period. Noting the diminished threat of global conflict, he nonetheless argues that "to deter regional conflict, we must maintain strong, ready, forward-deployed, conventionally-armed forces; make their presence felt; and demonstrate the will to use them."[97] He goes on, "while being able to fight and win is essential, that ability alone cannot deter conflict. Deterrence stems from military capability coupled with political will, both real and perceived; credibility is as important to deterrence as military capability." Perry illustrates this point by reference to

failures of deterrence, in 1950 when North Korea doubted American will, and in 1990 when Iraq believed that it could invade Kuwait and Saudi Arabia without provoking a U.S. response. He contrasts those failures with what he judges a case of successful deterrence in October, 1994, when Iraq again moved forces to the Kuwaiti border. "This time," he says, "the United States demonstrated political will by rapidly deploying additional U.S. military forces to the Gulf." The result: Saddam backed down. "Faced with that presence and the lessons of Operation Desert Storm, Saddam Hussein sent his brigades back to the barracks. We achieved deterrence through the capability to rapidly build up a highly capable force, coupled with the credible political will to use that force."[98]

More recent rational choice treatments of these subjects translate questions and answers into more formalized game theoretic language in an effort to achieve greater clarity and precision. While many of the modelers aspire to use the sparsest core RAM to produce interesting new findings, the more sophisticated practitioners recognize Simon's point: namely, that much of the real work of their explanations and predictions is, in fact, done by auxiliary assumptions extraneous to the model. Moreover, the sad fact is that when formal game theory approaches more real-world issues where information is incomplete, the games are not zero-sum, the interactions involve more multiple actors, and the theories yield few, if any, determinate conclusions.[99] Schelling's, Howard Raiffa's, and others' recognition of this disappointment continues to sink in slowly in fields that have come later to this methodology, including political science.

Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and David Lalman's *War and Reason* seeks to analyze competitive interactions between pairs of states, particularly interactions in which war is an option.[100] The book summarizes results of an ambitious effort to build a technically sophisticated game theoretic model that generates significant implications, on the one hand, and to test those deductive hypotheses statistically, on the other. Some 700 interactions between European states between 1815 and 1970 are coded as evidence against which hypotheses are tested. In formulating the model, they state their assumptions clearly: states are unitary rational actors ("so long as decisions to negotiate or to use force are made rationally . . . it does not matter, in the context of our model, whether the decision is made by a single

actor or by a group"); states seek to maximize their subjective expected utility "by making the choice *they believe* maximizes their expected utility."[101] To extract from this core RAM game determinant solutions, their analysis recognizes that the model requires further restrictions, for example, the assumption that in the case in question, using force entails domestic costs, possibly including demonstrations, electoral defeat, coups d'etat, and difficulties in obtaining funds with which to wage war.[102] Without such added assumptions, the two-state model yields no implications.

The most remarkable result of the book is how few surprising findings they report. In their own words: "to state it crudely: national leaders wage wars when the expected gains minus the expected costs of doing so outweigh the net expected consequences of alternative choices." In other words, when states think war is likely to pay, they fight. Since the first stated assumption of their model is "players choose the strategy with the greatest expected utility," the first conclusion follows tautologically. Their conclusions go on to note several further ways war happens. "War can be stumbled into when one nation judges the intentions of a rival too optimistically. War can begin even with full information if it is motivated by a fear of ceding any advantage that is attached to the first use of force. The anticipated net gains from war may be real and tangible acquisitions, or they may be the avoidance of a future expected to be worse than the one anticipated through warfare."[103]

The subjective expected utility (SEU) variant of the core RAM has also been used widely in recent analyses of deterrence.[104] The issue is defined as two unitary, rational states, one of which is considering whether or not to launch a military attack. Each state calculates its expected utility in terms of its beliefs about the expected costs of war, the probability of winning, and the probability that the defender will retaliate. With these assumptions, Achen and Snidal hypothesize that a credible threat of retaliation will deter war unless the threat is "less valuable than the prize."[105] An opponent will be deterred if the expected punishment exceeds the expected gain. But how is the analyst to assess the potential attacker's beliefs about the defender's likely response, expected costs, or fruits of victory—in sum, whether he is likely to be deterred? As Robert Jervis has observed cogently: "Before SEU can tell us much, we have to tell it a great deal. We must, for instance,

specify what situation the actor thinks he is facing, how he ranks his goals, what options he perceives, and how he thinks others are likely to react."[106]

Jervis also notes that rational deterrence theory "makes a number of assumptions *unrelated to rationality,*" such as the assumption that the challenger state is a "risk-prone, opportunity maximizer" and motivated mainly by its external situation.[107] To explain why states calculate expected utility differently when facing the same situation requires attention to factors beyond the boundaries of RAM. Moreover, critics of deterrence theory have pointed to cases such as Japan's decision to attack the United States in 1941 and Egypt's decision to attack Israel in 1973 as evidence that deterrence can fail in spite of a favorable balance of military power and a credible threat of retaliation.[108] As Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Stein argue, Japan and Egypt could have made all the calculations stipulated by deterrence theory but still have chosen to attack even when their expected utility was negative if, for example, they were motivated by domestic political concerns or the desire to avoid future losses. As noted in stating the rationality theorem above (p. 26), the terms of the RAM are so elastic that, after the fact, it can be stretched to incorporate these exceptions (or any others). But as Jervis rightly concludes: "in any SEU that will fit the empirical findings, the subjective elements will loom large. This is true not only for values and utilities, but also for the crucial means-ends beliefs, perceptions of the other side, and estimates of the probable consequences of alternative policies."[109]

Other scholars have used the basic RAM inductively to generalize from cases in which states succeeded, or failed, to deter others.[110] Alexander George and Robert Jervis are leading exemplars of this approach. George's analysis, with Richard Smoke, of the Berlin blockade of 1948 shows how deterrence can fail "in stages." They argue that imposition of a full Soviet blockade in June took the Americans by surprise—not because the Soviets gave no warning of their intent to impose a blockade, but because repeated warning signs had gone unheeded since April. The Americans' chances to deter the June blockade slipped by in stages, as each Soviet move went unanswered and each opportunity for decisive action passed.[111]

James Fearon's essay on "Rationalist Explanations for War" begins with a central puzzle that most rational choice accounts of war, including neorealist

and expected utility theories, have failed to recognize or resolve. Since fighting a war is costly, Fearon asks, why do rational states fight rather than deal? According to rationality theory, if there exists an alternative that both parties prefer, they will choose it. So why not a negotiated bargain essentially equivalent to the outcome of the war but without the expenditure of blood and treasure? Fearon concludes that all failures of negotiations between comprehensively rational states (the "notional states" in our Figure 1) can be traced to one of two types. First, because there exists no superior authority to enforce an agreement, states may forego a bargain that is preferable to war. Second, states rationally misrepresent facts about their own resolve or even power (they keep information about their military power private or distort it) in seeking to achieve a more advantageous bargain. In specifying ways in which wars may arise from rational miscalculation of resolve and power without any further miscalculation or misperception, Fearon makes an important contribution. His model improves on earlier rational choice efforts by weeding out many of what he calls "their sometimes nonrationalist assumptions."[112] However, as he concludes candidly: "In fact, a better understanding of what the assumption of rationality really implies for explaining war may actually raise our estimate of the importance of particular irrational . . . factors. For example, once the distinction is made clear, bounded rationality may appear a more important cause of disagreements about relative power than private information about military capabilities."[113]

Variants and Uses of the Classical Model

As shown in Figure 1 early in this chapter, the basic Rational Actor Model distills common features of a family of variants. One axis begins with assumptions of a comprehensive rationality and moves to the limited perceptions and calculations of a particular agent. A second axis begins with any state and stretches to regime type, identified state, and named leader. Differences along both dimensions are illustrated in recent theoretical approaches to international relations reviewed above.

In its simplest form, the RAM links purpose and action. If I know an actor's objective, I have a major clue to his likely action. By observing behavior and considering what the actor's objective might be, when I identify an objective

that is advanced effectively by the action, I have a strong hypothesis about why he did whatever he did. In this hyper-simple form, the danger of tautology is evident. Recall children's explanations of behavior: "he did it because he wanted to." If the only evidence of what he wanted is what he did, the two statements are empirically equivalent.

The full RAM includes not only objectives but also calculations about the situation in which the actor finds himself. This context presents threats and opportunities that the agent packages as options with pros and cons. The actor chooses the alternative that best advances his interests. Thus in explaining what an agent did, or in making bets about what he is likely to do, an analyst must consider not only the actor's objectives but also the options he identifies, the costs and the benefits he estimates to follow from each option, and his readiness or reluctance to take risks. If the reader thinks about an action he has taken—for example, the college he chose to attend—how much of the fact that he is at college X rather than college Y is explained by his objectives? In most cases the student's personal appraisal of options, estimate of the costs and benefits, and readiness to take risks were also important factors.

As Schelling has noted, one major advantage of the RAM is that "you can sit in your armchair and try to predict how people will behave by asking how you would behave if you had your wits about you. You get, free of charge, a lot of vicarious, empirical behavior."[114] This advantage comes with a major risk, however. Some analysts find their armchairs so comfortable that they rely on logical inferences alone, without any evidence about what the actor's objectives, options, and estimates actually were. This process leaves them vulnerable to the fallacy of the conspiracy theorist. A sufficiently imaginative analyst can invent objectives that an actor "must have had," however implausibly, by weaving a logical web from consequences, however unintended or unrelated, to some imagined intention, however farfetched. Allow the analyst to make further assumptions about options, estimates, and risk orientation as well, and the possible number of consistent RAM stories becomes infinite.

In the thinnest version *homo economicus* reappears as *polis strate-gicos.* Geopolitical conditions, including the distribution of power, geography, balance of threat, existing hardware and software for the use of technology,

etc., are coupled with a state's minimum objectives to draw broad inferences. Such an analysis sufficed in the late 1930s to explain (or predict) that Germany, located in the center of Europe with potential adversaries to both the East and West, subjected to a punitive peace in the aftermath of World War I and ravaged by depression and hyperinflation, would be ornery, assertive, and revisionist. Moreover, when Hitler became Chancellor of Germany, the British government recognized that he was likely to add a further explosive ingredient to the mix. But in 1938, when Hitler informed the world that Germany proposed to solve its limited territorial dispute with Czechoslovakia in order to protect ethnic Germans living there, the British government had to answer the questions: what does Hitler really want? Could his desires be satisfied peacefully? The British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, believed that Germany had reasonable grounds to feel aggrieved, including legitimate concerns about the German-speaking population in Czechoslovakia. He found plausible their claims that the peaceful transfer of limited amounts of territory to a Greater Germany could help heal psychic wounds inflicted by the Versailles Treaty after the first World War and thus prevent a second European War.[115] Moreover, from his face-to-face encounters with Hitler, Chamberlain believed he had taken the measure of the man: "In spite of the hardness and ruthlessness I thought I saw in his face, I got the impression that here was a man who could be relied upon when he had given his word."[116]

But Chamberlain got it wrong. By conceiving of Hitler as a normal, if extreme, German nationalist with real grievances but limited objectives, he failed to examine finer details about Hitler's particular idiosyncratic goals and thus missed major clues. Hitler had written extensively about what he wanted, stating clearly his distinctive theories of ethnicity, *lebensraum* (living space) for German expansion, and the German master race.[117]

Out of office during his wilderness years, Winston Churchill read carefully Hitler's book, *Mein Kampf,* watched his maneuvers on his path to power, and indeed as early as 1933 sounded an alarm about Hitler's deeper, "evil intentions."[118] When Germany unilaterally remilitarized the Rhineland in violation of the Versailles Treaty in 1936 and then absorbed Austria in the anschluss, Churchill castigated the Chamberlain government for its failure to understand its adversary.[119] Thus, when Chamberlain returned from Munich

with Hitler's signature on an agreement and declared that he had brought back "peace with honor . . . I believe it is peace in our time," Churchill said: Wrong. As he wrote: "the partition of Czechoslovakia under pressure from England and France amounts to the complete surrender of the Western Democracies to the Nazi threat of force. Such a collapse will bring peace or security neither to England nor to France. On the contrary, it will place these two nations in an ever-weaker and more dangerous situation. . . . The belief that security can be obtained by throwing a small state to the wolves is a fatal delusion."[120]

Looking back, Gerhard Weinberg concludes that Hitler's purposes were consistent but also practically unique. "Whether any other German leader would indeed have taken the plunge is surely doubtful, and the very warnings Hitler received from a few of his advisors can only have reinforced his belief in his personal role as the one man able, willing, and even eager to lead Germany and drag the world into war."[121]

As Iraq massed large numbers of troops near the border with Kuwait in the summer of 1990, Western leaders speculated about another dictator's goals and plans. The challenge for American officials was to figure out "what the Iraqis hope to accomplish and where this initiative is likely to lead."[122] They began with an identified state, Iraq, taking account of its recent history in the specific circumstances it confronted. Iraq had recently concluded a costly, decade-long war against Iran. Lavish military spending combined with major domestic financial commitments left Iraq feeling burdened by the weight of foreign debts. In the war with Iran, Iraq had lost Shatt-al-Arab and thus had a pressing need for new port facilities that could be met by annexing a small slice of coast from Kuwait. Impartial observers found some merit in Iraqi claims in its border dispute with Kuwait, especially about underground oil fields that could be drilled from both sides of the border. President Bush could thus understand why Iraq might demand money, and even minor territorial adjustments, from its richer, weaker neighbor, Kuwait.

Narrowing their focus to the personified state and particular characteristics of Saddam Hussein, Western leaders considered his behavior explicable as actions of the ruthless Iraqi tyrant they knew him to be. Moreover, neighbors who knew Iraq and Saddam much better agreed. The Kuwaitis thought some concessions to Iraq might be needed, but that Saddam was just bargaining.

Egypt shared this Kuwaiti assessment of Saddam's goals. President Bush checked with Jordan's King Hussein, expressing the hope that "'the situation will not exceed the limits of reason.'" The King said, "There is no possibility for this, and it will not reach this point." Secretary of State James Baker checked with Soviet foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze, since the Soviet Union had long been Iraq's most important patron. According to Baker, Shevardnadze confided that, "'The man is perhaps sort of a thug, but he is not irrational, and this would be an irrational act and I don't think this is something that could happen.'"[123]

Thus the consensus judgment emerged that any military action would be limited to adjacent disputed oil fields on the Iraq-Kuwait border. But when the attack came on August 2, it was not limited. The Iraqi tanks overran all of Kuwait in an offensive that, unchecked, could have threatened Saudi Arabia as well.

In both of these cases—Hitler and Saddam Hussein—Western leaders sought to explain and predict puzzling state actions with a Rational Actor Model. They started with the parsimonious core and minimum objectives. They thickened their analyses to focus on specific leaders with more particular values and views. But by typecasting each as a nationalist, they took insufficient account of still more idiosyncratic values, calculations, and other factors, clues about which they would have required more detail. In both cases, however, the behavior reflected values and calculations that were much more idiosyncratic and could only be understood with intensive analysis of particular personalities and perceptions. In Hitler's case, there was a nearly unique world view and personal sense of mission. In Saddam's case, there were very personal images of his own historic destiny in the Arab world and particular, dismissive, images he carried of the United States, in part as a product of Middle East events of the 1970s and 1980s.

As the microscope is turned on the leader, more information is needed about three main types of judgments. As Sir Geoffrey Vickers puts it, key questions are: How does the actor "select, derive, and represent its information about the 'state of the system'? How does it derive the standards by which this information is evaluated? How does it select and initiate a response?" We can think of these three sets of judgments—*value, reality, and instrumental*—coming together in a triangle of mingled beliefs.[124]

Though separate, all three judgments converge in the rational actor paradigm. *Value* judgments (what the state cares about) influence the goals and objectives but also affect which aspects of *reality* the state will care to observe. Judgments about value and reality are deeply intertwined, "for facts are relevant only in relation to some judgment of value, and judgments of value are operative only in relation to some configuration of fact."[125] The value judgments can be influenced in turn by *instrumental* calculations, since what a state wants may often be affected by what it thinks it can get. These intermingled judgments combine, for Vickers, to form an agent's "appreciation" of a situation. "Such judgments," he adds, "disclose what can best be described as a set of readinesses to distinguish some aspects of the situation rather than others and to classify and value these in this way rather than in that." These readinesses, taken together, form an appreciative system.[126]

The contribution of analyses that dig deeper into such complex beliefs is illustrated by Aaron Friedberg's study of how Britain assessed and adjusted to its decline as an imperial power. Friedberg appreciates realist premises about the salience of power and geopolitical position in explaining state action. But he goes on to paint a denser picture of uncertain officials, some looking at poor indicators of power, or none at all, adopting no coherent national strategy. An important factor in this behavior was Britain's "disorderly democracy" in contrast to states in which "power is concentrated, both in the state and inside the national government." Friedberg concludes that, "In Britain change went forward as the result of gradual, diffuse intellectual developments that were consolidated and accelerated by periodic crises."[127] Analyses of this level of complexity not only draw upon, but also comfortably fuse, the theoretical insights separated in the categories summarized earlier in this chapter.[128]

Combination of one state's subjective perceptions with equally detailed perceptions and preferences of other states complicates the story still further. Several recent works that proceed in this way examine the U.S.-Soviet conflict, drawing on both English and Russian language sources. William Wohlforth portrays the subjective fluctuations in perceptions of the central strategic balance on each side, which were often at dissonance with various objective measures of national power. The result, as Wohlforth puts it, is that

while power really does matter, "the bad news is that the issues of power, prestige, and security appear to arise in different ways, in different mixtures and intensities at different times. . . . If the balance of power has laws, then they are laws with loopholes big enough to drive a superpower through."[129]

Even in the most elaborate accounts of states and leaders in foreign affairs, regular reliance on the basic RAM assumptions and logic is still apparent: unitary actors with specified objectives, maximizing value. In explaining actions of nonstate actors, from international institutions such as the European Union or IMF to international businesses and nongovernmental organizations such as the Red Cross, this paradigm is also predominant. One reason the model is so pervasive is that it does have significant explanatory power. Both that power and some of its limits are evident as we turn now to the key questions about the Cuban missile crisis.

Notes

1. Lawrence Freedman and Efraim Karsh, *The Gulf Conflict 1990– 1991: Diplomacy and War in the New World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 61–62.

2. Hans Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, 4th ed. (New York: Knopf, 1970), pp. 185–86. Morgenthau's explanation thus mirrors Thucydides's oft-quoted explanation of the Peloponnesian War as a product of the "growth of Athenian power and the fear which this caused in Sparta." (See n.21.) For a distillation of the 1914 crisis in relation to a diagrammed balance of power system, analogous to Morgenthau's depiction, see Gordon A. Craig and Alexander L. George, *Force and Statecraft: Diplomatic Problems of Our Time,* 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 35–38. Those interested in a wider ranging exploration of the outbreak of the First World War can consult a concise survey by James Joll, *The Origins of the First World War,* 2nd ed. (London: Longman, 1992) and the range of specialist perspectives canvassed in Steven E. Miller, Sean M. Lynn-Jones, and Stephen Van Evera, eds., *Military Strategy and the Origins of the First World War,* rev. ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991). The interaction between the diplomatic

circumstances and the military balance is handled well in David G. Herrmann, *The Arming of Europe and the Making of the First World War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

3. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, pp. 5–6.

4. Thomas Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960), p. 232. This proposition is also central to Wohlstetter's "The Delicate Balance of Terror," *Foreign Affairs* 37 (January 1959): 211–34. Consider Schelling's discussion of deterrence. How does he characterize the essentials of the situations and behavior in question? Deterrence is concerned with influencing the choices that another party will make and doing it by influencing his expectations of how we will behave. It involves confronting him with evidence for believing that our behavior will be determined by his behavior. Thus, according to the analysis, the aspects of the concept that demand clarification are as follows. First, what combination of value systems for the two participants—of the pay-offs in the language of game theory—makes a deterrent threat credible? Second, how do we measure the mixture of conflict and common interest required to generate a deterrence situation? Third, what communications are required and what are the means of authenticating the evidence communicated? Fourth, what kind of rationality is required—knowledge of his own value system, an ability to perceive alternatives and to calculate with probabilities, an inability to disguise his own rationality? Fifth, what is the need for trust or enforcement of promises? Sixth, what are the devices by which one commits himself to acts that otherwise he would be known to shrink from, considering that if a commitment makes the threat credible enough to be effective it need not be carried out? (See Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict*, pp. 13 ff.)

5. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict*, p. 4.

6. When first stated in the original edition of *Essence of Decision*, this proposition constituted a discovery that was hotly contested. Explication of largely unstated or unrecognized reliance on this model's principal assumptions revealed heretofore unrecognized

similarities among quite different clans in the field. Many in the first wave of critics of *Essence of Decision* rejected this proposition. Over time, however, it has come to be part of the conventional wisdom and is often explicitly stated by more self-conscious theorists.

7. The term "intendedly rational" is Herbert Simon's in *Models of Man: Social and Rational—Mathematical Essays on Rational Human Behavior in a Social Setting* (New York: Wiley, 1957), p. 196. For the Lipset quotation, see Kathleen Archibald, ed., *Strategic Interaction and Conflict: Original Papers and Discussion* (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies of the University of California, 1966), p. 150.

8. Herbert Simon, "Human Nature in Politics: The Dialogue of Psychology with Political Science," *American Political Science Review* 79 (1985): 293–304. For a more extensive discussion of this basic concept and its refinement in further distinctions between "substantive" and "procedural" rationality, see Herbert Simon, *Models of Bounded Rationality* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1982).

9. Hobbes' concept has been discussed with care by Carl J. Friedrich, *Man and His Government: An Empirical Theory of Politics* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1963), pp. 159 ff. See also David Gauthier, *The Logic of Leviathan* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).

10. As Howard Raiffa has noted, in a game theoretic situation, in the absence of communication between the players, one's best choice is expected value maximization—in zero-sum games, minimax (minimize the other, maximize oneself). As one moves beyond stylized cases, like two-person zero-sum games, game theory's principal contributions are (1) to remind one of the fact of strategic interaction, i.e., that one actor's best choice is a function of the second actor's choice; and (2) to provide a vocabulary for describing such interactions. Most games have multiple Nash equilibria and are indeterminate among them. As Simon reminds us further, "Perhaps the major contribution of game theory to political science has been to demonstrate how rare and unusual the situations are where a game has a stable equilibrium consistent

with the principle of objective [comprehensive] rational choice." "Human Nature in Politics," p. 300.

11. The agent's appreciation of value is, however, bounded by—actually interpenetrated by—the agent's perception of reality since "facts are relevant only in relation to some judgment of value, and judgments of value are operative only in relation to some configuration of fact." Sir Geoffrey Vickers, *The Art of Judgment: A Study of Policy Making,* centenary ed. (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1995)[1964], p. 54.

12. See Philip Zelikow's seven components in "Foreign Policy Engineering: From Theory to Practice and Back Again," *International Security* 18 (Spring 1994): 143–71. Use of the simple concept of a utility function, even Raffia's multiat-tributed hierarchy of values, in terms of which an actor can choose among policy options, compresses an accordion of means-ends calculations in the hierarchy from fundamental values and interests to implementation and maintenance of a policy. In discussions of strategy in business or government, these layers are sometimes simplified by distinguishing "strategy" from "tactics."

13. For an early mathematical formalization of such a classical rational model, see Herbert Simon, "A Behavioral Model of Rational Choice," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 69 (February 1955): 99–118. Statistical decision theory and game theory modified this model for probabilistic situations. See R. Duncan Luce and Howard Raiffa, *Games and Decisions* (New York: Wiley, 1957), especially chapter 13; William Baumol, *Economic Theory and Operations Analysis* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1961), especially chapter 19; Howard Raiffa, *Decision Analysis* (New York: Random House, 1968). Among the more influential contemporary expositions of game theory in international relations: Robert Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation* (New York: Basic Books, 1984), and Steven Brams, *Superpower Games: Applying Game Theory to Superpower Conflict* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

14. Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1957), p. 4.

15. John Harsanyi, "Some Social Science Implications of a New Approach to Game Theory," in *Strategic Interaction and Conflict,* Archibald, ed., pp. 1, 139 (emphasis added).

16. On this point see Jack Levy, "Misperception and the Causes of War: Theoretical Linkages and Analytical Problems," *World Politics* 36 (1983): 76, 79–80.

17. Simon, "Human Nature and Politics," p. 294. Students of foreign policy behavior have noticed that, across a host of different personality types and decisionmaking environments, "individuals have a strong need to maintain a consistent cognitive system that produces stable and simplified cognitive structures" marked by values, beliefs, and attitudes. See Yaacov Vertzberger, *The World in Their Minds: Information Processing, Cognition, and Perception in Foreign Policy Decisionmaking* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), p. 137. Moreover, cognitive psychologists have demonstrated in laboratory settings an array of identifiable patterns of departure from the model of comprehensive rationality in normal human problem-solving, from inconsistency in utility functions and probability assessments, to discontinuities in risk aversion, to reliance on heuristics in lieu of complex calculations. For a summary of such examples, see Daniel Kahneman, Paul Slovic, and Amos Tversky, eds., *Judgment Under Uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982); see also Richard E. Nisbett and Lee Ross, *Human Inference: Strategies and Shortcomings of Social Judgment* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1980).

18. Simon, "Human Nature in Politics," p. 297. Simon goes on: "My main conclusion is that the key premises in any theory that purports to explain the real phenomena of politics are the empirical assumptions about goals and, even more important, about the ways in which people characterize the choice situations that face them. These goals and characterizations do not rest on immutable first

principles, but are functions of time and place that can only be ascertained by empirical inquiry." Ibid., p. 301.

19. Note 95 to chapter 1 in the original edition of this book alluded to a philosophy of history that, to the extent possible, calls for empathetic reconstruction of the circumstances of choice as actually perceived by the decision maker. That is still our view. For a fundamental explanation, see R.G. Collingwood, "Human Nature and Human History," (1933) in Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, ed. Jan van der Dussen, rev. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 214–15. The deeper philosophical defense of this approach to knowledge about human behavior is articulated best in various works of William James. On the difficulty of such reconstruction, in the context of international affairs, see the concise comments of Michael Howard, *The Lessons of History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), pp. 12–14. Note also the analogous treatment of rationality in work espousing a constructivist theory of international relations, e.g., Nicholas Greenwood Onuf, *World of Our Making: Rules and Rule in Social Theory and International Relations* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1989), pp. 258–66.

The original edition of this book also contained a lengthy discussion of the debate over comprehensive and bounded rationality. While that debate lies well beyond the interest of most readers, it has attracted the attention of some academics and thus we reproduce it here and add a final paragraph of comment.

"Objections raised by a considerable, but uneven, body of literature can be grouped in three clusters. The first cluster of critics objects to the requirement that the entire decision tree be generated. This demands more than man's limited intellectual capacities. For example, in our chess player's problem of rational choice, although there are only thirty possible moves in an average chess situation, consideration of all possible countermoves and counters to countermoves and so on leads to a number on the order of 10^{120} paths from the state of the board to the end of the game. A machine examining one of these paths every millionth of a second would require 10^{95} years to decide on its first move.

"A second cluster of critics—see R.J. Hall and C.J. Hitch, "Price Theory and Economic Behavior," *Oxford Economic Papers*, May 1939—combine practical objections of the first type with a methodological 'principle of realism,' condemning the rational model as 'unrealistic.' Since decisionmakers do not consciously rank all goals and consider all alternatives in choosing, it is argued that this model cannot be used to explain or predict decisionmakers" choices. This objection stems from a basic misconception of the function of theoretical models in explanation and prediction. The regularity with which this error is resurrected in the social sciences is disheartening. The natural sciences and the philosophy of science have relegated it to an appropriate methodological dump.

"That the model of rational action is not as 'realistic' as some alternative models of action is agreed. But 'realism' is no simple sieve for separating acceptable and unacceptable models. To the extent that the model is offered as a description—and I am unaware of anyone who has recommended it on these grounds alone—sharp divergence between the model and observed conditions in the world must be censored. But for explanation and prediction, this lack of realism need be no drawback—as long as the rules of correspondence, relating concepts of the model to observed phenomena, are reasonably clear.

"To reject criticisms of the rational model based on the principle of realism is not necessarily to accept Milton Friedman's argument that 'unrealism' is the mark of all powerful theory. See M. Friedman, 'The Methodology of Positive Economics,' in his *Essays in Positive Economics*, Chicago, 1953. In arguing that the single criterion for judging models is their predictive power and, moreover, that predictive power requires unrealism, Friedman is extreme—almost to the point of being deliberately perverse.

"Students of the genealogy of arguments will recognize that this essay's approach to the problem of conceptual models and their criticism represents a third-generation position. The essay might simply have attacked the Rational Actor Model and its employment in the literature as 'unrealistic.' The decisions and actions of national units are chosen not by monolithic actors, it would be pointed out, but rather by a conglomerate of distinct individuals who constitute a government. Moreover, these individuals choose not in terms of a consistent ranking

of strategic goals, but rather on the basis of various individuals' rankings of a much wider range of values. This first-generation argument would resemble most attacks on Hans Morgenthau's theory of international politics. At a second-generation level, this essay might have assumed Friedman's position—a flair that is becoming increasingly popular in political science. As such, it would present first-generation attacks on the model and then remove their sting by pressing Friedman's principle of unrealism. The function of models is prediction, it would be argued; thus predictive power is the sole criterion for judging the adequacy of models. Predictive power requires an unrealistic model. First generation critiques therefore support rather than detract from the model's adequacy. Fortunately, the reader has been spared both of these possible essays. But the rejection of these alternatives conveys important insight into the character of this study's argument. For we have assumed, in effect, a third-generation posture.

"A final group of critics of the rationality model seize the most serious objection: *conceptually*, the model's requirement that *all* alternatives be considered and *all* consequences evaluated is not as precise as it might seem. The typical assumption that payoff functions, alternatives, and consequences are properties of an *objective situation* in which real alternatives, consequences, and utilities exist may be understandable in the case in which the choosing subject is a rat and the observer a man (especially if the man designed the experimental situation). The alternative paths in the maze and the consequences of each path (whether or not the rat gets the cheese) are precise and determinant. In a constructed game, sense can be made of the notion of all alternatives and all consequences. But in most situations in which action is required, the notion of all alternatives, or even of a rule for generating all possible alternatives (given unlimited time), is simply unclear. What objective situation makes sense of the concept of all possible consequences and their values in an ordinary situation from the everyday world, for example, foreign aid?

"These objections cut. What they imply for a workable concept of rational action, however, is less straightforward than some critics have supposed. That the comprehensive rationalisty model is limited to artificial situations does not entail that only a *behavioral* rational model is applicable to situations in the natural world (contra Simon). Indeed, a

slightly modified sibling of the comprehensive rationality model can be made sufficiently clear to be acceptable and can do much of the work of its stronger brother. The modified rationality model simply relaxes the comprehensive rationality model's requirement that 'all' alternatives and 'all' consequences be generated and emphasizes the heart of the model: value-maximizing choice within the large set of alternatives and consequences that are considered. For purposes of mathematical calculation, this introduces an unacceptable degree of indeterminacy. But for the explanation of typical behavior, the requirement that the *purposive* character of the action be revealed may suffice." (Note 93 to [chapter 1](#) of the original edition.) For a provocative recent contribution to the debate, see Thomas Mayer, *Truth Versus Precision in Economics* (Aldershot, England: Edward Elgar, 1993).

   In the light of the recent ascendancy of rational choice approaches in political science, the debate between "comprehensive" and "bounded" rationality models becomes even more germane. Simon's demonstration of the necessity for "auxiliary" assumptions and evidence for any explanation employing "comprehensive" rationality should focus attention both on empirical research at the macro and micro levels aimed at identifying (1) which of innumerable reasonable specifications the agent has adopted or will adopt, and (2) rules for the use of evidence in these inquiries.

20. Robert Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure*, enlarged ed. (New York: Free Press, 1968), pp. 69–72. Merton's use of "paradigm" is consistent with its common usage today, per Webster's Dictionary: "a philosophical and theoretical framework of a scientific school or discipline within which theories, laws, and generalizations and the experiments performed in support of them are formulated." The same basic concept is utilized to advance further claims by Thomas Kuhn and Imre Lakatos. See Kuhn, "Reflections on My Critics" and Lakatos, "Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes" in Lakatos and Musgrave, eds., *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970).

21. Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, trans. Richard Crawley (various editions), [chapter 1](#), paragraph 24. For an examination of

both the merits of Thucydides' argument and the question of whether this was really how he assessed the causes of the war, see Donald Kagan, *The Outbreak of the Peloponnesian War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969), pp. 345–56, 357–74. It is worth noting that some modern scholars resist the classical realists' appropriation of Thucydides. See, e.g., Daniel Garst, "Thucydides and Neorealism," *International Studies Quarterly* 33, no. 1 (March 1989).

22. George F. Kennan, *American Diplomacy 1900–1950* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), pp. 3–4.

23. For leading examples of the opinions that influenced readers of Niebuhr, Spykman, and Lippmann during the wartime and immediate postwar period, see Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society: A Study in Ethics and Politics* (New York: Scribner's, 1932) and *The Irony of American History* (New York: Scribner's, 1952); Nicholas J. Spykman, *America's Strategy in World Politics: The United States and the Balance of Power* (New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1942); and Walter Lippmann, *U.S. Foreign Policy: Shield of the Republic* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1943); see also Ronald Steel, *Walter Lippmann and the American Century* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1980), pp. 404–08. Among intellectuals, another very influential exposition of realism in this period was E.H. Carr's *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919–1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1981; first published in 1940). See generally Michael Joseph Smith, *Realist Thought from Weber to Kissinger* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986).

On Kennan's thought, we await publication of the biography being prepared by John Lewis Gaddis. Until then, the best sources are John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 25–53; Anders Stephanson, *Kennan and the Art of Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989); Smith, *Realist Thought from Weber to Kissinger*, pp. 165–91; and, on Kennan in government, Wilson D. Miscamble, *George F. Kennan and*

the Making of American Foreign Policy, 1947–1950 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

24. George F. Kennan, "Morality and Foreign Policy," (1985) in Kennan, *At a Century's Ending: Reflections, 1982–1995* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996), pp. 270, 279.

25. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, pp. 5–6 (emphasis added). For a critique of Morgenthau's work, see Smith, *Realist Thought from Weber to Kissinger*, pp. 134–64. In a classic essay entitled "The Actors in International Politics," Arnold Wolfers observes, "Until quite recently, the 'state-as-the-sole-actors' approach to international politics was so firmly entrenched that it may be called the traditional approach" (in *Theoretical Aspects of International Relations*, William Fox, ed., Notre Dame, 1959, p. 83). He examines two further subsequent strands in the literature, the "minds of men" theory and the "decision-making" approach, and argues that these new frames of reference amount to a rather meager departure from the traditional approach. While accepting contributions from these strands, Wolfers defends the traditional "state-as-actor" model as the "standard on which to base our expectations of state behavior and deviations" (Ibid., p. 98). It establishes the "the 'normal' actions and reactions of states in various international situations." (ibid.).

26. See Felix Gilbert, *To the Farewell Address: Ideas in Early American Foreign Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961).

27. Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), p. 18.

28. The quote is from Henry Kissinger, *A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh, and the Problems of Peace, 1812–1822* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957), p. 329; see Smith, *Realist Thought from Weber to Kissinger*, pp. 192–217.

29. Raymond Aron, *Peace and War: A Theory of International Relations* (New York: Doubleday, 1966), p. 16 (emphasis in the original); see also Stanley Hoffmann, *The State of War: Essays on the Theory and Practice of International Relations* (New York: Praeger, 1965), pp. 22–53.

30. Aron, *Peace and War*, pp. 16, 17, 177, and see pp. 177–83.

31. Interestingly, in the international relations subfield, the prefix "neo-" has often been attached to the description of bodies of work by critics of the work in question. See, for example, Richard K. Ashley, "The Poverty of Neorealism," in *Neorealism and Its Critics*, ed. Robert O. Keohane (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), p. 257, on neorealism, and Joseph M. Grieco, "Anarchy and the Limits of Cooperation: A Realist Critique of the Newest Liberal Institutionalism," in *Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate*, ed. David Baldwin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 117 on neo-liberal institutionalism. See Colin Elman, "Neocultural Progress? A Preliminary Discussion of Lakatos' Methodology of Scientific Research Programs," paper for the American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, August 1997.

32. Keith Shimko, "Realism, Neorealism, and American Liberalism," *Review of Politics* 54 No. 2 (Spring 1992), p. 299.

33. Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), pp. 62–113.

34. Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1979), p. 129 ff. For the best summary of Waltz in context, including slightly revised versions of four chapters from his original text, see Keohane, ed., *Neorealism and Its Critics*.

35. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 15; and Waltz, "Anarchic Orders and Balance of Power," in *Neorealism and Its Critics*, p. 117. Waltz has at times also used an evolutionary model for state

choice, rather than a model of rational choice. "The theory says simply that if some do relatively well, others will emulate them or fall by the wayside." In this view the operation of a balance of power system is effectively automatic with states behaving more or less mechanically in response to the power structure, without real choice. Eighteenth-century thinkers were also fond of a mechanistic universal theory that would provide a parallel in the political world to their enthusiastic search for the scientific order of the natural world. See Edward Gulick, *Europe's Classical Balance of Power* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1955). Marxist theories also often slip into an evolutionary model, in which states seem to be obeying laws of nature (or history), rather than explain behavior with rational purposive decision. An older generation of scholars may recall the discussion of "automatic" and "manual" versions of balance of power theory in Inis Claude, *Power and International Relations* (New York: Random House, 1962).

But for Waltz and other "neo-realists," like the more modern Marxist theorists, the structure of the system presents only a set of constraints and opportunities that exert a critical influence over how states will define their goals and choices. Within these parameters Waltz relies on the rational actor model in explaining state behavior. As Keohane notes, "Waltz does rely on the rationality argument, despite his earlier statement to the contrary." Robert O. Keohane, "Theory of World Politics," in *Neorealism and Its Critics*, p. 173.

The evolutionary model, which discards the rationality paradigm by analogizing state behavior to the evolutionary adaptation of natural organisms, also sometimes takes the form of arguments about the deterministic power of ecological structures or the explanatory power of structures of economies or power. E.g., Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997). The evolutionary paradigm of natural selection has at least three other drawbacks, however. First, scientists have been moving away from the notion that "fitness" or optimal adaptation to a prevailing system adequately explains the contingent survival, disappearance, or proliferation of species. For a discussion of this matter and critiques of the natural selection metaphors so often found in popular and scientific culture, see Stephen Jay Gould, *Wonderful Life:*

The Burgess Shale and the Nature of History (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1989); see also the discussion of the drive toward complexity and "fitness landscapes" in Murray Gell-Mann, *The Quark and the Jaguar: Adventures in the Simple and the Complex* (New York: W. H. Freeman and Company, 1994), pp. 235–60. Second, the theory tends to assume a position downgrading the significance of human cognition and consciousness that is philosophically hard to defend. See Barry Schwartz, *The Battle for Human Nature: Science, Morality and Modern Life* (New York: Norton, 1986); but for an ecological perspective that nevertheless emphasizes rationality and cognition see Harold Sprout and Margaret Sprout, *The Ecological Perspective on Human Affairs with Special Reference to International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965). Third, such evolutionary theories are inevitably driven toward explaining outcomes that emerge over very long periods, removing them from serious attempts at explaining unit-level outcomes in time spans as short as a human life (or many lives). On this point, critiquing general theories on the evolution of the human mind, see Steve Jones, "The Set within the Skull," *New York Review of Books*, November 6, 1997, pp. 13–16.

36. Waltz also seeks to explain other general phenomena beyond the balance of power. For example, he asserts that the probability of war is higher in multipolar systems and that war is more likely between two states as interdependence increases. On Waltz and the application of neorealism to explaining foreign policies, see Colin Elman, "Horses for Courses: Why *Not* Neorealist Theories of Foreign Policy," *Security Studies* 6 (Autumn 1996): 7, 9–15, and Waltz's reply, "International Politics Is Not Foreign Policy," *Security Studies* 6 (Autumn 1996): 54–57. Elman's list of examples of Waltz's application of his theory to foreign policy explanation from structural, systemic factors includes: the lesser city-states of Greece siding with the weaker Sparta against the stronger Athens; Admiral Tirpitz emulating British naval prowess; Britain responding by running the naval arms race; the major continental powers emulating Prussia's military staff system; the cooperation of the United States (as the would-be winner of any naval arms race) making the Washington Naval Arms Limitation Treaty possible; French and Russian alliance diplomacy before the

First World War; and French buck-passing before the Second World War.

37. Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Emerging Structure of International Politics," *International Security* 18 (Fall 1993): 44–79.

38. Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 46 (Spring 1992).

39. Also see Randall Schweller, "Neorealism's Status-Quo Bias: What Security Dilemma?," *Security Studies* 5 (Spring 1996).

40. See, for example, Stephen Van Evera, "The Cult of the Offensive and the Origins of the First World War," *International Security* 9(Summer, 1984): 58–107 and Jack Snyder, "Civil-Military Relations and the Cult of the Offensive, 1914 and 1984," *International Security* (Summer 1984): 108–60.

41. Stephen Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987). See Thomas J. Christensen, "Perceptions and Alliances in Europe, 1865–1940," *International Organization* 51 (Winter 1997). Christensen argues that, particularly in a multipolar system, leaders focus on the perceived strength of a "frontline" state in potential alliance, but often misinterpret the system's distribution of power capabilities and the effectiveness of offensive or defensive doctrines. This leads them to adopt alliance policies that often turn out to be seemingly counterintuitive or even dangerous, such as Napoleon III standing aside in the Austro-Prussian War or British and Soviet passing the buck for critical responsibility to the French during the Czech crisis of 1938.

42. For the most recent synthesis of Jervis's work, see his book, *System Effects: Complexity in Political and Social Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997). In the context of this paragraph, see especially Thomas J. Christensen and Jack Snyder, "Chain Gangs and Passing Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in

Multipolarity," *International Organization* 44 (Spring 1990): 137–67.

43. See Van Evera, "The Cult of the Offensive and the Origins of the First World War;" and Snyder, "Civil-Military Relations and the Cult of the Offensive, 1914 and 1984."

44. Stephen Van Evera, "Offense, Defense, and the Causes of War," *International Security* 22 (Spring 1998): 5–43.

45. Elman, "Horses for Courses." Diagram 1 is reproduced, slightly modified, as Figure 3:

FIGURE 3
Anarchy—Assumptions and Some Possible Foreign Policy Strategies

Ordering Principle		Anarchy	
Unit Identity		Self-regarding	
Behavioral Rule or Principle		Self-help	
System-Generated Problem	Cheating (Neoliberal Institutionalism)		Survival (Neorealism)
		Offensive Neorealism	Defensive Neorealism
Possible Strategies		Bid for hegemony (Gilpin) Bandwagon for profit (Schweller) Expansion (Mearsheimer)	Balance (Walt, Layne) Bandwagon (Walt) Hide (Rothstein) Self-denial (Jervis) Integrate (Grieco)

Limit number of actors; lengthen shadow of future; form international regimes and enforcement mechanisms (Oye)

46. Robert Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984). See also Keohane, "Institutionalist Theory and the Realist

Challenge After the Cold War," in Baldwin, ed., *Neorealism and Neoliberalism.* As Keohane notes, the number of international organizations increased six-fold between 1945 and 1980. Ibid., p. 285.

47. See Ernst B. Haas, *The Uniting of Europe* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958). While in most of his writings Krasner tends to side with realists who see institutions as essentially epiphenomenal to state power (see, for example, "Global Communications and National Power: Life on the Pareto Frontier," in Baldwin, ed., *Neorealism and Neoliberalism);* see also his account of regimes as autonomous variables in Krasner, ed., *International Regimes* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983).

48. While not often noted by international institutionalists, one clear claim for the independent impact of such institutions is a proposition that can be stated as follows: "The establishment of institutions with capabilities that, in effect, pay large fixed costs in advance, and thus make possible actions for modest marginal costs, increase the likelihood of such actions." See Graham Allison and Hisashi Owada, "Democracy and Deadly Conflict: Reflections on the Responsibilities of Democracies in Preventing Deadly Conflict," paper for the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict (forthcoming). As Allison and Owada argue: "States' will to act is importantly affected by the existence of such established capabilities whose competence for doing the job is clear, and who could be sent into action at smaller incremental costs." This proposition and line of argument, essentially drawn from the Model II argument in Chapter 3, suggests opportunities for cross-fertilization between the international institutionalists and Model II analysts. For an earlier version of this argument, see Graham Allison, "Military Capabilities and American Foreign Policy," *Annals of the American Academy,* March 1973, pp. 17–37: "If Americans find it easy to go anywhere and do anything, they will always be going somewhere and doing something."

49. Keohane, "Institutional Theory and the Realist Challenge After the Cold War," in Baldwin, ed., *Neorealism and Neoliberalism,* p. 271;

his dislike for the neoliberal label is on p. 298 n. 3 (he prefers "institutionalism" or perhaps "rational institutionalism"). On international institutions and cooperation (which is not the same thing as friendly harmony) as powerful factors in world politics, see Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1977); Robert Axelrod and Robert O. Keohane, "Achieving Cooperation under Anarchy: Strategies and Institutions," *World Politics* 38 (October 1985): 226–54; Lisa L. Martin, "Institutions and Cooperation: Sanctions during the Falkland Islands Conflict," *International Security* 16 (Spring 1992): 143–78; Richard Rosecrance, *The Rise of the Trading State* (New York: Basic Books, 1986); and Robert O. Keohane, *International Institutions and State Power: Essays in International Relations Theory* (Boulder: Westview, 1989). On the nature and definition of regimes, a set of explanations that overlaps with international institutionalism, see Stephen D. Krasner, "Structural Causes and Regime Consequences: Regimes as Intervening Variables," in Krasner, ed., *International Regimes*, pp. 1–22.

50. See Keohane, *After Hegemony*, Part II.

51. Ibid., pp. 15–26. See also Keohane, "Institutionalist Theory and the Realist Challenge," p. 294: "In *After Hegemony*, I emphasized at the outset that no system-level theory could be complete."

52. Ibid., p. 285.

53. Ibid., pp. 294–95: "Without a theory of interests, which requires analysis of domestic politics, no theory of international relations can be fully adequate. . . . More research will have to be undertaken at the level of the state, rather than the international system as a whole." See also Axelrod and Keohane, "Achieving Cooperation under Anarchy," in which their first conclusion emphasizes "the importance of perception": "The contributors to *Cooperation under Anarchy* did not specifically set out to explore the role of perception in decisionmaking, but the importance of perception kept asserting itself." Reflecting his underlying interest

in the real world, Keohane's writings offer an eclecticism that reaches beyond the confines of the current statement of institutionalist theory. Thus noting that "the notion of self-interest is elastic," his institutionalism explores ways in which international institutions may change conceptions of self interest. See Keohane, *After Hegemony*, pp. 131–32. "Actors laboring under bounded rationality will value rules of thumb provided by regimes. If governments fear changes in preferences by their successors, they may seek to join regimes to bind those future administrations. And finally, if governments' definitions of self-interest incorporate empathy [for the welfare of other states], they will be more able than otherwise to construct international regimes, since shared interests will be greater."

54. Axelrod and Keohane, "Achieving Cooperation under Anarchy."

55. See Robert Axelrod, "Conflicts of Interest: An Axiomatic Approach," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 11 (March 1967): 87–99; and Robert Axelrod, *Conflict of Interest: A Theory of Divergent Goals with Applications to Politics* (Chicago: Markum, 1970).

56. See Lisa Martin, *Coercive Cooperation: Explaining Multilateral Economic Sanctions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992). See also John Duffield's analysis of NATO's contribution to the "long peace" in Europe after World War II, arguing that this institution, or "international regime," enhanced deterrence and reassurance in Europe, thereby making a causally significant contribution to five decades without war. John Duffield, "Explaining the Long Peace in Europe: The Contribution of Regional Security Regimes," *Review of International Studies* 20 (1994): 369–88. Duffield's treatment of NATO not simply as an institution but a "regime" employs a definition of regime based on Oran R. Young, *International Cooperation: Building Regimes for Natural Resources and Environment* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989) and Keohane, *International Institutions and State Power.* It is somewhat broader than the concept described by Steve F. Krasner, "Structural Causes and Regime Consequences:

Regimes as Intervening Variables," in Krasner, ed., *International Regimes.*

57. Keohane, "Institutional Theory and the Realist Challenge," p. 287.

58. John Mearsheimer, "Correspondence: Back to the Future, Part II," *International Security* 15 (Fall 1990), p. 199.

59. John Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War," *International Security* 15 (Summer 1990), p. 52. For an inventive example of how it is always possible to "save a theory" by supple interpretation or epicycles, see Joseph M. Grieco's neorealist explanation / prediction of a strengthened EU, "The Maastricht Treaty, Economic and Monetary Union and the Neo-realist Research Programme," *Review of International Studies* 21 (January 1995): 21–40.

60. Robert O. Keohane and Lisa Martin, "The Promise of Institutionalist Theory," *International Security* 20 (Summer 1995), p. 40.

61. Keohane, "Institutionalist Theory and the Realist Challenge," p. 291. Interestingly, Keohane's 1993 prediction about the EU includes a footnote that eschews an equivalent forecast about NATO: "I am unwilling to make the same forecast about NATO because it is not clear that both the United States and Europe will regard NATO as continuing to be in their interests."

62. Jack S. Levy, "Domestic Politics and War," in *The Origin and Prevention of Major Wars,* ed. Robert I. Rotberg and Theodore K. Rabb (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 88. Most democratic peace proponents now only argue that the democratic peace finding is a statement about propensities and probabilities, and have moved beyond asserting it as a universal law of history. For example, according to Bruce Russett and James Lee Ray, "The democratic peace proposition . . . does *not say* that democracies *never* have made or will make war on each other. . . . The absence (as opposed to the relative infrequency) of lower level conflicts

between democracies is not suggested by any proponent of the democratic peace. One counterexample does not refute a statement about relatively low probability." Bruce Russett and James Lee Ray, "Why the Democratic-Peace Proposition Lives," *Review of International Studies* 21 (1995): 319–25, from p. 322, note 2. See also David L. Rousseau, Christopher Gelpi, Dan Reiter, and Paul Huth, "Assessing the Dyadic Nature of the Democratic Peace, 1918–88," *American Political Science Review* 20 (September 1996): 512–533, 516, note 8: " . . . most researchers have proposed and tested probabilistic arguments (i.e., norms and structures reduce the probability of using military force) rather than deterministic laws (i.e., democracies will never use force against another democracy)." See also Bruce Russett, "Counterfactuals about War and Its Absence," in *Counterfactual Thought Experiments in World Politics: Logical, Methodological, and Psychological Perspectives,* ed. Philip E. Tetlock and Aaron Belkin (Princeton: Princeton University Press), p. 171.

63. Zeev Maoz, "The Controversy over the Democratic Peace," *International Security* 22 (Summer 1997): 162, 173–74.

64. "Perpetual Peace" appears in Hans Reiss, ed., *Kant's Political Writings,* 2nd ed., trans H.B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). The next few paragraphs also draw on Joseph S. Nye, Jr., Graham T. Allison, and Albert Carnesale, eds., *Fateful Visions: Avoiding Nuclear Catastrophe* (Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger, 1988), pp. 215–16. For the rediscovery of Kant, see also Michael Doyle, "Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs, Parts 1 and 2," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 12 (Summer and Fall 1983): 205–35; 323–53.

65. See John R. Oneal and Bruce M. Russett, "The Classical Liberals were Right: Democracy, Interdependence, and Conflict, 1950–1985," *International Studies Quarterly* 41 (June 1997): 267–93.

66. For a selection of views for and against the existence of a democratic peace, see Michael E. Brown, Sean M. Lynn-Jones, and Steven E. Miller, eds., *Debating the Democratic Peace*

(Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996). See also Miriam Fendius Elman, ed., *Paths to Peace: Is Democracy the Answer?* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997). A rebuttal of the critics is offered by Maoz, "The Controversy over the Democratic Peace." For an overview of the debate, see Steve Chan, "In Search of Democratic Peace: Problems and Promise," *Mershon International Studies Review* 41 (May 1997): 59–91. See also Spencer Weart, *Never at War: Why Democracies Will Not Fight One Another* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998). Skeptics either argue that the democratic peace does not exist or that democracy does not account for instances of democratic peace. The first group of critics claims that the number of wars between democracies is higher than claimed by democratic peace proponents. The second group does not argue with the aggregate data, but questions whether shared democratic institutions and values cause the observed peace among democratic states, and suggests alternative reasons to explain the regularity.

67. See Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, "Democratization and the Danger of War," *International Security* 20 (Summer 1995): 5–38. For a rebuttal, see Michael D. Ward and Kristian S. Gleditsch, "Democratizing for Peace," *American Political Science Review* 92 (March 1998): 51- 61.

68. Ibid., and John M. Owen, *Liberal Peace, Liberal War: American Politics and International Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997).

69. See Fareed Zakaria, "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy," *Foreign Affairs,* November-December 1997, p. 36.

70. See Michael W. Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace: Realism, Liberalism, and Socialism* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997). Doyle's wide ranging analysis identifies realism, liberalism, and socialism as the three main worldviews that have shaped modern perception of world politics, and provides a thoughtful intellectual history that notes the philosophical foundations, as well as the application of these traditions.

71. Ibid., pp. 211, 383, 420.

72. Ibid., and Andrew Moravcsik, "Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics," *International Organization* 51 (Autumn 1997): 513, 515. See also the version of the tripartite division of liberal theory offered in the realist critique of John Herz, *Political Realism and Political Idealism* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1951).

73. Andrew Moravcsik, "Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics."

74. Ibid., p. 513. Emphasis added.

75. On the distinctive behavior of revisionist governments animated by revolutionary or extreme nationalist sets of beliefs, see Stephen Van Evera, "Primed for Peace," *International Security* 15 (1991): 23–25, 30–31; and Stephen Walt, *Revolution and War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996).

76. Moravcsik's formulation of his "state-society" paradigm stretches at points to something that might better approximate a wide-angled Model III (discussed in Chapter 5), essentially pluralism applied to foreign policy. Thus see his assumption 1: "The fundamental actors in politics are individuals and private groups. . . . " Indeed, at another point he stretches beyond the unitary acts of states to disaggregated actors with semi-autonomous foreign policies. Moravscik, "Taking Preferences Seriously," pp. 516, 519. But when explaining actions, or formulating expectations about future actions, his actors become mostly unified governments whose leaders act as representatives of stable preferences on the basis of which they make rational calculations.

77. Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, p. 227.

78. Wilson writings of 1906 and 1908, quoted in a convincing short summary of Wilson's thought by Frank Ninkovich, *Modernity and Power: A History of the Domino Theory in the Twentieth Century*

(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. 41–42. Ninkovich does not, however, dwell on the significant intellectual legacy of Thomas Jefferson, who for Wilson's generation of Democratic politicians was considered a forerunner of such liberal theories of world politics for American statecraft. On the influence of beliefs about Jefferson, see Merrill Peterson, *The Jefferson Image in the American Mind* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960); and, for Jefferson's influence on Franklin Roosevelt, see John Lamberton Harper, *American Visions of Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 43–47.

Wilson's theory was premised on rational choices by state actors. To him "the social ethic is a utilitarian ethic, not an absolute one; that it is what you may accomplish by agreement, and not by an abstract process of right and wrong." He thus previewed the very analysis articulated by modern theorists like Keohane. Wilson also argued that the struggle between democratic states and those states led by "small groups who make selfish choices of their own" would consist of test conflicts that would determine whether the new norms being offered to the rest of the world would be respected and, thus, become more widely accepted. Therefore such evident tests of the new norms logically acquired, for Wilson (and most of his successors) an importance far beyond their intrinsic significance because of the impact on the unsettled majority of the world's peoples who, Wilson thought, would ultimately hold the real balance of global power. Wilson quoted in Ninkovich, *Modernity and Power*, pp. 45, 60–61; see also pp. 56–68; see also Arthur Link, *Woodrow Wilson: Revolution, War, and Peace* (Arlington Heights, Ill.: Harlan, Davidson, 1979); Thomas K. Knock, *To End All Wars: Woodrow Wilson and the Quest for a New World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); and, for a darker assessment of the legacy of Wilson's aggressive liberalism, Lloyd Gardner, *A Covenant with Power: America and World Order from Wilson to Reagan* (New York: Macmillan, 1984). The notion of exemplary test conflicts is still very strong. Frustrated by the failure of his administration's Bosnia policy in 1995, President Clinton exclaimed that, "Our position [in Bosnia] is unsustainable, it's killing the U.S. position of strength in the world." Bob Woodward, *The Choice: How Clinton Won* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), p. 261.

79. President Reagan maintained that "historians looking back at our time will note the consistent restraint and peaceful intentions of the democracies." whose mission was "to preserve freedom as well as peace." Ronald Reagan, speech to Parliament of the United Kingdom, June 8, 1982, as reported in *The New York Times*, June 9, 1982. In a speech to the United Nations entitled "Pax Universalis," George Bush argued that "as democracy flourishes, so does the opportunity for a third historical breakthrough: international cooperation." George Bush, speech to United Nations General Assembly, October 1, 1990, quoted in Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace*, p. 205. President Clinton entitled his administration's national security strategy "engagement and enlargement," affirming that: "our national security strategy is based on enlarging the community of market democracies." William Clinton, "A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement" (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, July 1994).

80. American Political Science Association annual meeting, 1996, roundtable on conflict and cooperation with Robert Keohane, Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, and Thomas C. Schelling.

81. For an elaboration of this proposition see John Passmore, "Explanation in Everyday Life, in Science, and in History," *History and Theory* 2, No. 2 (1962).

82. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict.*

83. For further development of the basic argument, see Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966).

84. Subsequent debate about deterrence has gone through several iterations. See the special issue of *World Politics* 41 (January 1989). For more recent rational choice and game theoretic restatements of the argument, see James D. Fearon, "Rationalists' Explanations for War," *International Organization* 49 (Summer 1995): 379–414; Robert Powell, *Nuclear Deterrence Theory: The Problem of Credibility* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

1990); and R. Harrison Wagner, "Peace, War, and the Balance of Power," *American Political Science Review* Vol. 88 (September 1994): 593–607. Wagner provides a thoughtful game-theoretic interpretation of the Cuban missile crisis in "Uncertainty, Rational Learning, and Bargaining in the Cuban Missile Crisis" in *Models of Strategic Choice in Politics,* ed. Peter Ordeshook (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989), pp. 177–205.

85. A good example is Snidal-Achen's application of the insight about strategic interaction to show that Lebow and Stein's analysis of deterrence neglected cases in which deterrence was not challenged. See Christopher Achen and Duncan Snidal, "Rational Deterrence Theory and Comparative Case Studies," *World Politics* 41 (January 1989): 143–69.

86. For a recent analysis that makes this case, see Devin T. Hagerty, *The Consequences of Nuclear Proliferation: Lessons from South Asia* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998).

87. While Schelling was publishing his major works, Glenn Snyder, in *Deterrence and Defense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), also offered a precise formulation of the basic model. In addressing the problem of deterrence, he asserts, "the probability of any particular attack by the aggressor is the resultant of essentially four factors which exist in his 'mind.' All four taken together might be termed the aggressor's 'risk calculus.' They are (1) his valuation of his war objectives; (2) the cost which he expects to suffer as a result of various responses by the deterrer; (3) the probability of various responses, including 'no response'; and (4) the probability of winning the objectives with each possible response" (p. 12). See also Snyder's elaborate extension of the game theoretic model in a study of nine crises with Paul Diesing, using rationality assumptions that calculate interests mainly in terms of power, in Glenn H. Snyder and Paul Diesing, *Conflict among Nations: Bargaining, Decision Making, and System Structure in International Crises* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).

88. T. C. Schelling, "Nuclear Strategy in the Berlin Crisis," 5 July 1961, in JFKL, NSF Files, Box 81, Germany-Berlin-General, 7/1/61–7/6/61. The document is reprinted in *The Development of American Strategic Thought 1945–1969: Writings on Strategy, 1961–1969, and Retrospectives*, ed. Marc Trachtenberg (New York: Garland Publishing, 1988), pp. 9–13. The editor's introduction to the document discusses its influence.

89. Herman Kahn, *Thinking about the Unthinkable* (New York: Horizon Press, 1962).

90. Herman Kahn, *On Escalation: Metaphors and Scenarios* (New York: Praeger, 1965) p. 25.

91. Ibid, p. 211.

92. Ibid, p. 212.

93. See Kees van der Heijden, *Scenarios: The Art of Strategic Conversation* (New York: J. Wiley and Sons, 1996).

94. Albert Wohlstetter, "Analysis and Design of Conflict Systems," in *Analysis for Military Decision*, ed. E.S. Quade (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 1964), p. 131.

95. Howard Raiffa, *Decision Analysis: Introductory Lectures on Choices under Uncertainty* (New York: Random House, 1968).

96. Robert McNamara, Address at the Commencement Exercises, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, June 16, 1962. Emphasis added. In fairness to McNamara, it should be noted that after this assertion he goes on to examine other possible causes of a nuclear war: "The mere fact that no nation could rationally take steps leading to a nuclear war does not guarantee that a nuclear war cannot take place."

97. Secretary of Defense William Perry, *Report of the Secretary of Defense to the President and the Congress* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1996), p. x.

98. Ibid.

99. See James D. Morrow, *Game Theory for Political Scientists* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); see also Drew Fudenberg and Eric Maskin, "The Folk Theorem in Repeated Games with Discounting or Incomplete Information," *Econometrica* 54 (1988). There may be multiple Nash equilibria (from which neither player will defect away on its own). In non-zero sum games these equilibria do not necessarily have identical values for the players; nor are the equlibrium strategies interchangeable as the "Battle of the Sexes" illustrates. For a thoughtful, critical review of rational choice approaches to security studies, see Stephen Walt, "Formal Theory and Security Studies," *International Security*, 23 (Spring 1999).

100. Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and David Lalman, *War and Reason.* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992.) Their central model posits two states (A and B) and eight possible outcomes: the status quo, negotiation, capitulation by A, capitulation by B, war begun by A, war begun by B, acquiescence by A, and acquiescence by B.

101. Ibid., pp. 27, 35–36, emphasis added. Bueno de Mesquita and Lalman discuss the assumption of the unitary actor and alternatives (p. 41); they also define a realpolitik vs. domestic variant, the difference being the source of the objective function of the actor (p. 46).

102. Ibid., p. 45.

103. Ibid., p. 250, 40, 50.

104. According to Robert Jervis, this "second-wave" of deterrence theory is the "best known and best developed." See Jervis, "Rational Deterrence: Theory and Evidence," *World Politics* 41 (January 1989): 190.

105. Achen and Snidal, "Rational Deterrence Theory and Comparative Case Studies," p. 152. As the authors note, the theory also predicts

a failure of deterrence in cases where there is no retaliatory threat or it is not credible.

106. Jervis, "Rational Deterrence: Theory and Evidence," p. 184.

107. Ibid., p. 190. Emphasis added. On rational deterrence theory's assumptions about risk propensity, see Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, "Rational Deterrence Theory: I Think, Therefore I Deter," *World Politics* 41 (January 1989).

108. Ibid. See as well Robert Jervis, Janice Gross Stein and Richard Ned Lebow, eds., *Psychology and Deterrence* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985); Richard Ned Lebow, *Between Peace and War: The Nature of International Crisis* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981).

109. Jervis, "Rational Deterrence: Theory and Evidence," p. 207.

110. See, for example, Alexander L. George and Richard Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974); George, *Forceful Persuasion: Coercive Diplomacy as an Alternative to War* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Institute of Peace Press, 1991); George, "The Causal Nexus between Cognitive Beliefs in Decision Making Behavior: The Operational Code Belief System," in *Psychological Models of International Relations*, ed. Lawrence S. Falkowski (Boulder: Westview, 1979); Robert Jervis, *The Logic of Images in International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970); Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*.

111. George and Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy*, p. 128. George and Smoke state their assumptions explicitly: "each side in the deterrence situation is a unitary, purposive actor (rational actor)"; and "payoffs and choices of action by the actors in the deterrence situation can be deduced by assuming a single general rationality" (p. 504).

112. Fearon, "Rationalists' Explanations for War."

113. Ibid., p. 409.

114. Schelling in Archbald, *Strategic Interaction and Conflict*, p. 150.

115. R.A.C. Parker admirably synthesizes a large literature in *Chamberlain and Appeasement: British Policy and the Coming of the Second World War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), see pp. 151–67 for Chamberlain's evidence that Hitler would settle for a peaceful, gradual transfer of the Sudetenland, up to and including his meeting with Hitler in Berchtesgaden.

116. Keith Feiling, *Life of Neville Chamberlain* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1946), p. 367.

117. On Hitler's early views, see the fine summary in Gerhard L. Weinberg, *Germany, Hitler, and World War II: Essays in Modern German and World History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 30–56.

118. Martin Gilbert, *Churchill: A Life* (London: Heinemann, 1991), p. 513.

119. Ibid., p. 552.

120. Winston S. Churchill, *The Gathering Storm* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1948), pp. 303–04. In the months that followed, Churchill underlined differences between the Prime Minister's views and his own more vividly: "Everyone must recognize that the Prime Minister is pursuing a policy of a most decided character and of capital importance. He has his own strong view about what to do, and about what is going to happen. . . . The Prime Minister is persuaded that Herr Hitler seeks no further territorial expansion upon the Continent of Europe; that the mastering and absorption of the Republic of Czechoslovakia has satiated the appetite of the German Nazi regime. . . . He believes that this act of restoration will bring about prolonged good and secure relations between Great Britain and Germany. . . . Mr. Chamberlain is convinced that

all this will lead to general agreement, to the appeasement of the discontented Powers, and to a lasting peace. But all lies in the regions of hope and speculation. A whole set of contrary possibilities must be held in mind. *By this time next year we shall know whether the Prime Minister's view of Herr Hitler and the German Nazi Party is right or wrong. By this time next year we shall know whether the policy of appeasement has appeased, or whether it has only stimulated a more ferocious appetite."* Ibid., pp. 333–34.

121. Gerhard L. Weinberg, *A World at Arms: A Global History of World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 29–30.

122. State 236637, "Iraqi Letter to Arab League Threatening Kuwait," 19 July 1990, quoted in Michael R. Gordon and General Bernard E. Trainor, *The Generals' War: The Inside Story of the Conflict in the Gulf* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1995), p. 15; see generally Zachary Karabell and Philip Zelikow, "Prelude to War: U.S. Policy toward Iraq, 1988–1990," Kennedy School of Government Case C16–94–1245.0 (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1994).

123. At the beginning of August, Baker was meeting with Shevardnadze in Irkutsk. Baker's recollection is quoted in Freedman and Karsh, *The Gulf Conflict*, p. 77. For an indication that this remark or a similar one was made during discussions in Moscow after Iraq's invasion, see the brief allusion to this point in James A. Baker III with Thomas M. DeFrank, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War and Peace, 1989–1992* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1995), p. 274.

124. Vickers, *The Art of Judgment,* pp. 51–52. For an analogous "golden triangle of strategic choice," composed of valuation, information, and incentives (instead of Vickers' instrumental judgments) see Richard J. Zeckhauser, "The Strategy of Choice," in *Strategy and Choice,* ed. Richard J. Zeckhauser (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), p. 2 and Figure 1.1.

125. Vickers, *The Art of Judgment,* p. 54.

126. Ibid., pp. 82–83. For some other distinctions between the views of Vickers and Herbert Simon beyond those mentioned in the text, see ibid., p. 36, n.3. See also Fred I. Greenstein, *Personality and Politics: Problems of Evidence, Inference, and Conceptualization* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987). A family of other theoretical work, often called "constructivism," reconstructs the appreciative systems of actors by examining the social construction of state identity and national interests, looking at social groups that are both domestic and transnational in origins. They still take the state as the basic unit (consistent with the RAM), as they emphasize the expression of these constructed identities in state behavior. See, e.g., Peter J. Katzenstein, ed., *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); Friedrich Kratochwil and John Gerard Ruggie, "International Organization: A State of the Art on an Art of the State," *International Organization* 40 (1986): 753–75; Friedrich Kratochwil, *Rules, Norms and Decisions: On the Conditions of Practical and Legal Reasoning in International Relations and Domestic Affairs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Richard Ned Lebow and Thomas Risse-Kappen, eds., *International Relations Theory and the End of the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995); Alexander Wendt, "The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory," *International Organization* 41 (1987): 335–70; Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It"; and the illustration in Daniel Friedheim and Alexander Wendt, "Hierarchy under Anarchy: Informal Empire and the East German State," *International Organization* 49 (1995): 689–721.

127. Aaron L. Friedberg, *The Weary Titan: Britain and the Experience of Relative Decline, 1895–1905* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), pp. 290, 288.

128. See also, for successful examples of such fusion, Fareed Zakaria, *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World*

Role (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998); Randall Schweller, *Deadly Imbalances: Tripolarity and Hitler's Strategy of World Conquest* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998). Also compare, for example, G. John Ikenberry, "Creating Yesterday's New World Order: Keynesian 'New Thinking' and the Anglo-American Postwar Settlement," and Stephen D. Krasner, "Westphalia and All That," both in *Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change,* ed. Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 57–86, 235–64.

129. William Curti Wohlforth, *The Elusive Balance: Power and Perceptions during the Cold War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 299, 306; see also Ted Hopf, *Peripheral Visions: Deterrence Theory and Soviet Foreign Policy in the Third World, 1965–1990* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994). On the Sino-American interaction, see the similar emphasis on both perceptions of power and on domestic circumstance, in Thomas Christensen, *Useful Adversaries: Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

2
The Cuban Missile Crisis: A First Cut

The "missiles of October" offer a set of fascinating puzzles for any analyst.[1] In October 1962, the governments of the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics came to the brink of war. For thirteen days, the United States and the Soviet Union stood "eyeball to eyeball," each with the power of mutual annihilation in hand. Leaders in both governments understood that a war between their states could quickly involve the use of thermonuclear weapons by both powers, killing millions of people. A war that began in Cuba could prompt a Soviet siege of West Berlin, or a Soviet strike against missile bases in Turkey—thereby lighting other fuses that could soon lead to thermonuclear war. Armed conflict over Cuba would have altered the course of world history in ways we can only dimly imagine.

These abstract possibilities seem so distant now, or so horrific, that they may appear conjured from some fantastic story or movie. Yet they were real. Governments came to the hinge of war. Leaders accepted risks that they understood, and they unknowingly courted risks that they did not comprehend. Why? During the crisis, the United States was firm but forbearing. The Soviet Union looked hard, blinked twice, and then withdrew. Again, we look back and ask: Why?

In retrospect, this crisis proved a major watershed in the Cold War. Having peered over the edge of the nuclear precipice, both nations edged backward toward detente. Never again was the risk of war between them as great as it was during the last two weeks of October 1962. An understanding of this crisis is thus essential for every serious student of foreign affairs.

To understand how these superpowers moved to the brink of nuclear war, and, having got there, how they managed to retreat, it is necessary to

answer three central questions. Why did the Soviet Union attempt to place offensive missiles in Cuba? Why did the United States choose to respond to the Soviet missile emplacement with a blockade of Cuba? Why did the Soviet Union decide to withdraw the missiles? Fortunately, the availability of extensive evidence about the crisis, including tape recordings of most White House deliberations, makes it possible to reconstruct the calculations of both nations with some confidence.

Nikita Khrushchev. *Source:* AP/Wide World Photos, Inc.

Why Did the Soviet Union Decide to Place Offensive Missiles in Cuba?

During the late summer of 1962, everyone knew that the Soviet Union was transporting large quantities of arms, and some troops, to bolster the defenses of Cuba against the danger of an American attack. The question arose whether these Soviet shipments might include nuclear weapons. Never before had Moscow stationed strategic nuclear weapons outside its own territorial borders—not in the Communist-controlled states of Eastern Europe that were satellites of the Soviet empire, and not even in China while that Communist-led country was a close ally of the Soviet Union.[2]

The Soviet government told its ambassador to Washington, Anatoly Dobrynin, to answer all queries with the assurance that only "defensive weapons" were being supplied. On September 4, Dobrynin privately

conveyed this assurance to the president's brother, Attorney General Robert Kennedy. Reassured, the White House released a written statement later that day asserting that there was no evidence that the Soviets were putting bases or ballistic missiles into Cuba. "Were it to be otherwise, the gravest issues would arise." Dobrynin repeated his assurance to another trusted adviser of the president, special counsel Theodore Sorensen, adding that nothing "new or extraordinary" was going on. Indeed, he had been specifically authorized by Khrushchev to tell the White House that "nothing will be undertaken before the American Congressional elections [in early November] that could complicate the international situation or aggravate the tension in the relations between our two countries."[3]

One week later, on September 11, the Soviet government added a lengthy and definitive public statement about its activities in Cuba. While Moscow affirmed its commitment to Cuba and warned America not to attack either the island or the Soviet ships supplying it, it also repeated its policy on the transfer of nuclear weapons to third nations with the following announcement:

> The Government of the Soviet Union authorized *Tass* to state that there is no need for the Soviet Union to shift its weapons for the repulsion of aggression, for a retaliatory blow, to any other country, *for instance Cuba.* Our nuclear weapons are so powerful in their explosive force and the Soviet Union has such powerful rockets to carry these nuclear warheads, that there is no need to search for sites for them beyond the boundaries of the Soviet Union.[4]

Such a formal, public declaration seemed to settle the matter. Naturally, all Soviet officials echoed this assurance in subsequent conversations with American officials. The Soviet signal was clear.

Nor was the American warning faint. Through public and private channels, the White House had warned the Soviet government that the United States would not tolerate offensive weapons in Cuba, and both sides understood that the Americans were defining ballistic missiles as "offensive" weapons. That point had been made clear both publicly, in the White House statement

of September 4, and privately. The United States staked its public prestige on the warning. On September 7, Congress granted the president standby authority to call up additional reservists into the armed forces. On September 13, President Kennedy held a press conference and, for the first time, spoke directly to the American people about the Soviet buildup in Cuba. In effect, he accepted the assurance in the Soviet statement of September 11. He promised that he would not order an invasion of Cuba unless Cuba threatened other nations in Latin America or became an offensive base for the Soviet Union. If, however, Cuba became an "offensive military base of significant capacity for the Soviet Union, then this country will do whatever must be done to protect its own security and that of its allies."[5]

Khrushchev certainly heard the warning. He complained angrily about it to Kennedy in a private letter sent on September 28. "I must tell you straightforwardly, Mr. President, that your statement with threats against Cuba is just an inconceivable step." Calling up reservists made "the atmosphere red-hot," and poured "oil in the flame." These threats against Cuba were like the behavior of brigands in the Middle Ages, Khrushchev wrote.[6]

Rhetoric aside, these moves and countermoves seem like a textbook case of responsible diplomacy. The United States formulated a policy stating precisely "what strategic transformations we [were] prepared to resist."[7] The Soviet Union acknowledged these vital interests and announced a strategy that entailed no basic conflict. This would also seem to be a model case of communication, or signaling, between the superpowers. By private messages and public statements, the United States committed itself to action should the Soviets cross an unambiguous line (deploying offensive missiles in Cuba). All responses indicated that the Soviets understood the signal and accepted the message.[8] The policy followed the tenets of deterrence espoused by the best scholars of the subject, then and now.[9]

The U.S. government nonetheless remained uneasy about Soviet intentions. The opposition Republicans, led by New York Senator Kenneth Keating, were making the Soviet buildup in Cuba the number one election issue in the upcoming congressional elections. Keating repeatedly voiced the fear

that hostile nuclear weapons were being placed off America's shores. Inside the administration there was also a gadfly who suspected that the Soviets were lying about their real plans. He was the Director of CIA, John McCone. McCone had no hard evidence, but a deep intuition stimulated by the discovery of antiaircraft missiles going into Cuba. For McCone, these made sense only if Moscow intended to use them to shield a base for ballistic missiles aimed at the United States.

Flowing from these warnings, promises, and assurances, U.S. expectations converged in an estimate prepared by the Office of National Estimates, the organization that prepared national estimates coordinating the views of intelligence analysts throughout the government. For ten years, that Office had been directed by "perhaps the foremost practitioner of the craft of analysis in American intelligence history": Sherman Kent.[10] Kent's analysts produced an estimate that was distributed to top officials throughout the government on September 19. Entitled "The Military Buildup in Cuba," the estimate concluded that, yes, the Soviets could gain considerable military advantage from placing longer range ballistic missiles in Cuba or, more likely, establishing a base for missile-launching submarines there. "But either development would be incompatible with Soviet practice to date and with Soviet policy as we presently estimate it." Why? Because sending missiles to Cuba "would indicate a far greater willingness to increase the level of risk in U.S.-Soviet relations than the USSR has displayed thus far."[11]

In an analysis of the episode published in the CIA's in-house journal in 1964, Kent argued that the analysts had tried to see the matter from the unique perspective of the Soviet government. In hundreds of cases, the method is reliable, Kent explained, because the "other man" is in his right mind, because he cannot capriciously make the decision by himself, because he knows the power of traditional forces in his country and generally accepted notions of its interests, and because the other man is well informed.[12] "It is when these constants do not rule that the real trouble begins," Kent explained. "It is when the other man zigs violently out of the track of 'normal' behavior that you are likely to lose him."[13]

When, on October 15–16, Kennedy and his advisers were informed that the United States had discovered Soviet ballistic missiles in Cuba, the president and most of the others were shocked. "It seems to me my press statement was so *clear* about how we *wouldn't* do anything under these conditions, and under the conditions that we *would*. He must know that we're going to find out. So it seems to me he just. . ." and then Kennedy's voice trailed off.[14] What Kennedy's announcement of the crisis called "this secret, swift, and extraordinary build-up of Communist missiles" indeed posed troubling questions. Just why did the Soviet Union undertake such a reckless move? What objective could the Soviets have had that would have justified a course of action with such a high probability of nuclear confrontation? These questions were among the first to be considered by Kennedy's senior advisers when they convened at 11:50 A.M. on Tuesday, October 16. "We certainly have been wrong about what he's trying to do in Cuba," Kennedy admitted. "There isn't any doubt about that." At least four separate times during that first day, Kennedy wondered aloud why the Soviets had done it. "Well," he shrugged, "it's a goddamn mystery to me."[15]

Discussion at that and subsequent meetings generated four hypotheses. A careful examination of the details of Soviet action should allow us to distinguish among the hypotheses more clearly than the policy makers could in the heat of the crisis.

Fidel Castro. *Source:* AP/Wide World Photos, Inc.

Hypothesis 1: Cuban Defense

An analyst who knew nothing about the Soviet Union except that it was a powerful country and that one of its important allies, Cuba, feared attack by a large, threatening neighbor, might infer that the powerful country would come to the aid of its weak friend. One of the first memos the CIA produced after the missiles were discovered in Cuba explained: "The Soviet leaders' decision to deploy ballistic missiles to Cuba testifies to their determination to deter any active U.S. intervention to weaken or overthrow the Castro regime, which they apparently regard as likely and imminent."[16] Though the 1961 effort to invade Cuba with a force of CIA-trained Cuban exiles had failed disastrously, the Soviet Union had substantial reason to believe that the United States might attempt to do the job right. The Bay of Pigs had demonstrated that the United States could act.

Certainly Khrushchev and other Soviet officials defended the deployment of Soviet arms to Cuba in 1962 in just these terms. After Kennedy revealed the missile deployment to the world, the Soviet reply emphasized that any Soviet aid to Cuba "is exclusively designed to improve Cuba's defensive capacity."[17] That remained the Soviet position throughout the crisis. In his memoirs Khrushchev recalled, "While I was on an official visit to Bulgaria [between May 14–20, 1962], one thought kept hammering at my brain: What will happen if we lose Cuba?"[18]

From the Soviet point of view, Cuban defense was a serious matter. A self-proclaimed socialist state, Cuba stood out as the Communists' only showcase in the Western world. We now know, especially with the aid of a new book by Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, that Soviet-Cuban relations were deeper and much more complex than America realized. The Soviets had begun providing covert assistance to the Castro government as early as the spring of 1959, and secretly arranged the first sales of arms in the fall of 1959, well before such aid was detected by a United States government that was still deciding whether Castro would be a friend or foe.[19]

In June 1960, Castro thought his decision to nationalize American oil refineries (which had refused to refine Soviet crude oil) would cause an

imminent American invasion. (The Americans had no such plan.) Khrushchev gave a speech indicating that the Soviet Union might launch a nuclear attack on America if Washington chose to invade Cuba. The speech had no effect on the nonexistent American plans, but it delighted the Cuban leaders, who thought the Russians had deterred an American attack.[20] There was another invasion scare in October 1960; Cuba feared attack from Cuban exiles being trained by the CIA in Guatemala. Such training was in fact taking place, but it would be months before the force would be ready to invade Cuba. The Soviet and Cuban governments nevertheless falsely believed an attack was imminent. Moscow again rattled its nuclear missiles. When the invasion did not come, the Cubans again believed the Soviet threats had deterred it. (In fact, the CIA then began operational planning for the invasion that the Cubans thought they had just deterred.) In early November 1960, Castro gave a private address among Cuban Communists saying that he had always been a Marxist, and pronouncing repeatedly that "Moscow is our brain and our great leader, and we must pay attention to its voice."[21]

The Cubans and Soviets were caught by surprise when the Cuban exiles really invaded at the Bay of Pigs in April 1961. Khrushchev offered all the support he could to Cuba and warned Kennedy that "any so-called 'little war' can touch off a chain reaction in all parts of the globe."[22] Again, the Soviets took some credit for deterring Kennedy from giving the invasion the U.S. military support it would have required in order to succeed. The Americans had little or no grasp of what, to the Soviets and Cubans, seemed like a string of deterrent successes for Soviet missiles.

Khrushchev and the Soviet government believed that more and more of their own status was tied to Castro's survival. Cuba was the prime example of success in the newly announced global strategy of undermining capitalism through wars of national liberation in the less developed world. Cuba's fate was becoming a test of Soviet power and global credibility. If Cuba was "lost," Khrushchev remarked, "I knew it would have been a terrible blow to Marxism-Leninism. It would gravely diminish our stature throughout the world, but especially in Latin America."[23] Khrushchev had already been severely challenged by the Chinese and by senior figures in his own government for reducing Soviet military preparedness and not

taking a sufficiently revolutionary stance in foreign policy. Castro himself had voiced this criticism in February 1962, while he was calling for revolution throughout Latin America.[24]

Soviet and Cuban beliefs about U.S. efforts against Cuba often bore only a coincidental relationship to what America was really doing. But certainly Soviet and Cuban intelligence would have found ample basis for suspicion. In November 1961, the U.S. authorized Operation Mongoose, a covert CIA-led plan to foment internal revolution in Cuba. Mongoose was supervised by an interagency group energetically chaired by Robert Kennedy. Various efforts to assassinate Castro had been undertaken at least since 1960, some with U.S. knowledge and support, some without.[25]

Mongoose suffered, however, from a basic problem characteristic of many such covert operations. Though it could dispatch agents to Cuba and mount some low-level sabotage operations, most officials—including at CIA—thought an internal revolt would never succeed on its own. The rebels would have to be bailed out by a U.S. invasion. The U.S. military developed contingency plans for such an invasion. But, as of the spring of 1962, many of Kennedy's advisers (especially at the State Department and the White House) were not only opposed to an invasion, but were also opposed to fomenting any revolt so large that it might force the U.S. to consider an invasion. On the one occasion in the spring of 1962 when Kennedy plainly expressed his own view of the matter in a closely held April conversation with the leader of the Cuban exiles, Kennedy did not say what the exile leader wanted to hear. Echoing the views his national security adviser, McGeorge Bundy, had conveyed a month earlier, Kennedy privately said he would *not* commit the United States to back up a revolt with American troops.[26]

McGeorge Bundy. *Source:* UPI/Corbis-Bettmann.

But meanwhile the covert Mongoose operation moved ahead, its advocates heartened by overt American denunciations of Cuba's revolutionary fervor. Trying to intimidate and isolate Castro, the U.S. led a January 1962 effort to persuade other Western Hemisphere countries in the Organization of American States to cut off their trade and diplomatic ties with Cuba. In February 1962, Khrushchev received new intelligence reports, again raising concerns about a possible American invasion of Cuba. The Soviets had some inkling that a reinvigorated American covert operation for low-level infiltration into Cuba and sabotage was underway. They also had information about the contingency planning to prepare American forces for a possible invasion. Khrushchev's son-in-law, the editor of *Pravda*, also reported on a lengthy private conversation with Kennedy, claiming that Kennedy had talked about an analogy between Cuba and the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956.[27]

Khrushchev had developed a greater fear of an American invasion of Cuba than American officials realized, or would have thought warranted. Yet there is no evidence that Khrushchev thought the danger of an invasion was acute, or imminent. "I'm not saying we had any documentary proof that the Americans were preparing a second invasion; we didn't need documentary proof. We knew the class affiliation, the class blindness of the United States, and that was enough to make us expect the worst." Fursenko and Naftali note that "the Soviet intelligence community's failure to provide

compelling evidence that a U.S. attack on Cuba was imminent allowed the policy process to grind to a crawl in Moscow."[28]

Then in late March 1962 Soviet-Cuban relations entered a crisis, for reasons having little to do with Washington and only dimly understood there. For internal reasons, Castro had turned on the ambitious leader of the Cuban Communist party and loyal servant of Moscow, Anibal Escalante.[29] Meanwhile, Castro embarked on new talks about getting economic assistance from China. In early April, the Soviet government contemplated its options and decided to redouble its commitment to Castro.

For months, the Soviets had carefully developed a package of military aid. In February 1962, after the report from Khrushchev's son-in-law, the governing Presidium finally approved the costly, long-pending assistance package for Cuba. The Defense Ministry had recommended accelerating decision to deliver the SA-2 air defense missiles, making the big political judgment to divert to Cuba a shipment of the missiles that had previously been promised to Egypt. This request was considered in the aftermath of the Escalante affair and news of new U.S. military exercises in the Caribbean. On April 12, the Presidium confirmed the decision to deliver approximately 180 SA-2 missiles to Cuba and a battery of Soviet coastal defense cruise missiles, along with trainers and the deployment of a regiment of regular Soviet troops. A military mission was also dispatched to Cuba to survey additional needs.[30]

If Cuban defense was the Soviet objective, the venture apparently succeeded. As the missile crisis ended, President Kennedy pledged that if Cuba did not threaten its neighbors, it would not be invaded by the U.S. or by any other nation in the Western Hemisphere. That pledge seemed to remove the threat the Soviet missiles were sent to deter. Therefore the missiles could be withdrawn.

Though persuasive, attempts to explain Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba with the Cuban defense hypothesis will not withstand careful examination. First, if deterrence of an American attack on Cuba had been the primary Soviet objective, there was no need to install ballistic missiles in Cuba. The equipment the Soviets were supplying to the Cuban Army certainly

precluded an American attempt to destroy Castro discreetly—without a major attack. If deterrence of a major attack had been the objective, the presence of a sizeable contingent of Soviet troops would have been a better solution. As a deterrent, the value of Soviet troops in Cuba would be roughly equivalent to that of American troops in Berlin.

Second, the Soviets could have signed a public defense treaty with Cuba without deploying forces. A defense pact was drafted and initialed by Soviet defense minister Rodion Malinovsky and Castro's senior aide, Che Guevara, and was to be signed triumphantly by Khrushchev in Cuba in November 1962, when the operational missiles were to be unveiled to the world. The signing ceremony never took place. When Guevara and another top Cuban official, Emilio Aragones, went to Moscow at the end of August to finalize the pact, they asked Khrushchev to publicize the preparation of the treaty and end the attempt to hide the nuclear missiles, hoping the treaty would suffice to deter America. The Cubans would then insist on their right to accept a Soviet base out in the open, just as America's allies (like Turkey) had done with their nuclear deployments. But Khrushchev said no.[31]

A third objection to the Cuban defense hypothesis centers on the nuclear question. If for some reason the Soviets believed a nuclear deterrent was necessary, tactical nuclear weapons (i.e., weapons with a range of less than 100 miles) were available that could have been emplaced more quickly, at less cost, and with considerably less likelihood of being discovered before they were ready. Indeed, Khrushchev made just such a decision to rush tactical nuclear weapons to Cuba, but only in September 1962, when Kennedy's public statements revived Khrushchev's real fear of a possible American invasion.

Fourth, if for some reason strategic-range missiles were thought necessary, a much smaller number of medium-range ballistic missiles (MRBMs, with a range of about 1,100 miles) would have sufficed, with none of the more expensive and more detectable intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBMs, with a range of about 2,200 miles). Nor would it have been necessary to turn Cuba into a base for submarine-launched ballistic missiles too.

Fifth and most important, what we now know about the timeline of Soviet decisions is inconsistent with the argument that Cuban defense explains the deployment of Soviet nuclear missiles. The Soviet government had already analyzed the American threat in dire terms, and had carefully chosen its response, culminating in the Presidium decision on April 12. That was Moscow's answer to Cuban defense. More than a month later, Khrushchev had initiated an entirely new process, culminating in a set of decisions taken on May 21 and 24, to send a far larger Group of Soviet Forces for deployment to Cuba, armed with many nuclear weapons. The U.S. held publicly announced military exercises in the Caribbean during April and May ("Lantphibex 1–62" and "Quick Kick"), which presumably were noticed by Soviet and Cuban military intelligence.[32] So one action might have triggered a response. But there is no evidence that the exercises prompted relevant officials in Moscow to react, nor did Havana ask for radical reconsideration of the Presidium's April 12 decision on the military aid package for Cuba. The Soviet military mission sent to Cuba did get new requests from Castro on May 18 for more coastal defense missiles and possibly more Soviet troops (though on this point Castro was a bit coy). But neither Castro nor the Soviet military delegation expressed any interest in nuclear weapons.[33]

After all, as Castro himself put it, Cuba had "stated repeatedly that it has no intention to offer any part of its territory to any state for the establishment of military bases,"[34] in part knowing that such a move might both provoke and legitimize an American attack. When recalled to Moscow and asked his opinion during the deliberations, the Soviet envoy to Castro was sure, for these reasons, that Castro would not accept the missiles.[35]

In the end, Castro did accept the missiles. But he and his colleagues always said that they did this only because they felt obliged to help the Soviet Union in its desire to change the global balance of power. Of course, having accepted the dangerous deployments, Castro and his colleagues could also hope that Cuba would be protected from attack. But Castro expected that the deployment would provoke an intense crisis. He was fatalistic about it, and says that he "ignored how many nuclear weapons the North Americans had. . . . We really trusted that they [the Soviets] were acting with the knowledge of the entire situation."[36] So a final problem with the Cuban

defense hypothesis is that the move actually made Cuba's position more, not less, perilous, a point that was made in Moscow by Khrushchev's top expert on Cuba.

In support of the Cuban defense hypothesis, it is clear that Cuba was surely on Khrushchev's mind. He might have worried about the American exercises, even if his experts and Castro had not raised a great fuss, and even if he was not alarmed enough to write to Kennedy about the matter. Khrushchev's impulsive nature is evident. There is no evidence that Khrushchev analyzed options for Cuban defense carefully or systematically. Nor had his military experts. For the Soviet General Staff, Khrushchev's plan "was like a roll of thunder in a clear sky." The only options they had examined were authorized in the original, April decisions to defend Cuba with conventional arms.[37]

Hypothesis 2: Cold War Politics

Weaknesses identified in probing the Cuban defense hypothesis can be addressed by locating this event in the context of a great power rivalry. The defining feature of the Cold War was the global competition between the U.S. and the values and interests it represented, on the one hand, and the Soviet Union's Communist agenda, on the other. Whenever one party lost, the other gained—and was seen to do so by others around the world. Without knowing many details about the United States and the Soviet Union, an analyst would quickly understand that they were competing for global power. A rival might seize the opportunity to display the extent of its worldwide power, especially so near its enemy's shores.

Reacting to Defense Secretary Robert McNamara's initial assessment that the Soviet missiles in Cuba had little military significance, President Kennedy fell back on such a broad hypothesis of global politics. He had drawn a line, and they had flagrantly crossed it, showing a general defiance of U.S. power. "Last month," Kennedy speculated, "I said we weren't going to [allow it]. Last month I should have said that we don't care. But when we said we're *not* going to, and then they go ahead and do it, and then we do nothing, then I would think that our risks increase. . . . After all, this is a political struggle as much as military."[38]

Intelligence experts around the government joined a few days later in estimating that, "A major Soviet objective in their military buildup in Cuba is to demonstrate that the world balance of forces has shifted so far in their favor that the U.S. can no longer prevent the advance of Soviet offensive power even into its own hemisphere." U.S. acquiescence would mean a loss of confidence in America throughout Latin America, and the world. Secretary of State Dean Rusk thought "there has been quite a debate going on in the Soviet Union about the course of action [in the global competition]. The peaceful coexistence theme was not getting them very far and I think the theme's clear now that the hard line boys have moved into the ascendancy. So one of the things that we have to be concerned about is not just the missiles, but the entire development of Soviet policy as it affects our situation around the globe."[39]

In 1962, American leaders saw the Cold War as a long-term struggle for global preeminence. Kennedy's decision to let the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba fail was widely interpreted as showing a lack of will, and Khrushchev had tried to push the American leader around at their only face-to-face meeting in Vienna in June 1961. "In a general sense," Kennedy aide and historian Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., wrote later, Khrushchev's dispatch of nuclear missiles to Cuba "obviously represented the supreme Soviet probe of American intentions."[40] Undertaken in secrecy and sustained by duplicity, the success of Khrushchev's plan required a *fait accompli*. Confronted with operational missiles, the United States might react indecisively. Diplomatic protests would just advertise Washington's weakness, and the hollow-ness of Kennedy's own threats. By unmasking an irresolute America, the Soviet Union would drastically reduce the credibility of U.S. commitments to other nations. After the failure to act on Cuba, who could expect the United States to act elsewhere? Though obviously risky, a victory would demonstrate that the tide in the Cold War had turned.

It is difficult today to recapture just how pessimistic many Americans were about the likely outcome of the Cold War. Just before Kennedy took office, Henry Kissinger—then a professor at Harvard—wrote that "the United States cannot afford another decline like that which has characterized the

past decade and a half." More such deterioration "would find us reduced to Fortress America in a world in which we had become largely irrelevant."[41]

Kennedy felt such global stakes. On October 21, when Schlesinger asked Kennedy why the Soviets had put missiles in Cuba, Kennedy pointed to the potential Soviet political gains in (1) drawing Russia and China closer together again, helping to heal a split that had been visibly widening since 1959, or at least strengthening the Soviet position in the Communist world by showing that Moscow was capable of bold action in support of a Communist revolution; (2) radically redefining the setting in which the Berlin problem could be reopened after the American congressional elections in November; and (3) dealing the United States a tremendous political blow.[42]

In spite of the persuasiveness of these arguments, this hypothesis ignores five key aspects of the situation.

First, as Robert McNamara wondered publicly on several occasions, why did the Soviet Union need to probe the firmness of American intentions any further after the strong American stand on Berlin in 1961? Why another test?

Second, the size and character of the Soviet weapon deployment were well beyond what was needed for a mere political probe. To challenge American intentions and firmness, even a few MRBMs, threatening the entire southeastern United States (including Washington) should suffice. What could the IRBMs possibly add to the achievement of this objective, or the planned deployment of submarine-launched ballistic missiles?

Third, the deployment of MRBMs, IRBMs, and plans for a nuclear submarine base jeopardized the essential requirement for a successful move on the Cold War chessboard: namely, that it be a *fait accompli*. A smaller, tailored nuclear deployment that became operational before it was discovered could indeed have given the Soviet Union a Cuban enclave no less defensible than the Western enclave in Berlin. But the specific features of the deployment undermined this objective.

Soviet SS-4 medium range ballistic missiles (MRBMs) being paraded through Red Square. These were the first type of nuclear ballistic missiles deployed and discovered in Cuba. *Source:* Itar-Tass/Sovfoto.

Fourth, why launch such a provocative probe of American intentions at that moment, in the autumn of 1962? Granted, America might be humbled. But was there some particular reason to try and humble the Americans at that particular time? What tangible gains could justify the risks?

Finally, why choose Cuba as the location of the probe? At no point on the globe outside the continental United States were the Soviets so militarily disadvantaged vis-à-vis the United States as in the Caribbean. If the Soviet probe provoked a forceful American riposte, a vivid Soviet defeat would make the whole venture counterproductive. Moscow would then be the big loser, not Washington.

Hypothesis 3: Missile Power

At the first meeting with his advisers, on the morning of October 16, the very first speculation about Soviet motives came from President Kennedy. He pointed to the strategic balance of power. "Must be some major reason for the Russians to set this up," he mused. "Must be that they're not satisfied with their ICBMs." The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Maxwell Taylor, thought Kennedy's guess was on target.[43]

Knowing nothing about the government of the Soviet Union, or its leaders, an analyst could have gotten quite far by examining objective facts. Imagine a strategic analyst from Mars who could read newspapers and observe the military forces deployed and being developed by the two sides. Starting only with the presumption that the goals of each state included survival and avoidance of extreme coercion by the other, and objective facts about current and projected strategic nuclear forces of each, this analyst would have put higher odds on the Soviet player's moving missiles to Cuba than did Sherman Kent's Office of National Estimates. Objectively, the Soviet Union faced a serious and widening "window of vulnerability"—to borrow a phrase that the Committee on the Present Danger made vivid in describing the threat to the U.S. in the American politics of the late 1970s and early 1980s. Specifically, the Soviet Union faced circumstances in 1962 in which the U.S. might have had, or might have believed it had, a "splendid first strike" capability against the Soviet Union. As described by Herman Kahn in his best-selling 1960 analysis, *On Thermonuclear War,* a splendid first strike capability exists when State A can, by striking first, destroy State B's capability to retaliate against State A's homeland. [44]

First, consider the brute facts. For a combination of technical and budgetary reasons, the Soviet government found itself in 1962 with only 20 ICBMs (intercontinental ballistic missiles with ranges of more than 5, 000 miles) capable of launching nuclear warheads that could reach American territory from bases inside the Soviet Union. About these missiles' technical reliability and accuracy, they had well-founded doubts. A successor generation of ICBMs would not become operational before 1964. In addition, Soviet strategic forces included only about six submarines with submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs). The only strategic nuclear submarine base for Soviet submarines was in the northern Kola Peninsula, 7,000 miles from U.S. shores. Since the relatively crude early missiles deployed by these submarines had a range of less than 600 miles, Soviet SLBM forces could not maintain regular patrols in areas from which their weapons could be launched against the U.S. Moreover, the long route to the launch area created significant vulnerabilities to detection and destruction by U.S. anti-submarine forces (as was demonstrated when submarines actually moved into the Atlantic during the Cuban missile crisis). The Soviet Union's best hope for threatening the U.S. homeland was its fleet of

approximately 200 long range bombers. Though U.S. air defense capabilities were ragged, even here a cautious planner would worry. Because of their range, the absence of forward bases from which they could be launched, and the lack of a capacity to refuel aircraft en route, bombers launched against the U.S. would be sent on a mission with little or no possibility of returning home, and could be plausibly intercepted by U.S. air defenses at various points along a 7,000 mile route.

The bulk of the Soviet nuclear capability consisted not of long range nuclear threats to the U.S., but rather of the medium and intermediate-range ballistic missiles (MRBMs and IRBMs). These missiles worked well and had been produced in the hundreds. From the Soviet homeland they could hit American allies, but not America (a fact that had framed strategic debates in Western Europe about the need for their own nuclear forces). There were also shorter range bombers carrying nuclear bombs, but again they could only strike America's allies.

With these assets, in 1962, Soviet leaders confronted a U.S. strategic nuclear arsenal of at least 180 ICBMs, 12 Polaris submarines (each carrying 12 missiles), and 630 strategic bombers stationed not only in the U.S., but also in Europe and Asia, from which they could attack Soviet targets from all azimuths. The bomber force was well trained and kept at high readiness. The Polaris submarines could constantly patrol within range of their Soviet targets. Moreover, the Kennedy administration had announced in February 1961 that one of its major initiatives would be to *increase* rapidly American strategic nuclear forces, to triple the ICBM force and double the SLBM force by 1964. In addition, as a counter to Soviet shorter and intermediate range nuclear threats to Europe and Asia, the U.S. and NATO maintained hundreds of nuclear-armed aircraft at bases in Europe and Asia and had deployed early, now obsolescent, Thor and Jupiter IRBMs in Great Britain, Italy, and Turkey. The Jupiter deployment was scheduled for completion in the spring of 1962.

To a detached analyst—American, Soviet, or Martian—the consequences of such a strategic balance were calculable and chilling. Strategic nuclear war planners distinguish between "first strike" and "second strike" scenarios in terms of who attacks first. With the strategic nuclear capabilities each had in

1962, and would have in 1963, rational Soviet planners could never have an incentive to strike first, but what about rational U.S. planners? Could they hope by a preemptive attack to destroy and disable altogether the Soviet capacity to respond against the U.S.? The horrific consequences of such an act that willfully destroyed tens of millions of Soviet citizens, as well as irreducible uncertainties about whether such a first strike could prove 100 percent effective, made any such decision highly unlikely—even when one side had significant strategic superiority.

But war planners must consider extreme cases. What about a case in which leaders judged nuclear war likely, or indeed inevitable? Then, to a theoretic American leader, the gains of striking first might seem immense—the difference between 10 million dead or 100 million dead. Add yet another fact, well-known in 1962. American strategy and operational plans for defense of Berlin (a land locked outpost surrounded by Soviet Forces in East Germany) called for initiation of nuclear war if the Soviet Union used its greater conventional military power to cut off or seize Berlin.[45]

Moving beyond brute facts to review prevailing beliefs among strategic thinkers and political leaders, an analyst would note a common perception that bargaining advantages accrued to a state that had a strategic nuclear advantage. In 1962, governments believed: size matters. Significant strategic nuclear advantages conveyed significant bargaining advantages, especially in crisis, because each side knew that the other knew that the advantaged party could force events up the escalation ladder to a level at which its advantages counted.[46] Moreover, it was a well known "truth" in 1962 that the state with significant strategic nuclear advantages would likely be emboldened to pursue its interests more aggressively, and be less likely to back down.

Third, the detached analyst could note the symbolic importance of strategic nuclear weapons in the politics of nations and states: international, domestic, and bureaucratic. Strategic nuclear weapons were seen as the highest trump card, the ticket into the most exclusive club in the world, that of the nuclear powers. Great numbers of nuclear weapons defined the "super powers." The Soviet Union's launch of the Sputnik satellite in 1957 made them first in space and became a source of pride for Soviet leaders. It

also galvanized the challenge for Americans in a race for both space and military uses of missiles. Soviet leaders touted their strategic nuclear advantage, asserting an ability to "turn out missiles like sausages." In response, John Kennedy had made the "missile gap" a key issue in his 1960 campaign against Richard Nixon, castigating the Republicans for allowing the Soviets to achieve a significant advantage over the U.S. Upon becoming president, Kennedy and his secretary of defense announced a massive build-up of the American strategic nuclear arsenal, including a rapid ramp-up of the new Minuteman ICBMs, and the Polaris SLBMs.

In sum, a clear-eyed strategic analyst, Martian, Soviet, or American, could quite reasonably conclude in 1962 that the Soviet Union had a problem, a large problem. Over several years, the Soviet Union could right the nuclear imbalance by deploying new ICBMs on its own soil. But to meet the threat it faced in 1962, 1963, and 1964, it had few options. Moving existing nuclear weapons to locations from which they could reach American targets was one.

With more specific information about Soviet leaders, an analyst would have even stronger grounds on which to conclude that the Soviet government was concerned. Khrushchev focused on missiles obsessively as an index of his country's military power, and for years had claimed to have more of them than he really had.[47]

American knowledge of actual Soviet military developments had been transformed by the high-flying U-2 surveillance aircraft in 1956 and then, after one of these was shot down and flights directly over the Soviet homeland were suspended, by the CORONA program which began using satellites to photograph Soviet territory from space in the summer of 1961. The first imagery from the satellite provided more coverage of a greater area than had all the previous U-2 flights combined. Though it showed the Soviets hard at work on new ICBMs, it provided convincing evidence that their existing ICBM arsenal was tiny. The evidence was confirmed by reports from a well-connected senior Soviet officer, Colonel Oleg Penkovsky, who was a spy for American intelligence.[48]

Outsiders did not know all this. But they did know that in October 1961, the Kennedy administration picked Deputy Secretary of Defense Roswell Gilpatric to give a public speech that would let Khrushchev know that Washington knew about the real weakness of Soviet intercontinental striking power. "In short," Gilpatric concluded, American forces were so powerful that, even after absorbing a full-scale Soviet attack "we have a second-strike capability which is at least as extensive as what the Soviets can deliver by striking first. Therefore, we are confident that the Soviets will not provoke a major nuclear conflict."[49]

Alone among Kennedy's top advisers, John McCone, director of the CIA, foresaw the missile deployment and went on the (then secret) record saying so. He had a "hunch," based less on the abstract calculus above and more on the size and character of Soviet arms supplied to Cuba. Most telling to him were the most modern surface-to-air antiaircraft missiles (SAMs). "Difficult for me to rationalize extensive costly defenses being established in Cuba," he argued, unless "MRBMs to be installed by Soviets after present phase completed and country secured from [U-2] overflights."[50]

Professional analysts at CIA, and others in the government, did not agree with McCone's hypothesis. There were three objections. First, some believed that the Soviets would not see any military advantage in deploying missiles to Cuba. Asked on the first evening of deliberations, October 16, how much the Soviet deployment changed the strategic balance, Robert McNamara replied that, "I asked the [Joint] Chiefs [of Staff] that this afternoon, in effect. And they said: Substantially. My own personal view is: Not at all." McNamara's opinion carried a good deal of weight with Kennedy, forcing Kennedy to reconsider his initial supposition that focused on ICBM strength. But McNamara's was a minority view. National Security Adviser McGeorge Bundy commented later in the same meeting, echoing State Department officials, that: "I'm sure his [Khrushchev's] generals have been telling him for a year and a half that he was missing a golden strategic opportunity to add to his strategic capability."[51]

As the full size of the Soviet deployment became apparent in the next few days, disagreement over its military significance faded from view. The missile power hypothesis was supported by lower-level experts across the

U.S. government. They noted that the ability to launch 40 missiles against the United States from Cuba (with a reload capability to fire more) would increase Soviet missile striking power against the United States by at least 50 percent. More accurately than he knew, Dean Rusk later explained to other members of the National Security Council that a deployment "of this magnitude is not something that we can brush aside, simply because the Soviets have some other missiles that can also reach the United States. The fact is that . . . the number of missiles that launch in these sites would double the known missile strength the Soviet Union has to reach this country."[52]

But there was a second objection. The estimate by Sherman Kent and his interagency panel of intelligence analysts had conceded the military significance of the missiles. They just did not believe that a sensible Soviet government would accept the extraordinary risk such a venture entailed. Specifically, the initiative's success depended on effecting a *fait accompli* without discovery.

Third, McCone's hunch did not give adequate attention to the "Cuban defense" hypothesis. The SAM deployments that McCone found so significant were authorized by the original April Presidium decisions— decisions made to assist Cuba in defending itself, prior to any consideration of nuclear missiles. Thus the behavior he observed, and his chain of inference, could have been wrong.

John McCone. *Source:* UPI/Corbis-Bettmann.

We now know that Khrushchev first asked key advisers about the idea of deploying ballistic missiles to Cuba a week or two after the April decisions on defensive aid to Cuba. One adviser with whom he discussed this was Defense Minister Rodion Malinovsky.[53] After hearing Malinovsky's gloomy report on the development of Soviet ICBMs able to reach America from Russia, Khrushchev suggested the shortcut of deploying MRBMs and/or IRBMs to Cuba. "Why not throw a hedgehog at Uncle Sam's pants?"[54]

Thus from Khrushchev's perspective: "You [Americans] had such a thing as a position of strength, and our inferior position was impossible to us."[55] Moreover, in reconstructing the timeline of decisions, it is essential to note what else was happening at this time. In March and April 1962, one aspect of the nuclear standoff that certainly engaged Khrushchev's full attention was an intense set of negotiations, centered in Geneva, about the possibility of banning further test explosions of nuclear weapons. The talks failed. The U.S. then proceeded with a series of test blasts in the Pacific. The Soviets saw the renewed American testing not only as a way of further improving America's nuclear arsenal, but also of advertising America's advantage. It was at this time that Khrushchev began privately exploring the idea of deploying missiles to Cuba.[56]

President John F. Kennedy and Dean Rusk. *Source:* UPI/Corbis-Bettmann.

To these weighty considerations an ironic coincidence in timing almost seems an aside. The long-delayed deployment of 15 Jupiter intermediate-range ballistic missiles at five launch sites in Turkey was finally reaching completion. The first of the five launch sites was set up in November 1961, the last in March 1962. The Soviets had known about the planned deployment for several years, and probably knew that the last of the missiles had arrived. For them, it would have been the obnoxious culmination of an old irritant. Moscow had complained loudly, especially during 1958–1959, when NATO announced its decision to deploy these missiles. There is no evidence that Soviet planners attached any particular strategic significance to the older systems. Militarily, the nuclear-armed U.S. airplanes based in Turkey were more worrisome. But Khrushchev never forgot the affront of these missiles. The Jupiters were not the reason Khrushchev took the extraordinary step of ordering missiles to Cuba, but they provided a ready rationalization for it.[57]

Khrushchev says in his memoirs that he believed "it was high time America learned what it feels like to have her own land and her own people threatened."[58] Of course they were already threatened by Russian bombers and a few missiles. Yuri Andropov, then a senior adviser to Khrushchev, privately advised the Soviet leader that deploying Soviet missiles to Cuba was a way to "sight them at the soft underbelly of the Americans."[59] Kennedy certainly felt it just that way. "A knife stuck right in our guts," was the metaphor he used in a meeting on October 19.[60]

As one of the staff planners, General Gribkov, later wrote, "In one stroke he [Khrushchev] could redress the imbalance in strategic nuclear forces."[61] The Soviet missiles in Cuba would also outflank America's existing systems for early warning of an attack (which were oriented toward the Arctic and other flight routes from the USSR). On May 21 and 24, Khrushchev formally presented his plan to the Defense Council and the Presidium and, after pro forma discussions, the proposal was unanimously adopted. Five days later a Soviet delegation was in Havana.

As the U.S. only discovered later, the Soviets intended to develop Cuba into a full-scale strategic base. The authorized deployment also included a submarine base in Cuba that would become the home port for an initial

group of 11 submarines, including 7 submarines carrying submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) with 1 megaton yield nuclear warheads. In addition to the nuclear warheads for the ballistic missiles, nuclear weapons would be provided for the coastal defense cruise missiles. The Americans did not know this. Nor did the Soviets plan to reveal that their coastal defenses were nuclear-armed. As Gribkov recalls: "Arcane theories of nuclear deterrence mattered less to us than practical questions of assuring our exposed troops the strongest possible armor against attack."[62]

There remain, however, two major objections to the missile power hypothesis. First, why did Khrushchev feel such extraordinary urgency to redress the strategic balance? Why did he feel he could not wait two or three years for his ICBM force to become much larger and more formidable?

Second, why was Khrushchev willing to run such extraordinary risks in order to solve his problem? This was the argument that Kent and his estimators had made, an argument shared at the time by more than one senior Soviet official, too. One answer, which doubtless had some merit, was that Khrushchev was an impulsive person, willing to take risks another leader might not. But McCone's answer, in his own comment on Kent's estimate, was that Khrushchev had some great political prize in mind elsewhere in the world, and that he would use the missiles in Cuba in order to win it.[63] (That dimension had not been analyzed in Kent's estimate.) Indeed, in the spring and summer of 1962, had they known about Khrushchev's plans, no one at the top of either the American or Soviet government would have wondered long about just what prize Khrushchev might have in mind.

This photo was taken in one of the low-level reconaissance flights that began on October 25, 1962; U-2 photos, taken from 70,000 feet rather than 300, are much harder to interpret. *Source:* John F. Kennedy Library.

Hypothesis 4: Berlin—Win, Trade, or Trap

President Kennedy was not satisfied with the missile power hypothesis. Secretary of Defense McNamara's argument that the missiles in Cuba did not make much difference to the strategic balance initially seemed persuasive. On the evening of October 16, Kennedy wondered aloud to his advisers: "If it doesn't increase very much their strategic strength, why is it —can any Russian expert tell us—why they. . .?" Some of his advisers explained how the missiles might indeed change the strategic balance. Kennedy was still not convinced. Why was Khrushchev taking this risk? Surely the missiles were not so valuable just for their own sake? His advisers moved on to another subject, but Kennedy was preoccupied with this question. He burst out with the comment that "we never really ever had a case where it's been quite this. . . ." Kennedy still did not get an answer.[64]

For Kennedy, at least, a more plausible answer dawned on him shortly afterward. It must be Berlin. Khrushchev would use the missiles to solve the Berlin problem—on his own terms. At the first meeting, Rusk had voiced the suspicion that "Berlin is very much involved in this. For the first time, I'm beginning to wonder whether maybe Mr. Khrushchev is entirely rational about Berlin. We've already talked about his obsession with it."[65]

The Berlin Wall. *Source:* UPI/Corbis-Bettmann.

In 1945, Berlin had been divided into zones of occupation among the Americans, British, French, and Soviets. As occupied Germany became a divided Germany, the Western sectors of Berlin became a democratic, capitalist metropolis unfortunately located in the heart of the communist East German state. The East Germans considered West Berlin a mortal threat to their fragile creation. For this and other reasons, Khrushchev had decided in 1958 to make West Berlin the pivotal battlefield in the Cold War. He delivered an ultimatum demanding, in effect, that the West withdraw from Berlin. After a period of intense confrontation with the Eisenhower administration, Khrushchev had agreed to lift the ultimatum in anticipation of a 1960 summit with Eisenhower. The planned summit was then cancelled after an American U-2 reconnaissance aircraft was shot down over the Soviet Union.

Khrushchev had renewed the ultimatum to Kennedy when they met in Vienna in June 1961. Western troops, he announced, must be out of Berlin by the end of the year. Kennedy responded with a major buildup of American forces, but he knew that was not enough. In military terms, the facts were clear. The U.S. and its NATO allies could not defend Berlin with conventional forces. Kennedy thought he could deter a Soviet move only by posing a credible threat to escalate a conflict to nuclear war. In August, the Communist authorities built a wall between East and West Berlin. As year end approached, in November 1961, Khrushchev again stepped back from

the brink, to allow the completion of intense negotiations that culminated in talks between his foreign minister, Andrei Gromyko, and the American secretary of state, Dean Rusk, during March and April of 1962. Yet in letting the negotiations take their course, Khrushchev made clear he was not trying to "play better the next fall-back position as diplomats call it." He warned that the U.S. and its allies had to give up their position in Berlin. The Soviet leader's words were fateful. "You have to understand, I have no ground to retreat further, there is a precipice behind."[66]

As the negotiations over Berlin foundered again in public stalemate in April 1962, Khrushchev once more renewed his pressure on Berlin. In Moscow, the American Ambassador Llewellyn Thompson could not understand what Khrushchev was up to. No American knew Khrushchev better or had followed his positions more closely. In fact, the Soviet ambassador to Washington, Anatoly Dobrynin later admiringly appraised Thompson as "the best American ambassador in Moscow during the entire period of the Cold War." But Thompson was puzzled by Khrushchev's increasing pressure on Berlin. "He must surely know our position is firm," he cabled back to Washington, and "it does not seem reasonable that he would wish further to commit his personal prestige which [is] already deeply engaged." And the pressure just kept increasing.[67]

In August 1962, Thompson flew back to Washington carrying a personal message from Khrushchev to Kennedy. Would the American president like the Berlin crisis brought to a head "before or after our Congressional elections" in November? "He did not want to make things more difficult for [the] President—and in fact would like to help him." Dobrynin was told to approach White House aide Theodore Sorensen, one of Kennedy's closest political advisers. Bundy warned Sorensen that "the Berlin crisis has warmed up a lot in recent weeks and looks as if it is getting worse." The Soviets heard from Sorensen that any crisis would be exploited by Kennedy's political opponents. So, in early September, Dobrynin brought word from Moscow reassuring Sorensen that they would not do anything to make Kennedy's life more difficult before the congressional elections.[68]

When Khrushchev met with a member of Kennedy's cabinet, Interior Secretary Stewart Udall, on September 6 he warned that he intended to

settle the Berlin issue once and for all. If the Americans wanted to start a nuclear war, that would be their choice. Khrushchev was earthy and blunt. "It's been a long time since you could spank us like a little boy—now we can swat your ass. So let's not talk about force. We're equally strong. You want Berlin. Access to it goes through East Germany. We have the advantage. If you want to do anything, you have to start a war."[69]

President Kennedy and Soviet Leader Nikita Khrushchev meet in Vienna. *Source:* John F. Kennedy Library.

Khrushchev then set another deadline for the third and last time. In a private letter to Kennedy dated September 28, Khrushchev affirmed that "we will do nothing with regard to West Berlin until the elections in the U.S." After the elections, apparently in the second half of November, it would be necessary to "eliminate this dangerous hot-bed which spoils our relations all the time." Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko traveled to the United States in October and met with Kennedy on October 18 (after Kennedy had learned of the missiles in Cuba, but before Gromyko was aware the missiles had been discovered). Again, Gromyko warned that the Berlin issue would be renewed in November to get "concrete results." "If there should be no such understanding, the Soviet Government would be compelled, and Mr. Gromyko wished to emphasize the word 'compelled'," to conclude a treaty with East Germany that formally liquidated Allied rights. The USSR would also "be compelled," Gromyko added, to take the steps called for by this treaty implying the ejection of Western forces from Berlin. Kennedy had

said he liked frankness, so Gromyko said he was being frank. "As Mr. Khrushchev had said, the NATO military base and the occupation regime in West Berlin represented a rotten tooth which must be pulled out, and no one would be harmed by that." To conclude on a more positive note, if the Berlin question could be solved, "there would remain no other questions on which our two states were at loggerheads, with the possible exception of disarmament."[70]

When the missiles were discovered, Llewellyn Thompson (by this time recalled from Moscow to serve as the State Department's special adviser on the Soviet Union) solved his puzzle. He had wondered in July why Khrushchev seemed to be staking even more of his prestige on a policy that would meet unaltered American resistance. Now Thompson understood. "[Khrushchev's] not a fool—I was always curious as to why he said he would defer this [confrontation on Berlin] until after the election. It seems to me it is all related to this [move of missiles into Cuba]." Kennedy agreed. Khrushchev "played a double game," Kennedy explained a few days later to the British prime minister. "You remember that he kept saying he was coming over here after the [U.S. congressional] election and would do nothing to disturb the situation until after the election. He said that the weapons were defensive, that they weren't moving any missiles there and all the rest. And obviously he has been building this up in order to face us with a bad situation in November at the time he was going to squeeze us on Berlin."[71]

Thus for Kennedy, Khrushchev's maneuver made sense for victory in Berlin. If the Americans did nothing, Khrushchev would force the West out of Berlin, confident that the missiles in Cuba would deter the Americans from starting a war. If the Americans tried to bargain, the terms would be a trade of Cuba and Berlin. Since Berlin was immeasurably more important than Cuba, that trade would also be a win for Khrushchev. If the Americans blockaded or attacked Cuba, Khrushchev could then use this as the excuse for an equivalent blockade or attack on Berlin. "So that whatever we do in regard to Cuba," Kennedy said, "it gives him the chance to do the same with regard to Berlin."[72] Worse yet, Kennedy thought, America's European allies would then blame the loss of Berlin on the United States, since they would not understand why America felt the need to attack Cuba. The

Alliance would be split by a dire Soviet threat, and again Moscow would be the ultimate winner.

As Kennedy saw it, his choice in responding to Soviet missiles in Cuba was not one between provoking a nuclear crisis over Cuba, or no nuclear crisis. He could either have a nuclear crisis over Cuba now, when the onus of starting a nuclear war would be on Khrushchev, or he could have a nuclear crisis the next month in Berlin, when the U.S. strategic position would be much worse and the burden of initiating a nuclear war would be on Kennedy. This formulation of the issue was ultimately the essence of Kennedy's analysis of his predicament to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, on October 19. "Our problem is not merely Cuba," he said, "it is also Berlin. And when we recognize the importance of Berlin to Europe, and recognize the importance of our allies to us, that's what has made this thing be a dilemma for three days. Otherwise, our answer would be quite easy." He went on: "On the other hand, we've got to do something. Because if we do nothing we're going to have the problem of Berlin anyway. That was made clear last night [by Gromyko]. We're going to have this knife stuck right in our guts" when the missiles in Cuba become operational. In bargaining terms, one had to admire Khrushchev's move. "The advantage is, from Khrushchev's point of view, he takes a great chance but there are quite some rewards to it."[73]

Examining the evidence about Soviet decisionmaking in retrospect, we can find a good deal of evidence to support the Berlin hypothesis. Recalling the spring of 1962, Dobrynin notes that "Germany and Berlin overshadowed everything."[74] The previous year, in September 1961, *after* the Berlin Wall had been erected, Khrushchev had established a private, confidential channel for writing to Kennedy, about subjects and in terms that neither felt obliged to share with others in his own government. Figure 1 lists the subjects the leaders thought needed discussion in this channel. Khrushchev's last message before the missile crisis announced his November target for resolving Berlin. After the missile crisis, however, Khrushchev dropped the subject of Berlin from the letters, making only a couple of perfunctory references which Kennedy ignored.

FIGURE 1
Confidential Khrushchev–Kennedy Correspondence (September 1961–October 1962)

Sent by	Date	Subjects (in order mentioned)
Khrushchev	9/29/61	Berlin, Laos
Kennedy	10/16/61	Berlin, Laos
Khrushchev	11/9/61	Berlin
Khrushchev	11/10/61	Laos, Vietnam
Kennedy	11/16/61	Laos, Vietnam
Kennedy	12/2/61	Berlin
Khrushchev	12/13/61	Berlin
Khrushchev	1/16/62[1]	Berlin
Kennedy	2/15/62	Berlin
Khrushchev	3/10/62	Berlin, nuclear testing[2]
Kennedy	6/5/62	Berlin
Khrushchev	7/5/62	Berlin
Kennedy	7/17/62	Berlin
Khrushchev	9/4/62	Nuclear testing
Kennedy	9/15/62	Nuclear testing
Khrushchev	9/28/62	Nuclear testing, Berlin, Cuba, surveillance of Soviet ships, U-2 intrusion into Soviet airspace, Berlin again
Kennedy	10/8/62	Nuclear testing

[1] Approximately.
[2] Khrushchev states he is raising the subject only because Robert Kennedy had raised it in an oral communication.

Source: FRUS 1961–1963, vol. 6, *Kennedy-Khrushchev Exchanges*, which was checked against holdings in Russian archives.

But in the spring of 1962, from Khrushchev's perspective, he had let a highly publicized deadline for results slip once again. Khrushchev's political standing at home and in the Communist world was already jeopardized by the failure or retraction of several of his most important initiatives in fiscal and agricultural policy.[75] The Americans seemed to think they were strong enough to threaten credibly to start a nuclear war if the Soviets used their local military superiority to squeeze the Western position in Berlin. To Khrushchev, Washington's willingness to threaten such a war "can rest—excuse my harsh judgments—only on the megalomania, on an intention to act from the position of strength."[76]

In April and early May 1962, as Khrushchev was finalizing his decision to send missiles to Cuba, he was confronting an enormous problem with Berlin. He had let the deadline in his 1958 ultimatum pass with the promise of successful negotiations. The promise had gone unfulfilled. He had then let his 1961 deadline pass, again with the promise of negotiations. By the end of March 1962, when Rusk and Gromyko were stalemated, and certainly by late April, it was clear that those negotiations had now failed, too. The failure was being publicly acknowledged. He was feeling unrelenting pressure from the East German comrades, who advocated tougher Soviet policy, urging escalation.[77]

On May 12, at a critical moment in Khrushchev's reflection about sending missiles to Cuba, the Soviet leader had an opportunity—the first in months—to talk with someone from Kennedy's White House. He took it, spending fourteen hours over two days with Kennedy's press secretary, Pierre Salinger. The central issue was Berlin, which seemed almost an obsession, fused together with issues of missile power. Kennedy had just given a press interview in which he had acknowledged that the U.S. might need to use nuclear weapons first in order to defend areas of vital interest. Kennedy was alluding to Berlin, and gradual escalation—flexible response—not a general preemptive attack. Khrushchev knew that. But he was angry about Kennedy's press remarks. "[N]ot a single fool wants to fight over West Berlin." The United States needed Berlin "like a dog needs five legs." Khrushchev said, "The key is in the hands of President Kennedy, because he will have to fire the first shot." The Soviet Union, he added forcefully, was "ready to meet this strike." Perhaps Khrushchev was not so confident. The next day he left for the trip to Bulgaria during which, by his own account, he made up his mind to send the missiles to Cuba. Nine days later the Kremlin's Defense Council ratified the decision.[78]

What were Khrushchev's options for resolving his Berlin problem? Khrushchev could walk away from the issue. But he had ostentatiously set an agenda and past deadlines to which he had fully committed his waning prestige. He could accept an interim settlement, more or less the status quo. Kennedy had offered such a settlement (infuriating West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer) but Khrushchev had already rejected it. Or Khrushchev could choose to renew the confrontation, hopefully under more

advantageous circumstances. The Soviet leader had already rejected the first two choices. The Americans stood by what he called their "policy of strength" on Berlin.[79]

In March 1962, as his new ambassador was leaving for Washington, Khrushchev told Dobrynin that the Berlin question was the principal issue in Soviet-American relations. The American belief in their supposed nuclear superiority was making them act, as Khrushchev put it, "particularly arrogant." Khrushchev concluded, "It's high time their long arms were cut shorter." He liked Kennedy and thought of him as a man of character. Yet, Dobrynin recalls, Khrushchev "did not conceal his belief that putting pressure on Kennedy might bring us some succes."[80]

Khrushchev certainly needed a success. As James Richter observed, "Khrushchev's domestic position set the stage for his foreign policy behavior. He needed a foreign policy success more than ever. The mounting difficulties in his domestic programs discredited his arguments that he could lead the Soviet Union to a rapid victory over the United States in the economic competition, even as the increased strains on capital investment reinforced his incentive to save on defense spending.[81]

Against this backdrop, which conditioned Khrushchev's evaluation of all his options, the missile power and Berlin hypotheses offer the most satisfactory explanation of the thinking behind the Soviet move to send nuclear missiles to Cuba. Khrushchev would gain a quick, relatively cheap, boost to Soviet missile power. The Berlin crisis, he apparently reasoned, might be pressed to a successful conclusion. Foreign policy triumph in hand, Khrushchev could now offer Kennedy the "radical" improvement in superpower relations that he had promised. He could return, too, to his hopes for Soviet domestic renewal, now better able to move resources from defense and heavy industry to the needs of his people. "The Cuban missile venture," Richter concluded, "offered him the prospect, however slim, that he could emerge from this situation and salvage his already declining authority."[82]

The defense of Cuba was a constant consideration in the background. But it is notable that, during his October 18 meeting with Gromyko, Kennedy

twice said his government did not intend to invade Cuba and freely offered to pledge that there would be no invasion of Cuba, either by refugees or by U.S. forces. Knowing what was happening and what mattered to Khrushchev, Gromyko ignored Kennedy's offer and did not even consider it important enough to mention in his cable to Khrushchev reporting on the meeting.[83]

But it must be acknowledged that the missile power and Berlin hypotheses, as well as the others considered above, fail to account for many other features of what the Soviets actually did. First, each of the four hypotheses assumes that the Soviet decision to emplace missiles led to a plan for implementing that decision, by installing air defenses first to protect the bases and deter photographic reconnaissance, and then sending in nuclear weapons. But Soviet actions appeared inconsistent with this reconstructed plan. It appeared to the Americans that the MRBMs were installed *before* the cover of surface-to-air missiles was in place. Kennedy's adviser and speechwriter, Theodore Sorensen, expressed forcefully the bewilderment of the White House over this fact: "Why the Soviets failed to coordinate this timing is still inexplicable."[84] We now know that in fact the Soviet Union did install the air defense cover on time, before the missiles were put in place, in order to shield the missiles from being discovered. Why, then, did the Soviet forces in Cuba permit the U-2 to fly over Cuba and spot the missiles?

Khrushchev's grand plan for unveiling his *fait accompli* presents a second difficulty. He planned to visit the U.S. and announce the true situation in the second half of November. Presumably by then the installation of the missiles would be complete. But even on the round-the-clock construction schedule adopted after the U.S. announcement that the missiles had been discovered, only the MRBMs would be in place. The IRBM complexes would not have achieved operational readiness until December.[85] This further failure of coordination is difficult to understand.

A third puzzle arises about the Soviet omission of camouflage at the missile sites. During the crisis, Thompson thought at one point that the Soviets had wanted the Americans to discover the missiles during construction. "It's so easy to camouflage these things, or hide them in the woods. Why didn't

they do it in the first place? They surely expected us to see them at some stage."[86] How else can one explain the fact that the missile sites were constructed in the configuration that was standard in the Soviet Union? At the White House meeting on the evening of October 16, the intelligence briefer explained that they could spot the launchers, in part, because "they have a four-in-line deployment pattern . . . which is identical . . . representative of the deployments that we note in the Soviet Union for similar missiles."[87] But a Soviet desire to be found out hardly squares with the extensive and effective camouflage and deception that characterized transport of the missiles to Cuba and from the docks to the sites.

Finally, why did the Soviet Union persist in the face of Kennedy's repeated warnings? Alexander George and Richard Smoke seek to explain the failure of deterrence in this case as an example of a *fait accompli*. In such situations, the initiator of the action being deterred (Khrushchev) believes that no commitment exists against his intended action and that the action can be accomplished before the defender has the time or opportunity to establish a commitment and make it credible.[88] Are George and Smoke right? Was the American signal too faint, or not heard? Was the warning not credible? How could the Soviets have believed that Kennedy would not react to their move?

Khrushchev did not ask his ambassador in Washington or any other known experts on the United States for a considered analysis of his judgement. The foreign minister, Gromyko, later wrote that he had warned Khrushchev privately that "putting our missiles in Cuba would cause a political explosion in the United States. I am absolutely certain of that, and this should be taken into account." When offering this assessment, he feared Khrushchev might "fly into a rage," but there was no reaction. According to Gromyko's account, Khrushchev was simply unmoved by this advice. His ambassador, Dobrynin, later complained that Khrushchev "grossly misunderstood the psychology of his opponents. Had he asked the embassy beforehand, we could have predicted the violent American reaction to his adventure once it became known. It is worth noting that Castro understood this. . . . But Khrushchev wanted to spring a surprise on Washington; it was he who got the surprise in the end when his secret plan was uncovered."[89]

Why Did the United States Respond to the Missile Deployment with a Blockade?

The U.S. response to the Soviet Union's emplacement of missiles in Cuba can be understood in strategic terms as simple value-maximizing escalation. American nuclear superiority could be counted on to paralyze Soviet nuclear power. Soviet use of nuclear weapons in response to American use of lower levels of violence would be wildly irrational, since it would mean virtual destruction of the Soviet Communist system and the Russian nation. In the Caribbean, American superiority was overwhelming: it could be initiated at a low level while threatening, with high credibility, an ascending sequence of steps short of the nuclear threshold. All that was required was for the United States to use its strategic and local superiority in a way that demonstrated American determination to see the missiles removed, while at the same time allowing Moscow time and room to retreat without humiliation. The naval blockade (euphemistically called a quarantine to circumvent the niceties of international law) did just that.

The United States had thought about logical Soviet countermoves, especially on Berlin. By not attacking Cuba, the U.S. avoided inviting an attack on Berlin. President Kennedy overruled suggestions that the blockade should be extended to the necessities of life in Cuba, reasoning that therefore the Soviets might be less likely to reciprocate with an identical blockade of Berlin and the danger of an escalation to war would be reduced.[90] A Soviet blockade to keep nuclear arms and materials out of Berlin would be meaningless since the U.S. was not shipping such weapons into Berlin.

The process by which the U.S. government selected the blockade exemplified this logic. Informed of the presence of Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba, the president assembled his most trusted advisers. The principal members of this group, which was later christened the Executive Committee of the National Security Council (ExCom), included Attorney General Robert Kennedy, Secretary of State Rusk, Secretary of Defense McNamara, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Taylor, CIA Director McCone, Secretary of the Treasury Douglas Dillon, National

Security Adviser Bundy, Special Counsel Theodore Sorensen, Undersecretary of State (Rusk's deputy) George Ball, Deputy Secretary of Defense Roswell Gilpatric, Deputy Undersecretary of State U. Alexis Johnson, Ambassador at Large for Soviet Affairs Thompson, Assistant Secretary of State Edwin Martin and State policy planner Walt Rostow, and Assistant Secretary of Defense Paul Nitze. Vice President Lyndon Johnson also sat in on almost all of the key White House meetings. UN ambassador and former presidential candidate Adlai Stevenson came to Washington and joined a few of the White House sessions, as did former Defense Secretary Robert Lovett. Former Secretary of State Dean Acheson gave private advice to Kennedy and attended some meetings at the State Department, but did not attend any ExCom meetings at the White House.

President Kennedy's "Executive Committee," meeting in the Cabinet Room during the Cuban missile crisis. The President is seated in front of the flag. To his right are Secretary of State Dean Rusk and Under Secretary of State George Ball. In front of the fireplace, with his face hidden, is Director of Central Intelligence John McCone. On McCone's right are Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs U. Alexis Johnson (chin in hand), Ambassador at Large Llewellyn Thompson (leaning forward), Attorney General Robert Kennedy (leaning back), Vice President Lyndon Johnson (leaning forward and almost hidden from view).Directly opposite the President is Secretary of the Treasury C. Douglas Dillon. On Dillon's right are two presidential assistants, McGeorge Bundy and Theodore Sorensen. In the foreground, head tilted and back to the camera, is acting U.S. Information Agency director Donald Wilson. To his right, at the end of the table, is Assistant Secretary of Defense Paul Nitze. On Nitze's right, with

his hand on his brow, General Maxwell Taylor. Between Taylor and the President are Deputy Secretary of Defense Roswell Gilpatric and Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara. *Source:* John F. Kennedy Library.

The five days after the discovery of the Soviet missiles were spent canvassing all the possible alternatives and weighing the alternatives for and against each. Six major categories of action were considered, before a fusion of several was finally chosen.

Another view of Kennedy's "Executive Committee": Rusk is standing and so is President Kennedy (almost completely obscured from view by Rusk). Otherwise the members are seated in the same positions. *Source:* John F. Kennedy Library.

Alternative 1. Do Nothing

American vulnerability to Soviet missiles was not new. Since the United States already lived under the gun of missiles based in Russia, a Soviet capability to strike the United States from Cuba made little real difference. The larger danger was that the United States might overreact to this Soviet move and prompt an explosive countermove against Berlin. The Soviet action would be announced by the United States in such a calm, casual manner that it could deflate whatever political capital Khrushchev hoped to make of the missiles.

No one among Kennedy's advisers made the case for doing nothing, except Bundy. Bundy only made the argument on October 18. By the next day, he had changed his mind and became an advocate of an air strike. But on October 18, Bundy's case, as Kennedy summarized it, was "that there would be, inevitably, a Soviet reprisal against Berlin and that this would divide our alliances and we would bear the responsibility. He felt we would be better off to merely take note of the existence of these missiles, and to wait until the crunch comes in Berlin, and not play what he thought might be the Soviet game."

President Kennedy and his brother Robert confer outside the Oval Office at the White House. *Source:* UPI/Corbis-Bettmann.

Kennedy recalled that "everyone else felt that for us to fail to respond would throw into question our willingness to respond over Berlin, would divide our allies and our country. [They felt] that we would be faced with a crunch over Berlin in two or three months and that by that time the Soviets would have a large missile arsenal in the Western Hemisphere which would weaken our whole position in this hemisphere and cause, face us with the same problems we're going to have in Berlin anyway."[91]

Though he discounted the military significance of the Soviet deployment, McNamara still conceded that political considerations required some sort of action. As he said on day one: "it's not a military problem that we're facing.

It's a political problem. It's a problem of holding the Alliance together. It's a problem of properly conditioning Khrushchev for our future moves." McNamara also alluded to the domestic political ramifications of any American action or inaction.[92]

Domestic politics were certainly a factor for Kennedy. Given the heated Republican criticisms of Kennedy's handling of Cuba, the president was sure the domestic consequences of inaction would be intolerable. Alone with his brother and feeling the tension of the moment, President Kennedy confided that, "It looks really mean, doesn't it? But, on the other hand, there wasn't any other choice. If he's [Khrushchev's] going to get this mean on this one, in our part of the world . . . no choice. I don't think there was a choice."

Robert Kennedy agreed. "Well, there isn't any choice. I mean, you would have been, you would have been impeached." President Kennedy echoed that, "Well, I think I would have been impeached . . . on the grounds that I said they wouldn't do it [put missiles in Cuba], and. . . ." He left the sentence unfinished.[93] Even allowing for the hyperbole of the moment, the comments underscore the sense that doing nothing was not a serious alternative for the president.

Alternative 2: Diplomatic Pressures

Two basic forms of diplomatic pressure were considered. Former ambassador to the Soviet Union Charles Bohlen and Thompson proposed a secret ultimatum to Khrushchev demanding a removal of the missiles and giving him an opportunity to comply without a public confrontation or military action.

Another version of diplomacy, suggested by Adlai Stevenson, would be an appeal to the United Nations or Organization of American States for inspection of Cuba and an effort to negotiate the removal of the missiles with bargaining on both sides, possibly at a summit meeting. The final settlement might include neutralization of Cuba, with U.S. withdrawal from the Guantanamo base or withdrawal of the U.S. Jupiter missiles from Turkey or Italy or both.

Both diplomatic approaches had particular drawbacks. To send a secret emissary to Khrushchev demanding withdrawal of the missiles would pose unacceptable results. On the one hand, this would invite Khrushchev to seize the diplomatic initiative, perhaps committing him to strategic retaliation in response to an attack on tiny Cuba, while waiting for opinion in the United States and overseas to force a conference like that of Chamberlain and Hitler at Munich. On the other hand, the U.S. would be tendering an ultimatum hard for any great power to accept without making a counterproposal. To confront Khrushchev at a summit would guarantee demands for U.S. concessions and the superficial similarity between U.S. missiles in Turkey and Russian missiles in Cuba could not be ignored. The Soviet Union could veto any resolution in the U.N. Security Council. While the diplomats argued, the missiles would become operational.

But why not offer to trade the Jupiters in Turkey and Italy for the missiles in Cuba? Few thought the missiles had any value. The U.S. had asked the Turks to forgo the deployment in the spring of 1961, but the Turks had insisted on going ahead and the U.S. had acquiesced. Still, plans had been developed for replacing the Jupiters, at least symbolically, with the promise that U.S. nuclear missile submarines would be placed offshore, committed to Turkey's defense. Kennedy believed, however, that now was "no time for concessions that could break up the Alliance by confirming European suspicions that we would sacrifice their security to protect our interests in an area of no concern to them. Instead of being on the diplomatic defensive, we should be indicting the Soviet Union for its duplicity and its threat to world peace." Kennedy believed that such moves, at this time, "would convey to the world that we had been frightened into abandoning our position." The U.S. might acknowledge its willingness to withdraw these missiles at some point, but only in the future.[94]

Alternative 3: A Secret Approach to Castro

The crisis provided an opportunity to divorce Cuba from Soviet Communism by offering Castro the alternatives: "split or fall." Introducing the idea, Rusk thought there might be "one chance in a hundred" but perhaps Castro might break with Moscow "if he knew that he were in deadly jeopardy."[95] The group, however, did not think Castro would be

tempted by the offer. Such an offer might also give advance warning of American intentions while inviting some of the same diplomatic entanglement that bedeviled the idea of an ultimatum to Khrushchev. Finally, of course, these were Soviet missiles firmly under Soviet control.

Alternative 4: Invasion

The United States could take this occasion not only to remove the missiles but also to rid itself of Castro. Contingency plans for an invasion had been made and practiced. During the first day of crisis deliberations, Kennedy remarked that the revelation of missiles in Cuba "shows the Bay of Pigs [attack with Cuban exiles against Cuba in 1961] was really right. We'd got it right. That was [a choice between] better and better, and worse and worse." General Taylor replied: "I'm a pessimist, Mr. President. We have a war plan over there for you. [It] calls for a quarter of a million American soldiers, Marines, and airmen to take an island we launched 1,800 Cubans against, a year and a half ago. We've changed our evaluations. Well . . .," he trailed off.[96]

Robert McNamara addresses a press conference during the height of the Cuban Missile Crisis. *Source:* UPI/Corbis-Bettmann.

An invasion was considered a last resort. It was a massive, costly operation bogging America into what Taylor called "that deep mud" of Cuba. It would force American troops to confront Soviet troops in the Cold War's

first case of direct combat between ground forces of the superpowers. Such brinksmanship risked nuclear disaster, including an equivalent Soviet move against Berlin.

Alternative 5: Air Strike

Far cleaner than an invasion would be the removal of the missile sites by a swift conventional air attack. This was the firm, effective counteraction the attempted deception deserved. A strike would remove the missiles before they became operational and could launch nuclear warheads against Americans. Done immediately, it would eliminate the risk that the Soviets would realize the American discovery and act first, concealing the missiles and making an easy strike impossible, as well as initiating diplomatic and military countermoves. The air strike would preserve the military advantages of surprise. Kennedy would make a public statement to the nation and to the Soviets as the planes approached their targets, describing his reasons and warning Moscow against retaliation.
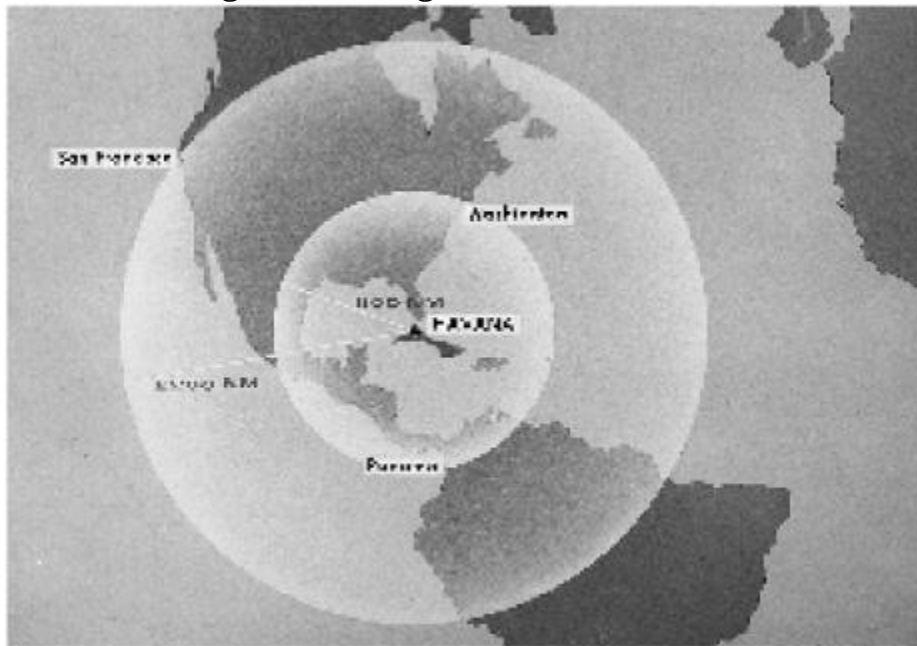
Variants of this map were widely distributed by the media during the Cuban Missile Crisis. *Source:* John F. Kennedy Library.

Kennedy leaned toward this option at the outset and remained tempted by it. Four difficulties, however, blunted its initial appeal.

First, could the strike be kept small and tightly focused? Even if the missile sites could be destroyed, the Soviet MiG-21s and the IL-28 bombers might attack the southeastern United States. Taylor repeatedly called Kennedy's attention to this problem, and the fact that the Joint Chiefs of Staff had just concluded that air defenses of this part of the country were lamentably weak. Americans would be furious if cities in Florida were bombed and the military had not even tried to destroy the MiGs and the IL-28s and their airfields. Adding these targets would significantly enlarge the size of the strike. Nor could any responsible Air Force officer endorse a large-scale strike that did not try, at the same time, to eliminate the enemy air defenses that would be killing his pilots. By October 18, a near-consensus developed among Kennedy's advisers. The advisers were persuaded that the only feasible air strike would have to include the air defense sites and the bombers, requiring attacks by hundreds of aircraft on targets throughout Cuba. This in turn might result in chaos and political collapse of the Castro regime, sucking America into an invasion.

To counter this argument, Bundy and Acheson held out for a narrower, more surgical strike. On October 20, the key day of the decision to go with the blockade, there were actually two air strike options before the president, the small version and the large. Kennedy apparently leaned more toward the smaller version, but other objections applied to either kind of strike.

Second, a surprise air attack would kill Russians at the missile sites—and elsewhere, if the attack were more massive. An attack on the military troops and citizens of a great power could not be regarded lightly. Kennedy worried that the missiles might be launched against the United States, and ordered unprecedented emergency civil defense planning to protect and evacuate major cities. Pressures on the Soviet Union to retaliate would be so strong that an attack on Berlin or Turkey seemed highly probable. Kennedy played out the scenario. If they went into Berlin, U.S. troops would be overrun. Then, someone asked, what do we do? Ball answered, "Go to general war." Bundy agreed, "It's then general war." Kennedy: "You mean a nuclear exchange?" The others agreed. A minute later Kennedy underscored that "the question really is to what action we take which lessens the chances of a nuclear exchange, which obviously is the prime

failure—that's obvious to us—and at the same time maintain some degree of solidarity with our allies."[97]

Third, there was the question of advance warning. A surprise attack, Ball told the group, was "like Pearl Harbor. It's the kind of conduct that one might expect of the Soviet Union. It is not conduct that one expects of the United States." No way could be found to solve the problem of advance warning. To attack without warning seemed repellent. Rusk called it "this business of carrying the mark of Cain on your brow for the rest of your life."[98]

Fourth, the attack might not get all the missiles and would not guarantee against future Soviet deployments. From the start the Joint Chiefs of Staff advocated an invasion, in part to do the job thoroughly. Taylor disagreed. But after intelligence showed the installation of IRBM launch sites as well as the MRBMs, he joined his Joint Chiefs of Staff colleagues in agreeing that both an air strike and an invasion would be needed to deal definitively with the Soviet deployment. This was just the chain of escalation Bohlen had singled out in his influential argument against a no-warning air strike. Bohlen thought "it will immediately lead to war with Cuba and would not be the neat quick disposal of their bases, as was suggested. Furthermore, I am reasonably certain that the Allied reaction would be dead against us, especially if the Soviets retaliated locally (in Turkey or Italy or in Berlin). . . . I feel very strongly that any belief in a limited quick action is an illusion and would lead us into a full war with Cuba on a step-by-step basis which would greatly increase the probability of general war."[99]

Alternative 6: Blockade

Indirect military action in the form of some type of blockade, an option first raised for consideration by McNamara on October 16, became more attractive as the president and his advisers dissected the other alternatives. An embargo on military shipments to Cuba enforced by a naval blockade, however, was not without its own problems.

First, even the term presented a formidable difficulty. Most advisers made the point that a blockade was a hostile act that they thought would have to

be accompanied by a declaration of war against Cuba. By October 19, however, the State and Justice Departments' legal experts had concluded that such a declaration might be avoided, but another legal justification, based on the Rio Treaty for defense of the Western Hemisphere, could be obtained only with a resolution that commanded a two-thirds vote of the members of the Organization of American States.

Second, could the United States blockade Cuba without inviting Soviet reprisal in Berlin? Joint blockades might result in the lifting of both, bringing the United States back to where it started and allowing the Soviets additional time to complete the missiles.

Third, the possible consequences of the blockade resembled those that counted against the air strike. If Soviet ships did not stop, the United States would be forced to fire the first shot, inviting retaliation. Moreover, Castro might attack American ships blockading his island. This possibility, and that of Soviet retaliation, led Kennedy to tell congressional leaders on October 22 that, even with the blockade, "we may have the war in the next 24 hours."[100]

Finally, how could a blockade be related to the problem of the existence of missiles already on the island of Cuba and approaching operational readiness daily? A blockade offered the Soviets a spectrum of delaying tactics with which to buy time to complete the missile installations. "It's a very slow death," Robert Kennedy complained. "It builds up, and goes over a period of months, and during that period you've got all these people yelling and screaming about it."[101]

President Kennedy immediately touched on this major problem with the blockade option after Thompson urged the idea at the White House on October 18. "What," Kennedy asked, "do we do with the weapons already there?"

Thompson's answer was equally concise: "Demand they're dismantled, and say that we're going to maintain constant surveillance, and if they are armed, we would then take them out. And then maybe do it." He went on, "I think we should be under no illusions, that is probably in the end going to

lead to the same thing [a strike]. But we do it in an entirely different posture and background and much less danger of getting up into the big war."[102]

Thompson's answer highlighted the existence of two major variants of the blockade option, which corresponded to the two kinds of diplomatic approaches being discussed. Thompson and former Treasury Secretary Douglas Dillon were the first to propose fusing the blockade with Bohlen's "ultimatum" approach. This approach, also supported by John McCone and Robert Kennedy, would open with the blockade, refuse detailed negotiations, demand removal of the missiles, and threaten further military action.[103]

But other proponents of the blockade saw it as an opening to negotiations. In this approach, supported by McNamara, Stevenson, and Sorensen, the U.S. would seek only to freeze the status quo, not demanding removal of the missiles already there. Meanwhile, negotiations would be arranged, including the offer of a summit meeting, to strike a deal that might trade withdrawal of missiles in Cuba for American concessions on its Guantanamo base in Cuba or its Jupiter missiles in Turkey and Italy. The two different blockade options were presented to Kennedy on October 20.

Either way, the blockade had several advantages: (1) It was a middle course between inaction and attack, aggressive enough to communicate firmness of intention, but still not so precipitous as a strike. (2) It placed on Khrushchev the burden of choice for the next step. He could avoid a direct military clash by keeping his ships away. (3) No possible military confrontation could be more acceptable to the United States than a naval engagement in the Caribbean. At our doorstep, a naval blockade was invincible. (4) A blockade permitted the United States, by flexing its conventional muscles, to exploit the threat of subsequent nonnuclear steps in each of which the United States would enjoy significant local superiority.

The blockade was only chosen, however, after the option was sharpened into the blockade and ultimatum approach on October 20–21.[104] That is, the blockade would be coupled with a demand for withdrawal of the missiles. No summit meeting or other channel of direct negotiation would be offered

to delay or obfuscate resolution of the central issue. The military move of a blockade would convey urgency and a sense of imminent confrontation.

Thus the blockade would be only the first step, a kind of warning shot. Direct military action against Cuba was still being threatened, though the action was being postponed. Still, it was a close call. Kennedy had started leaning toward the blockade option as early as October 18, but on October 22 he explained to his National Security Council, "from the beginning, the idea of a quick strike was very tempting and I really didn't give up on that until yesterday morning. . . . [I]t looked like we would have all of the difficulties of Pearl Harbor and not have finished the job. The job can only be finished by an invasion."[105] Kennedy knew that job might still lie ahead.

Why Did the Soviet Union Withdraw the Missiles?

On Sunday morning, October 28, the Soviets broadcast the message that ended the critical phase of the crisis. Khrushchev announced the Soviet decision to "dismantle the arms which you described as offensive, and to crate and return them to the Soviet Union."[106] The American objective was achieved. Obviously, the United States had done something right. The reason the Soviet Union decided to withdraw the missiles is, however, less clear.

To many analysts of the crisis—particularly to analysts within the American military establishment—the answer is straightforward. The United States possessed overwhelming strategic and tactical superiority. Tactically, American ships, planes, and manpower were sufficient for any possible action in the Caribbean. Strategically, U.S. capability could pose a credible threat of nuclear holocaust to the Soviet Union. Because of this overwhelming strategic and tactical superiority, once the United States credibly communicated its determination to have the missiles withdrawn, the outcome was certain. The president's statement on October 22 and the blockade set in boldface the firm American commitment to force withdrawal of the missiles. All that remained was for the Soviet Union to calculate its remaining move and withdraw.

This explanation has been refined by a number of strategic analysts of the Soviet withdrawal. Thomas Schelling's analysis of these events singles out the blockade as a successful "compellant threat," after earlier "deterrent threats" had failed to prevent Soviet nuclearization of Cuba.[107] The blockade, writes Alexander George, would "impress the Soviet leader with Kennedy's resoluteness, convince Khrushchev that he had grossly miscalculated, and give him an opportunity to resolve the crisis peacefully. . . . And coupled with the buildup of U.S. military forces in the Caribbean, a blockade might generate sufficient pressure and bargaining leverage to induce Khrushchev to agree to a formula for withdrawing the missiles on terms acceptable to Kennedy."[108] Perhaps the most careful, sustained strategic analysis was provided by Albert and Roberta Wohlstetter:

> What was threatened was a local nonnuclear action, a measure of very limited violence, only the boarding of ships. On the staircase of ascending steps in the use of force, there would have been many landings, many decision points, at which either side could choose between climbing higher or moving down. The United States nuclear retaliatory force would have made a Soviet missile strike against the United States catastrophic for Russia.[109]

Why did the Soviet Union withdraw the missiles? *"Chairman Khrushchev stepped down to avoid a clash of conventional forces in which he would have lost.* To avoid this level of loss, he would have had irresponsibly to risk very much higher levels."[110]

The major problem with this explanation of Soviet withdrawal of the missiles lies in its focus on the *blockade* as the sufficient demonstration of U.S. determination. Did the blockade work? Or did it instead fail in just the way that many of its opponents had predicted? For, after all, what did the blockade have to do with the missiles already on the island of Cuba and rapidly approaching operational readiness? The blockade exhibited U.S. willingness to escalate this crisis to the point of risking a local, nonnuclear naval encounter—with all the possible diplomatic ramifications of such a confrontation. It forced Khrushchev to choose among three alternatives: (1) avoid a showdown by keeping Soviet vessels out of the area; (2) submit to

the blockade by permitting ships to be stopped and searched; and (3) provoke the United States to a first use of force by defying the blockade. But if he chose the first, why could he not also proceed to complete the 24 MRBM launch sites, with their 36 missiles and 6 training missiles, 42 in all, that were already present in Cuba?

Indeed, was this not precisely what happened? The Soviet tanker *Bucharest*, which obviously could not be carrying outlawed contraband, was allowed to cross the blockade after identifying herself. An East German passenger ship was also allowed to proceed. A Soviet-chartered Lebanese ship, the *Marucla*, which carried only trucks, sulfur, and spare parts submitted to being stopped and searched. (But a Soviet-chartered Swedish ship defied the blockade and steamed through, and the U.S. chose not to shoot.) Soviet dry cargo ships steaming toward Cuba stopped and turned around, including the ships the Americans thought were probably carrying weapons. Construction of the medium-range missiles in Cuba rushed feverishly toward completion, and they were ready for action by October 27. The facts would seem to belie claims that the Soviets withdrew the missiles because of the blockade alone.

President Kennedy's announcement of the blockade emphasized that it was an *initial* step. No attempt was made to disguise the massive buildup of more than 200,000 invasion troops in Florida. Hundreds of U.S. tactical fighters moved to airports within easy striking distance of targets in Cuba. On Saturday night, October 27, McNamara called to active duty 24 troop-carrier squadrons of the Air Force Reserve, approximately 14,000 men. Thus the blockade was but the first step in a series of moves that threatened air strike or invasion.

The Kremlin deliberations began with news of the impending Kennedy speech. Not yet knowing what Kennedy would say, Khrushchev feared the worst. He thought the Americans might declare a blockade and then do nothing, but was very worried that they would just attack Cuba. Khrushchev speculated about how the Soviet government would react to such an attack. It might turn the nuclear weapons over to Cuban control and let them respond. But, he assured his colleagues, he would not let Castro threaten

America with the MRBMs.[111] In such a case, of course, an American air strike would have been effectively uncontested.

After the worried deliberations about what Kennedy might do, news of his speech and the announced blockade was greeted not with fear, but with relief. From Washington, Dobrynin reported the American move as a general effort to reverse a slide in world power away from the U.S., reflecting fears about Berlin. He warned that the Americans were preparing for a real test of strength. He then recommended that Moscow threaten a move against Berlin, starting with a ground blockade and "leaving out for the time being air routes so as not to give grounds for a quick confrontation." Yet Dobrynin added that Moscow should not hurry to do this, "since an extreme aggravation of the situation, it goes without saying, would not be in our interests."[112] The Soviet leadership was heartened that the Americans had not attacked Cuba. They considered the blockade a weaker response that left room for political maneuver. So the next day they issued a flat, unyielding response to Kennedy's demands.

President Kennedy addresses the nation. *Source:* John F. Kennedy Library.

As Kennedy and his advisers expected, the Soviets did consider a countermove against Berlin. Note the reference to this idea in Dobrynin's cable from Washington. A deputy foreign minister also advanced the idea of countering the blockade with pressure against West Berlin. Khrushchev, however, appeared to realize he was already in very deep water. One of

those present recalls that the idea of a Berlin countermove "provoked a sharp, and I would say violent, reaction by Khrushchev" that he could "do without such advice . . . we had no intention to add fuel to the conflict."[113] In this sense, the Wohlstetters may have been right in singling out the importance of American strategic and tactical superiority. Yet it is clear that other Soviet advisers were ready to consider a move against Berlin.

Khrushchev did order many, though not all, Soviet ships to turn around. Others apparently were left to probe American resolve. Khrushchev's message to Kennedy on October 24 was defiant. In that letter Khrushchev said he would tell Soviet captains to ignore the American quarantine. Khrushchev had also called publicly for a summit meeting with Kennedy.

By the next morning, October 25, Khrushchev had switched from the defiant attitude of the previous day to a tone of conciliation, at least in the deliberation with his colleagues in the governing Presidium. He said that he did not want to trade "caustic remarks" any longer with Kennedy. Instead, he wanted to try to resolve the crisis. He was ready, he said, to "dismantle the missiles to make Cuba into a zone of peace." He suggested the terms, "Give us a pledge not to invade Cuba, and we will remove the missiles." He was also prepared to allow United Nations inspection of the missile sites. First, though, he wanted to be able to "look around" and be sure Kennedy really would not yield.[114]

During the day, the Soviet government presumably received news that the Americans had allowed the *Bucharest* to pass onward to Cuba.

Khrushchev was stirred to action the next day, October 26, by a series of intelligence reports, some false and based on little more than rumor, warning of imminent American military action against Cuba.[115] Khrushchev promptly made several moves. He sent instructions to accept UN Secretary General U Thant's proposal for avoiding a confrontation at the quarantine line, thereby promising to keep Soviet ships away from this line. He also dictated a long personal letter to Kennedy suggesting a peaceful resolution of the crisis. In the letter, he stated that if the U.S. promised not to invade Cuba, "the necessity for the presence of our military specialists in Cuba would disappear."[116]

Kennedy and his colleagues hypothesized that these various hints about a possible trade of the missiles for a noninvasion pledge of Cuba indicated that Khrushchev had made the fundamental decision not to risk a military confrontation in order to keep the missiles in Cuba. On the other hand, Khrushchev had given Kennedy a hint of a deal, not a concrete offer. Also, by keeping the correspondence private, he had hidden his tentative move from Castro. Therefore, he might be continuing the delaying tactics he had mentioned to the Presidium on October 25, while Soviet military activity in Cuba rushed to complete the missiles and ready them for action.

For reasons that are still obscure, Khrushchev came to a judgment by the next morning, October 27, that the Americans could be pushed harder. Perhaps he misjudged U.S. resolve due to the way the Americans were enforcing, and failing to enforce, the quarantine. Khrushchev's son said his father felt obliged to send at least one ship through (the *Bucharest)* and was pleasantly surprised when the Americans let it through. Soviet ambassador to Cuba, Alexeev, later commented that the Americans had really just established a paper blockade since clearly some ships were crossing the line without effect.[117] American officials were quite worried about whether their selective enforcement of the quarantine was sending mixed or weak messages to Moscow. How Khrushchev or any of his advisers actually perceived matters at the time is unclear

Khrushchev convened the Presidium and explained that he thought the Americans would no longer dare to attack Cuba. "It is necessary to take into consideration that the United States did not attack Cuba." Five days had passed since Kennedy's speech and nothing had happened. "To my mind they are not ready to do it now." There was no guarantee against an American attack, so Khrushchev would make another, more concrete offer that actually acknowledged the presence of missiles in Cuba. But he would add missiles in Turkey to the bargain. With that "we would win," he said.[118]

Just as there is little evidence to explain why Khrushchev reversed his assessment of American intentions, there is also little evidence to explain why Khrushchev now chose to add Turkey to the bargaining. Though talk of Turkey was in the air, a subject of media speculation, the Jupiter missiles in Turkey had not actually been a topic, Fursenko and Naftali point out, in

any of the previous Presidium discussions during the crisis. No one had suggested that getting the obsolete missiles out of the way was an important goal.

Had Khrushchev included the Turkey idea in his private letter of October 26, the American reaction to the new proposal might have been different. Neither Kennedy nor his advisers had much use for the Jupiter missiles. Yet bringing the idea in at this point raised some obvious questions. Would the Americans not perceive this as a change in the Soviet negotiating position, plainly inconsistent with the October 26 letter? Surely any thoughtful analyst would have suggested that there was at least a good chance that Washington would, rather than accepting the offer, instead doubt Soviet interest in a negotiated settlement, thereby increasing the likelihood of American military action. There is no evidence that the Soviet government considered this danger. One insider simply remembers that Khrushchev's proposal of October 27 was "advanced in the hope of further bargaining."[119]

Khrushchev then further reduced the chance of success for his latest initiative by deciding to make his offer public. This made American acceptance of it extremely unlikely, especially given the implications for NATO of such a public trade. A public deal might save face for Khrushchev, but no face would be saved if the Americans rejected it—which almost any analyst should have predicted would happen. The Turks, whose attitude no one in Moscow seems to have considered, publicly rejected the trade just as the Americans started to discuss it. Castro certainly expected the Americans to reject such a deal, and the Soviet ambassador to Havana reported to Moscow that Castro was comforted by that very point.[120]

There is no evidence that Khrushchev analyzed this point either, or that any member of the Presidium chose to mention it. One of Khrushchev's staff remembered that the new proposal was broadcast over the radio in order to save time in transmitting it, and that "nobody foresaw that by making public the Turkish angle of the deal we created additional difficulties to the White House."[121]

Perhaps, as some Americans in Washington thought, Khrushchev's actions were not as thoughtless as they seem. Perhaps Khrushchev offered such a deal in order to stalemate the negotiations, not further them. The position was well designed for public consumption, not for American acceptance. The Soviets could then have hoped that the Americans might even back down, by accepting prolonged and fruitless negotiations. There was, though, still the risk to be considered that, instead, the Americans might escalate with new military action. This was, in fact, the way practically all of Kennedy's advisers did react.

Warning signs of imminent combat in Cuba arrived in Moscow during the day of October 27, to wake Khrushchev from his apparent complacency. A message arrived from Castro to Khrushchev. In it, Castro asserted that an American attack in the next 24 to 72 hours "is almost inevitable," probably a massive air strike but possibly an invasion. If the Americans did invade, Castro urged Khrushchev to consider "elimination of such a danger," plainly referring to use of Soviet nuclear weapons against the Americans. "However difficult and horrifying this decision may be," Castro wrote, "there is, I believe, no other recourse."[122] Air defenses in Cuba began shooting at American reconnaissance aircraft. And an American U-2 was shot down by Soviet SAMs in Cuba, and its pilot killed.

Late in the afternoon of October 27, in Moscow, Khrushchev learned that the Americans had immediately knocked down his public proposal with a press statement of their own. Khrushchev was reportedly quite worried about the shootdown of the U-2. He was certainly a bit unnerved by the message that had come in from Castro that had seemed to urge him to prepare for using nuclear weapons against America. A few days later, in another message to Castro, Khrushchev referred to this "very alarming" message in which "you proposed that we be the first to carry out a nuclear strike against the enemy's territory." "Naturally," Khrushchev added, "you understand where that would lead us. It would not be a simple strike, but the start of a thermonuclear world war."[123]

A public message from Kennedy to Khrushchev arrived late on Saturday evening, October 27, in Moscow. It laid out the deal that would entail the

verified withdrawal of Soviet "offensive weapons" in exchange for the noninvasion pledge.

The American government was conscious that it was sending a set of signals to Khrushchev. Rusk was explicit about this. On the evening of October 27, he listed "seven things that have happened today" that "are building up the pressures on Khrushchev with an impact that we can live with." The seven were: (1) a public White House statement in the morning that had rejected the Turkey-Cuba offer broadcast by Khrushchev; (2) a message to the United Nations clarifying just where the U.S. would intercept further Soviet ships bound for Cuba; (3) an afternoon announcement from the Pentagon insisting that surveillance of Cuba would continue despite the attacks on American aircraft; (4) a short message to the UN secretary general giving a negative answer to Khrushchev's proposed trade; (5) Kennedy's public letter sent to Khrushchev late in the afternoon (Washington time) giving, in effect, a positive reply to Khrushchev's private suggestion of the day before, offering a pledge not to invade Cuba in exchange for removal of the missiles; (6) McNamara's press conference calling up reserve air squadrons to further ready an invasion; and (7) a planned warning to the United Nations about the approach of a Soviet ship toward the American blockade line.[124]

Khrushchev opened the Presidium session on Sunday morning of October 28 with yet another about-face in his assessment of the American danger. This time he told his Presidium colleagues that they were "face to face with the danger of war and of nuclear catastrophe, with the possible result of destroying the human race." He went on: "In order to save the world, we must retreat."[125]

In sum, the blockade did not change Khrushchev's mind. Only when coupled with the threat of further action—action in the form of alternatives rejected during the first week for reasons that have already been discussed —did it succeed in forcing Soviet withdrawal of the missiles. Without the threat of air strike or invasion, the blockade alone would not have forced the removal of the missiles already present.

There is a related explanation according to which Khrushchev yielded both to a stick and to a carrot. In delivering Kennedy's letter to Dobrynin on the night of October 27, Robert Kennedy made the American threat of further action quite explicit, and said little time was left. Dobrynin asked about the Jupiters. Following instructions prompted by a suggestion from Rusk, Robert Kennedy said there could be no deal on this point, since it involved NATO. But he said he could privately assure the Soviets that the Jupiters were going to be withdrawn in four or five months.[126] The clever aspect of Rusk's idea was that this offer avoided any negotiation about the reciprocal scope or timetable of a trade, while getting the Jupiter issue off the table as an excuse for delay. It had been the form of Khrushchev's offer that had been so pernicious, more than the substance.[127] The urgency in Robert Kennedy's warning about imminent military action was real. Robert Kennedy would not have uttered such a threat if he thought his brother would make him a liar. President Kennedy himself reflected, on October 29, that "we had decided Saturday night [October 27] to begin this air strike on Tuesday [October 30]. And it may have been one of the reasons why the Russians finally did this [giving in]."[128]

In any case, apparently, Khrushchev's decision to blink was not based on news of either the stick or the carrot in Robert Kennedy's conversation with Dobrynin. According to Fursenko and Naftali, it was only after Khrushchev made his declaration to the Politburo that news came in of the cable from Dobrynin in Washington reporting on the discussion with Robert Kennedy in bleak, ominous terms. The offer on the Jupiters, such as it was, caused no relief. That signal was overwhelmed in the general tone of threat and urgency which just reinforced and accelerated the decision Khrushchev had already made. The staffer who read a summary of the cable to the Presidium remembered how the "entire tenor of the words by the President's brother, as they were relayed by Anatoly Dobrynin, prompted the conclusion that the time of reckoning had come." Khrushchev later told Castro that his warning of an imminent American attack had been confirmed by other sources and that he had hurried to prevent it.[129]

Khrushchev withdrew the Soviet missiles not because of the blockade, but because of the threat of further action. The middle road—that is, the blockade—may have provided time for Soviets to adjust to the fact of

American determination to withdraw the missiles. But it also left room for the Soviet Union to bring the missiles to operational readiness. What narrowed that room was Khrushchev's belief that he faced a clear, urgent threat that America was about to move up the ladder of escalation. In this ladder, America benefited from its advantages in *both* its nuclear and its conventional forces. As McNamara testified after the crisis: "I realize that there is a kind of chicken-and-the-egg debate going on about which was preeminent. To me that is like trying to argue about which blade of the scissors really cut the paper."[130]

Notes

1. This chapter presents a Model I analyst's explanation of the central puzzles in the missile crisis. The purpose is to illustrate a strong, characteristic classical account.

2. This piece of conventional wisdom—namely, that the Soviet Union did not station medium-range and long-range missiles outside the Soviet Union—played an important part in establishing the climate of opinion and consequently the subsequent surprise. See Theodore Sorensen, *Kennedy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), pp. 670–71, 673.

3. On Dobrynin's instructions, see Anatoly Dobrynin, *In Confidence* (New York: Random House, 1995), pp. 69, 74. On Dobrynin's conversation with Robert Kennedy, see ibid., pp. 68–69; and Robert F. Kennedy, *Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1968), pp. 24–27. For the text of the September 4 statement, see Department of State, *Bulletin*, 24 September 1962, p. 450. For Dobrynin's meeting with Sorensen, see Sorensen to the Files, "Conversation with Ambassador Dobrynin," 6 September 1962, John F. Kennedy Library (hereinafter JFKL), Sorensen Papers, Classified Subject Files, 1961–64, Cuba, General—1962; and Dobrynin, *In Confidence*, p. 68.

4. The full eleven-page text, as translated, can be found in JFKL, National Security Files (hereinafter NSF), Box 36, Cuba, General—

9/62. The quotation is from the excerpt of the statement published in "Text of Soviet Statement Saying That Any U.S. Attack on Cuba Would Mean War," *New York Times,* 12 September 1962, p. 16 (emphasis added).

5. *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy,* 1962, pp.674–75.

6. Khrushchev to Kennedy, 28 September 1962, in JFKL, NSF, Countries Series, USSR, Subjects, Khrushchev Correspondence, Vol. III-B—9/15/62-10/24/62.

7. For decision makers of the time, this prescription was exemplified by the quoted passage from Henry Kissinger, *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1957), p. 5 ff.

8. This prescription was also known to American officials, having been prominently developed by Thomas C. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960), [chapter 3](#).

9. Among the best summaries of more recent prescriptions for successful deterrence, see Alexander L. George and Richard Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), pp. 519–86; Alexander L. George, "Theory and Practice," in *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, 2d ed., ed. Alexander L. George and William E. Simons (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), pp. 16–20.

10. In 1950, William Langer and Kent headed what became called the Office of National Estimates. During the 1970s, it was renamed and is, in its current incarnation, called the National Intelligence Council. The quotation about Kent is from Donald P. Steury, "Introduction," in *Sherman Kent and the Board of National Estimates: Collected Essays*, ed. Donald P. Steury (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 1994), p. ix.

11. U.S. Intelligence Board, "The Military Buildup in Cuba," Special National Intelligence Estimate 85-3-62, 19 September 1962, in

CIA History Staff, *CIA Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis 1962* (Washington, DC: CIA, 1992), pp. 92–93.

12. Sherman Kent, "A Crucial Estimate Relived," originally published as a classified article in *Studies in Intelligence*, Spring 1964, published in Steury, *Sherman Kent and the Board of National Estimates*, pp. 184–85. For an extended presentation of Kent's views on the craft of assessment, see Sherman Kent, *Strategic Intelligence for American World Policy*, rev. ed., (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966). A brief but insightful discussion of the craft by one of Kent's successors is Joseph S. Nye, Jr., "Peering Into the Future," *Foreign Affairs* 77 (July/August 1994): 82–93.

13. Kent, "A Crucial Estimate Relived," p. 185. The argument about worst-case estimation is on pp. 181–82.

14. Ernest R. May and Philip D. Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes: Inside the White House During the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 88 (from meeting at 6:30 P.M. on October 16). All quotations are from the second (or later) printing of the hardcover edition of this book. The second, and subsequent, printings contain a number of small corrections and added speaker identifications. May and Zelikow were able to solve various puzzles in the transcriptions as the first printing was going to press.

15. Ibid., pp. 89, 107.

16. CIA, "Probable Soviet MRBM Sites in Cuba," 16 October 1962, in *CIA Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis*, ed. Mary S. McAuliffe (Washington, DC: CIA History Staff, 1992), p. 141.

17. Statement by the Soviet Government, 23 October 1962, in David L. Larson, 2d ed., *The 'Cuban Crisis' of 1962: Selected Documents, Chronology and Bibliography* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1986), p. 72.

18. Khrushchev dictated his memoirs after his fall from power and these were smuggled to the West. These reminiscences have been published in three volumes: Nikita Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers*, trans. and ed. Strobe Talbott (Boston: Little, Brown, 1970); Nikita Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament*, trans. and ed. Strobe Talbott (Boston: Little, Brown, 1974); and Nikita Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers: The Glasnost Tapes*, trans. and ed. Jerrold Schecter with Vyacheslav Luchkov (Boston: Little, Brown, 1990). The quote is from Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers* [1970], p. 493.

19. Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble": Khrushchev, Castro, and Kennedy, 1958–1964* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997), pp. 11–39.

20. Ibid., pp. 51–53.

21. Ibid., p. 71.

22. Khrushchev message to Kennedy, 18 April 1961, in Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961–1963* [hereinafter *FRUS 1961–1963]*, vol. 6, *Kennedy-Khrushchev Exchanges* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1996), p. 8.

23. Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers* [1970], p. 493.

24. Robert E. Quirk, *Fidel Castro* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1993), pp. 400–01.

25. The history of Operation Mongoose is documented in *FRUS 1961–1963*, vol. 10. Evidence on assassination efforts against Castro is canvassed in Edwards to Robert Kennedy, "Arthur James Balletti et al," 14 May 1962 in ibid., pp. 807–08 (and see note 1, p. 807, by the editors); Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities (also known as the Church Committee after its chairman, Senator Frank Church), *Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders*, 94th

Cong., 1st sess., November 1975; and John Ranelagh, *The Agency: The Rise and Decline of the CIA*, rev. ed. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), pp. 336–45, 355–58, 384–89; some additional details are assembled, without much discrimination, in Seymour Hersh, *The Dark Side of Camelot* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1997), pp. 187–221, 268–93. Certainly after 1961 there is no direct evidence of White House sponsorship for the continuing desultory efforts of the relevant CIA official, William Harvey, to find someone to assassinate Castro. However, Hersh argues that Robert Kennedy demanded the services of a CIA agent named Charles Ford, whose job was to visit Mafia leaders around the country to see if they had any remaining intelligence contacts that could be useful in Cuba. The scale of the activity was so low that CIA director John McCone was kept in the dark about what was going on, so low that there is also little evidence to link any real CIA-sponsored action with a known Soviet or Cuban intelligence report that got the attention of Soviet leaders, amid the noise of so many other plots—real and spurious.

26. If Soviet or Cuban intelligence had really penetrated Cuban exile groups in March–April 1962, they would have heard doubts about Kennedy's willingness to back any uprising with American force. E.g., Nestor Carbonell, *And the Russians Stayed: The Sovietization of Cuba* (New York: William Morrow, 1989), pp. 208–09. On March 29, the head of the Cuban government-in-exile, Jose Miro Cardona, met at the White House with McGeorge Bundy. The Cubans pleaded for enough help to invade Cuba and overthrow Castro. Bundy told them that, if the U.S. would support such an action it had to be decisive and complete. That could not happen without the open involvement of U.S. armed forces. "This would mean open war against Cuba which in the U.S. judgment was not advisable in the present international situation." Cardona did not like this answer. Memcon of Meeting between Cardona and Bundy, 29 March 1962, *FRUS 1961–1963*, vol. 10, *Cuba 1961–1962* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1997), p. 778. Cardona then met with Kennedy on April 10. Kennedy, like Bundy, specifically rebuffed Cardona's pleas

for commitment to an invasion. Passavoy to Record, "Topics Discussed during Meeting of Dr. Miro Cardona with the President," 25 April 1962, and Goodwin to President Kennedy, both in JFKL, NSF, Box 45, Cuba: Subjects, Miro Cardona, Material Sent to Palm Beach. The State Department officer running the Cuban desk wrote on April 19 of the "deep sense of frustration and impatience" in the Cuban exile community "over what it considers 'inactivity' regarding the overthrow of the Castro regime." The exile leaders "have become the objects of considerable criticism for having failed to convince the United States to embark on a military operations program." Cardona was debating whether to resign. Hurwitch to Martin, "The Cuban Exile Community, the Cuban Revolutionary Council, and Dr. Miro Cardona," 19 April 1962, in *FRUS 1961–1963*, vol. 10, p. 797.

27. See Fursenko and Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble"*, pp. 149–60.

28. Khrushchev, *Last Testament*, p. 511; Fursenko and Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble"*, p. 160.

29. In the year after Escalante's removal in 1962, up to 80 percent of the membership, in some regions, was expelled from the ruling communist party. Jorge Dominguez, *Cuba: Order and Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), pp. 210–18.

30. Fursenko and Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble"*, pp. 169–70, indicate that fears about Chinese influence in Cuba were more salient than news about the American military exercises in spurring a final approval of the military aid package for Cuba.

31. See the 1992 recollection of Castro at an oral history conference in Havana, *Cuba on the Brink: Castro, the Missile Crisis, and the Soviet Collapse*, ed. James G. Blight, Bruce J. Allyn, and David A. Welch (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993), pp. 85–86; the 1989 recollection of Aragones at another oral history conference, in Moscow, in *Back to the Brink: Proceedings of the Moscow Conference on the Cuban Missile Crisis, January 27–28, 1989,*

ed. Bruce J. Allyn, James G. Blight, and David A. Welch, Harvard CSIA Occasional Paper no. 9 (Lanham: University Press of America, 1992), p. 52; and Anatoli I. Gribkov, "The View from Moscow and Havana," in Anatoli I. Gribkov and William Y. Smith, *Operation ANADYR: U.S. and Soviet Generals Recount the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Chicago: Edition q, 1994), p. 23.

32. See James G. Hershberg, "Before 'The Missiles of October': Did Kennedy Plan a Military Strike Against Cuba?" in *The Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited*, ed. James A. Nathan (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), pp. 250–51.

33. Fursenko and Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble"*, pp. 178–79.

34. Reprinted, significantly, in *Pravda*, February 26, 1962 and quoted in Yuri Pavlov, *Soviet-Cuban Alliance: 1959–1991* (New Bruswick: Transaction, 1994), p. 37.

35. See Fursenko and Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble"*, pp. 179–80; Alexander Alexeev's 1989 recollections in *Back to the Brink:* pp. 150–151; Alexeev at the 1992 conference in Havana, pp. 77–78; and in *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn*, July 1992, p. 54. On the May 21 Defense Council session and the preparation of the formal document for approval on May 24, see the account of one of the responsible drafting officers who reviewed the records of the two meetings. Gribkov, "The View from Moscow and Havana," pp. 7–10, 14.

36. See the 1989 recollections from the member of Castro's Secretariat, Emilio Aragones (the other five members were Fidel Castro, Raul Castro, Che Guevara, Osvaldo Dorticos, and Blas Roca) and from the other Cuban official, Jorge Risquet, in *Back to the Brink*, pp. 51, 26. Their accounts are consistent with those of Castro himself at the Havana conference in 1992, see *Cuba on the Brink*, pp. 197–98; and those of Alexeev, see *Back to the Brink*, pp. 151–52. On Cuban reluctance, see also Pavlov, *Soviet-Cuban Alliance*, pp. 38–40. See also Blight, Allyn, and Welch's

discussion of Castro's real motives for accepting the missiles in *Cuba on the Brink*, pp. 345–47.

37. Gribkov, "The View from Moscow and Havana," p. 13.

38. May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, p. 92.

39. CIA Special National Intelligence Estimate, "Major Consequences of Certain U.S. Courses of Action on Cuba," SNIE 11–19–62, 20 October 1962, in *CIA Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis*, p. 214; the Rusk quotation is from a discussion with congressional leaders, October 22, in May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, p. 255.

40. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., pbk. ed. *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), p. 728.

41. Henry Kissinger, *The Necessity for Choice* (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), p. 1.

42. Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, p. 742.

43. May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, p. 59.

44. Herman Kahn, *On Thermonuclear War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960).

45. For a good analysis of both the apparent potential gain to the U.S. from striking first as well as the more cautious way in which these matters were actually evaluated in the Kennedy administration, see Richard K. Betts, *Nuclear Blackmail and Nuclear Balance* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1987), pp. 159–179. The top secret U.S. contingency plan for Berlin, its seriousness wonderfully disguised by the ridiculous code name "Poodle Blanket," assumed a first phase of diplomatic exchanges and a military buildup. If the Soviets persisted in blockading Berlin, the West would try to use conventional military forces to

break through. If Soviet forces resisted, defeating the Western effort with their larger conventional forces, the U.S. planned for "the onset of nuclear military action" starting with limited uses of nuclear weapons in order to signal the extreme gravity of the situation. For overviews, see National Security Action Memorandum No. 109, "U.S. Policy on Military Actions in a Berlin Crisis, 'Poodle Blanket,'" 23 October 1961, in *FRUS 1961–1963*, vol. 14, *Berlin Crisis 1961–1962* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1994); and Bundy to President Kennedy, "NATO Contingency Planning for Berlin (BERCON/MARCON Plans) and the Conceptual Framework of Poodle Blanket," 20 July 1962, in *FRUS 1961–1963*, vol. 15, *Berlin Crisis 1962–1963* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1994), pp. 232–34.

46. For a classic summary of strategic thinking at the time, see Thomas C. Schelling, *Strategy of Conflict* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962).

47. This point is handled well in William Curti Wohlforth, *The Elusive Balance: Power and Perceptions during the Cold War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 157–66.

48. See Kevin C. Ruffner, ed., *CORONA: America's First Satellite Program* (Washington, DC: CIA History Staff, 1995) and Jerrold L. Schechter and Peter S. Deriabin, *The Spy Who Saved the World: How a Soviet Colonel Changed the Course of the Cold War* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1992).

49. On the Gilpatric speech, see Michael R. Beschloss, *The Crisis Years: Kennedy and Khrushchev 1960–1963* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), pp. 328–31.

50. McCone to his deputy, Marshall Carter, 10 September 1962, in *CIA Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis*, p. 59. McCone was then following the issue every day while on a honeymoon trip to the south of France. He had begun mentioning his fears at White House meetings in August.

51. May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, p. 100.

52. Rusk in a meeting on Monday afternoon, October 22, in ibid., p. 236. The expert judgment included in briefings sent out the previous day for other key leaders was that "sites now identified will, when completed, give Soviets total of 36 launchers and 72 missiles. This compares with 60–65 ICBM launchers we now estimate to be operational in the USSR." CIA, "Soviet Military Buildup in Cuba," 21 October 1962, in *CIA Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis*, p. 259. The experts had judged "that this threat against the U.S. is approximately one-half the current ICBM missile threat from the USSR." Guided Missile and Astronautics Intelligence Committee, Joint Atomic Energy Intelligence Committee, and National Photographic Interpretation Center, "Supplement 2 to Joint Evaluation of Soviet Missile Threat in Cuba," 21 October 1962, in ibid., p. 262. Rusk probably counted reloads in coming to his figure, but in fact he was close to the mark since the U.S. had overestimated the size of the Soviet ICBM force.

53. See James G. Blight and David A. Welch, *On the Brink: Americans and Soviets Reexamine the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1989), p. 238. Khrushchev recounted "a bit lyrically" a story of his conversation with Malinovsky on the shores of the Black Sea in the draft of his letter proposing the dispatch of the missiles to Castro. The story cannot be directly confirmed and neither the draft nor the actual letter are available. A member of Khrushchev's staff at the time, Fyodor Burlatsky, recalls the story from his work in editing the letter. For his recollection of it, at a 1989 conference in Moscow, see Allyn, Blight, and Welch, *Back to the Brink*, p. 46.

54. Dmitri Volkogonov, *Sem Vozhdei* (Seven Leaders), quoted in Fursenko and Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble"*, p. 171.

55. Malinovsky quoted in Beschloss, *The Crisis Years*, p. 332; and Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge: Harvard

University Press, 1996), p. 258. On Khrushchev's prior resumption of testing in the fall of 1961, see Viktor Adamsky and Yuri Smirnov, "Moscow's Biggest Bomb: The 50-Megaton Test of October 1961," *Bulletin of the Cold War International History Project*, No. 4 (1994), p. 3. On the Alsop interview and Kremlin reaction, see Beschloss, *The Crisis Years*, pp. 370–72; Sergo Mikoyan's recollection in *On the Brink*, p. 243.

56. After the Soviets resumed above-ground testing in September 1961, the U.S. had resumed underground testing at its Nevada test site. The issue in the spring of 1962 was above-ground testing, which was much more controversial and garnered much more press attention. For Rusk's report on his talks with Gromyko, see Minutes of Meeting of the National Security Council, 28 March 1962, in *FRUS 1961–1963*, vol. 7, *Arms Control and Disarmament* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1995), p. 411; see also Memcon of Meeting between Rusk and Dobrynin, 23 April 1962, in ibid., p. 443. The U.S. nuclear test series, Dominic I, involved 36 detonations in the Pacific, in the vicinity of Christmas Island and Johnston Island, beginning on April 25. The Soviets followed with a further series of their own atmospheric tests, beginning in August 1962.

57. The best study of the Jupiter deployment is Philip Nash, *The Other Missiles of October: Eisenhower, Kennedy, and the Jupiters, 1957–1963* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); see also Barton J. Bernstein, "Reconsidering the Missile Crisis: Dealing with the Problems of the American Jupiters in Turkey," in Nathan, ed., *The Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited*, p. 55–67.

58. Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers* [1970], p. 494.

59. Oleg Troyanovsky, "The Caribbean Crisis: A View from the Kremlin," *International Affairs (Moscow)*, April–May 1992, pp. 147, 148.

60. May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, p. 176.

61. Gribkov, "The View from Moscow and Havana," p.13. For the Soviet estimate that they had 20 operational ICBMs and that therefore the missiles in Cuba would add greatly to their ability to strike the United States, see the statement of General Dimitri Volkogonov (who had examined some classified archives beforehand) at the 1989 Moscow conference, in *Back to the Brink*, p. 53. Volkogonov's assertion of 20 ICBMs is consistent with American estimates in September 1961 that the Soviet Union would have 10–25 launchers from which ICBMs could be fired against the U.S. "and that this force level will not increase markedly during the months immediately ahead." National Intelligence Estimate, "Strength and Deployment of Soviet Long Range Ballistic Missile Forces," NIE 11/8–1/61, available from CIA History Office. The next such national estimate in July 1962 thought the number of operational Soviet ICBMs could then be as high as 75. Raymond Garthoff, a former senior intelligence analyst and State Department official, later concluded, from subsequent American observations, that the Soviets actually had about 40 operational ICBMs at some point in 1962. Depending on the time at which the measure is taken and the definition of "operational," Garthoff's estimate might not differ materially from Volkogonov's. See *Back to the Brink*, p. 134; as well as Raymond L. Garthoff, rev. ed. *Reflections on the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1989), pp. 20–21, along with Garthoff's memos written during the crisis reproduced on pp. 197–98, 202–03; and, for the most extensive analysis, Raymond L. Garthoff, *Intelligence Assessment and Policymaking: A Decision Point in the Kennedy Administration* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1984).

62. Gribkov, "The View from Moscow and Havana," pp. 27–28, 43.

63. McCone made no effort to censor the September 19 estimate by Kent's panel, but he thought that, "As an alternative I can see that an offensive Soviet Cuban base will provide Soviets with most important and effective trading position in connection with all other critical areas and hence they might take an unexpected risk

in order to establish such a position." McCone to Carter, 20 September 1962, in *CIA Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis,* p. 95.

64. May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes,* p. 106. After Kennedy left the meeting, Under Secretary of State George Ball mentioned to others that the State Department experts disagreed about whether Khrushchev had thought this was a low-risk operation. Some thought Khrushchev had thought he was taking a low risk and just miscalculated. Others, notably Llewellyn Thompson, thought the Soviet leader had knowingly taken a very high risk.

65. First Rusk offered the missile power hypothesis, citing McCone: "Mr. Khrushchev may have in mind . . . that he knows that we have a substantial nuclear superiority, but he also knows that we don't really live under fear of his nuclear weapons to the extent that he has to live under fear of ours." Then Rusk added the quoted point about the relationship to Berlin. Ibid., pp. 60–61.

66. Khrushchev to Kennedy, 9 November 1961, in *FRUS Berlin Crisis 1962–1963,* vol. 15, p. 579; see also the account of West Germany's ambassador at the time to Moscow, Hans S. Kroll, *Lebenserinnerungen eines Botschafters* (Köln: Kiepenheuer and Witsch, 1967), pp. 524–27.

67. Khrushchev to Kennedy, [apparently sent on about 3 July 1962], in *FRUS 1961–1963,* vol. 15, pp. 208–09; Bohlen to Rusk, 6 July 1962, p. 213; for Thompson's puzzle, see Moscow 187, 20 July 1962, ibid., p. 234; and see Secto 50 (memcon of meeting between Rusk and Gromyko, 24 July 1962), 25 July 62, ibid., pp. 248–249. For Dobrynin's comment on Thompson, see Dobrynin, *In Confidence,* p. 63. By this time the sense of impending crisis was becoming general, and America's allies were also anxious to consider contingency plans. See Weiss to Johnson, "Berlin," 11 July 1962, and Secto 13 (Rusk to Kennedy and Ball), 22 July 1962 in *FRUS 1961–1963,* vol. 15, pp. 213–14, 236–37.

68. See Moscow 225, 25 July 1962; see also Moscow 228, 26 July 1962; and Copenhagen 76 (Thompson to Rusk), in ibid., pp. 252–255; for Bundy, see Bundy to Sorensen, "Berlin," 23 August 1962, in ibid., pp. 284–285; on the Sorensen communications see Dobrynin, *In Confidence*, pp. 67–68.

69. Memorandum of Conversation between Udall and Khrushchev, Petsunda, 6 September 1962, in *FRUS 1961–1963*, vol. 15, p. 309.

70. Khrushchev to Kennedy, 28 September 1962, in *FRUS 1961–1963*, vol. 6, *Kennedy-Khrushchev Exchanges* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1996), p. 161; Memorandum of Conversation for October 18 meeting between Kennedy and Gromyko, "Germany and Berlin; Possible Visit by Khrushchev," in *FRUS 1961–1963*, vol. 15, pp. 371–72, 375.

71. For Thompson's comment on October 18, see May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, p. 139. For Kennedy's October 22 conversation with Prime Minister Harold Macmillan (drawn from the British stenographic record), see ibid., pp. 285–86. Thompson's conclusion, summarized in writing for the benefit of overseas posts, was that, "When Soviet action in arming Cuba with offensive nuclear missiles became evident, it was because of developments [on Berlin over the summer and fall] that this Government tended to believe Soviet action was probably primarily geared to showdown on Berlin, intended to be timed with Khrushchev's arrival in U.S. and completion or installation of these missiles in Cuba." State telegram, 24 October 1962, in *FRUS Berlin Crisis 1962–1963*, vol. 15, pp. 397–399. British experts in the Foreign Office's Northern Department submitted a very similar opinion. "Yet if Khrushchev was to bring things to a head fairly soon over Berlin something must be done urgently to rectify imbalance if Soviets would be negotiating politically in an inferior military position. Khrushchev may well have calculated that once Cuban missile complex completed he could frighten Americans off taking determined action in Berlin by pointing to

their own vulnerability to attack from his Cuban base and thus obtain heavy leverage in negotiations on Berlin which he has been planning for the end of year." London 1696, 26 October 1962, conveying the estimate that had been provided to the British Cabinet's Joint Intelligence Committee, in National Security Archive, Cuban Missile Crisis Files, 1992 Releases Box.

72. The comment was in his briefing to congressional leaders on October 22. May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, p. 256.

73. Kennedy elaborated this understanding of Khrushchev's strategy at length on at least four occasions, to the Joint Chiefs of Staff on October 19 and on October 22 in different discussions with the National Security Council, congressional leaders, and Macmillan. For the quotations from the October 19 meeting with the JCS see ibid., p. 176. For the last quotation, from the October 22 meeting with congressional leaders, see ibid., p. 256.

74. Dobrynin, *In Confidence*, p. 63.

75. James Richter and an older account, from Michel Tatu, are quite good on Khrushchev's dilemmas and need to press forward on Berlin, given his increasing exposure to political enemies both at home and throughout the Communist world. For more on Khrushchev's difficult domestic and international position by late 1961, see James G. Richter, *Khrushchev's Double Bind: International Pressures and Domestic Coalition Politics* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), pp. 142–47; Michel Tatu, *Power in the Kremlin* (New York: Viking, 1968), pp. 148–214; and Robert M. Slusser, *The Berlin Crisis of 1961: Soviet-American Relations and the Struggle for Power in the Kremlin, June–November 1961* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973).

76. Khrushchev to Kennedy, 13 December 1961, in *FRUS 1961–1963*, vol. 14, pp. 683–84, 690.

77. See, based on research in East German archives, Michael Lemke, *Die Berlinkrise 1958 bis 1963: Interessen und Handlungsspielräume der SED im Ost-West Konflikt* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1995), pp. 186–90.

78. Salinger was reciprocating the January meeting with Kennedy by Khrushchev's son-in-law, and *Pravda* editor, Alexei Adzhubei. On the meeting, see Pierre Salinger, *With Kennedy* (New York: Doubleday, 1966), pp. 225–37; Fursenko and Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble"*, p. 176–77.

79. McNamara certainly believed that evident American nuclear superiority was affecting the Berlin diplomacy and keeping the Soviets from returning to direct confrontation. He explained the point to Kennedy in detail. See McNamara to Kennedy, "U.S. and Soviet Military Buildup and Probable Effects on Berlin Situation," 21 June 1962, in *FRUS Berlin Crisis 1962–1963*, vol. 15, pp. 192–95.

80. Dobrynin, *In Confidence*, p. 52.

81. Richter, *Khrushchev's Double Bind*, p. 128.

82. Ibid., p. 150. Richter grasps the significance of Berlin but does not integrate Khrushchev's 1962 moves on Berlin into his account. For a similar conclusion about Khrushchev's domestic and international need for a foreign policy success, but omitting Berlin as the vehicle for it, see Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, *We All Lost the Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 58–60. The earlier work by Tatu, *Power in the Kremlin*, is better on the Berlin dimension, though—lacking evidence—Tatu's formidable analysis had to be mostly speculative. For more evidence on Khrushchev's dilemmas in allocating resources see, in addition to Richter and Tatu, the still-valuable older work by Merle Fainsod, *How Russia Is Ruled*, rev. ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), esp. pp. 545–58, 611–12.

83. See Memorandum of Conversation for Meeting between Kennedy and Gromyko, "Cuba," 18 October 1962, in *FRUS 1961–1963*, vol. 11, *Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1997), pp. 113–14; Gromyko report to Central Committee of the CPSU, 19 October 1962, in "Russian Foreign Ministry Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis," *CWIHP Bulletin*, no. 5 (Spring 1995), 66–67.

84. Sorensen, *Kennedy*, p. 673.

85. E.g., Carter to U.S. Intelligence Board, "Evaluation of Offensive Threat to Cuba," 21 October 1962, in *CIA Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis*, p. 237. This judgment was never revised later. The actual missiles for the IRBM launch sites never reached Cuba. They were en route when the American blockaded Cuba and were brought back to the Soviet Union.

86. Thompson in White House meeting of October 18, in May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, p. 138.

87. Marshall Carter, in ibid., p. 79.

88. George and Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy*, pp. 537–39. If deterrence is defined as persuading not to initiate an action, then the American efforts can, alternatively, be viewed as a form of coercive diplomacy: persuading an opponent to stop an action short of the presumed goal. George, "Coercive Diplomacy: Definition and Characteristics," in *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, pp. 8–9. The requisites for this most modest form of defensive coercive diplomacy are analogous to those prescribed for effective deterrence.

89. Andrei Gromyko, "The Caribbean Crisis: On Glasnost Now and Secrecy Then," *Izvestia*, April 15, 1989; Dobrynin, *In Confidence*, pp. 79–80.

90. See, e.g., President Kennedy's remarks to his National Security Council on October 22 in May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*,

p. 237.

91. From Kennedy's summary, late in the evening of October 18, of a just-concluded meeting which he knew had not been tape-recorded because it was held in the residential area of the White House to avoid press attention. Ibid., p. 172.

92. Ibid., p. 133.

93. From a taped conversation in the Oval Office on the evening of October 23, in ibid., p. 342. For a more elaborate reconstruction of this exchange (incorrectly dated), see Robert Kennedy, pbk. ed. *Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1969), p. 67.

94. From minutes of the decisive National Security Council meeting on the afternoon of October 20, excerpted in May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, p. 199, from *FRUS 1961–1963*, vol. 11, pp. 126–36.

95. From discussion on evening of October 16, in May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, pp. 82–83. The idea was revived, in a different form, and seriously considered again on October 25–26. Kennedy and his advisers approved a message to Castro, but it had not been delivered by the Brazilian intermediaries when Khrushchev gave in and so the need for such a message passed. See ibid., pp. 458–62 and 462 n. 16.

96. Ibid., p. 91.

97. Discussion on October 18, in ibid., p. 144.

98. On October 18, in ibid., pp. 143 (Ball), 149 (Rusk). Ball had already sent Kennedy a passionate memo making this argument in writing.

99. Bohlen memo of October 17, read aloud and in full by Rusk at White House meeting of October 18, in ibid., p. 130. Bohlen had

departed earlier that morning for his highly publicized posting as ambassador to France.

100. Ibid., p. 264.

101. From discussions on October 18 in ibid., p. 138.

102. Ibid., p. 137

103. Dillon was actually the first to mention the idea, in a memo sent to Kennedy on the night of October 17. C. Douglas Dillon, "Memorandum for the President," reprinted in Laurence Chang and Peter Kornbluh, eds., *The Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962: A National Security Archive Documents Reader* (New York: New Press, 1992), pp. 116–18.

104. See May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, pp. 202–03, 208–13, which includes excerpts from the October 21 meeting of the National Security Council drawn from *FRUS 1961–1963*, vol. 11, pp. 141–49.

105. May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, p. 230.

106. Khrushchev to Kennedy, 28 October 1962, in Larson, *The "Cuban Crisis" of 1962*, p. 189.

107. Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), pp. 80–83. But Schelling also recognizes the "threat of more isolated action."

108. Alexander L. George, "The Cuban Missile Crisis: Peaceful Resolution Through Coercive Diplomacy," in Alexander L. George and William E. Simons, eds., 2d ed. *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), p. 114.

109. Albert Wohlstetter and Roberta Wohlstetter, *Controlling the Risks in Cuba,* Adelphi Paper no. 17 (London: International Institute for

Strategic Studies, 1965), p. 16. The Wohlstetters also recognize U.S. willingness to "take the next step if necessary."

110. Ibid., p. 16.

111. Fursenko and Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble"*, pp. 240–43.

112. Dobrynin to Foreign Ministry, 23 October 1962, in *Bulletin of the Cold War International History Project*, No. 5, Spring 1995, pp. 70–71.

113. Troyanovsky, "The Caribbean Crisis," p. 152.

114. Fursenko and Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble"*, p. 259.

115. Ibid., pp. 257–58, 260–62.

116. Ibid., p. 263.

117. See Lebow and Stein, *We All Lost the Cold War*, p. 115; Garthoff, *Reflections on the Cuban Missile Crisis*, p. 67, n. 107.

118. Fursenko and Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble"*, p. 274.

119. Troyanovsky, "The Caribbean Crisis," p. 153.

120. Alexeev to Foreign Ministry, 27 October 1962, in set of documents collected by the Cold War International History Project and translated by the Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard (hereinafter CWIHP/Harvard Collection).

121. Troyanovsky, "The Caribbean Crisis," p. 153.

122. Alexeev to Foreign Ministry, 25 October 1962; Castro to Khushchev, 26 October 1962, both in CWIHP/Harvard collection.

123. Khrushchev to Castro, 30 October 1962, in released correspondence at JFKL.

124. May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, p. 616.

125. Fursenko and Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble"*, p. 284.

126. See McGeorge Bundy, *Danger and Survival: Choices About the Bomb in the First Fifty Years* (New York: Random House, 1988), pp. 432–34; Robert Kennedy's account of the meeting is in a memo addressed to Rusk, 30 October 1962, in JFKL, President's Office Files; Dobrynin's report on the meeting, in *Bulletin of the Cold War International History Project*, No. 5, Spring 1995, pp. 79–80; Arthur M. Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy and His Times* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1978), pp. 522–523; and May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, pp. 605–09 and nn. 2, 3, 5, and 7.

127. A negotiated trade would have involved delicate, publicized U.S.-Turkish and Soviet-Cuban talks and questions about reciprocal treatment of Soviet bombers in Cuba and U.S. nuclear-capable attack aircraft in Turkey, along with other time-consuming issues. The result, as some Americans feared, could well have been no result at all—completion of the *fait accompli.*

128. May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, p. 656. On the so-called "Cordier maneuver" Kennedy might have planned instead, see ibid., p. 606 n. 3.

129. Fursenko and Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble"*, p. 284–86; and Troyanovsky, "The Caribbean Crisis," p. 154. After his quick public capitulation, Khrushchev sent a secret message to Kennedy trying to pocket the commitment to withdraw the Jupiters. Dobrynin tried to deliver the message to Robert Kennedy who, furious that Khrushchev had tried to reduce the offer to a formal quid pro quo, threw the letter back at Dobrynin and literally refused to receive it. The letter was later recovered for scholars from Russian archives. See May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, pp. 663–64 and nn. 1, 2.

130. McNamara testimony to the House Armed Services Committee, 12 January 1963, in files of the Office of the Secretary of

Defense.

3
Model II: Organizational Behavior

For some purposes, governmental behavior can usefully be summarized as action chosen by a unitary, rational decision maker: centrally controlled, completely informed, and value maximizing. But a government is not an individual. It is not just the president and his entourage, nor even just the presidency and Congress. It is a vast conglomerate of loosely allied organizations, each with a substantial life of its own. Government leaders sit formally on top of this conglomerate. But governments perceive problems through organizational sensors. Governments define alternatives and estimate consequences as their component organizations process information; governments act as these organizations enact routines. Governmental behavior can therefore be understood, according to a second conceptual model, less as deliberate choices and more as *outputs* of large organizations functioning according to standard patterns of behavior.

To be responsive to a wide spectrum of problems, governments consist of large organizations, among which primary responsibility for particular tasks is divided. Each organization attends to a special set of problems and acts in quasi-independence on these problems. But few important issues fall exclusively within the domain of a single organization. Thus, government behavior relevant to any important problem reflects the independent output of several organizations, partially coordinated by government leaders. Government leaders can substantially disturb, but rarely precisely control, the specific behavior of these organizations.

To perform complex tasks, the behavior of large numbers of individuals must be coordinated. Coordination requires standard operating procedures: rules according to which things are done. Reliable performance of action that depends upon the behavior of hundreds of persons requires established "programs." Indeed, if the eleven members of a football team are to

perform adequately on any particular down, each player must not "do what he thinks needs to be done" or "do what the quarterback tells him to do." Rather, each player must perform the maneuvers specified by a previously established play, which the quarterback has simply called in this situation.

At any given time, a government consists of existing organizations, each with a fixed set of standard operating procedures and programs. The behavior of these organizations—and consequently of the government— relevant to an issue in any particular instance is, therefore, determined primarily by routines established prior to that instance. Explanation of a government action starts from this baseline, noting incremental deviations. But organizations do change. Learning occurs gradually, over time. Dramatic organizational change occurs in response to major disasters. Both learning and change are influenced by existing organizational capabilities and procedures.

Borrowed from studies of organizations, these loosely formulated propositions amount simply to *tendencies.* In particular instances, tendencies hold—more or less. In specific situations, the relevant question is: more or less? But this is as it should be. If knowledge of the tendency prompts the right question, attention is drawn to a variable that otherwise might be overlooked, whether that is the attention of a student, or the attention of a president of the United States.

In spite of this caveat, the characterization of government action as organizational behavior differs sharply from Model I. Attempts to understand problems of foreign affairs in this frame of reference should produce quite different explanations. About the missile crisis, the Model I analyst asks why "Khrushchev" deployed missiles to Cuba, or the "United States" responded with a blockade and ultimatum. Governments are anthropomorphized as if they were an individual person, animated by particular purposes. In Model II explanations, the subjects are never named individuals or entire governments. Rather, the subjects in Model II explanations are organizations, and their behavior is explained in terms of organizational purposes and practices common to the members of the organization, not those peculiar to one or another individual.

When the basic argument of this chapter was first presented, few in political science addressed major questions from the perspective of organization theory, almost none among students of international relations and foreign policy. In the interim, studies of organizations have evolved along a number of promising paths, and scores of important studies have examined issues from weapons acquisition, military doctrine, and budgeting, to deterrence, safety, and risks of war. In the light of these developments and further reflection, this presentation of Model II underlines five additional points.

First, why organization? Why organize? To paraphrase a dictionary, organizations are collections of human beings arranged systematically for harmonious or united action. Or again: "something comprising elements with varied functions that contribute to the whole and to collective functions; an organism." While the spectrum from more formal to less formal organizations includes a grey zone, formal organizations are groups of individual human members assembled in regular ways, and established structures and procedures dividing and specializing labor, to perform a mission or achieve an objective.[1] This definition of organization thus does not include people brought together temporarily for a transient purpose. Consider the difference between an orchestra and improvisation; a football team and a sandlot game; an army and an uprising.

Second, and most importantly, organizations *create capabilities* for achieving humanly-chosen purposes and performing tasks that would otherwise be impossible. As Adam Smith noted insightfully in his analysis of a pin factory, by dividing labor, specializing according to function, and training members of the organization to perform in routine fashion, an organization harnesses the individual behavior of tens or hundreds or thousands to produce a uniform product in numbers unimaginably greater than what would be produced by each of these individuals working independently. As Smith explains, "a workman not educated to this business (which the division of labor has rendered a distinct trade) . . . could perhaps, with his utmost industry make one pin a day, and certainly could not make twenty." But organized with appropriate division of labor and specialization, he goes on: "I have seen a small manufactory of this kind where ten men only were employed . . . but could, when they exerted themselves make among them . . . forty-eight thousand pins in a day."[2]

Third, existing organizations and their existing programs and routines *constrain behavior* in the next case: namely, they address it already oriented toward doing whatever they do. Consider the example of the Chinese restaurant. There a customer can order dishes that he would not be able to enjoy had the restaurant not established a menu on the basis of recipes, ingredients, and practice in preparation. But at the Chinese restaurant, one cannot eat items that are not on the menu, for example, a hamburger or a pizza.

Fourth, *organizational culture* emerges to shape the behavior of individuals within the organization in ways that conform with informal as well as formal norms. The result becomes a distinctive entity with its own identity and momentum.

Fifth and finally, organizations are thus less analogous to individuals than to a technology or *bundle of technologies.* The Chinese restaurant's wok and stove and plates and chopsticks, or alternatively the airline's aircraft, guidance system, and engines with specific thrust that achieve a certain speed for a particular design and weight—these are the hardware that both creates capacities to serve up a specific dish or to transport passengers from one location to another. The standard operating procedures followed by chefs in preparing specific dishes, or by pilots, mechanics, air controllers, and others in operating an airline, constitute softer technologies critical to performance. Like the hardware and software of computers, they both create capabilities otherwise not imaginable, and simultaneously constrain performance that one may desire in the next case, or in the next year—for example the year 2000—for which they were not developed or organized.

Revisiting their classic work on organizations more than thirty years later, James March and Herbert Simon called attention to the difference between two different "logics of action," a logic of "consequences" contrasted with a logic of "appropriateness."

> The first, an analytic rationality, is a logic of consequences. Actions are chosen by evaluating their probable consequences for the preferences of the actor. The logic of consequences is linked to conceptions of anticipations, analysis, and calculation. It operates

principally through selective, heuristic search among alternatives, evaluating them for their satisfactoriness as they are found.

The second logic of action, a matching of rules to situations, rests on a logic of appropriateness. Actions are chosen by recognizing a situation as being of a familiar, frequently encountered, type, and matching the recognized situation to a set of rules. . . . The logic of appropriateness is linked to conceptions of experience, roles, intuition, and expert knowledge. It deals with calculation mainly as a means of retrieving experience preserved in the organization's files or individual memories.[3]

This distinction lies at the heart of the difference between Model I and Model II.[4]

You have probably had the frustrating experience of dealing with a representative of an organization who insists on following some "mindless" routine rather than thinking about what would be sensible, under your particular circumstances. While you may have been frustrated by some encounters with organizational logic described here as Model II, your life may also have been saved by others. The leaders of organizations operating an airline, or a hospital, or a nuclear power station would be badly frightened if a Model I explanation were required for successful performance of normal operations. A major purpose of organizing is to ensure that any of the operators, whatever their unique preferences and gifts, can interchangeably and successfully perform normal tasks on any given day. If you need to know the name of the pilot to determine whether the flight will be safe, or even arrive at all, then the airline has failed (and will probably be shut down by regulators).

Modern society is accompanied by the creation of more and more complex organizations. Routines interact within the same organization. Or they interact between different organizations operating in a more crowded environment for providing services, sometimes redundantly, sometimes in different jurisdictions. These complex organizations also often handle very dangerous materials or perform operations that carry great inherent risks to human life. The basic operating systems, themselves quite elaborate, are

reinforced by safety systems, all with their own "programs." These systems and programs also interact, sometimes with surprising—and fatal—results.

In the following sections we examine developments in the study of organizations, noting the ways in which different scholars account for the peculiar attributes of organizations. Despite their differences, these explanations nonetheless converge in recognizing a separate form of organizational logic, quite distinct from that of the rational actor.

Organizational Logic and Efficiency

Early theorists of organizations, such as Max Weber, viewed organizations as more effective, sometimes even dangerously effective, instruments of rational choice. Among the most remarkable features of current life is how much behavior of how many individuals is influenced by the controlling purposes of the organizations to which they belong. Modern consumer society, with mass production, distribution, and sales, represents the triumph of purposive organizations. McDonald's is a corporate organization with the purpose of maximizing profit by selling readily available meals, especially hamburgers. The corporation has developed standard products with standard operating procedures (SOPs) for obtaining the needed ingredients, storing them, transporting them to retail outlets around the world, holding them in the inventory of those outlets, cooking them for customers, serving them, and commenting to the customer to "enjoy" or "have a nice day." By franchising outlets with handbooks that include SOPs for the design and approval of the facility, its appearance, the equipment to do the cooking, cleanliness, the way food is served, and advertising, the corporation harnesses and harmonizes the behavior of tens of thousands of people to produce essentially homogeneous products (with wrinkles for special markets, if the corporation so chooses) on the scale of billions. Similar accounts can be offered for many other corporations in many countries. Such triumphs of organized purposiveness vastly increase the number, quality, and availability of products and the performance of both products and providers over any unorganized collection of individual amateurs.

Extend the point. Political leaders have created organizations, from navies to municipal water departments, that have proved to be remarkably efficient, effective instruments for achieving given goals—especially if one thinks of the alternative in the absence of such organizations. Hence the rise of organizations in public life. The focus of the new field of public administration, as it emerged in America between about 1880 and 1940, was to promote scientific management for greater efficiency, replacing amateur administrators with trained professionals.[5] A Bell Telephone executive, Chester Barnard, argued in the 1930s and 1940s, with considerable effect, that organizations, combining talents and dividing labor, dramatically enhanced the rationality of public as well as private choice.[6]

From this perspective—which has variously been labeled rationalist or functionalist or instrumental—organizational logic might seem to be little more than a subset of the Model I logic of purposive action. After all, can we not explain the behavior of organizations and their members just by discovering the central purposes they were created to serve?

Not quite. Economists began with the proposition that organizations are solutions to problems of efficiency as actors pursue their preferences. The actors must arrange exchanges and make bargains. I pay taxes; you clear snow from my streets. So far the instrumental concept of organizations seems intact. But as some economists began to note, and warn, bureaucrats will produce more of *it* (whatever *it* is), and seek more resources to do it, than society may really need or can afford.[7]

Many economists and economic historians start from whatever institutional environment a society has developed for economic exchange and focus on how organizations develop in relation to these institutions. Organizations adapt and thrive if they deal effectively with the uncertainties inherent in economic exchanges and if they reduce transaction costs enough to offset the cost of the organization itself. Yet, as Douglass North has pointed out, societies and their organizations may become so dependent on a particular path toward prosperity, the inertia and transaction costs of change becoming so high, that choices for future development become quite constrained.

Having chosen their instruments in the circumstances of the past, they are confined by them as they encounter new circumstances in the future.[8]

Theorists have also pointed out that even an organization that was slavishly devoted to being an efficient instrument of its masters' plan can not simply mirror its creators' purposes. The masters have not confronted the problems the organization must address. The organizations must adapt to those new problems, acting in an environment surrounded by other organizations, private as well as public. This adaptation is another reason why, as they evolve, "policy preferences of organizations reflect mainly nonideological organizational imper-atives."[9] These imperatives are one (but only one) of the reasons why organizations tend to look alike, tend to experience what some theorists call "isomorphism," even if they are operating in very different fields of activity.[10]

These works tend to study private organizations and those in government. Yet government organizations are different from private firms. They are called into being by political processes; their goals—like their masters—are often diffuse. Government organizations are especially burdened by unique constraints; they cannot keep their profits; they have limited control over organization of production; they have limited control over their goals; they have external (as well as internal) rules governing their administrative procedures; and their outputs take a form that often defy easy evaluation of success or failure.[11] "American public bureaucracy is not designed to be effective."[12]

Historians of American public life thus offer a somewhat different picture for the rise of government bureaucracies and administrative power. A functionalist story for the rise of organizations in American governance reads roughly as follows: Problem arises in society; problem is recognized by powerful elites or interest groups; an organization is created, exploiting its superior capacities and efficiency, to address the problem. Yet, at least in the United States, the definition and existence of the problem has been a matter of political opinion; its recognition turns on the contingencies and structure of American political life at the time; organizations may be formed to address some distinctive definition of a "problem" long after (or even before) the problem seems manifest to many observers.[13]

Political scientists have also come to see organizations, once they are created, as something more than the agents of their masters, either in the form of political leaders or interest groups. While it is true that organizations may be established as instruments of one or several purposes, scholars such as Philip Selznick and Terry Moe have illustrated how organizations become active players in defining just how various purposes will be realized in action.[14] Deference to specialized expertise can also mean a surrender of effective control.[15] A dominant political group that can impose its will on everyone may have a strategy for action but "almost surely lacks the knowledge to do it well. It does not know what to tell people to do. In part this is an expertise problem. . . . These knowledge problems are compounded by uncertainty about the future."[16]

Start with the notion of central purpose, as it takes form in an organization's mission. As received by the organization, these goals may be so banal that they can be conceived or framed as a mission for the organization in many different ways. Mark Moore gives the example of how the manager of the Environmental Protection Agency was given the goal of protecting the environment. He and his organization then defined that goal, distinctively, into a mission of stringent regulation of polluting industries. Moore also shows how the manager of a local department of youth services defined the goal of dealing with delinquent and troubled children into the mission of establishing community-based care and referral of children to the least restrictive setting for their rehabilitation.[17]

The drive toward efficiency, toward the optimal accomplishment of the mission, also obliges organizations to develop the special capacities for performance of what James Q. Wilson has called their "critical task," a task that forces the organization to formulate distinctive operational objectives. Wilson illustrated the concept:

> For the German army [at the end of World War I], the problem was the killing power of dug-in machine guns and artillery. The critical task was finding the solution to this problem. There was a technological solution (the tank) and a tactical solution (infiltration). The Germans made use of both, principally the tactical solution. For the Texas

Department of Corrections, the critical environmental problem was maintaining order among numerically superior, temperamentally impulsive, and habitually aggressive inmates. The critical task became the elaboration and enforcement of rules sufficiently precise, understandable, and inflexible that inmates would never acquire the opportunity for independent or collective action. For Carver High School the critical environmental problem was the fear, disorder, and low morale among students and teachers. The critical task was to carry out a highly visible, even dramatic attack on these feelings by a relentless program to clean the buildings, keep them safe, and motivate the students.[18]

Like the definition of the organization's mission, the specification of operational objectives is as malleable as the notion of efficiency itself, when applied to any large, public task.

None of this means that government organizations lack central purposes. The point is rather that organizations participate meaningfully in a process in which several purposes are possible and preferred by nominal masters in the executive, legislative, or judicial branches of government. The organizations influence the prioritization of purposes into a definition of their "mission" and are especially influential when the mission is translated, for a specific task, into more concrete, operational objectives. In that context, the organization may seek congruence between the operational objectives and its special capacities for efficient performance.

The sociologist Donald MacKenzie studied the arcane subject of nuclear missile guidance systems. His most powerful conclusion is that this technology did not evolve inevitably to take the form it has today. There were many possible paths. Particular organizations, such as the M.I.T. Instrumentation Laboratory which became the Draper Laboratory, Inc., converted broad defense goals into the mission of producing superior missile guidance systems. They then helped shape tasks and operational objectives that used these remarkable capacities, defying bureaucratic odds in fostering missile programs with the aid of specialized, like-minded subunits of both the Air Force and the Navy. In theory, national strategy should dictate which weapon systems are bought. "In actuality, nothing

guarantees this. Quite different actors and considerations are involved at each level. 'Stated posture' is a matter primarily for those at the pinnacle of formal power. . . . Operational planning, on the other hand, is much more a military insiders' business. . . . Weapons system design, finally, involves a different constituency yet again. It often involves different branches of the armed services: the Strategic Air Command, central to operational planning, was quite deliberately excluded from the process of the design of early U.S. ICBMs."[19] At each of these three levels, but especially the latter two, organizations had substantial scope to define their operational objectives in relation to the special capacities they already had, or wanted to have.

Once it is apparent that public organizations and their managers are not just neutral administrators of legislation, natural concerns arise in a democracy about whether the real masters are the unelected bureaucrats or informal coalitions formed among a few interested and powerful politicians, affected interest groups, and the bureaucrats. Some political scientists have reacted to these fears by reem-phasizing the controlling purposes, a "rational choice" viewpoint granting a significant measure of control to democratically elected leaders. A key argument in the literature involves just how much effective control is being retained, and how much "bureaucratic drift" political masters will allow.[20]

To perform and to make regular judgments, organizations adopt rules, norms, or routines. Where satisficing is the rule—stopping with the first alternative that is good enough—the order in which alternatives are approached is critical. Organizations generate alternatives by relatively stable, sequential search processes. As a result, the menu of choice is severely limited and success is more likely to be defined simply as compliance with relevant rules.[21]

Organizations exhibit great reluctance to base actions on estimates of an uncertain future. Thus choice procedures that emphasize short-run feedback are developed. Like house thermostats, organizations, rely on relatively prompt corrective action to eliminate deviations between actual and a preset, desired temperature rather than on accurate prediction of next month's temperature. They develop routines for making many frequent adjustments in a variety of relationships with their operating environment.[22]

"The whole pattern of programmed activity in an organization," March and Simon observed, "is a complicated mosaic of program executions, each initiated by its appropriate program-evoking step."[23] These programs constitute the range of effective choice in recurring situations. "As new situations arise, the construction of an entirely new program is rarely contemplated. In most cases, adaptation takes place through a recombination of lower-level programs that are already in existence."[24] A common understanding of these programs and development of the capacities to run them, including professional specialization, are powerful ingredients in shaping an organizational culture.[25]

Set programs and rigid routines are easy to criticize, yet they are indispensable to efficient organizations. Their value is clearest to those who have actually had to get something done, as one practitioner, Gordon Chase, made clear in his essay, "Implementing a Human Services Program: How Hard Will It Be?"[26] The established routines reflect considered tradeoffs within the technological and social context of an organization. They create areas of freedom and autonomy for individual operators by setting limits on all of them. Often the real problem is not the rule, but the premise behind it, or the system to which the rule is coupled.[27]

Organizational Logic and Organizational Culture

Efficiency is not the only impulse pushing organizations toward the "logic of appropriateness." Organizations often behave in ways that seem inconsistent with a purely functional account, even one that acknowledges the idiosyncratic ways an organization might pursue efficiency. "Administrators and politicians champion programs that are established but not implemented; managers gather information assiduously, but fail to analyze it; experts are hired not for advice but to signal legitimacy."[28] Analysts contributing to the "new institutionalism" have argued that organizations create purposes and routines that arise from within, and that are tied to what James March has called "the concept of identity. An identity is a conception of self organized into rules for matching action to situations." The rules both define and grow out of a distinctive organizational culture.[29]Organizational culture is thus the set of beliefs the

members of an organization hold about their organization, beliefs they have inherited and pass on to their successors.

This approach to understanding organizational behavior sees organizations and bureaucrats as more autonomous, with great scope to define their critical tasks in a way that serves preferences that arise out of the organization itself and its managers. While Selznick, Moe, and others had acknowledged that managers could exert a good deal of leverage in defining what they would do, the "new institutionalists" think they do not go far enough in seeing the organization, and its needs, at the very center of stories about public action.

Some of this difference is little more than a matter of narrative perspective. Told from the point of view of Congress, administrators may seem constrained. Told from the point of view of more activist administrators, the constraints are just one of many background circumstances in an environment in which they still make the key decisions. John DiIulio has argued, for example, that the quality of life in American prisons depends more on management practices than on any other variable. It is not society, not politicians, but above all bureaucrats and their choice of procedures that will determine how prisons work and how prisoners live.[30] A recent wave of works by scholars giving advice to public managers may not venture into the theoretical debates of the "new institutionalists" but, by setting up bureaucrats as protagonists with considerable discretion for important choices, they join in putting the organization and its own desires at the center of the story.[31]

The early milestone along this road was set by the book, *A Behavioral Theory of the Firm*, by Richard Cyert and James March. In contrast to mainstream economic theories that explain the firm's behavior in terms of market factors, Cyert and March focused on the effect of organizational structure and conventional practice upon the development of goals, the formulation of expectations, and the execution of choice. This product of the "Carnegie School" of organization theory represented an extension of Herbert Simon's concern with problem-solving under conditions of bounded rationality. Following Barnard, Cyert and March view the organization as a coalition of participants (some of whom are not

necessarily on its payroll, e.g., suppliers and customers) with disparate demands, changing focuses of attention, and limited ability to attend to all problems simultaneously. Bargaining among potential coalition members produces a series of *de facto* agreements that impose constraints on the organization but construct a unique identity.[32]

The development of operational objectives to perform a specific task also influences the organization's culture. Later March, working with Johan Olsen, argues that organizations actually define themselves in taking action. Inchoate circumstances are crystallized in a way that galvanizes the participants and clarifies how they see themselves. The visitor strolling the halls of the Pentagon will see scores of paintings and photographs depicting scenes and events of past actions, some mundane and some heroic. Each represents a decision; the decisions now provide powerful tokens of identity and rules for future action. For an organization, March and Olsen noticed, decision-making "provides an occasion for other things: an occasion for executing SOPs and fulfilling role expectations, duties or earlier commitments; an occasion for defining virtue and truth, during which the organization discovers or interprets what has happened to it, what it has been doing, and what it is doing; an occasion for glory or blame; for discovering self and group interests; and a good time."[33]

The argument that operational activity shapes organizational culture is strongly reinforced by evidence about how key judgments and information are concentrated at the bottom of an organization, not the top. If "street-level bureaucracy" and its "field-based learning" define operational objectives, then the organization's beliefs about itself will come from within, not without.[34]

Operational experiences in the field reinforce certain capacities and routines, even endow the capacities and routines with a ceremonial power that provides legitimation internally or in dealings with the outside world. The resulting culture is powerfully reinforced by the professionalization of key operators in the organization. Professionals try to distinguish the nature of their work from non-professionals. They set norms of appropriate behavior (down to style of dress and manner of speaking) and create incentives for organizations in certain sectors to conform to a common ideal

—isomorphism again. In a famous phrase, Rosabeth Moss Kanter called this the "homosexual reproduction of management." In his book *The Right Stuff*, Tom Wolfe shows how the Mercury astronauts were all molded by the common professional and organizational norms of military test pilots. Sometimes the cultural routines clash with criteria of efficiency. Efficiency often loses.[35]

While individuals can also rely on a "logic of appropriateness," organizations reinforce this tendency. They provide *models* for defining identity, classifying a situation, and applying the appropriate rule. They provide *cues* and prompts by assigning labels and casting people into prescribed roles. They provide *experiences* that reinforce behavior or produce learning, adaptation, and the development of new rules.[36]

Though the results may be the same, there are important distinctions between explanations of organizational behavior rooted in "efficiency" or in constructs of "culture," between the old and "new" institutionalism. We spotlight four of them, relying upon but extending the work of Paul DiMaggio and Walter Powell.

1. *Where do organizations derive their preferences?* Those who emphasize efficiency see organizations as aggregations of interests where problems of cooperation and collective action are solved. There is a cost to solving these problems by building large organizations with their surrounding distractions, but organizations succeed where the friction or transaction costs of doing without them would be even greater. They stress principal-agent relationships as a key to understanding organizations.[37] Those who emphasize culture concede some of this. But they tend to see the interests as a social construction, varying with the institutional setting in which an organization is placed. They see the choices about those interests being made more through the "logic of appropriateness" rather than the "logic of consequence." Those who emphasize culture also focus, with March and Olsen and others, on a theory of action, on the street-level bureaucracy, where interests are actually derived from decisions rather

than the other way around. Actions are occasions when organizations define what they really want and will do. These desires are often endogenous to the organization, not exogenous.[38]

2. *Why does organizational behavior constrain "rationality"?* Those who emphasize efficiency point more to rules that necessarily constrain optimal choice in order to achieve the efficiencies of established routines. They also point out that these rules may reflect negotiated bargains within the organization and with those it serves, preserving the organization's net ability to achieve desired results. Finally they may observe that bureaucrats are reluctant instruments, shrewdly circumventing one master to obey another or simply being unresponsive, producing unforeseen consequences. On the other hand, those who emphasize culture do not see the operators as instruments of an external actor, effective or defective. Instead, they stress how organizations strive for legitimacy and status, ideals that may matter much more to those inside the organization or an organizational field than to those outside of it. To the extent they obey the purposes or values assigned by others, these are simply circumstances that the organization's operators take into account. "Not norms and values but taken-for-granted scripts, rules, and classifications are the stuff of which [organizations] are made."[39]

3. *Why are organizational structures sometimes so peculiar?* Those who emphasize efficiency concentrate on how interest groups foster cliques or patterns of interaction that create informal structures, structures that may subvert the formal structure put in place by the organization's original creators in order to accomplish the goals desired by new, less obvious masters. Those who emphasize culture look more to "irrationality in the formal structure itself, attributing the diffusion of certain departments and operating procedures to interorganizational influences, conformity, and the pervasiveness of cultural accounts, rather than to the functions they are intended to perform."[40]

4. *How do organizations relate to their environment?* Those who emphasize efficiency pay more attention to the place where the organization operates, including the needs of the area and the interest groups working to co-opt the agency's efforts. Those who emphasize culture tend to focus instead on the organization's relationship to a sector or field, rather than a particular geographic location. They

would try to explain the behavior of the Houston Police Department more by looking at the way police officers generally perceive themselves and their duties, rather than concentrating on particular conditions in Texas. From this perspective, key routines may develop throughout an organizational field and become shared by all the organizations in that field, overriding local diversity, rather than responding to the unique demands of one or another work-place.[41] In other words, a cop in Houston may have more in common with a cop in Chicago than either of them have in common with ordinary citizens in their city.

We do not ask the reader to choose between the paradigm of efficiency and the paradigm of culture. For our purposes, the more important point is the extent to which both approaches agree on certain basics: a mission, the creation of special capacities linked to operational objectives oriented toward performance of specific tasks, and reliance on associated routines. Both acknowledge in different ways that organizational behavior has a distinctive pattern of its own, with considerable autonomy not only in defining specific objectives but in defining how to measure performance.[42] A number of scholars of international relations, especially Robert Keohane and Stephen Krasner, have shown how these patterns are significant for understanding governmental actions. Keohane *succinctly* explained that "institutions do not merely reflect the preferences and power of the units constituting them; the institutions themselves shape those preferences and that power."[43]

Studying the effect of routines for going to war in 1914, Jack Levy concluded that the routines were not alone responsible for the catastrophes that attended their use. Yet, as he notes, the reliance on the routines "cannot be explained by a rational strategic calculus." The routines, and the organizational logic that shaped them, were a powerful, independent variable in a complex interaction of influences on key officials, pulling them toward a logic of appropriateness, of programmed responses, and away from the logic of consequences.[44] Moving from the beginning of the century to its last decade, Barry Posen showed how the U.S. military's late Cold War plans for waging a purely conventional war against a Soviet adversary had led to capacities, operational objectives, and routines that

were difficult to understand outside of the organization's own logic, especially since they opened up several dangerous pathways for inadvertent escalation to nuclear war.[45] Fortunately, unlike the 1914 case, Posen's hypothesis was never tested.

Elizabeth Kier's book, *Imagining War*, asks why Britain and France developed defensive, rather than offensive, military doctrines in the years before World War II. She stresses the relationship between a military's organizational culture and the scope granted to the organization by the areas of controversy and consensus in the domestic political environment. But she also emphasizes the malleability of organizational culture. "We should not assume that similarly situated groups in different national settings have similar preferences." Not all militaries want offensive doctrines. Even within the same military, the Air Force and Army may pursue radically different doctrines, and the differences persist among subunits that have their own special capacities and culture. Throughout, "military preferences cannot be deduced from the functional needs of military organizations,"[46] or at least these functional needs are particular mixtures of objective reality, political context, and the beliefs the organization's senior operators hold about themselves and their common tasks.

Interactive Complexity

Organizations develop special capacities and routines for implementation. Once these are recognized, the next step is to notice how they interact with each other. The interactions of programs or routines occur in several different ways. One large organization may have many suborganizations, each with overlapping routines for performing related functions. Some cabinet departments in the executive branch resemble holding companies for a variety of organizations. The structure of the Department of Defense was radically reformed in 1986, in part because of widespread alarm about problems stemming from the inconsistent, even clashing, procedures for command and control of operations that had been worked out by each of the various services housed within the Pentagon.

Damaging interactions can also occur within one agency when new, unfamiliar tasks are superimposed onto old routines. A splendid

performance record was compromised in the Social Security Administration when, because it handled old age pensions so well, it took on new responsibilities for Medicare payments.[47]

Many different organizations now involved in major public activities interact to create new levels of complexity in trying to get anything done. Jeffrey Pressman and Aaron Wildavsky in their book, *Implementation*, tell the story of how a federal agency tried to create jobs in Oakland, California. Pressman and Wildavsky studied the intersecting responsibilities of the federal, state, county, local, and private organizations concerned, and the interaction of their various rules and routines. The phenomenal "complexity of joint action" they found is common to most modern endeavors of government.[48] Simplification is hard, not just because different jurisdictions have different interests, but because there are sometimes good arguments for having redundant attention to a problem from several organiza-tions.[49]

Charles Perrow's book, *Normal Accidents*, broke new ground by showing how ever-increasing numbers of routines interact as large organizations are entrusted with ever more complex and risky operations. High risk spawns many new routines designed to guarantee reliable, safe performance, but the new routines also interact. The result, Perrow argues, is that the interactions defy ready understanding and can magnify the consequences of small failures, which are inevitable. When the failures arising in the environment of interactive complexity also occur in a system where operations are tightly coupled, for example, in a nuclear power reactor, hazards loom. For many systems, "neither better organization nor technological innovations appear to make them any less prone to system accidents. In fact, these systems require organizational structures that have large internal contradictions, and technological fixes that only increase interactive complexity and tighten the coupling. They become still more prone to certain kinds of accidents," hence Perrow's title.[50]

Our review of the drives for efficiency and identity in organizational logic highlights instances when this logic of appropriateness produces behavior at odds with actions states should rationally have chosen in moments of crisis. As Sagan has argued, instances in which organizations dominate in state behavior may be correlated with behavior that is "dysfunctional in a

competitive international system."[51] In every case, analysts, managers, and political leaders should be acutely aware of the gravitational pull exerted by organizational propensities. Success in policy management requires of leaders extraordinary efforts to create a balance between their purposes and the accumulated weight of the organization's predispositions.

Our conclusion is not that organizations invariably tend to produce dysfunctional behavior that must then be checked by political leaders. In general, organizations not only enhance capability but also provide superior capacity for coping with new strategic circumstances.[52] Nonetheless, the potential for dangerous dysfunctionality exists, and must be managed by sustained thought and attention to operational details.

NASA: Hero and Goat

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) embodies many of the strengths and weaknesses of organizations, their logic, and the power of their culture. *Apollo 13* was the first movie to win an Academy Award for best picture in which the hero was an organization. While the movie certainly had protagonists, especially astronaut Jim Lovell, played by actor Tom Hanks, neither in life nor in fiction did Lovell play the lead part in saving his own life, or the lives of his crew, after an oxygen tank in his spacecraft exploded while the craft was 200,000 miles away from earth, speeding to the moon.

In 1970, NASA had the mission of transporting human beings to the moon, landing them there, enabling some exploration of the lunar surface, and then bringing the astronauts safely home. To accomplish this mission, NASA had acquired, at great cost, a host of unique capacities, most revolving around the operation of extraordinary and risky aeronautical systems and founded on the assembled ability to solve practically unique sets of engineering problems. Elaborate procedures and routines were established to mobilize this talent on a regular basis in a work environment that combined nearly zero tolerances for errors with a frequent need to improvise technical solutions to inevitable minor problems that threatened those tolerances.

The explosion on Apollo 13 was the product of three events: the mistaken installation of a 28-volt thermostat rather than a 65-volt thermostat when an oxygen tank was built in Colorado in 1968; the misalignment of a drain tube in the tank when it was dropped two inches in a factory in early 1970; and the judgment, less than two days before launch, to heat the tanks to force oxygen out of them after discovery of the misaligned drain tube. That last judgment, taken with care and approved by Lovell, would have been inconsequential if not for the faulty thermostat, which fused shut and neither turned off the heaters nor indicated the rising heat in the tank. Three groups of technicians had, following procedures, reviewed the quality of the original tank construction two years earlier; none had noticed that it had the wrong thermostat.[53]

The tank exploded during a routine flight operation and, within two hours, the spacecraft was "drifting and dead," most of its oxygen gone along with most of the control jets that could be used for manual control. Already new routines had come into play. The power on the ship had been shut down in dozens of steps according to emergency procedures detailed in a book stuck with Velcro strips to the interior of the craft. The astronauts used "the pink pages, emergency pages one through five," as instructed by Mission Control in Houston. Then, as the crew retreated into the still intact lunar lander, attached to the command capsule, the controller for electrical and environmental systems dusted off procedures for using the lander as a "lifeboat." NASA already had "LEM [lunar excursion module] lifeboat procedures" that had been tested in a problem simulation months earlier.

Then engineers plotted a way to fire the spacecraft's main engine so that it would propel the craft on a perfect trajectory back to Earth. There were no routines for this, but a 15-person team of top-notch controllers from each major specialty was collected, called the "Tiger team," and tackled the various problems. They had experience, special training, established analytical methods, technical support, and routines for implementing their plans. Simulators were activated, with other astronauts, to test ideas and prepare them for implementation. There were a series of questions about how to supply enough oxygen and electrical power to keep the crew alive during the more than four days it would take for them to return. Procedures were then improvised to guide the crew on each of the scores of steps that

would be required to put each plan into action. Options were identified, each with their own risk-benefit tradeoffs, and discussed in detail among the engineers, astronauts, flight directors, and NASA administrators.[54]

The teams succeeded. To explain their success it is meaningless to examine the obvious wishes of President Nixon or the U.S. government. At no point did relevant guidance come to NASA from political officials. Even NASA's top administrators, in accordance with the organization's procedures, were relatively powerless in comparison to the flight directors and controller/engineers. The Apollo 13 story is, in many ways, a supreme tribute to a "pure" technical culture imbued with a "can do" ethos.[55]

On January 28, 1986, NASA launched Space Transportation System Mission 51-L, which was the latest in nearly five years of successful flights of what was known as the space shuttle. This launch, of the shuttle Challenger, went catastrophically awry. After little more than a minute, the system exploded on national television. All seven crew members, including a school teacher invited to participate as an inspirational passenger, were killed.

The subsequent investigations, led by a presidential commission (the Rogers Commission), established that certain long-standing concerns with the solid rocket boosters that powered the shuttle into orbit had been overridden in favor of launch. The Rogers Commission blamed a flawed decision-making process and other critics blamed political pressure driving NASA to avoid the launch delays that had plagued the space shuttle program.

An extensive investigation by sociologist Diane Vaughan instead found little that was abnormal in the lengthy deliberations that had immediately preceded the *Challenger* launch. For years, the organization had slowly evolved as "each time a launch decision had to be made, the technical experts snatched certainty from the jaws of uncertainty, pulling together a coherent technical analysis. . . . Over time, the work group developed a scientific paradigm that incrementally expanded to include recurring anomalies, becoming more stable in the process."[56]

Vaughan conclusively shows that there was no particular political pressure to launch *Challenger.* The "decision making here consisted of a repeating choice about the same technical object in a highly regulated, open decision process." The case, she argues, cannot be understood through a conventional rational choice model, in which launch decision makers calculated cost and benefit. Nor were the decision makers apparently afflicted by group think, in the usual sense of a cohesive small group trying to protect itself and support each other. The judgments involved dozens of people and several organizational subunits. They followed rigorous norms and rules for such technical discussions, appropriate within the engineering culture that dominated the organization. While pressures to launch and scarce resources were in the background, those pressures had long ago been internalized by the organization, and only formed part of the "taken-for-granted assumptions, predispositions, scripts, conventions, and classification schemes" that made the launch decision sensible to those who participated in it. Outsiders, viewing the event later with the logic of consequences, saw the judgments as deviant. Insiders, viewing the event at the time with their logic of cumulative appropriateness, found them acceptable. There is individual rationality, of course, but in this case it was "irretrievably intertwined with position in a structure." No single person's calculation can be blamed for the *Challenger* launch decision. The event can only be comprehended as an organizational output.[57]

Vaughan points out that the conditions of the Challenger launch decision were unprecedented. But no one recognized that, in an organizational sense. Confronting uncertainty, they followed the usual rules and routines of their engineering culture. Instead of innovating they conformed. Conformity, not deviance, was responsible for the outcome.

The NASA experience is far from unique. In April 1994, two U.S. Air Force F-15 fighters, aided by the most advanced system of airborne flight control in the world, shot down two U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopters flying in clear skies over northern Iraq, killing 26 peacekeepers. Two years of inquiry followed but, despite widespread assumptions of pilot or controller error, Scott Snook found, after very close scrutiny, that the event can only be explained "as the result of normal people behaving in normal

ways in normal organizations." Each link in the tragic chain had done what was appropriate, given the information and the program for responding to it.

The crew of the Airborne Warning and Control Systems (AWACS) aircraft did not attempt any possible, nonroutine actions that might have averted the tragedy. The AWACS crew had been confused about who was supposed to make key judgments; the result was inaction. The Air Force had foreseen such problems and had adopted policies encouraging crew cohesion, "hard crews" who constantly fly together, though these policies were often not followed in practice because the organization was adapting to other imperatives. As one officer put it, "with the ops [operations] tempo and the manning we had, it was near impossible to make it happen. So it was one of those things that you go okay, we'll fly hard crews, but everybody knows that the percentages of flying with a real hard crew is very difficult."[58]

The redundancy in responsibility that was intended to prevent failure also diffused responsibility and thereby, paradoxically, made failure possible. Many routines interacted. "The Army never got the word on Mode I IFF [identification friend or foe] codes; the F-15 pilots weren't alerted to the helicopters' mission that day; the Black Hawks entered the no-fly zone prior to it being swept; and fighters and helicopters were talking on different radio frequencies." Even routines to integrate the routines will, as one theorist observed, soon "unravel if they are left unattended."[59]

Organizational Behavior Paradigm

This capsule review of organizational theory provides a context within which to outline an organization behavior paradigm relevant to foreign policy and international politics. What is now known about the behavior of organizations is enough to suggest significant limits and essential supplements to Model I for explaining and predicting governmental behavior.

> **I.** *Basic Unit of Analysis: Governmental Action as Organizational Output.* The happenings of international politics are outputs of organizational processes in three critical senses. First, actual

occurrences are organizational outputs. For example, consider American military intervention in the Persian Gulf War (Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm). American soldiers were stationed on the Saudi Arabian border with Kuwait in August 1990 and American aircraft destroyed targets throughout Iraq in January 1991. Those were organizational actions: the action of soldiers in platoons, which form companies, which in turn comprise battalions, brigades, divisions, corps, and form part of a unified theater command, responding as privates to lieutenants who are responsible to captains and so on to the commanding general, moving into Kuwait and Iraq, advancing against enemy troops, and firing according to fixed routines of the U.S. armed forces. The decisions of government leaders trigger organizational routines. Government leaders can trim the edges of this output and can exercise some choice in combining outputs. But most of the behavior is determined by previously established procedures.

Second, existing organizational capacities for employing present physical assets constitute the range of effective choice open to government leaders confronted with any problem. Only the existence of men and women who were equipped and trained as fighting units and capable of being transported thousands of miles to the Persian Gulf made entry into the Gulf War a live option for the American leaders. The fact that the fixed programs (equipment, personnel, and routines that exist at the particular time) exhaust the range of buttons that leaders can push is not always perceived by the leaders. But in every case it is critical for an understanding of what is actually done.

Third, organizational outputs structure the situation within the narrow constraints of which leaders must make their decisions about an issue. Outputs raise the problem, provide the information, and take the initial steps that color the face of the issue that is turned to the leaders. As Theodore Sorensen has observed, "Presidents rarely, if ever, make decisions—particularly in foreign affairs—in the sense of writing their conclusions on a clean slate. . . . The basic decisions, which confine their choices, have all too often been previously made."[60] To one who understands the structure of the situation and the face of the issue—both shaped by the organizational outputs—the formal choice of the leaders is frequently anticlimactic.

Innovation: Leaders may try to undertake a new activity, where there is no established organizational capacity or set routines. If they comprehend the effort required to create the preconditions for effective organizational output, they will understand that the payoffs will be for a future crisis rather than for the one at hand.[61] Often they do not understand or they have no choice. During the Gulf War the United States came under tremendous pressure to find and destroy the mobile Iraqi launchers that were firing SCUD missiles at Israel and at Saudi Arabia. From the perspective of General Norman Schwarzkopf, running the theater campaign at the U.S. Central Command headquarters (CENTCOM), the task was vexing. From his organization's perspective, the missiles were not inflicting any serious military damage. His command had not established a proven capacity and routines for locating, targeting, and destroying the SCUDs. A "SCUD-hunt" for the mobile launchers over thousands of square miles of western Iraq would consume enormous resources, and CENTCOM thought the threat could be neutralized more efficiently by using the resources in the existing plan to knock Iraq out of the war. CENTCOM was overruled. Dick Cheney exclaimed that, "As long as I am secretary of defense, the Defense Department will do as I tell them. The number one priority is to keep Israel out of the war." CENTCOM was directed to respond vigorously, and be seen to respond, to the missiles that were bombarding Israeli cities. The hunt was on, though Schwarzkopf complained about interference and continued to fend off proposals for more radical disruptions of the ongoing strike plans. CENTCOM also resisted rival proposals offered to tackle the problem from another military organization, the Special Operations Command, arguing that the rival plans would disturb CENTCOM's own established plans and routines for effectively conducting the war. When the war ended, the political leaders were satisfied (barely) that Israel had stayed out. The military results of CENTCOM's reluctant, improvised hunt were disappointingly modest.[62]

If the unit of analysis is governmental action as organizational output, then analysis of formal governmental choice centers on the information provided and the options defined by organizations, the existing organizational capabilities that constitute the effective choices open to the leaders, and the outputs of relevant organizations that fix

the location of pieces on the chess board and shade the appearance of the issue. Analysis of actual government behavior focuses on executable outputs of individual organizations as well as on organizational capabilities and organizational positioning of the pieces on the chess board.

II. *Organizing Concepts*

A. *Organizational Actors.* The actor is not a monolithic nation or government but rather a constellation of loosely allied organizations on top of which government leaders sit. This constellation acts only when component organizations perform routines. In the U.S. government, the departments or agencies—for example, the Air Force, the Department of State, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative—are typically the principal agents. Or the actors may be subunits of large organizations, such as submariners in the Navy or elite forces in any organization that typically have distinctive norms and routines of their own.

B. *Factored Problems and Fractionated Power.* Surveillance of the multiple facets of foreign affairs requires that problems be cut up and parceled out to various organizations. Within the U.S. government, the Department of State has primary responsibility for diplomacy, the Department of Defense for military security, the Treasury for economic affairs, and the CIA for intelligence estimates.

To avoid paralysis, primary power must accompany primary responsibility. The Defense Department purchases weapons required for national security; the CIA gathers relevant clandestine intelligence. Where organizations are permitted to do anything, a large part of what they do will be determined within the organization. Thus, each organization perceives problems, processes information, and performs a range of actions with considerable autonomy (within broad guidelines of national policy and numerous constraints).

The overriding fact about large organizations is that their size prevents any single central authority from making all important decisions or directing all important activities. Factored problems and fractionated power are two edges of the same sword. Factoring permits

more specialized attention to particular facets of problems than would be possible if government leaders tried to cope with the problems by themselves. But that additional attention must be paid for in the coin of discretion for *what* an organization attends to and *how* organizational responses are programmed.

C. *Organizational Missions.* Whether missions are stated more formally or more vaguely, many organizations, especially businesses, have an explicit, brief mission statement that seeks to define for their members and customers what businesses they are in and what they seek to accomplish. Many government organizations have formal charters that specify their authorities, the arenas in which they are directed to operate, and activities that are forbidden. Organizations interpret mandates into their own terms. This is especially true when the broad goals conflict or offer little operational guidance. Morton Halperin thus adds the concept of organizational essence, defined as "the view held by the dominant group in the organization of what the missions and capabilities should be. [63]

D. *Operational Objectives, Special Capacities, and Culture.* Primary responsibility for a narrow set of problems combines with the gritty, everyday requirements for action to produce distinctive sets of beliefs about how a mission should be implemented and what capacities are needed or wanted to perform it. The beliefs create an organizational culture, marked and accentuated by: (1) the way the organization has defined success in operational terms; (2) selective information available to the organization; (3) special systems or technologies operated by the organization in performing its task; (4) professional norms for recruitment and tenure of personnel in the organization; (5) the experience of making "street-level" decisions; and (6) distribution of rewards by the organization. Clients (e.g., interest groups), government allies (e.g., congressional committees), and extranational counterparts (e.g., the British Ministry of Defense for the Defense Department's Office of the Secretary of Defense or the British Foreign Office for the State Department's Bureau of European and Canadian Affairs) galvanize this parochialism. Thus organizations develop relatively stable propensities concerning priorities, operational objectives, perceptions, and issues. For

example, the military services are manned by careerists on a structured ladder. Promotion to higher rungs is dependent on years of demonstrated, distinguished devotion to a service's mission. Work routines, patterns of association, and information channels combine with external pressures from organized groups and friends in Congress to make quite predictable a service's continual search for new hardware consistent with currently assigned roles and missions—for instance, the Air Force's pursuit of a new manned strike aircraft.

E. *Action as Organizational Output.* The preeminent feature of organizational activity is its programmed character: the extent to which behavior in any particular case is an enactment of preestablished routines. In producing outputs, the activity of each organization is characterized by:

1. *Objectives: Compliance Defining Acceptable Performance.* The operational objectives of an organization are seldom revealed by formal mandates. Rather, each organization's operational objectives emerge as a set of targets, flanked by constraints, that define performance of the critical task. Operators then are obliged to comply with the targets and constraints. For them, successful compliance is successful performance. These may be quantified: numbers of clients interviewed, percentage of aircraft ready to fly on an hour's notice, or hours flown without an accident. They may be procedural: lesson plan filed, procurement rules followed. But they tend to allow operators to follow the more "cybernetic" logic of appropriateness. The requirements for compliance emerge from a mix of the expectations and demands of other organizations and professionals in the field or in the government, statutory authority, demands from citizens and special interest groups, and bargaining within the organization. The targets and constraints represent a quasi-resolution of conflict—the requirements are relatively stable, so there is some degree of resolution; however, they may not always be compatible over time, hence it is only a quasi-resolution. Typically, the constraints are formulated as imperatives to avoid roughly specified discomforts and disasters. For example, the behavior of each of the U.S. military services (Army, Navy, and Air Force) seems to be characterized by effective imperatives to avoid:

(1) a decrease in dollars budgeted, (2) a decrease in manpower, (3) a decrease in the number of key specialists (e.g., for the Air Force, pilots), (4) reduction in the percentage of the military budget allocated to that service, (5) encroachment of other services on that service's roles and missions, and (6) inferiority to an enemy weapon of any class.

2. *Sequential Attention to Objectives.* The existence of conflict among operational targets and constraints is resolved by the device of sequential attention. As a problem arises, the subunits of the organization most concerned with that problem deal with it in terms of the targets and constraints they take to be most important. When the next problem arises, another cluster of subunits deals with it, focusing on a different set of targets and constraints.

3. *Standard Operating Procedures.* Reliable performance of critical tasks, and associated compliance with targets and constraints, requires standard operating procedures (SOPs). Rules of thumb permit concerted action by large numbers of individuals, each responding to basic cues. The rules are usually simple enough to facilitate easy learning and unambiguous application. Since procedures are "standard" they do not change quickly or easily.

On the evening of November 9, 1989, the East German government announced, at a press conference, a change in the rules on how their citizens could apply for travel to the West. Some of the language, which was poorly worded and easily misunderstood, encouraged tens of thousands of East Germans to go to the Berlin Wall during the night and attempt to cross into West Berlin. The border guards were caught unaware, unsure of what their government had announced, without any SOPs for handling the crush of people or for answering their questions. Confused and off balance, they quickly faced the choice of shooting masses of people or stepping out of their way. They stepped. So fell the Berlin Wall.[64]

Without standard operating procedures, it would not be possible to perform certain concerted tasks. But because of them, organizational behavior in particular instances appears unduly formalized, sluggish, or inappropriate. Some SOPs are simply conventions that make possible regular or coordinated activity. But most important SOPs are grounded in the incentive structure of the organization or even in the

norms of the organization or the basic attitudes, professional culture, and operating style of its members. The deeper the grounding, the more resistant SOPs are to change.

4. *Programs and Repertoires.* Organizations must be capable of performing actions in which the behavior of hundreds of individuals is precisely coordinated. Special capacities require sets of rehearsed SOPs for producing specific actions, e.g., fighting enemy units or answering an embassy's cable. Each cluster comprises a "program" (in the language of drama and computers) that the organization has available for dealing with a situation. The list of programs relevant to a type of activity, e.g., fighting, constitutes an organizational repertoire. The number of programs in a repertoire is always quite limited. When properly triggered, organizations execute programs; programs cannot be substantially changed in a particular situation. The more complex the action and the greater the number of individuals involved, the more important are programs and repertoires as determinants of organizational behavior.

5. *Uncertainty Avoidance.* Organizations do not attempt to estimate the probability distribution of future occurrences. Rather, organizations avoid uncertainty. By arranging a *negotiated environment*, organizations try to maximize autonomy and regularize the reactions of other actors with whom they must deal. When Melvin Laird became Secretary of Defense in 1969, he supervised large cuts in defense spending but gave the services great autonomy in deciding how to spend their money. He was a very popular secretary. As Halperin explained, bureaucracies often prefer "less money with greater control than more money with less control."[65] Where autonomy is not possible, the primary environment (relations with other organizations comprising the government) is stabilized by such arrangements as agreed budgetary splits, accepted areas of responsibility, and established practices. The secondary environment (relations with the international world) is stabilized between allies by the establishment of contracts (alliances, formal and informal) and "club relations" (U.S. State Department and British Foreign Office or U.S. Treasury and British Treasury).

Where the international environment cannot be negotiated, organizations deal with remaining uncertainties by establishing a set of

standard scenarios that constitute the contingencies for which they prepare. For example, the U.S. Army in the 1960s prepared for large-scale ground operations that would emphasize American advantages in firepower. When, after some initial engagements, these scenarios did not materialize in Vietnam, the Army found it agonizingly difficult to adapt.[66]

6. *Problem-directed Search.* Where situations cannot be construed as standard, organizations engage in search. The style of search and its stopping point are largely determined by existing routines. Organizational search for alternative courses of action is problem-oriented: it focuses on the atypical discomfort that must be avoided. It is simple-minded: the neighborhood of the symptom is searched first, then the neighborhood of the current alternative. Patterns of search reveal biases that reflect factors such as specialized training, experience of various parts of the organization, and patterns of communication within the organization. The American army in Vietnam, unable to force the enemy into large-scale battles, tried to leverage its existing assets and routines with massive search and destroy plans centered around firepower and helicopter-borne mobility.

7. *Organizational Learning and Change.* The parameters of organizational behavior mostly persist. In response to nonstandard problems, organizations search and routines evolve, assimilating new situations with considerable skill but within the world view of the organization's culture. Such learning and change follow in large part from existing procedures, but marked changes in organizations do sometimes occur. Conditions in which dramatic changes are more probable include:

a. *Budgetary Feast.* Typically, organizations devour budgetary feasts by proceeding down the existing shopping list. Nevertheless, government leaders who control the budget and are committed to change can use extra funds to buy new organizational capacities that can perform a radically redefined critical task. In the mid-1970s, the British government, waging an internal war in Northern Ireland, chose to abandon reliance on the army and martial law and turn instead to "police primacy," trying to restore true civil authority and deal with terrorism as a problem of criminal justice. The police

force, the Royal Ulster Constabulary, was rebuilt at lavish expense, with new capacities, new norms, and new routines.[67]

b. *Prolonged Budgetary Famine.* Though a single year's famine typically results in few fundamental changes in organizational structure and procedures, it often causes a loss of effectiveness in performing certain programs. Prolonged famine, however, forces major retrenchment. The Department of State, after several years of being starved for funds to support its diplomatic establishment, closed many posts and created a new Special Embassy Program to provide new, lower cost forms of diplomatic representation in some smaller countries.

c. *Dramatic Performance Failures.* Dramatic change occurs usually in response to major disasters. In these circumstances the organization's culture can be so shocked or discredited that mission, operational objectives, special capacities are all redefined, creating a new culture. The U.S. Army, in particular, was deeply marked by the experience of the Vietnam War. Confronted with an undeniable failure of procedures and repertoires, authorities outside the organization may demand change; existing personnel are less resistant to change; and key members of the organization are replaced by individuals committed to change.

F. *Central Coordination and Control.* Governmental action requires decentralization of responsibility and power. But problems do not fit neatly into separable domains. Each organization's performance of its job has major consequences for other departments. Important problems lap over the jurisdictions of several organizations. Thus the necessity for decentralization runs headlong into the requirement for coordination. (Those who advocate one horn or other of this dilemma—responsive action which entails decentralized power versus coordinated action which requires central control—account for a considerable part of the demand for government reorganization.)

The necessity for coordination and the centrality of foreign policy to the welfare of the nation guarantee the involvement of government leaders in the processes of the organizations that share power. Each organization's propensities and routines can be affected by the intervention of government leaders. Sustained central direction of

operations and persistent control of organizational activity, however, is not possible. The result is a renewed emphasis on fixing targets or enacting constraints. Constraints, however, are crude instruments of control. Specification of relevant operational criteria, compliance targets, for the activities of most government organizations is surprisingly difficult. The criteria can be evaluated most readily for what James Q. Wilson calls "production" organizations (like one that mails checks). But in "procedural," "craft," or "coping" agencies, the outputs cannot be observed, the policy outcomes cannot be observed, or neither outputs nor outcomes can be monitored effectively.[68]

Intervention by government leaders does sometimes change the activity of an organization in an intended direction, but instances are fewer than might be expected. These machines are not turned on or off just by pulling a switch. In 1970, Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger forced a reluctant CIA to take covert action against the government of Chile on two tracks, one involving diplomatic and economic pressure and a second, more secret, effort to organize a military coup. After a coup attempt supported half-heartedly by the CIA failed, an annoyed Nixon recalled that he instructed CIA "to abandon the operation." The CIA operatives later testified that Kissinger told them to stop only the first track and keep the second track alive; Kissinger testified he told them to stop it. Amid the confusion about the two tracks and little follow-up to be sure what had happened, the second track lurched onward, and CIA was aware of (though not a party to) the planning for the successful coup that overthrew Chile's democracy in 1973. In other words, Nixon had trouble getting the agency to do what he wanted, yet, by his and Kissinger's account, he then also had trouble getting the agency to stop doing it.[69]

Politicians are also usually frustrated if they burrow into an organization and try to change its basic programs or SOPs. As Franklin Roosevelt, the master manipulator of government organizations, remarked:

The Treasury is so large and far-flung and ingrained in its practices that I find it is almost impossible to get the action and results I want. . . . But the Treasury is not to be compared with the State Department.

You should go through the experience of trying to get any changes in the thinking, policy, and action of the career diplomats and then you'd know what a real problem was. But the Treasury and the State Department put together are nothing as compared with the Na-a-vy. . . . To change anything in the Na-a-vy is like punching a feather bed. You punch it with your right and you punch it with your left until you are finally exhausted, and then you find the damn bed just as it was before you started punching.[70]

G. *Decisions of Government Leaders.* Organizational persistence does not preclude shifts in governmental behavior. Government leaders sit atop the conglomerate of organizations. In spite of the limits of the leadership's ability to control changes in a particular organization's goals or SOPs, many important issues of governmental action require that these leaders decide what organizations will play out which programs where. Thus some kinds of important shifts in the behavior of governments can take place with little change in a particular organization's parochialism and SOPs. The degree of these shifts is limited by the range of existing organizational programs.

The leadership's options for shifting governmental behavior at any point include: (1) triggering program A rather than program B within a repertoire; (2) triggering existing organizational routines in a new context; and (3) triggering several different organizations" programs simultaneously. Additional leeway can be won by assigning an issue to one component of an organization rather than another, for example, raising a strategic issue in budgetary guise or vice versa. Over the longer run, leaders can create new organizations. Occasionally, they may even effect deliberate change in organizations by manipulating the factors that support existing organizational tendencies. Even in making these various choices, leaders rely for the most part on information provided by, estimates generated by, and alternatives specified by organizational programs.

III. *Dominant Inference Pattern.* If a nation performs an action of a certain type today, its organizational components must yesterday have been performing (or have had established routines for

performing) an action only marginally different from today's action. At any specific point in time, *t*, a government consists of an established conglomerate of organizations, each with existing notions of critical tasks, special capacities, programs, and repertoires. The characteristics of a government's action in any instance follows from those established routines, and from the choice made by government leaders—on the basis of information and estimates provided by existing routines—among established programs. The best explanation of an organization's behavior at *t* is *t* − 1; the best prediction of what will happen at *t* + 1 is *t*. Model II's explanatory power is achieved by uncovering the special capacities, repertoires, and organizational routines that produced the outputs that comprise the puzzling occurrence. On the other hand, if an analyst observes behavior by members of an organization that is consistent with the organization's established routines, that behavior per se provides zero evidence about any specific intentions of state leaders in the particular case.

This inference pattern is illustrated clearly by the various studies of the Japanese surprise attack against the U.S. Pacific Fleet in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on December 7, 1941.[71] A question that is always addressed is why America slept. That is, how could the United States have failed to anticipate the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, given the extraordinary amount and quality of intelligence available, especially from breaking the codes used for Japanese diplomatic messages? The Rational Actor Model would seem to supply the answer: confusion or conspiracy (usually painted as a conspiracy by Franklin Roosevelt to embroil America in the war), incompetence or design.

By December 7, Admiral Kimmel, the Pacific Fleet Commander, had received the following information: (1) a warning from the Navy that "surprise aggressive movements in any direction including attack on the Philippines or Guam is a possibility"; (2) several subsequent warnings from Washington that diplomatic talks had broken down and war could break out at any moment, probably beginning in Southeast Asia; (3) an unusual change in Japanese naval codes coupled with a change in radio call signs for Japanese aircraft carriers and a suspicious lack of information about their whereabouts; (4) ample information about Japanese ship and troop movements preparatory to

attacks at various locations in Southeast Asia; (5) messages deciphered ordering Japanese embassies to destroy secret papers and their code machines; and (6) FBI notice that the local Japanese consul in Honolulu was burning papers. Washington's code breakers had also intercepted and decoded Japanese messages between its Honolulu consulate and Tokyo that displayed an exceptionally acute interest in mapping and tracking the positions of ships in Pearl Harbor.

Assuming honesty and competence, a Model I analyst would be led to predict: (1) Kimmel's headquarters would be given or told about the Honolulu-Tokyo intercepts; (2) the fleet would be out of the harbor or taking all defensive measures, such as screening anchored ships with antitorpedo nets, in anticipation of possible attack; (3) the island would be air patrolled to the limit of available resources; (4) the aircraft warning service would be staffed, with maximum use of available radar; and (5) the Army would have been notified under the existing contingency plan (the Joint Coastal Frontier Defense Plan) and, having received some of the same warnings, would have distributed antiaircraft ammunition and taken other defensive precautions. But each of these predictions would have proved incorrect. Instead, the Navy's activity on December 7 was identical to its behavior on December 6, which differed imperceptibly from its behavior on December 5, and so on. Gordon Prange observes that "in the face of a clear warning, alert measures [for air patrol] bowed to routine." Prange adds: "The predictable movements of fleet units enabled Japanese agents to report to Tokyo that major vessels were invariably in port over the weekends. This information was a foundation stone of Japanese planning." The relevant organizations continued to function in accordance with established routines.[72]

IV. *General Propositions*
A. *Existing Organized Capabilities Influence Government Choice.* The existence of an organization with special capacities for doing something increases the probability that its output/action/option will be chosen by the leadership of the organization and the government. Such an option is clearly conceivable, available at lower costs than would be true without the organization since the costs of creating

the capability have already been paid. It is easier to find the political will to choose such an option since it exists as something that is realistic or feasible as opposed to hypothetical or imagined. The organizations created to provide an option also generate information and estimates that are tailored to make the exercise of that option more likely. In doing this, the organizations, or subunits, are not dissembling. They more often see their reason for being as advocating a point of view. They assume other organizations are also playing parts expected from them by decision makers, who in turn are cast as judges.

B. *Organizational Priorities Shape Organizational Implementation.* When confronted with conflicting goals or orders, organizations prioritize them and define the tradeoff.

1. Organizations will tend to emphasize, in practice, the objectives most congruent to their special capacities and to the hierarchies of beliefs in the organization's culture. After World War II, both the American and Soviet armed forces were haunted by the memory of devastating surprise attacks they had suffered in 1941. Senior military leaders had been court-martialed. Careers were ruined; in the USSR, the penalty for some was death. The experience was a particularly searing memory for the U.S. Navy and Air Force and for the Soviet Army and Air Force. In the postwar era, these organizations constantly stressed the virtue of high readiness. In crisis situations these organizations faced conflicting imperatives: for readiness or for safety, for central control of nuclear weapons or for decentralized readiness to use nuclear weapons. In practice, the organizations chose to behave in crisis situations in accord with the goal they considered most important to their well being and conceptions of duty—the readiness to act, to be confident their forces would not be caught unawares.

2. If conflicting goals both accord with the organization's capacities and culture, the incompatible constraints tend to be addressed sequentially, the organization satisfying one while deferring or neglecting another.[73]

The aerial arm of the U.S. Navy stationed in Hawaii had two imperatives: (1) to train pilots for an attack on Japanese-controlled islands in the central Pacific (mainly the Marshall islands) and (2) to

carry out distant reconnaissance of enemy activities. Given the available aircraft, it was not possible to satisfy both imperatives, so the Navy concentrated on the first. In order to conserve resources for the primary mission (attack on the Japanese base areas), aircraft were returned to base on weekends, including Friday, for maintenance. Had a limited number of aircraft been attending to the second imperative on Sunday, December 7, the base would have had an hour's warning. But attention to that imperative had been neglected for concentration on preparations for the fleet war plan.

C. *Implementation Reflects Previously Established Routines.* Activity according to standard operating procedures and programs does not constitute far sighted, flexible adaptation to "the issue" (as it is conceived by the analyst). Detail and nuance of actions by organizations are determined chiefly by organizational routines, not government leaders' directions. Model I's attempt to use these details to distinguish among alternative hypotheses about leaders' subtle plans is thus misguided.

1. *SOPs.* SOPs constitute routines for dealing with *standard* situations. Routines allow large numbers of ordinary individuals to deal with numerous instances, day after day, without much thought. Shrewdly devised routines may even account for prodigious organizational successes, such as the code breaking achievements of America and Britain during World War II. But this regularized capacity for adequate performance is purchased at the price of standardization. If the SOPs are appropriate, average performance—i.e., performance averaged over the range of cases—is better than it would be if each instance were approached individually (given fixed talent, timing, and resource constraints). But specific instances, particularly critical instances that typically do not have "standard" characteristics, are often handled sluggishly or inappropriately.

2. *Programs.* A program, i.e., a complex cluster of SOPs, is rarely tailored to the specific situation in which it is executed. Rather, the program is (at best) the most appropriate of the programs in the existing repertoire.

3. *Repertoires.* Since repertoires are developed by parochial organizations for standard scenarios that the organization has

defined, programs available for dealing with a particular situation are often ill suited to it.

On December 7, 1941, what was Army Intelligence in Hawaii prepared to do? The Army commander, after receiving a war warning from Washington, decided (as his message had hinted) that the real danger of attack was in Southeast Asia. He chose from three programs for alerts, and he chose alert level 1, precautions against sabotage. Planes were grouped together to make them easier to guard; ammunition for antiaircraft guns was kept locked up in bunkers. This program, however, lacked flexibility. While thwarting saboteurs it actually increased vulnerability to a possible attack from the air.

D. *Leaders Neglect Calculations of Administrative Feasibility at their Peril.* Blueprints for action provide one set of opportunities and constraints. Actual implementation of the blueprint provides yet another set. Adequate explanation, analysis, and prediction must address administrative feasibility as a major dimension. A considerable gap frequently separates what leaders choose and what organizations implement. In the months before Pearl Harbor the American willingness to court a confrontation with Japan was linked to American deterrence of a Japanese attack. The major organizational option for providing this deterrence relied on the threatened use of relatively small forces of untried B-17 bombers, principally stationed in the Philippines. The war quickly revealed a vast gulf between how political leaders thought of this bomber option (in part because of how the military had portrayed this option to them) and the reality that, in the harsh glare of combat operations, soon cut the option down to a nearly negligible size. In considering administrative feasibility, leaders should recall that: (1) organizations are blunt instruments; (2) projects that demand that existing organizational units depart from their established programs to perform unprogrammed tasks are rarely accomplished in their designed form; (3) projects that require coordination of the programs of several organizations are rarely accomplished as designed; (4) projects that bring together programs of several organizations will feature an interaction of routines, producing unforeseen and possibly dangerous consequences; (5) where an assigned piece of a problem is contrary to existing organizational

goals, resistance will be encountered; (6) government leaders can expect that each organization will "do its part" in terms of what the organization knows how to do; and (7) government leaders can expect incomplete, even distorted, information (from the leaders' perspective) from each organization about its part of the problem.

E. *Limited Flexibility and Incremental Change.* Major lines of organizational action are straight—i.e., behavior at one time, t, is marginally different from behavior at $t − 1$. Straightforward predictions are a good bet: behavior at $t + 1$ will be marginally different from behavior at the present time.

1. *Organizational budgets change incrementally*—both with respect to totals and with respect to intra-organizational splits. Organizations could divide the money available each year by carving up the pie anew (in the light of objectives or changes in the environment), but, in fact, organizations take last year's budget as a base and adjust incrementally. Predictions that assume large budgetary shifts in a single year between organizations or between units within an organization should be hedged.

2. *Organizational culture, priorities, and perceptions are relatively stable.* The topic of cultural change has received a good deal of attention in the private sector. Craig Lundberg notes that, "The complexity of the phenomena of organizational culture, the inherent difficulty of impacting deep levels of cultural meaning, the vision required for designing a new, more relevant culture, and the complexity of designing and sequencing the multiple interventions needed suggests that managing culture change is not often likely, even if it is possible."[74]

3. *Organizational procedures and repertoires change incrementally.*

4. *New activities typically consist of marginal adaptations of existing programs and activities.*

5. *A program, once undertaken, is not dropped at the point where objective costs outweigh benefits.* Organizational momentum carries it easily beyond the loss point.

F. *Long-range Planning.* The existence of long-range planning units in the foreign policy departments of the U.S. government—e.g., the Policy Planning Staff in the Department of State—might seem to support Model I's implication that governments deal with the

uncertain future by devising long-run plans. Model II's proposition, however, concerns the effective contribution of such units to the policy output. Long-range planning tends to become institutionalized (in order to provide a proper gesture in that direction) and then disregarded.

The idea of a surprise Japanese attack against Pearl Harbor had long been a subject for military planning. In January 1941, the Navy's War Plans Division prepared an excellent summary of the Pearl Harbor defense problem, approved by the Secretary of the Navy and the Chief of Naval Operations and widely distributed, that described the surprise air attack danger with precision and concluded that "the inherent possibilities of a major disaster to the fleet . . . warrant taking every step, as rapidly as can be done, that will increase the joint readiness of the Army and Navy to withstand a raid of the character mentioned above." Five recommendations were made, and the only one fully implemented was the suggestion for more planning. In March 1941, the top Army and Navy air officers in Hawaii prepared a superb and prescient report on planning to defend the island against attack. Washington admired the plan. The patrol aircraft to provide the protection called for in the plan were not in Hawaii, however, and they were not there nine months later—though the plan was still in effect.[75]

G. *Imperialism.* Most organizations define the central goal of "health" as synonymous with "autonomy." They therefore seek growth in their budget, personnel, and appealing new territory. Thus issues that arise in areas where boundaries are ambiguous and changing, or issues that constitute profitable new territories, are dominated by colonizing activity.[76]

When a breakthrough cracked the Japanese diplomatic codes, the question in the Navy of "What do these messages mean?" often gave way to "Who would perform the task of serious evaluation of enemy intentions?" This issue pitted the Office of Naval Intelligence against the War Plans Division. Though it lacked Japanese linguists and specialists, the powerful War Plans Division, led by a formidable and abrasive admiral, fought and won the right to "interpret and evaluate all information concerning possible hostile nations from whatever source received." The results for the U.S. government were not good.[77]

H. *Directed Change.* Existing organizational orientations and routines are not impervious to directed change. Careful targeting of major factors that support routines—such as personnel, rewards, information, and budgets—can effect major changes over time. But the terms and conditions of most political leadership jobs—short tenure and responsiveness to hot issues—make effective, directed change uncommon.

V. *Specific Propositions*

A. *Deterrence.* The probability of nuclear attack is less sensitive to balance and imbalance or stability and instability (as these concepts are employed by Model I strategists) than it is to a number of organizational factors. Except for the special case in which one or another power acquires an obvious and credible capability to strike an enemy without fear of receiving a devastating blow in return, superiority or inferiority may affect the probability of a nuclear attack less than a number of organizational facts that may trigger various logics of appropriateness.

The organizational behavior paradigm suggests that the scenarios that dominate the existing strategic literature are considerably less interesting than a range of additional scenarios that arise irrespective of conditions of balance and imbalance. First, if the undesired event occurs, it will be as a consequence of organizational activity: the firing of missiles by a member of a missile unit. This raises a central question: What is the enemy's *control* system? If the physical mechanisms and the SOPs permit multiple centers at which a choice can be made to launch nuclear weapons against the United States, the probability of the undesired event rises considerably higher than it would over most conceivable ranges of imbalance and instability. Examination of this issue might suggest than an enemy be given information about mechanical devices for maximizing central control over nuclear launches.

Second, what patterns of regularized behavior has the enemy developed for bringing his strategic capabilities to *alert status?* If these routines are loose, an accident may occur. If the procedures are so unregulated that the forces have never been brought to alert status, this is a critical piece of information about the dimension of risk and the difficulty of de-escalation. Prior to the outbreak of World War I, if the

Russian czar had understood the consequences—in terms of organizational processes—of his order for full mobilization, he might have known that he had chosen war.

Third, organizational processes fix the range of effective choices open to enemy leaders. What plans and procedures will the leaders face when the showdown comes? The menu of choice made available to the Russian czar in 1914 included only full mobilization and no mobilization. Partial mobilization was not an option offered by the organization.

Fourth, outputs of routine organizational procedures set the chessboard and the rules for moving pieces when government leaders confront problems of choice. How are the enemy troops trained, and how are nuclear weapons deployed?

Fifth, how likely are organizational processes to produce accidental firing? Reduction of American losses and protection against responding irrevocably to false alarms are also values for which the system must be designed. These values require some reduction in the deterrence of the rational enemy (with which standard deterrence theory is concerned) in order to encourage the organization controlling the strategic capability to develop safety systems.

Many aspects of these issues have arisen in the context of arms control. The most sophisticated deterrence theorists, especially Schelling and the Wohlstetters, and more recently Bruce Blair and Scott Sagan, have contributed significantly to thought about these issues. But the discussion of deterrence by students, the military, and many policymakers persists within a framework in which stability and balance are the focus, without full integration of these further considerations.[78]

B. *Force Posture.* Force posture (i.e., the fact that certain weapons, rather than others, are produced and deployed) is determined by organizational factors such as the goals and procedures of existing military services and of research and design labs. Government leaders' choices determine budgetary totals and influence some major procurement decisions, but the bulk of the force posture emerges from the routine functioning of organizational units.

The weakness of the Soviet Air Force within the Soviet military establishment, dominated by the ground forces and their definition of

the critical task for theater war fighting, seems to have been a crucial element in the Soviet failure to acquire a large bomber force in the 1950s (thereby faulting American intelligence predictions of a "bomber gap") and in the lethargy that surrounded any effort even to design an intercontinental range bomber. The Soviet strategic program was dominated by powerful organizations and the political leaders, in practice, were "heavily dependent on the technical judgments of their military advisers." The governing Politburo had to "operate within the context of these [organizational] forces, and not only take them into account, but often—perhaps for lack of effectively formulated alternatives—approve what they advise." Force posture was accurately projected, in U.S. intelligence estimates, as influenced by organizational imperatives "toward working deliberately along established lines" with solutions "devised more by building on proven approaches than by vigorously pushing the state of the art."[79]

Among the most fateful force posture decisions of the Soviet government, before its collapse, was the decision to deploy large numbers of highly accurate, multiple warhead, SS-20 intermediate-range missiles in the late 1970s, targeting Western Europe. Using Model I logic, the West saw this move as a highly threatening effort to change the military balance in Europe. From what we know now, the Soviet deployment decisions were driven more by Model II processes, in which the military organizations were replacing older missiles with newer ones in accordance with fixed requirements to cover the complete set of European targets. The decision, Raymond Garthoff observes, was "natural and almost inevitable . . . a normal modernization program [that] could be accommodated within the overall budgetary and more specific construction limitations of the established military fiscal allocation."[80] The Soviet government did no political analysis, did not consider the consequences of its actions for the West, was surprised by the vehement Western response, and for years refused to admit that its actions had caused the Western theater missile deployments that became the focal point for a wrenching crisis in Western Europe and East-West relations in the early 1980s.[81]

Given the way its government worked during the last few decades of the Cold War, the case of Soviet force posture is highlighted as an exceptionally strong one for applying Model II explanations. Model I

and III factors reemerge in the mid-1980s, as Gorbachev endeavored to change the fundamental scale of resource distribution to all of the military organizations.[82] Yet American strategic force posture can also be explained, to a substantial degree, with Model II. As McGeorge Bundy noted "The strategic targeting of SAC, from Eisenhower's time through Johnson's, was governed by the standards inherited by strategic air commanders from World War II." The decision to place multiple warheads on strategic missiles also "was always appealing to military commanders who measured their preferences more by what they could deliver than by what the Soviets might later possess." The controversial configuration of America's response to the SS-20 deployment was again strongly influenced by organizational repertoires and programs.[83]

VI. *Evidence.* This paradigm's stark statement of organizational tendencies constitutes a marked shift of perspective. Examination of government action in terms of these roughly formulated concepts and propositions can be fruitful. For example, with a minimum of information about the organizations that constitute a government and their routines and SOPs, an analyst can significantly improve some expectations generated by the Rational Actor Model. But in order for the paradigm to get a strong grip on a specific case, the bare bones of this generalized statement must be fleshed out by information about the characteristics of the organizations involved.

Notes

1. Organizations, in this definition, are entities that exist within "institutions," a different concept referring to the formal and informal rules and practices that may define the structure of a society, polity, or political economy. "Formal organizations are generally understood to be systems of coordinated and controlled activities that arise when work is embedded in complex networks of technical relations and boundary-spanning exchanges. But in modern societies, formal organizational structures arise in highly institutionalized contexts." John W. Meyer and Brian Rowan,

"Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony," in Walter W. Powell and Paul J. DiMaggio, *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 41.

2. Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* [1776], ed. Edwin Cannan (New York: Modern Library, 1994), Book One, chapter one.

3. "Introduction to the Second Edition," in James G. March and Herbert A. Simon, *Organizations*, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1993), p. 8. Thirty-five years after their book was first published, the authors thought that one of only four major things they would have treated differently was that "we would place relatively less emphasis on analytically rational, as opposed to rule-based, action." Ibid., p. 8; see also James G. March, *A Primer on Decision Making: How Decisions Happen* (New York: Free Press, 1994), p. viii.

4. John D. Steinbruner similarly contrasted the "analytic" paradigm to the "cybernetic." In the cybernetic paradigm, uncertainty is controlled by developing "highly focused attention and highly programmed response" where "decisions are fragmented into small segments and the segments treated sequentially. The process is dominated by established procedure." John D. Steinbruner, *The Cybernetic Theory of Decision: New Dimensions of Political Analysis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), pp. 86–87. A study of the procurement of the F-111 aircraft confirmed the "cybernetic" explanation for "the rigidities, the narrow vision, the objectively strange assumptions that, even casual observation informs us, suffuses much of the activity of large organizations." Robert F. Coulam, *Illusions of Choice: The F-111 and the Problem of Weapons Acquisition Reform* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 366.

5. See, e.g., Max Weber, *Economy and Society* [1922] (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978); Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (New York: Oxford University Press,

1947). On the emergence of a science of public administration in America, see the essays collected in Frederick C. Mosher, ed., *American Public Administration: Past, Present, Future* (University, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 1975). A scholarly reaction against the supposed separation of politics from "efficient" administration became evident, however, by the early 1940s. E.g., Schuyler C. Wallace, *Federal Departmentalization: A Critique of Theories of Organization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941) and see the commentary on the trend in Matthew Holden, Jr., *Continuity and Disruption: Essays in Public Administration* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1996), esp. chapters 1 and 2.

6. E.g., Chester Barnard, *The Functions of the Executive* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938); Barnard, *Organization and Management* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1948). For a modern variation on this theme, see Charles T. Goodsell, *The Case for Bureaucracy: A Public Administration Polemic*, 3rd ed. (Chatham: Chatham House, 1994).

7. William A. Niskanen, *Bureaucracy and Representative Government* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1971); see also James S. Coleman, *Individual Interests and Collective Action* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

8. See Douglass C. North, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); see also John Pratt and Richard Zeckhauser, *Principals and Agents* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986); Terry Moe, "The New Economics of Organizations," *American Political Science Review* 28 (1984): 739–77; Oliver E. Williamson, *The Economic Institutions of Capitalism: Firms, Markets, Relational Contracting* (New York: Free Press, 1985); Armen A. Alchian and Harold Demsetz, "Production, Information Cost, and Economic Organization," *American Economic Review* 62 (1972): 777–95; Richard Nelson and Sidney Winter, *An Evolutionary Theory of Economic Change* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982);

R.C.O. Matthews, "The Economics of Institutions and the Sources of Growth," *Economic Journal* 96 (1986): 903–18.

9. Edward O. Laumann and David Knoke, *The Organizational State: Social Choice in National Policy Domains* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), p. 383 (italicized in source). Laumann and Knoke add, as another of their major findings, that the interorganizational dynamic produces an "iterative gaming strategy" in which "event cleavages reflect the idiosyncratic nature of organizations' interests" rather than alignment with some consistent set of externally imposed beliefs. See also Kenneth A. Shepsle, *Perspectives on Positive Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) and Shepsle and Barry Weingast, "The Institutional Foundations of Committee Power," *American Political Science Review* 81 (1987): 85–104.

10. See Jeffrey Pfeffer, *Organizations and Organization Theory* (Marshfield: Pitman Press, 1982); W. Richards Scott, *Organizations: Rational, Natural, and Open Systems* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1981); Jay Galbraith, *Designing Complex Organizations* (Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1973); Paul J. DiMaggio and Walter W. Powell, "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields," [1983] in DiMaggio and Powell, eds., *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*, especially pp. 63–70 (on coercive isomorphism and mimetic processes); and Michael T. Hannan and John Freeman, *Organizational Ecology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989).

11. James Q. Wilson, *Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It* (New York: Basic Books, 1989), pp. 113–36, 156–71.

12. Terry M. Moe, "The Politics of Bureaucratic Structure," in John Chubb and Paul Peterson, eds., *Can the Government Govern?* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1989), p. 267. Strongly influenced by British efforts in this domain, a principal part of the Clinton administration's National Performance Review has been

to find some ways of setting benchmarks for satisfactory government performance.

13. The best introductions to the development of public administration in the United States, in order of chronological coverage, are Leonard D. White, *The Federalists: A Study in Administrative History* (New York: Macmillan, 1948); White, *The Jeffersonians: A Study in Administrative History* (New York: Macmillan, 1951); White, *The Jacksonians: A Study in Administrative History 1829–1861* (New York: Macmillan, 1954); White, *The Republican Era: A Study in Administrative History 1869–1901* (New York: Macmillan, 1958); Stephen Skowronek, *Building A New Administrative State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities 1877–1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Morton Keller, *Regulating a New Economy: Public Policy and Economic Change in America, 1900–1933* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990); and Keller, *Regulating a New Society: Public Policy and Social Change in America 1900–1933* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994).

14. See Philip Selznick, *TVA and the Grass Roots* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1949); Selznick, *Leadership and Administration* (Evanston: Peterson, Row, 1957); Terry Moe, "Interests, Institutions, and Positive Theory: The Politics of the NLRB," *Studies in American Political Development* 2 (1987): 236–99. In this conception, the organization and its masters are engaged in a constant dialogue in which both sides have some information and power, striking bargains about how goals will be defined and accomplished. E.g., Gary J. Miller and Terry Moe, "Bureaucrats, Legislators, and the Size of Government," *American Political Science Review* 77 (1983): 297–323.

15. On the deference to specialized committees given their presumed understanding of just how legislation will actually affect society, as a rational response to the general lack of information and uncertainty among most legislators, see Keith Krehbiel, *Information and Legislative Organization* (Ann Arbor: University

of Michigan Press, 1991). Left alone, however, these specialist committees will tend to allocate disproportionate rewards to their particular constituencies. Presumably, this cost is accepted by other legislators as the price for solving their "uncertainty" problem. See John A. Ferejohn, *Pork Barrel Politics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974).

16. Moe, "The Politics of Bureaucratic Structure," pp. 270–71.

17. See Mark H. Moore, *Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), pp. 70–99.

18. Wilson, *Bureaucracy*, p. 25.

19. Donald MacKenzie, *Inventing Accuracy: A Historical Sociology of Nuclear Missile Guidance* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990), pp. 398–99. See also Graham T. Allison, "Questions About the Arms Race: Who's Racing Whom? A Bureaucratic Perspective," in *Contrasting Approaches to Strategic Arms Control*, ed. Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr. (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1974). Very similar conclusions were reached by Michael Brown in his wide-ranging study of the fifteen major U.S. strategic bomber development programs of the postwar era, emphasizing "doctrinal and organizational preconceptions" over economic or technological factors. Strategic needs were omnipresent and abstract, hence explanations for choices are to be found more in the organization's interpretation of those needs. Michael E. Brown, *Flying Blind: The Politics of the U.S. Strategic Bomber Program* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992). But for a greater emphasis on the strategic environment in explaining weapons innovation (as opposed to mainstream weapons production), see Matthew Evangelista, *Innovation and the Arms Race* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988).

20. Outlining the underlying rational choice perspective, see Jack H. Knott and Gary J. Miller, *Reforming Bureaucracy: The Politics of Institutional Choice* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1987) and,

in a particularly nice summary, Moe, "The Politics of Bureaucratic Structure," pp. 267–329. For the notion of "bureaucratic drift" and elaborations on the mechanisms of political control, see Matthew McCubbins, Roger Noll, and Barry Weingast, "Structure and Process, Politics and Policy: Administrative Arrangements and the Political Control of Agencies," *Virginia Law Review* 75 (1989): 431–83; see also Matthew McCubbins and Thomas Schwartz, "Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols versus Fire Alarms," *American Political Science Review* 28 (1984): 165–79; John Ferejohn and Charles Shipan, "Congressional Influence on Administrative Agencies: A Case Study of Telecommunications Policy," in Lawrence C. Dodd and Bruce I. Oppenheimer, eds., *Congress Reconsidered*, 2d ed. (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1989); Barry Weingast and Mark Moran, "Bureaucratic Discretion or Congressional Control?: Regulatory Policymaking by the Federal Trade Commission," *Journal of Political Economy* 91 (1983): 765–800.

21. March and Simon, *Organizations*, pp. 160–62; and Wilson, *Bureaucracy*. Steven Kelman has shown how such a logic of appropriateness, defining performance through compliance with rules, can produce terrible results if the results are measured by a logic of consequences. Kelman, *Procurement and Public Management: The Fear of Discretion and the Quality of Government Performance* (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute Press, 1990).

22. March and Simon, *Organizations*, pp. 162–65; Sir Geoffrey Vickers, *The Art of Judgment: A Study of Policy Making* [1965] (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1995), pp. 39–49.

23. March and Simon, *Organizations*, p. 170.

24. Ibid., p. 171.

25. Wilson, *Bureaucracy*, pp. 90–110.

26. Gordon Chase, "Implementing a Human Services Program: How Hard Will It Be?," *Public Policy* 27 (1979): 285–346.

27. Charles Perrow, *Complex Organizations: A Critical Essay* 3d ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1986), pp. 20–26.

28. Paul J. DiMaggio and Walter W. Powell, "Introduction," in Powell and DiMaggio, eds., *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*, p. 3.

29. March, *A Primer on Decision Making*, p. 61; see also Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership* 2d ed.(San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1992).

30. John J. DiIulio, Jr., *Governing Prisons: A Comparative Study of Correctional Management* (New York: Free Press, 1987).

31. Major examples of the new manager-centered scholarship are found in Moore, *Creating Public Value;* Philip B. Heymann, *The Politics of Public Management* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987); Robert Behn, *Leadership Counts: Lessons for Public Managers from the Massachusetts Welfare, Training and Employment Program* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991); Laurence E. Lynn, Jr., *Managing Public Policy* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1987); Richard N. Haass, *The Power to Persuade* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1994); Hal G. Rainey, *Understanding and Managing Public Organizations* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1991); and Martin A. Levin and Mary Bryna Sanger, *Making Government Work* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1994). For a fine overview of how the narrative perspective has shaped the fields of public management, public administration, and public policy, see Laurence E. Lynn, Jr., *Public Management as Art, Science, and Profession* (Chatham: Chatham House, 1996).

32. Richard M. Cyert and James G. March, *A Behavioral Theory of the Firm* [1963] 2d ed. (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1992).

33. James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, *Ambiguity and Choice in Organizations* (Bergen: Universitetsforlaget, 1976), p. 11; the same point is stressed in Wilson, *Bureaucracy*, pp. 55–59.

34. See Michael Lipsky, *Street Level Bureaucracy* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1980); Arthur Stinchcombe, *Information and Organizations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); Robert Behn, "Management by Groping Along," *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 8 (1988): 643–63; Eugene Bardach and Robert A. Kagan, *Going by the Book: The Problem of Regulatory Unreasonableness* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982); and, on "field–based learning," Levin and Sanger, *Making Government Work*, pp. 127–48.

35. On professional norms, see Wilson, *Bureaucracy*, pp. 59–65. Wilson observes that professional norms likely also emanate from outside of the organization and actually may clash with the preferences of its internal managers. Politicians or ordinary citizens might not distinguish between the norms that come from within an organization and those that come from within an organizational field. For the Kanter quote, see Rosabeth Moss Kanter, *Men and Women of the Corporation* (New York: Basic Books, 1977); see also Tom Wolfe, *The Right Stuff* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1979). For scholarly elaborations on the effect of professional influences, see Meyer and Rowan, "Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony;" DiMaggio and Powell, "Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality," pp. 70–74; and Lynne G. Zucker, "The Role of Institutionalization in Cultural Persistence," in Powell and DiMaggio, *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*, especially pp. 103–04.

36. March, *A Primer on Decision Making*, pp. 71–73.

37. For an argument in the field of national security policymaking of how civilian leaders create incentive structures to shape organizational biases, see Deborah D. Avant, *Political Institutions*

and Military Change: Lessons from Peripheral Wars (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).

38. This point has been underscored recently by James G. March and Johan P. Olsen in "Institutional Perspectives on Political Institutions," *Governance* 9 (July 1996): 247–64.

39. DiMaggio and Powell, "Introduction," p. 15. It is possible, though, to accept this general description of organizational desires and still relate "legitimacy" to public values, though the values may be those chosen by its managers, not by outsiders. See Moore, *Creating Public Value,* pp. 105–92; all of Heymann, *The Politics of Public Management;* and, somewhat more cynically, Haass, *The Power to Persuade,* pp. 28–43, 48–51.

40. Ibid., p. 13.

41. This point would imply that organizations in the same field might even look alike regardless of the country they are in. This is doubtless true to some extent. It is often said that a policeman from one country has more in common with other policeman around the world than with ordinary citizens in their own town. On the other hand, those analysts who emphasize "identity" also often see this identity constructed in an institutional setting that arises from a certain kind of polity. Different polities may then produce their own patterns of transnational organizational isomorphism. On such patterns of organizational variation, see Ronald L. Jepperson and John W. Meyer, "The Public Order and the Construction of Formal Organizations," in Powell and DiMaggio, eds., *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis,* pp. 204–31.

42. Moore, *Creating Public Value,* pp. 33–36.

43. Robert O. Keohane, "International Institutions: Two Research Programs," *International Studies Quarterly 32* (1988): 379, 382. See Stephen Krasner, ed., *International Regimes* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983); Friedrich Kratochwil and John Gerard

Ruggie, "International Organization: A State of the Art on the Art of the State," *International Organization* 40 (1986): 753–76; Oran R. Young, "International Regimes: Toward a New Theory of Institutions," *World Politics* 39 (1986): 104–22.

44. Jack Levy, "Organizational Routines and the Causes of War," *International Studies Quarterly* 30 (1986): 193, 219.

45. Posen focused specifically on Air Force plans for preemptive suppression of enemy air defenses and on Navy plans for offensive operations against Soviet naval units (including Soviet nuclear missile submarines) in waters close to the USSR. Barry R. Posen, *Inadvertent Escalation: Conventional War and Nuclear Risks* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991). Some fragmentary evidence now emerging about U.S. and Soviet military behavior in the early 1980s lends credence to Posen's hypothesis, and his fears.

46. Elizabeth Kier, *Imagining War: French and British Military Doctrine Between the Wars* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 142, 143. Kier's book contests Jack Snyder's portrait of (pre–World War I) military organizations as institutions that tend to develop simplified and offensive-minded organizational ideologies to serve their self-interests and Barry Posen's similar view (based on a study of the pre–World War II period) that militaries prefer offensive doctrines except when their civilian masters intervene to direct them in accord with state interests (and a Model I logic of consequences). Jack Snyder, *The Ideology of the Offensive: Military Decision Making and the Disasters of 1914* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984); Barry R. Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany between the World Wars* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984).

47. See generally, Harold Seidman and Robert S. Gilmour, 4th ed. *Politics, Position and Power* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986). On the decentralization of command and control procedures in the Department of Defense, and the resulting

difficulty in later imposing joint approaches, see C. Kenneth Allard, *Command, Control, and The Common Defense* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990). On the Social Security case, see Martha A. Derthick, *Agency Under Stress: The Social Security Administration in American Government* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1990).

48. Jeffrey L. Pressman and Aaron Wildavsky, *Implementation* 2d ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983); see also Eugene Bardach, *The Implementation Game: What Happens After a Bill Becomes Law* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1977).

49. See Jonathan B. Bendor, *Parallel Systems: Redundancy in Government* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

50. Charles Perrow, *Normal Accidents: Living with High-Risk Technologies* (New York: Basic Books, 1984), p. 5.

51. Scott D. Sagan, "Culture, Strategy, and Selection in International Security," unpublished paper.

52. On innovation, see Stephen Peter Rosen, *Winning the Next War: Innovation and the Modern Military* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991); Kimberly Martin Zisk, *Engaging the Enemy: Organization Theory and Soviet Military Innovation, 1955–1991* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); Kier, *Imagining War*, pp. 92–97 (on the British military's more prescient understanding of the need for a continental commitment). On military culture contributing to restraint in the conduct of war, see Jeffrey W. Legro, *Cooperation Under Fire: Anglo-German Restraint during World War II* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995).

53. Conclusions of the Cortright Commission, summarized in Jim Lovell and Jeffrey Kluger, *Lost Moon: The Perilous Voyage of Apollo 13* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1994), pp. 372–80.

54. Ibid., pp. 104–240.

55. See generally, Howard McCurdy, *Inside NASA: High Technology and Organizational Change in the U.S. Space Program* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993). To the extent the Apollo 13 story had a hero, within the organization that person was probably John Aaron, who had the unassuming title of electrical and environmental command officer for Mission Control's Maroon Team, one of four 'color' teams that shared responsibility for managing the flight.

56. Diane Vaughan, *The Challenger Launch Decision: Risky Technology, Culture, and Deviance at NASA* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), pp. 400–401.

57. Ibid., pp. 403, 405, and on the difference between this institutional behavior and "group think," p. 525 n. 41. See also Diane Vaughan, "The Trickle–Down Effect: Policy Decisions, Risky Work, and the Challenger Tragedy," *California Management Review* 39 (1997): 80–102.

58. Scott A. Snook, "Practical Drift: The Friendly Fire Shootdown Over Northern Iraq," Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1996, pp. 281, 290.

59. Ibid., pp. 295–96. See, more generally, the work of Karl E. Weick, "Organizational Culture as a Source of High Reliability," *California Management Review* 29 (1987): 112–27; and Weick, "The Collapse of Sensemaking in Organizations: The Mann Gulch Disaster," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 38 (1993): 628–52.

60. Theodore Sorensen, "You Get to Walk to Work," *New York Times Magazine*, March 19, 1967.

61. Pressman and Wildavsky, *Implementation*, can be seen as a large case study in the danger of trying to invent new organizational capacities and routines to solve a pressing, current problem. For an overview, see Wilson, *Bureaucracy*, pp. 218–32.

62. For an overview see Michael R. Gordon and Bernard E. Trainor, *The Generals' War: The Inside Story of the Conflict in the Gulf* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1995), pp. 227–48.

63. Morton H. Halperin, *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1974), p. 28.

64. Philip Zelikow and Condoleezza Rice, *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed: A Study in Statecraft* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), pp. 98–101.

65. Halperin, *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy*, p. 51.

66. The North Vietnamese sought large-scale battle in the Ia Drang valley in November 1965 and then, bruised, adopted a different strategy until the Tet offensive in the spring of 1968. After Tet, which was as damaging militarily to Hanoi as it was devastating politically to the Americans and their South Vietnamese allies, North Vietnam returned to a more patient use of ground forces until most American combat forces had withdrawn from Vietnam. On the American standard scenarios and resulting dilemmas, the best source is Andrew Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986); but see also Robert Buzzanco, *Masters of War: Military Dissent and Politics in the Vietnam Era* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

67. Philip Zelikow, "Policing Northern Ireland," Parts A and B (Cambridge: Kennedy School of Government Case Study, 1994).

68. Wilson, *Bureaucracy*, pp. 158–71.

69. See John Ranelagh, *The Agency: The Rise and Decline of the CIA* rev. ed. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), pp. 514–20.

70. Marriner S. Eccles, *Beckoning Frontiers: Public and Personal Recollections*, ed. Sidney Hyman (New York: Knopf, 1951), p. 336.

71. On the background to the Pearl Harbor attack, the points that follow rely, unless otherwise cited, on Gordon W. Prange, *At Dawn We Slept: The Untold Story of Pearl Harbor* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1981); Edwin T. Layton with Roger Pineau and John Costello, *"And I Was There": Pearl Harbor and Midway—Breaking the Secrets* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1985); John Costello, *Days of Infamy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994); and the earlier classic, Roberta Wohlstetter, *Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962). Any serious student of the Pearl Harbor attack must balance the more narrow military studies with the broader context presented best in Waldo Heinrichs, *Threshold of War: Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Entry into World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

72. For the quotation, see Prange, *At Dawn We Slept*, p. 732–33. The Honolulu-Tokyo intercepts, like other intercepts of diplomatic traffic code-named MAGIC, were handled by Navy and War Department code breakers in Washington and, to some extent, in the Philippines. Distribution was hampered, first, by the fact that the Honolulu-Tokyo communications actually used less secure codes that therefore received lower priority attention (since it was assumed that less secure codes carried less important transmissions) and, second, by the strained routine for communicating MAGIC material to Pacific Fleet from the chief of naval operations (arising in part from the tension between the offices of Naval Intelligence and War Plans mentioned later in the text). Nor, a bit complacent about MAGIC, had Washington allocated the resources and personnel earlier in 1941 that could have broken the general naval code then in use (JN-25B). After Pearl Harbor, the resources were committed and the naval code's new revision was broken in four months. The Americans had actually intercepted messages using the JN-25B code that (they later discovered) would have given important clues to Japanese plans in late 1941, had they been able to read them at the time. On this last point see Costello, *Days of Infamy*, pp. 278–301.

On the issue of keeping ships in harbor, Admiral Kimmel and his staff did consider, on December 6, moving some of the battleships out to sea, but decided to keep them together in readiness for execution of the fleet's war plan after war broke out. The battleships would have been vulnerable, since Kimmel's two aircraft carriers were at sea delivering planes to American garrisons at Midway and Wake Island. Layton, *"And I Was There"*, p. 275. Presumably in Hawaii the fleet would have land-based air cover, but the measures to provide such cover were not in place when Japanese planes arrived the next morning. Nor had Kimmel argued with the earlier orders to send out his carriers; nor had he asked for quick return of his third aircraft carrier, then being overhauled in California. The Joint Coastal Defense Frontier Plan had not been activated by the commander of the Hawaiian naval district.

73. The order in which organizations attend to inconsistent goals is thus a critical factor.

74. Craig C. Lundberg, "On the Feasibility of Cultural Intervention in Organizations," in *Organizational Culture,* ed. Peter L. Frost, Larry Moore, Meryl Reis Louis, Craig C. Lundberg, and Joanne Martin (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1985), p. 183. On the persistence of culture, see also the musing on the significance of Diane Vaughan's *Challenger* study in Karl E. Weick's review, *Administrative Sciences Quarterly*, June 1997, pp. 395–401.

75. On the Knox letter of January 1941 and on the Martin-Bellinger report of March 1941, an annex to the Joint Coastal Frontier Defense Plan, see Prange, *At Dawn We Slept,* pp. 45–47, 93–96. On the larger phenomenon, see Lee Clarke, *Fantasy Documents* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

76. James Q. Wilson expects (and urges) bureaucrats to obey six imperial propositions: (1) "seek out tasks that are not being performed by others"; (2) "fight organizations that seek to perform your tasks"; (3) "avoid taking on tasks that differ significantly from those that are at the heart of the organization's mission"; (4) "be wary of joint or cooperative ventures"; (5)

"avoid tasks that will produce divided or hostile constituencies"; and (6) "avoid learned vulnerabilities." *Bureaucracy*, pp. 181–95. Note the combination of colonizing behavior alongside refusals of new turf, a combination also observed by Matthew Holden, Jr., "'Imperialism' in Bureaucracy," *American Political Science Review* 60 (1966): 943–51. Wilson considers it simplistic to describe this mixed behavior as imperialist (p. 195); we think it is his definition of imperialism that is too simple. Many empires did not want to conquer everything, only—especially in the classic mercantile model—those possessions that guaranteed autonomy and national health. So Britain in the 1880s dominates Egypt to assure control of Suez, which in turn guarantees what was considered a lifeline to India, and the British link to India was considered essential to the health of the imperial system as a whole. The same British government was deeply ambivalent about, say, expansion into the Sudan.

Wilson only discussed executive agencies. For the leading analysis of analogous behavior among congressional committees, see David C. King, *Turf Wars* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996); and King, "The Nature of Congressional Committee Jurisdictions," *American Political Science Review* 88 (1994): 48–63.

77. The War Plans Division was headed by (then) Rear Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner, a strong character whose abilities had greatly impressed the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Harold Stark. On the nature and effect of the turf struggle, see Prange, *At Dawn We Slept*, pp. 87–88; Layton, *"And I Was There"*, pp. 95–102.

78. See Bruce Blair, *Strategic Command and Control* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1986); Blair, *The Logic of Accidental Nuclear War* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1993); and Scott Sagan, *The Limits of Safety: Organizations, Accidents, and Nuclear Weapons* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 259–62. For a more direct clash of Model I and Model II perspectives on deterrence, see also Scott Sagan and Kenneth

Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1995).

79. National Intelligence Estimate, "Issues and Options in Soviet Military Policy," NIE 11- 4–72 (1972), excerpted in Donald P. Steury, ed., *Intentions and Capabilities: Estimates on Soviet Strategic Forces,* 1950–1983 (Washington, DC: CIA History Staff, 1996), pp. 291–93. Though the intelligence community may have understated the pace or scope of Soviet strategic force development, these methodological points for understanding overall force posture proved to be valid.

80. Raymond L. Garthoff, *Detente and Confrontation: American-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan* rev. ed. (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1994), pp. 963–64.

81. Former Soviet ambassador to the United States Anatoly Dobrynin recalled that, "On my trips to Moscow for consultations during that period [of the SS-20 decision] I never heard any member of the Politburo or our top generals discuss or even mention such political considerations. I did not see any Politburo or Foreign Ministry paper on the possible political opportunities or consequences of deploying our SS-20s. Military justifications were the only ones ever advanced. The Foreign Ministry barely participated in this Defense Ministry project until we faced a diplomatic confrontation. . . . This may be difficult to believe, but it was exactly what happened." Anatoly Dobrynin, *In Confidence* (New York: Random House, 1995), p. 432.

82. For an overview, see Coit D. Blacker, *Hostage to Revolution: Gorbachev and Soviet Security Policy, 1985–1991* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1993).

83. McGeorge Bundy, *Danger and Survival: Choices About the Bomb in the First Fifty Years* (New York: Random House, 1988) provides the most lucid summary of a large literature. For the particular points see pp. 548, 551, 568. Other valuable studies of force posture and weapons acquisition include Robert Art, *The*

TFX Decision: McNamara and the Military (Boston: Little, Brown, 1968); Michael Armacost, *The Politics of Weapons Innovation: The Thor-Jupiter Controversy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969); Ted Greenwood, *Making the MIRV: A Study of Defense Decision Making* (Cambridge: Ballinger Publishing Company, 1975); Harvey Sapolsky, *The Polaris System Development: Bureaucratic and Programmatic Success in Government* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972).

4

The Cuban Missile Crisis: A Second Cut

Most accounts of the missile crisis attempt to answer the central questions by comparing competing hypotheses, examining specific details of the deployment of missiles in Cuba or the blockade for clues to governments' goals and intentions. On the assumption that actors do what they intended, the details of actions taken and comparisons of the costs and benefits of the different options provide evidence about intent. Yet despite the best efforts in analyzing the behavior of the Soviet and American governments in this case, including our Chapter 2, anomalies and inconsistencies abound; "inexplicables" invite attention through the lens of organizational behavior.

As a point of departure consider the troublesome Jupiter IRBM missiles (15 in all) deployed to Turkey under Turkish control, along with their nuclear warheads, which would remain under U.S. control. Originally a highly publicized gesture of reassurance to allies fearful of the Soviet ballistic missiles being fielded in the late 1950s, the crude liquid-fueled Jupiters, along with F-100 fighter-bomber aircraft and their nuclear bombs, were by 1962 part of NATO's plans for defending Europe, specifically the eastern flank—namely Turkey.[1] These pieces on the chessboard greatly complicated the challenge President Kennedy faced in managing a confrontation with the Soviet Union over Cuba.

Unraveling the more important threads of this story requires entry into the arcane world of military acronyms or, as a colleague has named it, "acronymphomania." The term refers to the practice prevalent in Washington, especially in the Pentagon, of using acronyms that many participants in discussions do not understand but are afraid to ask about lest they expose their ignorance. In the case of Turkey, the most important acronyms were: EDP and QRA. These stand for: Emergency (or European) Defense Plan and Quick Reaction Alert.

A vignette from the tapes of the missile crisis deliberations captures Kennedy as he discovers EDP. On October 21, in one of the few direct presidential orders of those two weeks, he dictates that a special order be sent to Turkey giving commanders explicit instructions. They should *not* fire their nuclear weapons, *even if they were attacked*, unless and until they had a direct order from the White House. At the meeting on the morning of October 22, the Deputy Secretary of Defense reports that the Joint Chiefs of Staff object to sending out such a special order and thus that none had been sent.[2]

Kennedy repeats his instruction: "We may be attacking the Cubans, and a reprisal might come. We don't want these nuclear warheads firing without our knowing about it." Assistant Secretary of Defense Paul Nitze responds, explaining that the Chiefs thought such a special instruction "compromises their standing instructions." Eager to avoid conflict between the President and the Chiefs, Bundy and Taylor attempt to move the conversation along, observing that a reminder to commanders to be sure to check their standing instructions requiring presidential authorization for the use of nuclear weapons should suffice.

But then Nitze let the cat out of the bag. "They [the Joint Chiefs of Staff] did come back with another point, and that is: NATO strategic contact requires the immediate execution of EDP in such events." Many participants undoubtedly wondered: what do "strategic contact" or "EDP" mean? In most discussions, however, that much acronymphomania, especially from authorities who presumably know what they are doing, would strangle questions.

Not with President Kennedy, who persists: "What's EDP?" Nitze replies, "The European Defense Plan, which is nuclear war. So that means . . ." Kennedy interrupts, "Now, that's why we ordered that [special instruction] on that."

Backpedaling, Nitze tried to explain that the standing order did require presidential authorization. Yet Kennedy pushed to the deeper point. "They [in Turkey] don't know . . . what we know," he said. "And therefore they don't realize the chance there will be a spot reprisal. And what we've got to do is make sure these fellows *do* know, so that they don't fire them off and

put the United States under attack. I don't think we ought to accept the Chiefs' word on that one, Paul."

Recognizing that he has dug himself into a hole, Nitze tries to stop and move on: "I've got your point and we're going to get to that." The Cabinet Room erupts in laughter. But sensing the president's skepticism, Bundy says, "Send me the documents, and I will show them to a doubting master." More laughter. In the end, an hour later, the instruction Kennedy wanted was sent. It said unambiguously, "make certain that the Jupiters in Turkey and Italy will not be fired without specific authorization from the President. In the event of an attack, either nuclear or non-nuclear . . . U.S. custodians are to destroy or make inoperable the weapons if any attempt is made to fire them." The instructions were kept secret from the Turks, Italians, and other NATO allies.[3]

Kennedy's caution was well founded. While Nitze and the Chiefs were certainly right that presidential authorization was legally required in order to authorize any use of U.S. nuclear weapons, all—including Kennedy— knew that the president had, by earlier order, delegated some of this authority to NATO entities in the event of attack. There were at least two reasons for such predelegation. The first was that a Soviet nuclear attack might well kill the president and other leaders before they could issue orders for retaliation. So to keep the Soviets from being tempted by this scenario, launch authority was delegated in advance if such a contingency occurred. (Presumably, the Soviets should know about the arrangement, although it is not clear anyone told them.) The second reason for predelegation was that some allied governments, such as Germany, sought proof that all NATO nuclear weapons would be used under certain predetermined conditions, so that Soviet attack would be deterred by a more automatic response that left little to chance or whims of an American president. To address the first concern the Eisenhower administration had predelegated its nuclear use authority "in the event of a nuclear attack upon the United States," authenticated as such if possible. To address the second, Eisenhower had predelegated the authority to use nuclear weapons for the defense of U.S. forces based overseas if there was "grave necessity," subject to required consultation with allies.[4]

The Kennedy administration entered office wishing to tighten the predelegation of nuclear use authority. Bundy warned Kennedy that Eisenhower's procedures "have created a situation today in which a subordinate commander faced with a substantial Russian military action could start the thermonuclear holocaust on his own initiative if he could not reach you (by failure of communication at either end of the line)." Not a man given to hyperbole, Bundy warned Kennedy these were literally matters of "life and death." By 1962 the Kennedy administration had led efforts in the Alliance to put the release of nuclear weapons on less of a hair trigger and increase reliance on nonnuclear defenses. At a meeting in Athens in May 1962, NATO members "confirmed" fresh guidelines for the use of nuclear weapons. Although those guidelines have not been declassified, apparently President Kennedy had approved advance delegation of the use of NATO nuclear weapons to other persons and authorities only "in the clearly specified contingency of unmistakable large scale nuclear attack on NATO." We presume, but cannot confirm, that this is the only contingency of predelegation in NATO's Emergency Defense Plan. But, given the layers of prior directives, the murkiness of the plan itself to Kennedy, and the blurry delineation of the contingency (what is "unmistakable" or "large scale"), Kennedy's special orders were profoundly sensible.[5]

President Kennedy took some satisfaction in this triumph of presidential rationality over organizational routine. But simultaneously, another related sequence of events was unfolding, demonstrating how the number of important routines exceed the span of presidential control. In addition to the Jupiters, the U.S. maintained nuclear-armed aircraft in Turkey and other European states. As Scott Sagan's penetrating study, *The Limits of Safety*, reveals in detail, these nuclear-armed fighter-bombers were put on a nuclear Quick Reaction Alert (QRA) at military bases in NATO, including Turkey, on October 22. These QRA aircraft were kept fully armed, ready to take off within 15 minutes, and the NATO commanding general in Europe (a U.S. general, Lauris Norstad), had the authority "to launch his alert aircraft under positive control launch ("failsafe") procedures in the event that tactical warning of an attack was received."[6] At the White House meeting just described, no one mentioned QRA. So these aircraft, which presented a threat of escalation identical to the one Kennedy had pinpointed with his

special order on the Jupiters, escaped the special orders and remained covered by standing authorizations for potential nuclear use.

Moreover, in a subsequent review of the safety of the arrangements at the time, the commander of the squadron in Turkey recalled that nuclear safety was "so loose that it jars your imagination. . . . We loaded up everything [including nuclear bombs], laid down on a blanket on the pad for two weeks, planes were breaking down, crews were exhausted." He did not think anyone would do anything unauthorized with their nuclear-armed aircraft, but "in retrospect, there were some guys you wouldn't trust with a .22 rifle, much less a thermonuclear bomb."[7] None of these nuclear weapons had encoded locks—"permissive action links"—that subsequently became routine as essential protection against accidental or unauthorized use.

The nuclear QRA readiness of NATO fighter-bombers in Turkey and across Europe provide yet another odd twist—one that would have puzzled and worried Soviet intelligence analysts had they known of it. As Sagan's analysis details, while U.S. strategic forces were brought to a higher level of alert on the day Kennedy announced U.S. discovery of the Soviet missiles in Cuba, Europe posed a distinct problem. General Norstad, NATO and U.S. commander of forces on the continent, and a veteran of Berlin crises, was appropriately concerned that NATO preparations not alarm the Soviet-led alliance, the Warsaw Pact. At a meeting with British prime minister Harold Macmillan, Norstad agreed "that NATO forces should *not* be placed on DEFCON 3 alert and so advised the Joint Chiefs of Staff." A veteran of World War I, the British prime minister recalled vividly the ways in which mobilization plans had pushed Europe along the path to that war. His diary entry for October 22 recounts: "I said that we would *not*, repeat *not*, agree to a (NATO alert) at this stage. N [Norstad] agreed with this and said that he thought NATO powers would take the same view. I said that 'mobilization' had sometimes caused war."[8]

Kennedy was impressed with Norstad's good judgment.[9] Nonetheless, as Sagan demonstrates, even Norstad's orders did not suffice to prevent the U.S. Air Force commander in Europe from complying with the wishes of his Air Force superiors in Washington and doing everything he could to

increase the readiness of his aircraft for nuclear combat, including placing a large number of planes on nuclear Quick Reaction Alert.[10]

Had events followed the path President Kennedy feared—the U.S. attacks Soviet missiles in Cuba; the Soviets attack American bases in Turkey; U.S. forces there respond by launching nuclear-armed missiles or aircraft— historians sifting through the rubble might find the cause of the conflagration in the clash of national interests and large purposes.[11] Yet the events outlined above, which arise principally from the programs and routines of the large organizations that constitute governments, typically get short shrift in accounts of important events. In contrast, this chapter attempts to focus on the organizationally-determined features of the missile crisis that provided the drumbeat to which the actors marched.

From this perspective, we focus once again on three central events: (1) deployment of Soviet offensive missiles in Cuba; (2) imposition of a U.S. blockade of Cuba, and (3) withdrawal of Soviet missiles from Cuba. When the tentative hypotheses of organization theory are used to sift the available information, the results are suggestive.

Deployment of Soviet Missiles in Cuba

The Soviet Build-up in Detail

Most explanations of the placement of Soviet missiles in Cuba focus on several of its salient characteristics. For example, the size of the Soviet deployment and the simultaneous emplacement of intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBMs) and medium-range ballistic missiles (MRBMs), some analysts argue, exclude an explanation of the action in terms of Cuban defense. But this behavior supports the hypothesis that the Soviet objective was a rapid buildup of missile power, since a nation with this objective would have reasonably chosen to install a large number of both MRBMs and IRBMs. Similarly, the relative weakness in total Soviet strategic nuclear forces invites the conclusion that Soviet nuclear weapons in Cuba were meant to rectify the strategic balance and thereby deter the American threat, for example to use nuclear weapons in defense of Berlin.

A full account of the Soviet construction of missiles in Cuba includes many details that do not seem consistent with either of these hypotheses. Careful examination of these puzzling features suggests that specific characteristics of Soviet actions in Cuba in September and October 1962 should not serve as a principal guide to Soviet intentions.

American sources and newly available material from the Soviet Union now permit the construction of a detailed series of snapshots of the Soviet arms buildup that culminated in the conversion of Cuba into a major strategic missile base.[12] The Soviet government decided to give arms to Cuba in the fall of 1959. In early 1962, there was a lull as Soviets and Cubans discussed the next phase of military assistance. The United States observed that Soviet dry-cargo arriving in Cuba averaged only fifteen per month for the first half of 1962, and that the ships carried few weapons.

Though the U.S. did not know it, the Cuban requests for conventional weapons to aid their defense were approved by the governing Soviet Presidium in April 1962. In their path-breaking work, Alexander Fursenko and Timothy Naftali note that the Presidium chose to divert surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) already promised to Egypt to Cuba instead. They identify the separate decision-making process initiated by Khrushchev that six weeks later produced the Presidium's decision to send nuclear missiles to Cuba.[13] Castro had not asked for the nuclear missiles, but was persuaded to accept the Soviet decision. For the Americans, the two separate decisions produced a single set of organizational outputs that became visible during the summer. In late July, Soviet shipments of arms resumed at a markedly increased pace. Thirty-seven Soviet dry-cargo ships arrived at Cuban ports during August, and some twenty of these carried arms shipments. By September 1, Soviet equipment in Cuba included surface-to-air missiles, coastal defense "Sopka" cruise missiles (similar to unpiloted jet aircraft), patrol boats that could fire conventional antiship missiles, more than 5,000 Soviet technicians and military personnel, and large quantities of transportation, electronic, and construction equipment.[14]

The first Soviet nuclear ballistic missiles reached Cuban soil on September 8. Measuring 59.6 feet in length (without the 13.7-foot nose cone), and 5.4 feet in diameter, the MRBMs were secretly transported to Cuba beneath the

decks of Soviet ships that had been designed with extra large hatches for lumber trade. The *Omsk*, which brought the first MRBMs, docked at the port of Mariel and was followed by a second large-hatch ship, the *Poltava*, on September 15. Thereafter, additional MRBMs, missile trailers, fueling trucks, special radar vans, missile erectors, materials for building nuclear warhead storage bunkers, and other equipment related to the strategic missiles arrived and were rushed to construction sites (some of which had been prepared in advance). Similar equipment for IRBMs was also arriving. Nor were the September shipments restricted to nuclear ballistic missiles. Throughout that month, the steady stream of Soviet ships brought IL-28 medium jet bombers, as well as the first of the Soviets' most advanced jet fighters (MiG-21s), and additional SAMs, cruise missiles, and patrol boats. The Soviet Union acknowledged publicly only that it had agreed to help Cuba meet the threat from "aggressive imperialist circles" by delivering technicians for training Cuban servicemen and "armaments and military equipment . . . designed exclusively for defensive purposes." There was no need, Moscow proclaimed, to send its nuclear weapons to other countries.[15]

October shipments brought more of the same at an accelerated pace, until October 24—the day on which the American quarantine of Cuba began. Unknown to the U.S., nuclear warheads for the MRBMs arrived on October 4, along with dozens of nuclear warheads for the Sopka coastal defense cruise missiles, 6 nuclear bombs for the IL-28 aircraft, and 12 nuclear warheads for short-range tactical nuclear rockets.[16] Just before the blockade took effect, 24 more nuclear warheads for the IRBMs arrived in Cuba. Indeed, a large number of dry-cargo ships, including those carrying the IRBM missiles themselves, were moving toward Cuba when the blockade was announced.

The original plan required all the ships to be en route for Cuba by October 20, and arrive at the island and deliver their cargo before the American congressional elections.[17] Khrushchev and Gromyko had repeatedly told Kennedy and others that the Soviet government would force a settlement of the Berlin crisis after these elections.

Even without the arms carried on the interrupted shipments, the catalogue of military equipment on the island included:

1. *MRBMs.* There were six field sites for the mobile MRBMs, 4 located in an area near San Cristobal, 50 miles southwest of Havana, and 2 located near Sagua la Grande, 135 miles east of Havana. Each of the sites included 4 launch positions, mobile ground-support equipment, transportation equipment for bringing the warheads to the launch sites from separate nuclear warhead storage facilities, and extra missile shelter tents, indicating that the Soviets intended to have a refire capability for each of their launching positions. In total, 6 sites, each with 4 launchers, each pair of launchers with an extra missile, meant 36 MRBMs, plus 6 more decoy versions to deceive possible American attackers (or for use in training), for a total of either 36 or 42. The MRBMs had ranges of 1,100 nautical miles. All of the missiles reached Cuba. They were divided among 3 missile regiments.
2. *IRBMs.* Three fixed, concrete sites for the heavier IRBMs were observed under construction and a fourth was about to be started. Two of the sites, for one missile regiment, were located at Guanajay near Havana. The others, for another missile regiment, would be at Remedios (in an earlier stage of construction). At each of the sites, 4 launch positions, concrete control bunkers, nuclear weapon transportation, and missile-servicing facilities were under construction. There would have been 16 launchers, with an extra missile for each pair, amounting to a total of 24 IRBMs. The range of Soviet IRBMs was up to 2,200 nautical miles. Though the related equipment for the missiles was present, and the sites were under construction, no IRBMs reached Cuban soil. Khrushchev had also planned to establish a strategic naval base for Soviet submarines carrying ballistic missiles, along with a base for a squadron of surface warships, but he suspended all of the naval portion of the deployment in September after Kennedy's public warnings, for fear that the naval preparations would be harder to conceal from the anxious Americans. After the crisis, the Americans suspected that other areas were being prepared for deployments of more missile units if the Soviets had been able to expand their base.[18]
3. *IL-28s.* As many as 42 unassembled IL-28s [NATO designation Beagle] bombers arrived at two Cuban airfields, San Julian and

Holguin. The jet bombers had a capability of delivering nuclear or nonnuclear payloads of 6,000 pounds to a range of 600 nautical miles and returning to their home base. Only 7 of the planes were fully assembled by the end of the crisis. American Intelligence suspected that nuclear bombs might be available for these planes, and it was right. In September, responding to Kennedy's public warnings about the consequences of deploying nuclear arms to Cuba, Khrushchev had approved quick delivery of 6 nuclear bombs that could be dropped by the aircraft.[19]

4. *SAMs.* Twenty-four SA-2 sites ringed the isle of Cuba in a tight-knit perimeter air defense, organized into 2 air defense divisions of 3 regiments each. Each site consisted of 6 launchers (for a total of 144), each with a missile in place and three reload missiles available. The antiaircraft missiles had the capability to strike targets at altitudes of up to 80,000 feet and a horizontal range of 30 nautical miles. An extensive radar system was deployed to support the air defenses. In addition, large numbers of anti-aircraft artillery were installed for low-level air defense.

5. *Cruise Missiles.* At least 4 coastal cruise missile sites were established. Located near key beach and harbor areas, would deploy a total of 16 34-foot launchers, guidance equipment, and 5 missiles for each launcher, for a total of 80 missiles. The Americans never knew that nuclear warheads were delivered for many, if not all, of these missiles. With a range of up to 40 nautical miles, cruise missiles posed a threat to ships and amphibious landings.

6. *Tactical Nuclear Missiles.* In September, again as part of his reaction to Kennedy's warning, Khrushchev had added 12 Luna tactical nuclear missiles in three detachments divided among his ground forces. These were called FROGs in the West, for Free (unguided) Rocket Over Ground. They had a range of about 20 miles. The missiles were not part of the normal order of battle for the ground units sent to Cuba and were added later, by Khrushchev's personal order, to provide battlefield nuclear defenses against a possible American attack.[20]

7. *KOMAR Guided Missile Patrol Boats.* At least 12 high-speed KOMAR patrol boats were operating from Mariel and Banes. Weighing 66 tons and measuring 83 feet in length, each boat featured 2 20-foot cruise type missiles with a range of 10 to 15 nautical miles.

8. *MiG-21 Aircraft.* Forty-two of the latest Soviet high-performance MiG-21 aircraft were delivered to Cuban airfields. Equipped with air-to-air missiles, the interceptors were capable of speeds of up to 1,000 knots at 40,000 feet. During the crisis, the Americans realized that a large portion of the aircraft were being flown by Soviet pilots. More than 40 of the earlier model MiG-15s and MiG-17s had been sent to Cuba prior to the July buildup.

9. *Soviet Troops.* A full Group of Soviet Forces, analogous to the Groups of Forces stationed in Eastern Europe, was dispatched to Cuba as part of the missile decisions in May 1962. Four heavily equipped motorized rifle regiments were deployed with battalions of the most modern tanks and assault guns in the Soviet arsenal. In total, there were more than 40,000 Soviet soldiers and technicians in Cuba when the crisis broke, and thousands more had not yet arrived. The Soviet ground forces were deployed at 4 major installations (at Artemisa and Santiago de las Vegas in western Cuba, near Remedios in central Cuba, and near Holguin in eastern Cuba).

Transportation of the armaments and related equipment required more than 100 shiploads. Construction and protection of them required more than 40,000 Russians. There can be no doubt that the Soviets were engaged not only in a provocation, but also in a truly massive military buildup in Cuba. Presumably, coordination of these activities involved a plan calling for the introduction of less provocative defensive weapons first, followed by a second stage in which offensive weapons would arrive. (Both sides understood that the American term "offensive weapons" at a minimum included nuclear missiles.) An analyst might expect the available evidence about the Soviet action to be a source of clues to Soviet plans and thus to their intentions in embarking on this adventure.

Careful examination of the panoply of Soviet actions, however, raises many more questions than it answers. As more information about the Soviet side has become available, the puzzles have grown. Perhaps the most striking question is why the Soviets seemed so insensitive to the possibility of U-2 observance of their operation. Having captured one of the high-altitude planes in 1960, the Soviets could harbor no illusions about the U-2's capability. Thus, as the American photo reconnaissance expert Amron Katz

has argued, the Soviet Union "could not have expected that their missile sites in Cuba would escape detection, given the likelihood of closely spaced surveillance."[21] If they were to avoid being found out, they would have to anticipate U-2 flights and design the operation accordingly. But consider what they actually did:

1. *SAMs.* The SA-2s the Soviets shipped to Cuba were very sophisticated antiaircraft missiles. SAMs of this variety had downed an American U-2 over the Soviet Union in 1960 and another over Communist China on September 9, 1962. (One of the SAMs based in Cuba was to shoot down a U-2 on October 27.) The perimeter defense that the Soviets were installing could therefore have effectively denied the U-2s free air space over Cuba. The SAM network was by October 9 in place and apparently ready. The original deployment plan had actually been changed during July to ensure the air defenses were in place first. Khrushchev, at least, wanted to be sure that any snooping U-2 flights could be shot down. But when a U-2 flight first overflew the MRBM sites, on October 14, no action was taken against it. The Americans wondered if the SAMs or their radars had even been operational. As Sorensen recalled, "Why the Soviets failed to coordinate the timing is still *inexplicable*." [22] Yet they had coordinated the timing. So why didn't they try to shoot down the U-2?

2. *Camouflage.* Construction of Soviet MRBM and IRBM sites in Cuba proceeded with little attempt at camouflage. Arthur Lundahl, the head of the National Photographic Interpretation Center in Washington, and the leader of the team that spotted the missiles, wondered "why would the Soviets leave the missiles and all the support equipment exposed in an open field in such a manner that they would certainly draw a photo interpreter's attention?" The Soviet government knew well what American cameras could do.[23] In the light of their awareness of U-2 overflights, this behavior seems so puzzling that some analysts have been driven to the hypothesis that the Soviets must have wanted the United States to discover the missiles during construction. Such a hypothesis is inconsistent with earlier Soviet behavior, and it neglects the further fact that after the United States publicly disclosed what the

Soviets were doing, they rushed to camouflage the sites. As Robert Kennedy recalled, "It was never clear why they waited until that late date to do so."[24]

3. *Construction Pace.* "There has been almost universal agreement on the logistic efficiency of the Soviet operation [in constructing MRBMs]." The speed at which the Soviets were able to install the missiles was indeed "remarkable."[25] Still, the Soviets did not bring in lights and begin round-the-clock construction until after the United States announced the blockade. If at the outset they had restricted construction activity to hours of darkness and camouflaged the sites during the day, they might have escaped detection.

4. *Missile Sites.* The SAM, MRBM, and IRBM sites constructed in Cuba were built to look exactly like the SAM, MRBM, and IRBM sites in the Soviet Union. On October 16, CIA Acting Director Marshall "Pat" Carter briefed Kennedy and his advisers on how the deployment pattern "is identical, complexes about five miles apart, representative of the deployments that we note in the Soviet Union for similar missiles." Soviet SAM sites were placed in the established Soviet pattern for defense of strategic missile installations.[26] This made it possible to interpret the Soviet construction activity; American analysts had photos of similar missiles and deployment patterns in the Soviet Union and even a manual of Soviet missile construction, which Soviet Colonel Oleg Penkovsky had delivered to United States intelligence.[27]

A second set of questions is raised by various inconsistencies in the Soviet operation. On the day he confirmed his team's discovery of the missiles, Lundahl noted a major puzzle. "Why had the Soviets employed extensive security in transporting the missiles from the USSR to Cuba yet, once in the field, there were no security procedures to avoid overhead observation?" For example, consider the Soviet behavior in the matter of camouflage. Only after the U.S. announced the discovery of the missiles and announced the blockade did the Soviets begin camouflaging what had already been publicly identified. Similarly, after the United States had announced the blockade, Soviet troops at San Cristobal began constructing permanent barracks, while at San Julian the Soviets continued unpacking and assembling IL-28 trainers before assembling the combat aircraft. But the

most puzzling inconsistency of all is the simultaneous construction of MRBMs and IRBMs. Given the importance of finishing the MRBMs quickly, how can one explain the effort to install the more expensive, less salvageable, and more conspicuous IRBM sites before the MRBM sites were completed?

A third quandary stems from the strategic character of the nuclear missiles. For what contingencies were these missiles intended? While American strategic superiority would have made any Soviet first strike desperate or hopeless, could the missiles have been used in a retaliatory strike? All of the sites were "soft" and therefore extremely vulnerable to U.S. attack. The Soviets made no effort to harden them; nor were they constructed with an eye to future hardening. Still more puzzling is the fact that the Soviets transported an extra ballistic missile for each pair of launchers. Presumably they intended to be able to reload and fire off a second nuclear salvo. But under what circumstances could an opportunity for refire be imagined? In any contingency, the Soviets would be fortunate to avoid American preemption and launch a single salvo from the missiles. At that point the United States would undoubtedly destroy the sites before there was any possibility of reloading and refiring. So the reload missiles, which constituted a third of the original deployment, were essentially useless. Indeed, there seems only one imaginable contingency in which the Soviets might have had an opportunity to fire a second missile from the soft sites. If, prior to American discovery of the missiles, the missiles were launched against the United States in a first strike, the second missiles might have been loaded onto the launchers and fired in a second salvo. Yet the likelihood that prior to American discovery of the missiles, or Soviet revelation of their *fait accompli*, they would undertake such a surprise attack seems infinitesimal.

Fourth, the Soviet government's most convincing defense of its decision to send missiles to Cuba argued that these weapons would deter *any* use of nuclear weapons by anyone. Specifically, it would deter the Americans from escalating any local conflict in Berlin or in Cuba to the use of nuclear weapons. As Khrushchev explained to the Presidium, the missiles "have one purpose—to scare them [the Americans] to restrain them . . . to give them back some of their own medicine."[28] Yet the Soviet government had

nonetheless deployed its weapons in a way that greatly *increased* the chance that nuclear weapons might be used, and that they would be used first by *Moscow*, not Washington. To defeat an American invasion of Cuba, Khrushchev had ordered that Soviet forces be armed with nuclear coastal defense missiles and battlefield tactical nuclear weapons. But this action would not have deterred an American invasion, since the U.S. never knew the coastal defense missiles had been deployed with nuclear warheads, and only discovered the tactical nuclear weapons late in the crisis. Standing Soviet plans and doctrine would have called for use of the nuclear weapons against American invaders. The coastal defense missiles were meant for launch against invading vessels offshore; the tactical nuclear weapons were intended for use against concentrations of troops after they had landed. The only munitions available in Cuba for either system were nuclear.

Fifth, the behavior of the Soviet military personnel in Cuba seems mildly schizophrenic. Though they made considerable efforts to disguise their identity (for example, troops did not wear uniforms but rather appeared in slacks and sport shirts), a number of signals revealed their presence. The "young, trim, physically fit, suntanned" technicians who arrived in civilian clothes at Cuban docks formed in ranks of fours and moved out in truck convoys.[29] An even more startling signal was noted by Representative Mahon in the House Appropriations Hearing. "It seems a little singular," he observed, "that these units would display large insignia descriptive of them in the area of the barracks and concentrations of men. Does this mean anything to you?" In fact, Soviet units decorated the area in front of their barracks with standard Soviet ground force insignia representing both infantry and armor forces, elite guard badges, and even a Red Army Star.[30] Similarly, the positioning of military equipment throughout the operation left not only telltale signs but also attractive targets, for example the MiGs. As Robert Kennedy mused, "The Russians and Cubans had inexplicably lined up their planes wing tip to wing tip on Cuban airfields, making them perfect targets."[31]

Organizational Implementation

Some of the anomalies in the Soviet buildup must be traced to errors and blunders of specific individuals in the Soviet Union. The Soviet team that

persuaded Castro to accept the missiles also reported back to Khrushchev on the feasibility of the plan. They told him they thought the forests or palm trees in Cuba would conceal the missiles. This assertion later drew particular scorn from Soviet military analysts.[32] But many of the problems and seeming contradictions become considerably less puzzling if one assumes the perspective of an observer of the outputs of Soviet organizations. Information about the organizations and their specific functions is sparse in the public literature. But informed speculation is revealing.

The final decision to put missiles in Cuba was made in the Presidium, but the details of the operation—that is, the path from the general decision to the actual appearance of operational missiles in Cuba—were delegated to appropriate Soviet organizations. Standard Soviet operations, particularly where nuclear weapons are involved, imposed secrecy beyond anything approached in the American government. Thus, each organization's tendency to "do what it knows how to do" was reinforced by a lack of information about the activity of other organizations and the impossibility of an overview of the whole operation.

The clandestine manner in which the missiles were shipped, unloaded, and transported to construction sites was a major organizational success, eluding all methods of detection until the missiles were deployed in the field. This part of Operation Anadyr was planned by a specially created subunit of the operations branch of the Soviet General Staff, working closely with Soviet intelligence agencies. Various routines for total secrecy were devised, as were several procedures of "disinformation," to deceive inquiring eyes.[33] Cubans were almost completely excluded from sensitive port areas and bases. But once the weapons and equipment arrived in Cuba, another organization took over—namely the operational command for the Group of Soviet Forces in Cuba.

The Group of Forces was commanded by General Issa Pliyev, an artillery officer who had led the North Caucasus Military District. The Strategic Rocket Forces branch of the armed forces had wanted one of its own generals to be in charge (since it provided the ballistic missile units) but Khrushchev wanted Pliyev because if Pliyev's identity were discovered (he

traveled to Cuba with a false passport) it would not give away the missile secret. Even more important, Khrushchev could trust Pliyev personally. Both Khrushchev and Defense Minister Malinovsky had long been friends with Pliyev, and the general had just led an operation using machine gun fire to suppress an uprising of rebellious citizens in Novocherkassk. Pliyev's deputy and his headquarters staff, however, were all drawn from the Strategic Rocket Forces.

One consequence, however, was that Pliyev, the old artillery veteran, got along poorly with his deputy and his staff, creating a sullen atmosphere of accusations and bickering. Once they arrived in Cuba, the subordinate units, which came from different branches of the armed forces, reverted as quickly as they could to their operational programs and routines for doing their jobs. They soon found that their original instructions had to be changed or ignored. "What had looked neat and logical on maps in Moscow frequently turned out to be unworkable on the ground."[34]

The missile regiments came from the Strategic Rocket Forces. Never had an MRBM or IRBM left Soviet soil. Few, if any, of the men assigned to install the missiles had traveled outside the Soviet Union. Soviet strategic rocket teams came with their equipment (including the trailer-erectors on which the MRBMs had been hauled through Red Square in the Moscow parades), their materials (including a variety of distinctive support vehicles and systems for providing missile fuel and electricity), and their know-how to an unfamiliar island 8,000 miles away.

At the sites, each team did what it knew how to do—emplace missiles—literally according to the book. Each MRBM site consisted of four launchers, because an MRBM site has four launchers. At each IRBM site, the two pairs of identical launchers were separated by 750 feet, because that is the established distance between IRBM launchers. An extra missile was transported for each pair of launchers because MRBM launchers have a refire capability that was part of their usual deployment in the western Soviet Union, aimed at Western Europe. No attempt was made to harden the missile sites, not because of any intention to launch a first strike, but rather because no Soviet missile sites had ever been hardened. Soviet strategic rocket forces did not harden sites in the Soviet Union and had no equipment

or procedures for such an operation. Nuclear warhead storage bunkers were constructed with fixed dimensions and requisite material, according to established specifications. Otherwise they might not have passed standard inspection tests for storage bunkers.

Other instances of organizational behavior were more subtle. The failure of camouflage made it certain that if a U-2 flew over the site the U.S. would discover the missiles. Initially, it had been hoped that the missiles could be concealed in Cuba's many wooded areas. During the early days of the missile crisis, Kennedy and his aides also feared that missiles might be hidden in the woods, defeating a possible air strike. But both Soviet hopes and American fears were misplaced. Field organizations knew better. As General Anatoli Gribkov explained:

> [Presidium member] Sharaf Rashidov had reported to the Defense Council that Cuba's forests would provide just the needed cover for our missiles. Only someone with absolutely no competence in such technical matters could have reached such a conclusion. A missile-launching complex is not easily disguised. The area is filled not with slim, upright rockets but with multiple command and support buildings, rows of fuel trucks and tanks and hundreds of meters of thick cable—all surrounding the large concrete slabs that anchored the missile launchers. Once the heavy equipment had been moved in, such an installation—but not the roads built to it—could be hidden from ground-level view. From above, however, it could and did stick out like a sore thumb.
>
> Cuba's climate, moreover, made wooded areas unsuitable places to hide Soviet troops and arms. The island's forests were generally sparse, consisting of a few clusters of palm trees or a thick undergrowth of bushes where the air barely moved and the intense, moist heat was unbearable. Instead of providing welcome shade during daylight, the woods acted like a sponge, soaking up atmospheric moisture and raising the humidity debilitating for men and machinery alike. On the eastern part of the island, moreover, the forests held many poisonous guayaco trees. Merely touching their bark raised blisters on the skin.[35]

Even if operational units had orders to keep their activities hidden, they also had orders to get the job done and have all military forces ready for action by early November.

Despite Gribkov's account, more camouflage efforts were possible, and were initiated *after* Kennedy revealed to the world that the missiles had been discovered (and after Gribkov had arrived in Cuba as the General Staff's representative to check on Pliyev's progress). A few days after Kennedy's speech, photo interpreters were disturbed to notice that "in addition to using trees, shrubbery, and bushes to conceal missile equipment, various forms of camouflaging was also being used. Garnished netting had been erected over some of the missile support equipment. Plastic camouflaged sheathing appeared over a number of the launchers and erectors. The canvas covers of some of the missiles and missile transporters had been painted with disruptive patterns." Much more work was plainly being done at night. The efforts could not entirely conceal the sites, but they did obscure them. Kennedy wondered aloud to CIA chief John McCone, "If we hadn't gotten those early pictures [before they were camouflaged], we might have missed them."[36] If so, the U.S. deliberations would have been decidedly different.

Gribkov's excuse for not putting up better camouflage is therefore only part of the story. A serious effort to camouflage the operation was possible. But the units constructing the missiles had no routine for camouflage, having never camouflaged construction activity in the Soviet Union. Moreover, the command had two competing goals: to be ready for action and to conceal its activity. The field organization had to choose which had priority. Camouflage would have created extreme discomfort in the tropical heat for people working under the netting or plastic covers. Working only at night, with great stealth, would have slowed the pace of construction and put the work even further behind schedule. An intelligence agency would likely have made a different choice, but a field organization in the business of deploying missiles could be expected to focus first on completion of preparation for possible combat, particularly when that directive came with a date attached. Thus the troops in the missile regiments did what they knew how to do, sometimes to the point of exhaustion, and without nonroutine help from the other regiments in Pliyev's command. Pliyev's

deputy "was often out on the tennis courts with [the naval commander], both playing as though they had not a care in the world."[37] Only the shock of American discovery (and the General Staff inspection team) produced extraordinary changes in organizational behavior.

The SAMs puzzle is even more difficult. There is direct evidence that Khrushchev worried specifically that U-2 overflights might discover the missiles. In July, as his scores of ships began departing for Cuba, Khrushchev secretly requested that Kennedy, as a gesture of peace, stop overflights of Soviet ships in international waters. Kennedy agreed, if Khrushchev would leave the Berlin problem alone. Khrushchev pocketed Kennedy's agreement (but deflected the Berlin request). In addition Khrushchev also made sure that SAMs would go to Cuba first, to be ready to protect Cuban skies against overflying U-2s.[38]

When Gribkov arrived in Cuba to inspect work, Pliyev had some bad news: The missiles had probably been discovered by the Americans. A U-2 had flown over the areas where the missiles were deployed on October 14. Soviet air defenses had observed the over-flight but had taken no action. (There had been more overflights on October 15 and 17 which presumably were observed, too.) The date was now October 18.

Why no action? SAMs were operational. But, Gribkov recalled, "Moscow had sent them to Cuba to defend against air attack, not aerial espionage. With no invasion thought imminent, the SAM commanders were not even allowed to use their radars to track the spy planes overhead." Gribkov had known about the special July orders to get SAMs ready in Cuba, but he thought they had come from his more immediate superior, Defense Minister Malinovsky,[39] and he apparently had no inkling of Khrushchev's reported desire to use the SAMs against prying U-2s. We can presume Pliyev was equally ignorant. More to the point, it seems that the standing orders to the air defense units told them to fire only if attacked, perhaps to avoid provoking any incident or unwanted attention before everything was ready. The standing orders were undoubtedly written by someone who was not present when Khrushchev expressed his concerns, so the Soviet leader's intentions never entered the operational directives to the relevant implementing organizations.

An alternative hypothesis is that the Soviet air defenses suspected a U-2 overflight without being sure. Confronting an uncertain situation where the appropriate response was unclear, the organization took no action.

There is evidence that, on October 14, Pliyev suspected that the missiles had been discovered. On October 18, Gribkov was told about this suspicion. But there is no evidence that the "Soviet government" learned of the suspicions. Soviet foreign minister Andrei Gromyko met with Kennedy on October 18 and reported back gloatingly that the Cuban situation was "completely satisfactory." Gromyko saw no sign that the Americans knew what was going on, and confidently predicted that "a USA military adventure against Cuba is almost impossible to imagine."[40] The Kremlin did not start seriously worrying about American discovery of the missiles until October 22, when they heard the news bulletins advertising Kennedy's forthcoming television address to the nation.[41]

Why did Moscow not know what Havana knew? We can only guess. Naturally Pliyev would have considered such a report to be a testament of failure. He was visibly unhappy to see Gribkov. But the matter of the U-2 would have been too widely known in his headquarters to attempt concealment from Moscow's "inspector general." When Gribkov heard the news, there was an immediate round of fingerpointing about inadequate camouflage. Yet we have no evidence (yet) that Gribkov cabled the bad news home.[42] Perhaps, he thought, or rationalized, that all this was just a suspicion. They had no proof that the Americans knew. So why report a suspicion that might end their careers? They had no orders covering the contingency. What orders they had, they had obeyed. For them, in their organizational position at the moment, that was apparently good enough.

Finally, we come to the matter of Soviet force structure, specifically the dispatch of nearly 100 tactical, or battlefield, nuclear weapons. They were readied for first use—which could initiate a nuclear war—though the whole deployment had been motivated by the desire to prevent a local conflict from escalating to the nuclear level. Certainly part of the explanation lies in the confused intentions of the Soviet leadership. There is evidence that Khrushchev and his colleagues thought about using the tactical nuclear weapons. On October 22, worried that Kennedy was about to announce an

invasion of Cuba, the Presidium actually drafted an instruction authorizing Pliyev to use the tactical nuclear weapons to repel it. Only after Malinovsky warned that the Americans might intercept the message and therefore use nuclear weapons first did the Kremlin step back to more conservative instructions directing Pliyev not to use the nuclear weapons without authorization from Moscow.[43]

Yet until the message from Moscow arrived, "the tactical weapons were Pliyev's to deploy and, if he were cut off from contact with Moscow, to use as a last resort."[44] Imagine that the U.S. had chosen to launch a surprise air strike followed by an invasion. This option was supported by many senior officials in Washington—indeed, by Kennedy and most of his advisers during the first days of deliberation. In that case, it is quite possible that in the heat and chaos of battle—and in accordance with standing Soviet doctrine and guidance—Pliyev would have launched some of his battlefield nuclear weapons against the invaders. On October 26, acting on his own authority, Pliyev ordered the movement of a number of nuclear warheads closer to the missiles that would carry them. He then reported his move to his superiors in Moscow. Unsettled, the superiors sharply reminded Pliyev that he must wait for central authorization before using any weapons. They relied on his obedience. There were no technical safeguards to physically prevent nuclear use by the field units.

Until late in the crisis, the Americans did not even know that Pliyev had tactical nuclear weapons. The American "planners saw no sense in the island's defenders employing battlefield atomic weapons and thereby risking escalation."[45]

As one analyzes the normal behavior of the organizations engaged, the performance becomes more plausible. The Sopka coastal defense cruise missiles had been nuclear-armed in accordance with standard Soviet military practice for their use in defending the Soviet Union or its neighboring allies. There is no evidence of top-level attention to or deliberation about the application of this practice to the Cuban deployment. The FROG or Luna tactical nuclear rockets and the nuclear bombs for the IL-28s reflected options proposed by the Ministry of Defense in response to

Khrushchev's desire to get more nuclear weapons into Cuba, fast, after Kennedy issued his warning.

Why did the Soviet government not tell the Americans the weapons had been sent to Cuba, especially once Kennedy made his speech? Why not use the weapons to deter Washington, trying to avoid the dreaded scenario in which the weapons might be used? On October 22, Khrushchev contemplated announcing not only that the tactical nuclear weapons were in Cuba, but also that they were being turned over to Castro and the Cubans, and that the Cubans would declare their readiness to use them against attack.[46] Fortunately, he reconsidered.

From the perspective of the Soviet military commanders, their mission was to fight and win battles. Why reveal weapons to an enemy, and spoil a nuclear ambush? Gribkov puts it bluntly: "Arcane theories of deterrence mattered less to us than practical questions of assuring our exposed troops the strongest possible armor against attack."[47]

Observers of organizational output are familiar with persistence in established patterns, details of operations that follow from standard operating procedures, and oddities that become normal in specific cultures. Eventually, difficulties arise from old programs played out in new contexts, slips between semi-independent organizations, and complications stemming from leaders' attempts to force organizations to act contrary to existing goals. While minor modifications in organizational routines occur constantly, major organizational changes typically follow, rather than precede, major crises. (This was true in the Cuban case as well. After the crisis, the Soviet government reacted by taking many steps to tighten central command and control over nuclear weapons.[48])

Nevertheless, the political leaders who sit atop government organizations do make major decisions about *which* organizations shall play out *what* programs *where.* Often this means the performance of existing organizational programs in different contexts, a new combination of routines from several organizations, and even, occasionally, rapid changes in existing organizational programs. Furthermore, each organization consists of components with somewhat different operational goals. Political

leaders choose among organizational components in seeking to realize their objectives. These points are illuminated by returning to the American side of the story.

Imposition of a U.S. Blockade of Cuba

The temptation to dismiss organizational oddities at the heart of Soviet deployment of missiles as something special to the Soviet Union should be resisted. Certainly, Soviet totalitarianism stretched normal behavior to extraordinary extremes in organizational life, as elsewhere. An ideology that imagined that the state could decide and control everything combined with underlying paranoia to make standard operating procedures more pervasive and more powerful factors in Soviet behavior than in other societies. But the world about which Weber and Kafka wrote preceded Lenin.

Because information about the behavior and routines of American organizations in the missile crisis is so much more accessible, a review of the evidence uncovers more, and still more puzzling, grist for the analyst's mill. The vexing problems of Jupiter missiles, nuclear weapons, and QRA aircraft in Turkey have already been noted.

Another dimension of the story begins with another acronym: DEFCON 3. DEFCON is Pentagon-speak for Defense Condition, an elaborate system of programmed orders that specify the levels of readiness for war at which U.S. military forces are maintained. President Kennedy raised the worldwide alert status to DEFCON 3 on October 22, and subsequently to DEFCON 2 for strategic forces—just below the alert level that signifies imminent war. This alert constituted "the highest state of readiness for nuclear war that U.S. military forces have ever attained and the longest period of time (30 days) for which they have maintained an alert."[49]

Pursuant to President Kennedy's orders to increase the alert status, what happened? For example, how many nuclear weapons moved from one location or configuration to another? The answer: thousands. As Sagan summarizes the activity: Strategic Air Command (SAC) nuclear weapons on active alert jumped from 1,433 prior to the crisis to 2,952; alerted

bombers from 652 to 1,475; ICBMs from 112 to 182; Polaris SLBMs from 48 to 112; and hundreds of QRA aircraft in Europe and in the Pacific area were loaded with nuclear weapons and readied for launch. Nuclear-loaded SAC bombers were dispersed to 33 civilian and military air bases across the U.S., to forward bases in Britain and Spain, and to airborne alert. On airborne alert, 66 aircraft flew daily across the Atlantic (or an equivalent route), refueled over Spain, and orbited over the Mediterranean from where they would, if ordered, follow attack routes into the Soviet Union. SAC B-52s "flew over 2,088 missions—flying 47,000 hours and 20 million miles with 4,076 aerial refuelings—during the crisis without a single plane crash."[50]

The objectives of this extraordinary alert were not only to be prepared for war, if that happened. It also signalled and made vivid American nuclear readiness and capacity. But procedures that allowed the U.S. to achieve these goals inescapably increased risks of provocation, accident, or other unintended consequences. This tradeoff is a recurrent theme of almost all of the huge organizational activities put in motion by the U.S. as the crisis intensified, beginning with the discovery of the missiles.

Organizational Intelligence

At 7 P.M. on October 22, 1962, President Kennedy delivered the major foreign policy address of his career. Disclosing the American discovery of the presence of Soviet strategic missiles in Cuba, the president declared a "strict quarantine on all offensive military equipment under shipment to Cuba" and demanded that "Chairman Khrushchev halt and eliminate this clandestine, reckless, and provocative threat to world peace."[51] This decision was reached at the pinnacle of the U.S. government after a week of deliberation. What initiated that crucial week were photographs of Soviet missile sites in Cuba taken on October 14 by a U-2 aircraft piloted by Air Force Major Richard Heyser. Had this information not become available until weeks later, the American reaction would likely have been very different. A blockade aimed at stopping shipments of missiles and warheads that had already arrived would lack a certain plausibility. Indeed, Khrushchev's original plan could have succeeded. He would have unveiled the missiles on his timetable and then, as he had promised, moved onto a

climactic confrontation to force the West out of Berlin. The discovery of the missiles on October 14 thus determined the context in which American leaders came to choose the blockade.

After the missile crisis, there was considerable debate over alleged American intelligence failures. But what both critics and defenders in that debate mostly miss is how extraordinary it was that the Soviet missiles were discovered at all. Their discovery was possible only because of the special organizational capacities, routines, and procedures of the U.S. intelligence community. The capabilities had not been developed for a Cuban scenario. Had they not been created earlier, however, no discovery would have occurred.

The job of intelligence requires incredibly complex organizations, coordinating large numbers of actors, processing endless piles of information. That these organizations must function according to established routines and standard procedures is a simple fact. The organizational routines and standard operating procedures by which the American intelligence community discovered Soviet missiles in Cuba were neither more nor less successful than they had been the previous month or were to be in the months to follow.[52]

The available record permits a fairly reliable reconstruction of the major features of the organizational behavior that resulted in discovery of the Soviet missiles. Intelligence on activities within Cuba came from four primary sources: shipping intelligence, refugees, agents within Cuba, and U-2 overflights. Intelligence on all ships going to Cuba provided a catalogue of information on the number of Soviet shipments to Cuba (at least 85 by October 3), the character of the ships (size, registry, and the fact that several large-hatch ships were used), and the character of their cargoes (transport, electronic, and construction equipment, SAMs, MiGs, patrol boats, and Soviet technicians). Ships were systematically tracked and photographed if they were deemed to have "special interest," fitting a seven-part profile prepared and distributed by the Office of Naval Intelligence. The design of ships was also analyzed, and the photographic interpreters developed a new specialty, which they called "cratology," for

measuring, identifying, and cataloguing different kinds of crates and their contents.[53]

Refugees were a second source of intelligence. Refugees from Cuba brought innumerable distorted reports of Soviet missiles, Chinese soldiers, etc. The low reliability of the reports made their collection and processing of marginal value. Nevertheless, an interdepartmental interrogation center was established in February 1962 at Opa Locka, Florida, which collected, collated, and compared the results of interrogations of refugees—though often with a lag, since refugees numbered in the thousands. This created an organizational capacity, manned by trained bilingual professionals, to compile, screen, and distribute the reports in a systematic way. Another procedure was created, in May 1962, to identify suspect locations for aerial surveillance and photographic evaluation. Still a further procedure was added in August, after the Soviet buildup became evident, to create a comprehensive card file on possible Cuban targets.[54]

Amid more than 800 refugee reports received during September, two received particular attention since each described, in some detail that corroborated the other, a Soviet truck convoy that appeared to be towing ballistic missiles toward the San Cristobal area of Cuba. The Cubans dated their observations on September 12 and 17; the observations were published in Opa Locka reports that were distributed on September 27 and October 1.[55]

In addition to refugees, CIA had a small number of Cuban agents in Cuba. They would write reports, using secret techniques, and, according to procedures of their tradecraft, mail them to a city outside the United States. The address was a "drop" from which the letters were collected, and then deciphered and processed at CIA headquarters. One report described a large zone in western Cuba (including San Cristobal) that was heavily guarded by Soviets, and noted a particular location where important work on missiles was apparently in progress. This observation was made on September 7; the letter mailed on September 15; and the headquarters report distributed on September 18. Another agent reported a conversation with Castro's personal pilot, in which the pilot described the coastal defense and SAM missiles, the radar system, and reportedly added: "There are also many

mobile ramps for intermediate range rockets. They don't know what is awaiting them." Obtained in Cuba on September 9, this information was apparently mailed on September 15, and the resulting report distributed by CIA headquarters on September 20.[56]

The reports were part of a massive paper flow that carried routine transmissions. But due to procedures that had been established the convergence of separate geographic reports was noted and analysts prepared a new "target card" on San Cristobal between October 1 and 3. Again in accordance with the procedures, this card then became a strong cue for aerial surveillance.

The aerial surveillance was the most extraordinary part of the system. In an era of satellites and space shuttles, it is almost impossible to appreciate how amazing U-2 photography was, as a technical feat, in 1962. By 1956, the United States had deployed an aircraft that could fly at 70,000 feet (beyond the altitude of the fighters or air defense missiles of that time), mount multiple cameras that could discern objects only a few feet long, and photograph steadily during hours of flight from a distance of nearly 14 miles. The cameras—synchronized—shot continuous panoramic photos over a swath of earth 100 miles wide. The thousands of feet of film that were used had to be stored in a small space aboard the plane. This technological achievement in photography alone relied on fusing several key discoveries in chemistry, engineering, and electronics.[57]

A unique, heretofore unimagined, aircraft was also needed—the U-2. After appraising Air Force progress and its complex procedures for setting aircraft requirements (a compromise between various potential users) and for supervising production, President Dwight Eisenhower approved acquisition of such a plane in 1954, "but he stipulated that it should be handled in an unconventional way so that it would not become entangled in the bureaucracy of the Defense Department or troubled by rivalries among the services."[58]

The CIA was put in charge of the program, to work in a partnership with the Air Force. Devising his own procedures using secret funds hidden from public scrutiny, the project director, Richard Bissell, created entirely new

capacities. The U-2 was built by a secret production line at Lockheed (called the Skunk Works) in record time and on budget. Twenty months after the project was approved, the first U-2 actually flew a mission over the Soviet Union. Bissell's team of experts was drawn from the CIA, the Air Force, and civilian contractors (mostly from Lockheed). "Forming harmonious teams out of these groups took a surprising amount of time and attention," Bissell recalled. It is no surprise that Curtis LeMay, the powerful head of Strategic Air Command, repeatedly attempted to take over the program on behalf of the Air Force (or that Bissell received private encouragement from organizations within the Air Force that preferred to see the CIA keep the program rather than see it go to their rival).[59]

The CIA then also received lead responsibility, working with the Air Force, for building the U-2's successors, a more invulnerable airplane and a satellite that could photograph installations from space (Project Corona). The resulting aircraft flew regularly until the late 1980s and was never shot down. By 1960, the Corona satellite was able to photograph a million square miles of the Soviet Union on film released from the spacecraft in a 20-pound capsule that was retrieved in midair by an airplane. The CIA could not really take the credit for the prodigious organizational achievement represented by Corona because, by that time, the Air Force had wrested back control of the program.[60]

After pictures were taken by these organizations and their systems, film had to be developed, enlarged, and analyzed by teams of experts trained to work together employing a variety of methods and disciplines to interpret the photos.[61] This was done in the National Photographic Interpretation Center (NPIC), which was run by the CIA and directed by Arthur Lundahl, employing an interagency team. On the morning of October 18, McCone mentioned to his colleagues that six U-2 missions flown the previous day "involve about 28,000 linear feet of film. When this is enlarged, it means the Center [NPIC] has to examine a strip of film 100 miles long, 20 feet wide." McCone added, laconically: "Quite a job."[62] The analysts completed the job in about one day.

All these capacities had been created long before the crisis in Cuba. Thus, the major factor in the discovery of the missiles cannot be explained by

referring to intentions of the Kennedy administration, since most of the key decisions had been made by the Eisenhower administration, including all the decisions to create the revolutionary capacities for overhead reconnaissance, from U-2 to NPIC.

Intelligence experts in Washington processed information received from these four sources and produced estimates of contingencies. Hindsight highlights several bits of evidence in the intelligence system that might have suggested the presence of Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba by mid-September. Yet the September 19 National Intelligence Estimate, described in Chapter Two, concluded that the Soviet Union would not introduce offensive missiles into Cuba. No U-2 flight was directed over the western end of Cuba between September 5 and October 4. No U-2 actually flew over the western end of Cuba until the flight that discovered the Soviet missiles on October 14. Can these "failures" be accounted for in organizational terms?

On September 19, when the highest assembly of the American intelligence community, the United States Intelligence Board (USIB), met to consider the question of Cuba, one or another component of the U.S. government possessed assorted clues suggesting the possible presence of Soviet missiles in Cuba. Earlier U-2 photos, including recent ones taken from the periphery of Cuba (to avoid a direct overflight) already showed the construction of a number of SAM sites and the coastal defense cruise missiles.

Not all this information, however, was on the estimator's desks. Information does not pass from the tentacle to the top of the organization instantaneously. Facts can be in the system without being available to the head of the organization. Information must be winnowed at every step up the organizational hierarchy, since the number of minutes in each day limits the number of bits of information each individual can absorb. It is impossible for people at the top to examine every report from sources in 100 nations (many of which then had as high a priority as Cuba). But those who decide which information the boss shall see rarely see their bosses' problem. Finally, facts that with hindsight are clear signals are frequently indistinguishable from surrounding "noise" before the occurrence. The volume of reports about Cuba flowing into the system has been noted

above. It was known that defensive SAMs were being emplaced. As one CIA analyst reflected later, "Knowledge on the part of the analysts that such a deployment was in fact going on, plus the normal difficulties encountered by untrained observers in telling an offensive [longer-range ballistic] missile from a defensive one, tended to throw a sort of smoke screen around the Soviet offensive deployment when it finally began."[63]

Intelligence about large-hatch ships riding high in the water did not go unremarked. Shipping intelligence experts spelled out the implication: the ships were probably carrying some kind of military equipment. These details were carefully included in the catalogue of intelligence on shipping. For experts alert to the Soviet Union's pressing requirement for ships, however, neither the facts nor the implication carried a special signal. The spy report of Castro's pilot's remark had been received at Opa Locka along with reams of inaccurate and even deliberately false reports spread by the refugee community. That report and hundreds of others had to be checked and compared before being sent to Washington. The days or weeks required for processing could have been shortened by greatly increasing the resources devoted to this source of information. But the yield of this source was quite marginal, and there was little reason to expect that a change in procedures that reduced transmission time to one week would be worth the cost. Nor had U-2 flights produced a hard indication of the presence of offensive missiles.

Given the information available to them on September 19, then, the chiefs of intelligence judged that the Soviets would not introduce nuclear missiles into Cuba. After September 19, the organization's procedures led analysts to notice the convergence of reports and prepare a new target card, which together highlighted the particular need for surveillance of the area of western Cuba. This cue was passed along by the Targeting Working Group of the Interagency Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance (COMOR) to the senior officials staffing that committee. A hypothesis laying out the suspected deployment of MRBMs was put on paper on October 1 and discussed that day in a briefing for McNamara and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.[64]

On October 4, the COMOR recommended plans for flights directly over Cuba, to cover the suspect area. McCone then carried that recommendation into arguments with the top officials of the government that were finally resolved, in his favor, by Kennedy on October 9. This group also decided that if a U-2 plane was shot down it should be a military aircraft, so operational control of the U-2 flights was transferred from the CIA to the Air Force's Strategic Air Command. Kennedy was reassured that there would be no loss of organizational capacity, however, because the CIA personnel and aircraft continued to perform key tasks and the Air Force pilots had already been specially trained for this duty. After October 9, the weather precluded an overflight until October 14. The gradual accumulation of pieces of evidence leading to the formation of a hypothesis that the Soviet Union was installing missiles and then to the decision to dispatch a U-2 over the western tip of Cuba is again, at least in substantial part, routine and nonstartling from an organizational perspective.

Organizational Options

Deliberations of leaders in the White House meetings produced broad outlines of alternatives. Details of the alternatives and blueprints for their implementation had to be specified by the organization that would be responsible for execution. The organizations answered the question: What, specifically, *could* be done?

The first days of discussion in the White House came to a near-consensus that the Soviet missiles had to be removed from Cuba. The principal military options for doing this included a massive air strike followed by an invasion (with the added virtue of removing Castro, too) and a much narrower air strike aimed only at removing the ballistic missiles. Throughout the discussions, the viability and contours of an air strike were always on the table. Kennedy was strongly attracted to an air strike at the beginning of the discussions on October 16. As he told his National Security Council on the afternoon of October 22, "I've said from the beginning, the idea of a quick strike was very tempting, and I really didn't give up on that until yesterday morning." That was when, after one more discussion with the Air Force general in charge of planning the strike, Kennedy was again convinced that the surprise attack "would have all the

difficulties of [being a parallel to the Japanese surprise attack on] Pearl Harbor and not have finished the job. The job can only be finished by an invasion." The U.S. government continued to prepare for an invasion, which still might have been the next step if the blockade and accompanying demands did not convince the Soviets to remove the missiles voluntarily.[65]

To Kennedy, the difficulties of a strike were partly moral but mainly political, including the danger of retaliation against Berlin and the extent of allied unity to defend Berlin if America was blamed for rashly starting a war. Yet the question of whether an air strike would "finish the job" was a factual question about capabilities.

Organizations defined what the president believed U.S. military equipment and personnel were capable of doing in the Cuban missile crisis. Months before the discovery of missiles in Cuba, the armed forces had prepared three major plans for action against Cuba: Oplan 312 (air attacks alone) and Oplans 314 and 316 (two major variants for an invasion). Thus when asked about an air strike against missiles in Cuba, the Air Force began with Oplan 312.

In late August 1962, Kennedy had ordered the Department of Defense to study military options to "eliminate any installations in Cuba capable of launching nuclear attack on the U.S.," including "the pros and cons of pinpoint attack, general counterforce attack, and outright invasion."[66] The presidential order spurred an intense reevaluation of the air strike plan, which until then had been abstract and associated only with a general attack on Cuba. The new work on the air strike plan went to the U.S. Air Force's Tactical Air Command, headed by General Walter Sweeney. In August, spurred by both the presidential order and Sweeney's own concerns, Sweeney's staff began developing much more realistic strike plans, focused much more on the particular kinds of targets that were being identified in Cuba.[67]

The Defense Department's first answer to Kennedy's inquiry stated that the only weapons in Cuba that could bomb the United States were 25 older model MiG fighter-bomber aircraft. Pentagon planners began reviewing the weak air defenses in the southeastern United States and TAC actually

constructed a model of the advanced concrete revetments (shelters to protect aircraft) being used at Cuban airfields. The model was completed at Nellis AFB in Nevada on September 30 and used for practice bomb runs and measurements of bombing effectiveness. Late in September, intelligence experts began observing the late-model MiG-21 aircraft being unloaded and deployed on fields in Cuba. The MiG-21 was capable of dropping either nuclear or conventional bombs. SAM air defense missile sites were being tracked, too. Kennedy met with McNamara and the Joint Chiefs on September 14 and discussed strike plans. His interest was so detailed that he wrote McNamara a week later noting apparent uncertainty about planned aircraft losses in attacking SAM sites and urging McNamara to keep updating the contingency plans "taking into account the additions to their armaments resulting from the continuous influx of Soviet equipment and technicians."[68]

In early October, CIA Director McCone called attention to the increasing numbers of MiG-21s observed in Cuba because of their "definite offensive capability against nearby American cities and installations" and the intelligence community also observed, for the first time, the unloading of IL-28 medium bombers.[69] In mid-October, the plans were revised again, both because the ballistic missile installations had now been spotted and had become a new target set, and because the overflights directly over the island (rather than around its periphery) disclosed much more data about other military deployments.

Sweeney and TAC were still in charge of the air strike plan. Air Force Chief of Staff Curtis LeMay, who had also suspected that the Soviets were planning to put ballistic missiles into Cuba, was impressed with Sweeney's planning and training efforts during September. So LeMay helped devise an unusual arrangement, by which Sweeney subordinated himself to the operational theater commander responsible for Cuba, the Commander-in-Chief of Atlantic Forces (CINCLANT) Admiral Robert Dennison, and became the commander of Dennison's air forces. Dennison agreed. LeMay then authorized Sweeney to begin preparing to execute his strike plan by moving aircraft, people, and supplies into Florida. The process was well underway for at least a week before the missiles in Cuba were photographed by the U-2. Air strike options considered after the ballistic

missiles were photographed on October 14 emerged from the organizational decisions and preparations taken weeks earlier.

The air strike contingency plan, Oplan 312, was separate from the invasion contingency plan. Oplan 312 allocated forces for strikes against sets of targets. The strike plan came in five variants, based on which sets of targets would be covered. Each target set required a certain number of sorties (a sortie is an individual mission by an individual aircraft). In summary form, the organizational options initially presented to the White House, as of October 17, were as follows:

	Variant	*Sorties*
I.	Missile and nuclear storage sites only:	52
II.	Above plus IL-28s, MiG-21s:	104
III.	Above plus other aircraft, SAMs, cruise missiles, and missile boats:	194
IV.	All military targets except tanks:	474
V.	All military targets; prelude to invasion:	2,002

The strike packages, with their associated sortie numbers, were calculated by judging how many aim points needed to be hit to destroy a target, then estimating how many attacking aircraft were needed to hit an aim point. Practice runs yielded a "circular error probable": *x* number of bombs dropped equaled *y* percentage of bombs dropped within a given radius of the target. As Merritt Olsen writes, "until April of 1972 the ability to hit a small target with a bomb dropped in any mode of delivery from a tactical fighter moving at 450-550 knots was nearly zero for a single pass with a string of eight bombs."[70] Standard statistical procedures were used to estimate the number of sorties required to produce success, defined in these calculations as a 90 percent chance of destroying the targets.

Using these same methods, planners calculated that there was a diminishing marginal return after a certain point such that it was very difficult to push confidence of destruction above 90 percent without allocating greatly disproportionate numbers of aircraft to each target. So, as Taylor told Kennedy from the beginning, there could be no guarantees of complete success from a single strike. Multiple strikes would be needed, concentrating on the surviving targets.

After each new round of U-2 photos was analyzed, new targets were identified, driving up the number of aim points. Sortie calculations increased accordingly. The MRBMs had been discovered by the October 14 U-2 flight. The IRBM sites under construction were discovered a day later, hardening attitudes in Washington and increasing again the number of sorties required. More planning clarified new requirements for fighter escort or suppressing air defenses. The first dozen MiG-21s were spotted in September; nearly 40 more were identified at two other airfields on October 17. Yet the constant revisions in the plan were frustrating to those who had to explain what was going on to the politicians. Presented with newly enlarged sortie numbers at a JCS meeting just before a round of climactic meetings, Taylor exclaimed in frustration to his Pentagon colleagues: "What! These figures were reported to the White House. You are defeating yourselves with your own cleverness, gentlemen."[71]

Variant I, targeting the missile and suspected nuclear weapon storage sites, had highest priority. The military desire to strike the IL-28s, in Variant II, was also easy to understand since these medium bombers could carry nuclear weapons. But knocking out the IL-28s would be relatively easy since few had been assembled and they were all at one airfield, San Julian. The large size of the target set of Variant II arose from the MiG-21s. More than 40 of the advanced fighter interceptors had been spotted in Cuba. In theory, they could carry nuclear bombs, and they certainly had the capability to carry conventional bombs, though only for short distances, against targets in Florida. In September, the Air Force had already noticed that it had no air defenses readied in the southeastern United States that could stop the MiG-21s from dropping bombs against Miami or other cities. American air defenses were substantial, but they had been designed for attacks from the Soviet Union, not from the Caribbean. The military leaders were understandably anxious not to attack Cuba while their defenses were so wide open to such retaliation against America (for which the military might expect to be blamed, as it was for the failure to defend Pearl Harbor).

The major element driving up sortie numbers in Variant III was the attempt to knock out the scores of Soviet SAM sites.[72] Top Air Force officers were unanimous in the desire to destroy these sites in an initial strike. Ground defenses made the probability of target destruction much lower, because

attackers would fly at higher altitudes, with more evasive maneuvers, greater stress, and greater speed. But, as an organization, the U.S. Air Force believed deeply in not sending pilots to attack targets without first suppressing air defenses. So the Air Force, readily joined by the other military chiefs, felt strongly and unanimously that the president should order at least strike Variant III. Though Kennedy himself, and one or two of his advisers, kept coming back to the idea of a more limited strike, Kennedy's top civilian as well as military officials came to a consensus, on October 18, that strike Variant III was the minimum feasible approach.

Kennedy and his senior advisers were thus presented with organizational options, constructed with a methodology they dimly understood, that pushed toward a very large strike (with proportionately larger dangers of Soviet retaliation in Berlin or even against the U.S.) while not offering a guarantee of success. On October 21, even after Kennedy had settled on the blockade approach (possibly to be followed by a strike), he met again directly with General Sweeney. Sweeney outlined his best plan, reflecting Variant III, which would suppress air defenses and the dozens of coastal defense cruise missiles, requiring a number of sorties that had grown during the week from 194 to 350–500. Taylor reiterated, with Sweeney's concurrence, that, "The best we can offer you is to destroy 90 percent of the known missiles." As Sorensen recalls: "The Air Force admitted—and this in particular influenced the President—there could be no assurance that all the missiles would have been removed or that some of them would not fire first.[73] No assertion could have made the air strike less attractive to the president of the United States.

For years afterward, a number of Kennedy's advisers expressed bewilderment and annoyance about the absence of a viable "surgical" strike option. Former secretary of state Dean Acheson, for instance, complained about how "the narrow and specific proposal, pressed by some of us, constantly became obscured and complicated by trimmings added by the military. . . . While a drill book might call for preliminary attack on Cuban defenses, this was not necessary for the action we recommended." Rather than accept the organizational explanation (dismissively referred to as "trimmings" from the "drill book"), some of these advisors explained the

Air Force's unwillingness to serve up a narrow strike option as its attempt to force Kennedy into choosing an invasion.[74]

The air strike option was not ruled out, however, and became more plausible as the crisis went on. Use of low-level reconnaissance gave more definitive information about target points. With the need for secrecy eliminated, interceptor aircraft crowded into Florida and lessened the concern about vulnerability to retaliation from the MiG aircraft based in Cuba. Continued American low-level reconnaissance missions, which had begun after Kennedy's televised speech and flew unarmed aircraft over missile sites at altitudes of only a few hundred feet, made clear how vulnerable the missiles were. Civilian experts reviewed plans for an airstrike, reexamining assumptions made in the prior week's estimates. MRBMs classified by the Defense Intelligence Agency manuals as "mobile" could be moved in perhaps 48 hours, but movement of such large items on trucks with trailers could be effectively tracked. Missiles that Kennedy had hesitated to attack, fearing that under attack some might fire first, were shown to be "eight hours from launch." Thus, McNamara reported to the president on October 25 that "we're moving to a position now, where we can attack those missiles and have a fair chance of destroying them with very few aircraft."[75]

The JCS still preferred the larger strike, of at least Variant III scale. Kennedy also thought in these terms. After the American U-2 was shot down over Cuba on October 27, Kennedy discarded plans that would have retaliated by attacking the one offending SAM site. He explained that, "I don't think we do any good to begin to sort of *half* do it. . . . If they still fire [on our surveillance aircraft] and we haven't got a satisfactory answer back from the Russians, I think that we ought to put a statement out tomorrow that we are fired upon. We are therefore considering the island of Cuba as an open territory, and then take out all the SAM sites. . . . Otherwise . . . our reply will be so limited that we'll find ourselves with all the disadvantages."[76]

Organizational Implementation

The U.S. government opened the public phase of the crisis by ordering a blockade of Cuba, which for legal and political reasons the U.S. termed a quarantine. A political decision was made to blockade all armaments going into Cuba, but not to try to interrupt life-sustaining flows of food or of fuel (usually referred to by the acronym POL, standing for "petroleum, oil, and lubricants") for fear that a reciprocal blockade might be placed on supplies flowing into West Berlin.

Beyond that judgment, the task of specifying the *details* of the option named "blockade" belonged to the Navy. Before the president announced the blockade on Monday evening, the first stage of the Navy's blueprint was in motion. The Navy had a detailed plan for the blockade, drawn up with McNamara's encouragement before the missiles had been discovered.[77] The president had several less precise but equally determined notions about what should be done and when and how. For the Navy, the issue was one of effective implementation of a military mission—with minimal meddling and interference from political leaders. For the president, the problem was to pace and manage events in such a way that the Soviet leaders would have time to see, think, and blink.

Observers of such conflicts naturally side with the responsible political leaders against the parochial organizations. But the tendency should be restrained in this case, for implementation of the proclaimed quarantine was no small order. First, the quarantine area included nearly one million square miles of water. The Navy launched a large effort: some 180 ships. Ships from the mid-Atlantic had to approach Cuba by one of five navigable channels. Naval reconnaissance planes spotted all Soviet ships and plotted their position, speed, and direction. Operation of the quarantine qualifies as a virtuoso organizational performance by the Navy's Atlantic Fleet, a tribute to the quality of its prior planning, training, and design of routines.[78]

This operation was complicated, however, by a second factor—new to naval history and modern relations between American political leaders and military organizations. Advances in the technology of communications made it possible for political leaders in the basement of the White House to talk directly with commanders of destroyers stationed along the quarantine line. Advances in the technology of mass destruction created the possibility

that acts by men on a single destroyer in that quarantine line could rapidly escalate to bring death to millions of Americans. Thus the governmental leaders had both the capability and the incentive to reach out beyond the traditional limits of their control. Maps in the Situation Room in the basement of the White House tracked the movement of all Soviet ships.[79] Kennedy and his advisers eventually knew each of the ships by name and argued extensively about which should be stopped first, at what point, and how. Sorensen records "the President's personal direction of the quarantine's operation . . . his determination not to let needless incidents or reckless subordinates escalate so dangerous and delicate a crisis beyond control."[80]

A surface chronology establishes a context within which questions arise. The president first heard a discussion of how the blockade would actually operate at a meeting of the National Security Council on Sunday, October 21. Admiral George Anderson, chief of naval operations, explained that 40 ships were already in position. He described the method for making an interception, following accepted international rules. The ship would be asked to stop. If it refused, shots would be fired to disable the ship, then it would be boarded and towed, if necessary, back to a U.S. port. Anderson suggested giving the Russians a grace period after the blockade was announced so Moscow would have time to instruct merchant ship captains on what they should do.[81]

Anderson then turned to his rules of engagement. If any Soviet warship or aircraft in Cuba took "hostile action" against an American ship, the offending vessel or plane could be destroyed. If a Soviet submarine tried to evade the blockade and make its way underwater to Havana, Anderson said he would ask for permission to destroy it. McNamara concurred, supporting rules of engagement allowing violent responses to hostile action.[82]

On October 23, the implementation of the blockade was discussed in greater detail. Kennedy agreed it would not take effect until the morning of the next day, October 24. At first, the White House resisted setting a fixed radius from Cuba for the blockade, preferring to stop any ship that still seemed to be moving toward the island—especially one that might be carrying arms. Then McNamara suggested an interception radius of about

800 miles from Cuba, a convenient distance because this would keep U.S. ships beyond the range of IL-28 bombers based in Cuba and well beyond the range of the MiG-21 aircraft based there.[83] The first Soviet ships carrying weapons, especially the *Kimovsk*, would pass that line during the night of October 23–24 and, under this plan, they would be intercepted at dawn so the Navy could conduct operations in daylight.

Thus in the early evening of October 23, just after he signed the formal executive order to establish the quarantine, Kennedy turned to his advisers: "Now, what do we do tomorrow morning when these eight [Soviet] vessels continue to sail on?"[84] They agreed that U.S. ships would stop and, if necessary, board Soviet ships even if they were carrying "baby food." But Kennedy pressed to understand, step by step, just what might happen. "These fellows need as detailed instructions as possible," he emphasized, "from those who are knowledgeable about the sea [as Kennedy was] and know just how to proceed on this." Kennedy was anxious to avoid a bloody battle on board a Russian ship, and suggested the possibility of simply allowing a disabled ship to drift rather than "try to board it and have them reopen machine guns and have 30 to 40 people killed on each side."[85]

Yet the alternative of shadowing a disabled ship created another problem, since U.S. ships were reluctant to linger in a single place because of danger from Soviet submarines. Several Soviet attack submarines had been accurately identified cruising toward Cuba near the leading group of ships. The situation was too complex. McNamara urged, "I think we have to allow the commander on the scene a certain amount of latitude. . . ." Kennedy agreed, but told McNamara to "make sure that you have reviewed these instructions that go out to him."[86]

Later that night of October 23, Kennedy reviewed the plans further with the British ambassador, David Ormsby-Gore. Ormsby-Gore suggested giving the Russians a bit more time. Instead of intercepting their ship at dawn (after it had crossed the 800-mile line during the night), he proposed waiting until it was only 500 miles from Cuba. This would put the interception within range of IL-28s, but just beyond the range of the MiG-21s. Kennedy agreed and called McNamara. McNamara resisted. Kennedy

overruled him, and presumably the Navy too. From then on, the blockade line became increasingly formalized at a radius of 500 miles.[87]

The first Soviet ships approached the quarantine line on Wednesday, October 24, but halted and turned around just before challenging it. Information that this had occurred arrived at the White House in the late morning. Had the original plan not been altered, the U.S. Navy probably would have attempted to stop the lead Soviet ship, the *Kimovsk*, shortly after dawn. The *Kimovsk* was well past the original arc for interception. The Navy was just waiting for daylight. We cannot know what would have happened if the U.S. had in fact stopped and attempted to board the *Kimovsk*, which was carrying missiles, some of the most sensitive equipment in the Soviet armed forces. The *Kimovsk* and other ships were contacted by radio from the Soviet Union at about 2:30 A.M.[88]

Fortunately, because Kennedy had contracted the quarantine line there was no attempted interception of a Soviet ship at dawn. The *Kimovsk* would have reached the new 500-mile point and was scheduled for an intercept at the very time news was confirmed that it had turned around—between 10:30 and 11:00 A.M., Washington time. The instant the good news was confirmed, Kennedy ordered that the *Kimovsk* be left alone and given the chance to retreat.[89] A Soviet attack submarine was shadowing it, about 20 to 30 miles away.

As Dean Rusk put it at the time, the Soviets had blinked. Yet earlier in the morning, before that news could be confirmed, Kennedy was still worried about the behavior of U.S. and Soviet organizations. As part of their defensive routine the U.S. Navy ships were keeping radio silence. Neither the Soviets nor the White House knew the precise location of the front-line ships. The Soviet submarine would plainly be in the picture. American ships would track the submarine and attempt to force it to surface.

The previous day, unknown to Kennedy, a procedure for signaling the Soviet submarine had been devised. The procedures were delivered to the Soviet foreign ministry the previous night. The State Department thought it was a standard procedure. "No," McNamara corrected. "This is a new procedure I had them set up yesterday." McNamara explained it: "We have

depth charges that have such a small charge they can be dropped and they can actually hit the submarine, without damaging the submarine. It is the depth charge that is the warning notice and the instruction to surface."

So, contrary to the president's best laid plans to control the first encounter between American and Soviet ships to limit risks, the Navy was now on its own. His hopes of a ship with no prohibited items had been overtaken by the most dangerous engagement he had imagined, namely a Soviet submarine that might be (and as it turned out in fact was) armed with nuclear torpedoes. And at this very moment his ships might be experimenting with a newly-devised procedure to bombard that submarine with depth charges. As Robert Kennedy noted at the time, "these few minutes were the time of greatest worry by the president. His hand went up to his face and covered his mouth and he closed his fist. His eyes were tense, almost gray, and we just stared at each other across the table."[90]

President Kennedy pressed. "If he doesn't surface or if he takes some action —takes some action to assist the merchant ship, are we just going to attack him anyway? At what point are we going to attack him?" Kennedy was obviously troubled. "I think we ought to wait on that today. We don't want to have the first thing we attack as a Soviet submarine. I'd much rather have a merchant ship."[91] Kennedy apparently also did not know that the very Soviet submarine they were discussing was carrying—as part of its normal complement of torpedoes—a torpedo armed with a nuclear warhead.

Both McNamara and Taylor assured Kennedy they would only engage the submarine if it was in a position to attack an American ship while it was intercepting a merchant ship. But McNamara cleared resented the Navy's logic, arguing that "it would be extremely dangerous, Mr. President, to try to defer attack on this submarine in the situation we're in. We could easily lose an American ship by that means." The interception could not be safe "if we restrict the commander on the site in any way. I've looked into this in great detail last night because of your interest in the question."[92] "Okay," President Kennedy finally replied. "Let's proceed."

Secretary of State Dean Rusk reminded McNamara to be sure the Navy knew that retreating Soviet ships should not be pursued. Kennedy continued

asking questions to satisfy himself, for example, that Russian-speaking officers were on each ship, that this become a "matter of procedure as quick as possible."[93]

In fact, the first direct contact with a Soviet ship occurred Thursday morning, October 25, when the tanker *Bucharest* crossed the line. On presidential orders it was allowed to continue after merely identifying itself. American warships shadowed the *Bucharest* as it proceeded toward Cuba while the ExCom discussed whether to intercept it. An East German passenger ship, the *Völkerfreundschaft*, was also allowed to pass—again after debate. The first boarding occurred Friday morning, October 26, when the *Marucla*, a Lebanese freighter under charter to the Soviets, was stopped, boarded, and inspected before being allowed to pass. Later that day, a Swedish ship under charter to the Soviets, the *Coalangatta*, simply ignored American requests to stop and identify itself, and the White House made the decision not to allow the Navy to fire on it. Another troubling encounter, with a Russian ship, the *Grozny*, seemed imminent when the crisis eased on October 28.

There are many still unanswered questions about the combination of government decisions or organizational behavior explains the behavior reflected in actions of Soviet ships. Khrushchev's October 25 promise to the UN that he would keep his ships from challenging the American blockade only compounds the puzzle.

Any analyst sensitive to organizational perspectives will surmise that this chronicle of developments in the White House must have caused serious problems between the Navy and the government leaders. The difficulty of McNamara's position, sandwiched between a demanding, worried president and a resentful, worried Navy is apparent. Though the details of stories differ, there is no doubt that there were some acrid confrontations in the Pentagon between McNamara, his deputy Roswell Gilpatric on the one hand and various naval officers, especially Admiral Anderson, on the other.

On the evening of October 24, Anderson reportedly told Gilpatric, bluntly: "From now on, I don't intend to interfere with Dennison or either of the admirals on the scene" until the Soviet missiles are removed from Cuba. Later in the evening, McNamara, who had also already clashed with

Anderson, pressed matters further. We quote here at length from one reliable chronicler, Dino Brugioni, whose reconstruction of a confrontation in the Navy's inner sanctum, the Navy Flag Plot, is especially revealing about the contrasting logics revealed in McNamara's insistence and Anderson's resistance.

McNamara noted that there were two U.S. destroyers several hundred miles from the quarantine line. . . . When McNamara asked why the destroyers were so far from the quarantine line, Anderson took him aside again to explain that U.S. forces were holding down a Soviet F-class [attack] submarine at that location.

McNamara demanded to know who had given those orders. Anderson explained it was just part of the overall naval strategy and that in such situations it was a common Navy practice to "trail" unidentified submarines.

"How sure are you that it is a Soviet submarine?" McNamara asked.

"Trust me," was Anderson's answer. Then he added that the reason these Soviet submarines were so far west in the Atlantic was undetermined and that he could not allow them to "pose any threat to my Navy."

"How does he know you are above him?" McNamara asked. Coming as it did from the secretary of defense, this appeared to be an ignorant question to anyone familiar with submarines. . . .

"Isn't this dangerous?" McNamara asked.

"If he chooses to make it so. Otherwise, he can do as he has in the past few days—that is, come up for air and charge his batteries"

McNamara was dumbfounded that Russian submarines were being held down and was irritated by Anderson's casual attitude. . . .

The Russian submarines, when actually warned, . . . continued to stay submerged until foul air and uncharged batteries forced them to surface.

When Anderson reassured the secretary that things concerning the blockade were going according to plan, McNamara asked, "What plan?" Anderson handed him a large black notebook containing the

specific operational plan and said, "It's all there" McNamara disdainfully pushed the book aside.[94]

The Withdrawal of Soviet Missiles from Cuba

Chairman Khrushchev's announcement on Sunday, October 28, that "the arms which you describe as offensive [will be] crated and returned to the Soviet Union" marked the climax of the crisis.[95] A week of intense interaction between the United States and the Soviet Union preceded that announcement. That interaction was in large part a by-product of action within each nation—action that pitted government leaders against organizations whose outputs they sought to control. Indeed, the similarities between the phrases with which the groups who sat on top of each government characterized "the problem" are suggestive. As Soviet ships approached American warships stationed along the quarantine line, the American leaders sent a letter to the Soviets expressing concern "that we both show prudence and do nothing to allow events to *make the situation more difficult to control* than it is."[96] Later, a Soviet reply emphasized the danger, "Contact by our ships . . . can spark off the fire of military conflict after which any talks would be superfluous because other forces and other laws would begin to operate—the *laws of war*."[97] As the climax of the crisis drew near, developments were, in the American phrase, "approaching a point where *events could have become unmanageable*."[98] Khrushchev chose another metaphor: the logic of war. "If indeed war should break out, then it would not be in our power to stop it, for such is the logic of war."[99]

American *intra*national relations in the critical week of the crisis constitute a catalogue of friction and frustration as political leaders attempted to interfere with organizational routines and procedures in the name of flexibility and options. These established, rather boring, organizational routines determined hundreds of additional, seemingly unimportant details —both the key to enormous accomplishments and potential fuses for disaster. For example, after the crisis, Admiral Anderson testified that, "Our aircraft and ships were searching an area of some 3.5 million square miles for Russian ships and submarines. They were engaged in *the most extensive* and, I might add, *the most productive*, antisubmarine warfare operations

since World War II."[100] It had at once been an extraordinary, and extraordinarily dangerous, organizational achievement.

A second encounter pitted the secretary of defense's "no cities doctrine" (enunciated in his Ann Arbor speech four months earlier in June 1962) against the alert procedures of the Strategic Air Command (SAC). According to the "no cities" doctrine, in the case of a nuclear war, the United States intended to launch weapons in a controlled fashion at Soviet military forces, rather than in an attack on Soviet cities and their citizens. Such an attack, it was hoped, would encourage the Soviet Union to attack only American military centers, since additional U.S. capability would remain to deter Soviet counter-city attacks. Nevertheless, the SAC alert dispersed nuclear-armed bombers to 40 civilian airports across the U.S.[101] The "no cities" doctrine was shelved. So programmed was SAC's dispersal of bombers that some moved to civilian airports in the southeastern United States, placing themselves within the range of the operational MRBMs in Cuba.

Third, the intelligence capacities and programs were also impressive, as noted earlier, but they too ran on a logic of their own. A few top officials knew that some valuable electronic intelligence (for instance, about instructions being given to Cuban pilots) was coming from a Navy intelligence ship, the U.S.S. *Oxford,* 10 miles off the Cuban coast—in what Cubans regarded as their territorial waters. On Friday morning, October 26, McNamara and another official called attention to the danger, prompted by indications that Cuban forces might be readying some action. To perform the intelligence task, the ship needed to be close to Cuba, where it could intercept high-frequency communications. Even at the risk of losing this capacity, McNamara recommended that "it seems wise to draw it out 20, 30 miles and take it out of the range of capture, at least temporarily."[102] This incident took five minutes of the ExCom's time. For several years after the crisis, this fact seemed so trivial that it escaped note by accounts and analyses. But the procedures of that intelligence ship were not unlike those of the two now-famous U.S. intelligence ships: the *Liberty* (attacked by Israel during the 1967 Israeli-Arab war) and the *Pueblo* (captured by North Korea in 1968 when operating close to the shores of North Korea). In the

aftermath of these incidents, we can now appreciate the significance of this small detail.

As the American forces shifted to DEFCON 3, no one in the White House appreciated what this entailed. Among the thousands of orders, one authorized SAC to fly arctic routes that had proved especially difficult, given capability for celestial navigation. Two months earlier, in August, a B-52 on the arctic route had flown nearly 500 miles off course and approached the Soviet border before it was frantically recalled. The error could not be fixed without changing the basic route of flight. That was not completed however, until two months later —*during* the crisis, after the alert had been in effect for several days.[103] The alert had already greatly increased the chance for another, more dangerous, error by increasing the number of B-52 sorties on the route.

However worrying this episode was, the bomber alert was least likely to suffer from near accidents since it was receiving so much high-level attention. An analyst of organizational behavior should instead be especially alert to unexpected interactions in operations that were getting far less high-level scrutiny. Examples abound.

As part of the SAC alert, a facility for test launching intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), Vandenberg Air Force Base in California, converted most of its test ICBMs into armed nuclear missiles. Vandenberg thus became an operational missile base. On October 26, near the climax of the crisis, Vandenberg launched an ICBM to fly thousands of miles toward its intended target. The target, however, was Kwajalein Island in the Pacific and the missile was a test flight. It was launched according to a test scheduled before the crisis that proceeded without interruption, irrespective of the nuclear confrontation. The Soviets, however, would not have known about the test schedule. If they were aware that Vandenberg had become an operational base for armed missiles during the crisis, the routine test launch could have appeared to be the first missile in the attack.

On the morning of October 28, an early warning radar detected an apparent missile launch from Cuba against the United States. The air defense command (NORAD) and the Strategic Air Command were alerted. There was no time to react; officers waited for the predicted detonation in Florida.

There was no detonation. Officials breathed a sigh of relief, discovering later that an early warning center had inadvertently run a test tape, simulating a nuclear attack, at the same time that another radar site, recently activated to provide more redundant coverage, detected a satellite.[104] Such an interaction could have been even more dangerous if it had interacted with another false alarm, about which we still know little, triggered by the accidental explosion of a Soviet spacecraft and the radar detection of its debris, sometime in the last week of October.[105]

Saturday, October 27, was the blackest and most frustrating day of the crisis. The ExCom convened at 10 A.M. to draft a reply to Khrushchev's secret Friday letter. But a few minutes later, Kennedy read a news ticker announcing that Khrushchev "would withdraw offensive weapons from Cuba if the United States withdrew rockets from Turkey." Bundy's first reaction was, "No he didn't." They then realized it was a new letter, with a new deal. Kennedy was the first to realize the danger in the Soviet move, with its alluring public appeal. "He's put this out in a way to cause maximum tension and embarrassment," the president observed. "It's not as if it was a private proposal, which would give us an opportunity to negotiate with the Turks. He has put it out in a way that the Turks are bound to say that they don't agree to this."[106]

Kennedy may have been right. He and his advisers assumed the public proposal was clever, but made in bad faith—an attempt to snarl the crisis in public negotiations while the missiles became operational. Yet some evidence from the Soviet side points to an organizational consideration. In this pre-hotline era, the Soviet leaders were frustrated at the time lag in their inefficient system of communication with Washington. It involved sending a telegram, waiting for the telegram to be delivered to their embassy (by Western Union), which would then decode and translate the message and arrange to deliver it. To the eight hour time difference between Moscow and Washington, this process added another ten hours. One of Khrushchev's staff remembers Khrushchev choosing the radio broadcast simply because the message would be received much more quickly. "Nobody foresaw that by making public the Turkish angle of the deal we created additional difficulties to the White House."[107]

Then, early in the afternoon, an incident stranger than "Strangelove" occurred. A U-2 based in Alaska had been flying an arctic route on a routine mission planned and authorized before the crisis to collect atmospheric samples of residue from Soviet nuclear tests. Through no particular fault of his own, the pilot had navigation difficulties that caused him to fly off course into Soviet airspace. (Recall the problem SAC had in August 1962.) Soviet MiG fighters scrambled to intercept the offending aircraft. American fighters in Alaska were then sent aloft to protect the U-2's return.

But thanks to the DEFCON 3 alert, these American fighters were armed with air-to-air missiles carrying *nuclear* warheads. Their procedures for use meant that they carried the weapons in an "active air defense" mission ready and able to fire. Physical control over firing the weapons was entirely in the hands of the individual fighter pilots.[108] Fortunately, the U-2 was able to return to U.S. airspace without a clash.

Why should the Soviet Union not regard this as last-minute reconnaissance in preparation for a nuclear attack? As Khrushchev himself asked in his letter announcing withdrawal of the missiles:

> One of your reconnaissance planes intruded over Soviet borders in the Chukotka Peninsula area. . . . The question is, Mr. President: How should we regard this? What is this, a provocation? One of your planes violates our frontier during this anxious time we are both experiencing, when everything has been put into combat readiness. Is it not a fact that an intruding American plane could be easily taken for a nuclear bomber, which might push us to a fateful step; and all the more so since the U.S. Government and Pentagon long ago declared that you are maintaining a continuous nuclear bomber patrol?[109]

Were the organizations on top of which the president was trying to sit going to drag the country over the nuclear cliff in spite of all his efforts?

Discovering this incident while at the Pentagon during a break in the White House meetings, McNamara expressed alarm about the danger and drove to the State Department to tell Rusk. The next day the secretary of defense

canceled all U-2 flights, anywhere in the world, until he could get a satisfactory explanation for what had happened. At the White House, Kennedy listened painfully as he was briefed on what had happened and then, according to the briefer, broke the unbearable tension with an ironic laugh. "There is always some son-of-a-bitch who doesn't get the word."[110]

Kennedy was certainly right. Another U-2, following the previously established schedule, had taken off on yet another air-sampling mission from the same Alaskan air base when McNamara's order arrived. It was recalled to base.[111]

The potential implications of this inadvertent U-2 flight into Soviet airspace during the crisis were surely incredible. Certainly Kennedy had not intended such an incident. Yet the overall program of which the mission was a part was authorized. The nuclear alert had been authorized. There is no evidence, though, that any top official realized that nuclear-armed aircraft had scrambled to protect the U-2.

When McNamara returned to the Pentagon, he received more bad news. Word arrived that Cuban gunners had fired on the low-level reconnaissance flights. One plane was hit by a 37 mm shell. They all returned home. But that day's U-2 overflight of Cuba had not returned. Late in the afternoon, McNamara and Taylor learned that the overdue U-2 had been shot down. The pilot, Major Rudolf Anderson, had been killed.[112] The Soviet forces had finally fired their SAMs at the Americans.

Amid these events was constant discussion in Washington about the problem of the Jupiter missiles in Turkey. Khrushchev had used them effectively, Kennedy thought, as a negotiating ploy—for public consumption. Kennedy discovered yet another conflict between his agenda and that of the Department of State. As the implications of the second Soviet letter were discussed on Saturday morning, October 27, Kennedy was plainly angry. During the preceding week he had made clear, he thought, that State should undertake private discussion with the Turks that would prepare the way to respond effectively to Khrushchev's predictable maneuver.

Yet to the State Department, this request was taken as an opportunity to advance its strategy for dealing with Turkey and the Jupiters. The department had painstakingly organized a campaign to persuade European countries to abandon the goal of national nuclear deterrence and join a multilateral nuclear force—the MLF. Thus the president's regret became an occasion for State to reiterate and reinforce their existing program. They would phase out Jupiters in Turkey once the multilateral force they were planning was agreed upon, established, and accepted as a substitute by the Turks. All three affected bureaus jointly presented this approach to Rusk on October 24.[113]

This was a program geared to a timetable of months, or years, not days. Thus when Kennedy raised the issue with State on the morning of October 27, the department had nothing to report except a preliminary sounding taken from the American ambassadors to Turkey, Italy, and NATO.[114]

"Well," Kennedy pressed, "have we gone to the Turkish government before this came out this week? I've talked about it now for a week. Have we had any conversations in Turkey, with the Turks?"

Rusk admitted that State had begun consulting with the U.S. ambassadors, but "we've not actually talked with the Turks." Rusk's deputy, George Ball, offered his view to the president that talking to the Turks "would be an extremely unsettling business."[115]

"Well, *this* is unsettling *now*, George, because he's got us in a pretty good spot here," Kennedy replied. The discussion moved on, but Kennedy did not forget. Two days later, he privately upbraided Dean Rusk when the two men were alone in the Oval Office. Kennedy harshly reminded Rusk that when Khrushchev's broadcast proposal "came in on Saturday, there was nothing there, really." There were cables to ambassadors. "But we were not really prepared to know what we were going to say, and we weren't prepared." Kennedy went on dressing down his nearly mute secretary of state. "Now it seems to me that somewhere in the State Department [someone] ought to be, about a week ahead, not just to be drawing plans up for six months ahead."[116]

The president's wishes had not disturbed the organization's priorities and previously established program of action.[117] In time, Kennedy had his way. The missiles were withdrawn and replaced early in 1963, not by the mirage of a multilateral force but by the missiles carried in an American Polaris submarine on patrol in the Mediterranean Sea. Long before the grinding of the machinery in Washington had led to actual withdrawal of missiles in Turkey, the problem itself had been defused by events. On Sunday morning, October 28, in another urgent message broadcast over the radio, the Soviet leaders announced that they would withdraw their missiles from Cuba.

Notes

1. Jupiter missiles were also deployed to Italy; even older model Thor missiles had already been sent to Great Britain, where neither the Americans nor the British had much further use for them. For some background, see Philip Nash, *The Other Missiles of October: Eisenhower, Kennedy, and the Jupiters 1957–1963* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

2. The following discussion is from Ernest R. May & Philip D. Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes: Inside the White House During the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), pp. 222–23.

3. The message was sent from Taylor to the U.S. Commander-in-Chief in Europe, General Lauris Norstad. JCS 6866, quoted in May & Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, p. 223 n.16.

4. See the series of orders issued by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to CINCEUR, CINCLANT, and CINCSAC in December 1959, declassified and published by the National Security Archive in a microfiche collection edited by William Burr, *U.S. Nuclear History: Nuclear Weapons and Politics in the Missile Era, 1955–1968* (Alexandria: Chadwyck-Healey, 1998). For background, see also Bruce G. Blair, *The Logic of Accidental Nuclear War* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1993); and Peter Feaver, *Guarding the Guardians: Civilian Control of Nuclear Weapons in the United*

States (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992). For U.S. forces defending the U.S., a third predelegation scenario may have been included in Eisenhower's orders for other cases of attack on the U.S. or U.S. forces, but the declassified fragments leave the matter unclear.

5. Bundy to President Kennedy, "Politics previously approved in NSC which need review," 30 January 1961, in *FRUS 1961–1963*, vol. 8, *National Security Policy* (Washington, DC: Department of State, 1994), p. 18. The NATO document "confirmed" at Athens was Document C-M(62)48. See State 1920, "Summary of NATO Meeting in Athens," 9 May 1962 and National Security Action Memorandum No. 147, "NATO Nuclear Program," 18 April 1962 with attached State/Defense paper, "Suggested NATO Nuclear Program," 22 March 1962, all in *FRUS 1961–1963*, vol. 13, *West Europe and Canada* (Washington: Department of State, 1994), pp. 389, 391–92, 384, and 387. The quoted guidelines are those recommended for a hypothetical NATO multilateral MRBM force, which were congruent with the NATO nuclear guidelines being proposed for general adoption at the Athens meeting. See the evidence from British and German sources in Stephen Twigge and Len Scott, *Fail Deadly: Britain and the Command and Control of Nuclear Forces 1945–1964*, Nuclear History Program Project Report, Aberystwyth, July 1997, pp. 244–51.

6. Scott D. Sagan, *The Limits of Safety: Organizations, Accidents, and Nuclear Weapons* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 104. "Failsafe" procedures meant the aircraft would fly toward their targets up to a point at which they would then either receive a recall order or a go code to attack their targets. The procedure looks safer on paper than it would be in practice, especially given the fragility of communications in 1962, particularly for aircraft dispersed at bases as remote as those in Turkey which could even be under conventional attack. The inability to communicate with base, where such inability was believed to be caused by enemy attack, was another contingency in which aircraft commanders (under U.S., not NATO procedures) may have had predelegated authority to use

nuclear weapons. Since such contingencies tended to be described imprecisely (partly to avoid a clear point at which presidential authority was lost) the result, as Bruce Blair pointed out, is that "military commanders [in this period, at least] probably operated under significant ambiguity of authority. . . . How might the uncertainty be resolved in the absence of formal guidance? What has been called institutional ethos—the attitudes, traditions, and beliefs prevalent in military organizations—would arguably have the most systematic effect on behavior." Bruce G. Blair, *Strategic Command and Control: Redefining the Nuclear Threat* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1985), pp. 122–23.

7. Lt. Col. Robert Melgard to Scott Sagan, quoted in Sagan, *The Limits of Safety*, p. 110.

8. Ibid., p. 102.

9. Kennedy chose, as a result, to keep Norstad at his post during the crisis and overruled a previous schedule for replacing him. See McCone to File, "Executive Committee Meeting on 23 October 1962, 6:00 p.m.," in *CIA Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis*, ed. Mary S. McAuliffe (Washington, DC: CIA History Staff, 1992), p. 291.

10. This happened even though Norstad had privately cabled JCS chairman Taylor asking Taylor, specifically, to make sure that the individual services (Army, Navy, or Air Force) did *not* give any different alert instructions to their component commanders in Europe. Sagan, *The Limits of Safety*, pp. 102–03; see also U.S. ambassador to NATO Thomas Finletter's report, Paris 1907, 22 October 1962, in Record Group 59, National Archives.

11. The fears induced by the missile crisis led McNamara and Bundy to harden their attitudes about predelegation of nuclear use authority, to the point of opposing any predelegation whatsoever. See, e.g., Memcon, "State-Defense Meeting on Group I, II, and IV Papers," 26 January 1963, in the National Security Archive

microfiche collection, Burr, ed., *U.S. Nuclear History: Nuclear Weapons and Politics in the Missile Era, 1955–1968.*

12. These sources include Alexander Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble": Khrushchev, Castro and Kennedy 1958–1964* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997); Anatoli I. Gribkov, "The View from Moscow and Havana," in Anatoli Gribkov & William Y. Smith, *Operation ANADYR: U.S. and Soviet Generals Recount the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Chicago: Edition q, 1994); various CIA estimates, many reprinted in *CIA Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis;* U.S. Congress, House Appropriations Committee, Subcommittee on Department of Defense Appropriations, *Hearings,* 88th Cong., 1st sess., 1963 (hereinafter referred to as *DOD Hearings);* Department of Defense, *Special Cuba Briefing,* February 6, 1963; U.S. Congress, Senate Armed Services Committee, Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee, *Interim Report on Cuban Military Buildup,* 88th Cong., 1st sess., 1963 (hereinafter referred to as *Cuban Military Buildup).* The following account is reconstructed from the preceding sources. Additional references are made where central facts or major pieces of information depend on other sources.

13. On the April 1962 Presidium decision on defensive military aid to Cuba, see Fursenko and Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble",* pp. 158–70. On the subsequent May 1962 decision to dispatch ballistic missiles, see ibid., pp. 170–81 and the discussion in Chapter Two.

14. *Cuban Military Buildup,* pp. 5 ff.; see also Roger Hilsman in *Briefing.*

15. The key precrisis public statement is the Soviet government press release of September 11, 1962, reprinted in David L. Larson, ed., *The "Cuban Crisis" of 1962: Selected Documents, Chronology and Bibliography 2d ed.* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1986), with the quoted material on p. 25.

16. Fursenko and Naftali say there were 45 warheads delivered for the MRBMs (though why there were 45 warheads for 36 missiles is unclear). Gribkov states there were 80 warheads for the Sopka missiles; Fursenko and Naftali say there were only 36. Compare Gribkov, "The View from Moscow and Havana," pp. 45–46 with Fursenko and Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble"*, pp. 213, 217. Fursenko and Naftali indicate that the MRBM warheads each had a yield equivalent to one million tons of TNT; U.S. intelligence sources thought the warheads for these missiles had a yield of 2 or 3 megatons.

17. Fursenko and Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble"*, p. 213 (citing a September 25 memo to the Presidium from Chief of the General Staff Marshal Zakharov and Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Fokin).

18. The deployment of H-class [NATO designation Hotel] ballistic missile submarines was replaced, however, by a deployment of four F-class [Foxtrot] attack submarines, each carrying one nuclear-armed torpedo with its conventional armaments. Fursenko and Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble"*, pp. 213–14. The diesel submarines departed for Cuba on October 1 and were approaching Cuba when the blockade began. They were then the target of intense antisubmarine tracking by U.S. warships that eventually forced them to surface under American scrutiny. For the reference to evidence of planning for a deployment area in eastern Cuba (the known MRBM and IRBM sites were all on western and central portions of the island) see CIA, "Deployment and Withdrawal of Soviet Missiles and Other Significant Weapons in Cuba," 29 November 1962, in *CIA Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis*, p. 357. This estimate turns out to have been remarkably accurate in its tracking of major Soviet military hardware.

19. For the numbers of IL-28s, see CIA memo, "Deployment and Withdrawal," on p. 360. The Soviet sources tend to give lower numbers, and it is possible that some crates might have contained

different types of aircraft. On Khrushchev's decision to send nuclear bombs for them after the White House warning of September 4, see especially Fursenko and Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble"*, pp. 209–12; see also *DOD Hearings*, pp. 6, 15–16; *Cuban Military Buildup*, p. 7.

20. Raymond Garthoff asserts that the FROGs were routinely deployed as conventional weapons, being nuclear-capable only in the sense of practically all rocket and artillery systems, and that no nuclear weapons were dispatched for the FROGs in Cuba. Raymond L. Garthoff, *Reflections on the Cuban Missile Crisis* rev. ed. (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1989), p. 38 n. 64. There is now no doubt, however, that the FROGs were sent to Cuba with nuclear weapons.

In fact, the FROGs were so inaccurate as to be practically worthless for delivery of conventional munitions. The best inference from observed Soviet military behavior is that the FROGs were seen as useful or cost-effective only in the role of battlefield nuclear systems, attached to Soviet ground forces at the level of divisional headquarters. Since their use was apparently under special control, the FROGs were not usually observed in the field with other artillery but were kept back in barracks. Intelligence analysts watching the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 noticed that FROGs accompanied some of the first Soviet divisions sent into that country. A few days later, the Soviet high command apparently realized its error, because the FROGs were immediately detached from the divisions and sent back to the USSR. Zelikow interview with retired CIA official Douglas MacEachin, February 10, 1998. Since the FROGs were so inaccurate and took so long to fire and reload, few observers, American or Soviet, would have thought that a mere 12 such rockets would have had value in Cuba as conventional artillery. After the FROGs were identified by a low-level reconnaissance flight on October 25, the Pentagon promptly assumed that the FROGs were nuclear-armed and began revising plans for an attack on Cuba accordingly. The Group of Soviet Forces for Cuba deployed to Cuba had no divisional headquarters and there is no evidence that FROGs were considered an appropriate complement to

the Group of Forces until Khrushchev asked for additional nuclear defense options in September.

21. Amron Katz, *The Soviets and the U-2 Photos—An Heuristic Argument*, RM-3584-PR (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 1963), p. v.

22. Fursenko and Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble"*, pp. 191–92; Gribkov, "The View from Moscow and Havana," p. 28. Signals intelligence from the National Security Agency (NSA) detected radar emissions for the SAMs on September 15 and evidence of a complete air defense network on October 9. See the declassified documents available from NSA. For the Sorensen quote, see Theodore C. Sorensen, *Kennedy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 673 (emphasis added).

23. Dino A. Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball: The Inside Story of the Cuban Missile Crisis*, ed. Robert McCort updated ed. (New York: Random House, 1991), pp. 204–05.

24. Robert F. Kennedy, *Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1969), p. 58.

25. Albert and Roberta Wohlstetter, *Controlling the Risks in Cuba*, Adelphi Papers (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1965), p. 12; *DOD Hearings*, p. 6.

26. May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, p. 79; *Cuban Military Buildup*, p. 11; *DOD Hearings*, pp. 44–46.

27. Though the title claims too much for Penkovsky and too little for American satellites, see Jerrold I. Schechter and Peter S. Deriabin, *The Spy Who Saved the World: How a Soviet Colonel Changed the Course of the Cold War* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1992).

28. Quoted in Fursenko and Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble"*, p. 182.

29. *Cuban Military Buildup*, p. 6.

30. *DOD Hearings*, p. 23.

31. Kennedy, *Thirteen Days*, p. 59.

32. Kennedy had his own experience of receiving such an ill-analyzed assurance. Before approving the Bay of Pigs invasion by CIA-trained Cuban exiles in 1961, Kennedy had been told that, if defeated, the invaders could "melt away" and become guerrillas in the mountains, but the mountains were 80 miles away from the landing site, separated by swamps. See Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), p. 234.

33. For a summary by one of the General Staff planners, see Gribkov, "The View from Moscow and Havana," pp. 23–38.

34. Ibid., p. 39.

35. Ibid.

36. Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, p. 437. Kennedy to McCone in the Oval Office on October 26, in May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, p. 473.

37. Gribkov, "The View from Moscow and Havana," p. 58.

38. Fursenko and Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble"*, pp. 192–94, also noting that Khrushchev's concern may have been provoked by the worries of the Soviet military representative in Cuba, A.A. Dementyev, who had expressed concern about the U-2s to Defense Minister Malinovsky before the Presidium decision and who was in Moscow in early July, near the time of Khrushchev's order to put the SAMs in place first.

39. Gribkov, "The View from Moscow and Havana," p. 28.

40. Gromyko's cabled report, 19 October 1962, reprinted in "Russian Foreign Ministry Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis," *CWIHP Bulletin*, no. 5 (Spring 1995), pp. 66–67.

41. Fursenko and Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble"*, pp. 237–38, 242.

42. Gribkov had his own special channel for sending reports back to Moscow, reports that Pliyev was not allowed to read. "The View from Moscow and Havana," pp. 57–58.

43. Fursenko and Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble"*, pp. 241–43; Mark Kramer, "'Lessons of the Cuban Missile Crisis for Warsaw Pact Nuclear Operations," *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, Issues 8–9 (Winter 1996–97), pp. 348–49.

44. Gribkov, "The View from Moscow and Havana," p. 63.

45. General William Y. Smith, "The View from Washington," in Gribkov and Smith, *Operation ANADYR*, p. 141. In October 1962, Smith was a major on the staff of JCS chairman Maxwell Taylor.

46. Fursenko and Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble"*, p. 241.

47. Gribkov, "The View from Moscow and Havana," p. 28.

48. See Kramer, "'Lessons of the Cuban Missile Crisis for Warsaw Pact Nuclear Operations."

49. Sagan, *The Limits of Safety*, p. 62.

50. Ibid.

51. The speech is reprinted in many sources, including Larson, *The "Cuban Crisis" of 1962*, pp. 59–63.

52. *DOD Hearings*, pp. 25 ff.

53. The best summary of overall gathering of intelligence on Soviet arms deliveries to Cuba is Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, pp. 148–65. On shipping intelligence and cratology, see ibid., pp. 72–73.

54. See Richard Lehman to McCone, "CIA Handling of the Soviet Buildup in Cuba," 14 November 1962, in McAuliffe, *CIA Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis*, pp. 99–101.

55. The reports are reprinted in *CIA Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis*, pp. 107–09.

56. For copies of the reports see ibid., pp. 103–05; see also Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, pp. 164–65.

57. This fusion required convergence of the discovery of new plastics that enabled production of far thinner film and machines to process it; new kinds of lenses; new computer-driven methods for grinding and polishing such lenses; and new cameras which could automatically rotate a lens barrel to take panoramic pictures. Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, pp. 14–15.

58. James R. Killian, *Sputnik, Scientists, and Eisenhower: A Memoir of the First Special Assistant to the President for Science and Technology* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1977), p. 82.

59. Richard M. Bissell, Jr., with Jonathan E. Lewis and Frances T. Pudlo, *Reflections of a Cold Warrior: From Yalta to the Bay of Pigs* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), pp. 106, 108–09.

60. Ibid., pp. 131–40. The aircraft was the A-12, better known in its military designation as the SR-71. Its first official flight was in 1962. Bissell was rewarded in 1959 by becoming head of the CIA's clandestine service, responsible for covert operations. The Bay of Pigs disaster effectively ended this area of responsibility. In 1962, Bissell, who had also kept control of CIA technical collection projects, was offered a job concentrating exclusively on this portfolio. But McCone was determined to separate technical collection from the clandestine service and, amid disagreements

about how to restructure the CIA to do this, Bissell refused the offer and resigned from government. The new head of CIA Research became Herbert "Pete" Scoville. Jeffrey T. Richelson, "The Wizards of Langley: The CIA's Directorate of Science and Technology," *Intelligence and National Security* 12 (January 1997): 82, 84–85.

61. See Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball,* pp. 20–27.

62. May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, p. 122.

63. Lehman to McCone, "CIA Handling of the Soviet Buildup," at p. 101.

64. See the briefing paper by Col. John Wright, of the Defense Intelligence Agency, "Analysis of SAM Sites," 1 October 1962, in *FRUS 1961–1963*, vol. 11, *Cuba 1962–1963*, pp. 1–2.

65. May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, p. 230.

66. National Security Action Memorandum 181, 23 August 1962, in *FRUS 1961–1963*, vol. 10, pp. 957–58.

67. Unless otherwise cited, discussion of TAC preparations relies heavily on the private, unpublished research work of former RAND Corporation researcher Merritt W. Olsen, who discussed TAC's performance in the Cuban missile crisis with many of its staff officers and sent his findings to Allison in January 1978. Available Defense Department records confirm Olsen's account.

68. See Gilpatric to President Kennedy, "Cuba," 1 September 1962 (with attached analysis prepared by the Air Staff); Harris to McNamara, "Air Defense in Southeast US Area," 4 September 1962; Special National Intelligence Estimate, "The Military Buildup in Cuba," SNIE 85-3-62, 19 September 1962 (reporting the MiG-21s); President Kennedy to McNamara, 21 September 1962; McNamara to Taylor, 2 October 1962; and McNamara to President Kennedy, 4 October 1962, in *FRUS 1961–1963*, vol. 10,

pp. 1010–12, 1036–37, 1075, and 1081 and *FRUS 1961–1963*, vol. 11, pp. 6–7, 10–11.

69. McCone to File, 5 October 1962 (on conversation with Bundy that day), in ibid., p. 15.

70. Olsen letter to Allison, p. 13.

71. On the MiGs, see McCone, in May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, p. 374. For Taylor's comment, see Notes taken from Transcripts of Meetings of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, October–November 1962, p. 6, in National Security Archive, Washington, DC.

72. As McNamara explained to his curious president, the military would knock out the sites by sending in planes against the Soviet SAM sites at low level, below the effective range of the air defense missiles. The planes would then be vulnerable not to the missiles, but to antiaircraft artillery (Cuban and Soviet) deployed to defend the sites, so a strike must also allocate other aircraft to suppress the defending artillery positions.

73. On the meeting with Sweeney the most thorough notes are those of McNamara, reprinted in Laurence Chang and Peter Kornbluh, eds., *The Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962: A National Security Archive Documents Reader* (New York: New Press, 1992), pp. 144–45. For Sorensen's comment, see Sorensen, *Kennedy*, p. 684.

74. Dean Acheson, "Homage to Plain Dumb Luck," in *The Cuban Missile Crisis*, ed. Robert Divine (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1971), p. 189. Such complaints and suspicions are reflected in the original edition of Allison, *Essence of Decision*, pp. 125, 204–05.

75. May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, p. 403. See original edition of *Essence*, p. 126, a principal source for which was William Kaufman, an MIT professor who served as a consultant to the Office of the Secretary of Defense during the crisis. This account

was reconfirmed with Kaufman in an interview with Allison on 10 November, 1998.

76. Ibid., p. 612.

77. The blockade idea was already being discussed by Kennedy's opponents on Capitol Hill, as a way of responding to the flow of Soviet conventional arms to Cuba. McNamara had alerted the Navy to the possible need for a blockade at the beginning of October.

78. See generally the declassified *CINCLANT Historical Account of the Cuban Missile Crisis,* 29 April 1963, Operational Archives, Naval Historical Center, Washington, DC.

79. Sorensen, *Kennedy,* p. 710.

80. Ibid., p. 708.

81. Minutes of the 506th Meeting of the National Security Council, 21 October 1962, in *FRUS 1961–1963*, vol. 11, *Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, p. 146.

82. Ibid., p. 147. There was also discussion about how to block aircraft flights to Cuba. Given the difficulty in doing this, the informal expedient was adopted of arranging to have Soviet flights stopped, or at least delayed and searched, in the countries where the planes had to stop and refuel—Canada, Senegal, and Guinea. The Canadian and French governments offered quiet assistance. This assistance is discussed both in some of the CIA documents in McAuliffe, *CIA Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis;* and in Gribkov, "The View from Moscow and Havana," p. 50.

83. See May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes,* pp. 294, 328. The Americans judged the combat radius, or range, of an IL-28 to be 740 nautical miles; the range for the MiG aircraft was presumed to be about 450 nautical miles (with external fuel tanks). McNamara in ibid., p. 328.

84. Ibid., p. 333.

85. Ibid., pp. 335–36.

86. Ibid., p. 336.

87. On the Kennedy-Ormsby-Gore discussion, see the reports of two eyewitnesses: Robert Kennedy, *Thirteen Days*, pp. 66–67; and Ormsby-Gore's reports to London, Washington 2662 and Washington 2664, both sent on 24 October 1962, in Public Record Office, PREM 11/3690, 24020.

88. McCone briefed the Executive Committee of the National Security Council on the Soviet radio contact (though he did not know the contents) shortly after 10:00 A.M. on October 24. May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, p. 348.

89. Kennedy said: "It seems to me we want to give that ship a chance to turn around. You don't want to have word going out from Moscow: 'Turn around,' and we suddenly sink out a ship." Ibid., p. 361.

90. McNamara's explanation is from ibid., pp. 354–55. Robert Kennedy's handwritten notes on the meeting, found in the Robert Kennedy Papers, are quoted in Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *Robert Kennedy and His Times* (New York: Random House, 1978), p. 514. See also the more elaborate reconstruction five years later in Kennedy, *Thirteen Days*, pp. 69–70.

91. May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, p. 355.

92. Ibid., pp. 355–56.

93. Ibid., pp. 356–57. In fact, the Navy had stationed Russian-speaking officers on each ship, a feat possible only because a few prescient officers had earlier devised a contingency plan to identify and rapidly transfer the needed officers.

94. Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, pp. 400–01; 415–17.

95. Khrushchev to Kennedy, 28 October 1962, in Larson, *The "Cuban Crisis" of 1962*, pp. 189–92.

96. Kennedy to Khrushchev, 23 October 1962, in ibid., pp. 68–69 (emphasis added).

97. Khrushchev to Kennedy, 27 October 1962, in ibid., pp. 183–84 (emphasis added).

98. Kennedy to Khrushchev, 28 October 1962, in ibid., p. 194 (emphasis added).

99. Khrushchev to Kennedy, 26 October 1962, in ibid., p. 176.

100. U.S. Congress, House Armed Services Committee, *Hearings on Military Posture*, 88th Cong., 1st sess., January 1963, p. 897.

101. See William W. Kauffman, *The McNamara Strategy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), p. 271.

102. May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, p. 444. In 1962, all nations recognized a territorial limit of 3 miles from shore. Many nations were already extending this traditional norm to claim a 12-mile limit. So if Cuba asserted a 12-mile limit it would have a plausible defense for this argument, given the evolving state of the relevant international law.

103. Sagan, *The Limits of Safety*, pp. 73–77.

104. Ibid., pp. 130–31.

105. Ibid., p. 137 n.47.

106. May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, pp. 495, 501.

107. Oleg Troyanovsky, "The Caribbean Crisis: A View from the Kremlin," *International Affairs* [Moscow], April–May 1992, p.

153.

108. Sagan, *The Limits of Safety*, pp. 135, 137.

109. Khrushchev to Kennedy, 28 October 1962, in Larson, *The "Cuban Crisis" of 1962*, p. 192.

110. Roger Hilsman, *To Move a Nation: The Politics of Foreign Policy in the Administration of John F. Kennedy* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1967), p. 221.

111. Sagan, *The Limits of Safety*, p. 138.

112. May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, pp. 570–72.

113. See Tyler, Rostow, and Talbot to Rusk, "Cuba," 24 October 1962, Cuban Missile Crisis Files, 1992 Releases Box, National Security Archive, Washington, DC.

114. The most important of these was the thoughtful response from Ambassador Raymond Hare, in Turkey, that had begun arriving the previous day and was continuing to come in during the day on October 27. (Longer cables were transmitted in "sections," each of which would arrive separately; then the whole message could be assembled. Many scholars have noticed the first section of Hare's cable; few have commented on the subsequent sections that arrived and were read on the 27th.) See Ankara 587, 26 October 1962, National Security Files, Box 226, NATO-Weapons-Cables-Turkey, JFK Library.

115. May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, pp. 498–99.

116. Ibid., pp. 659–60. This episode was apparently misunderstood, including by Robert Kennedy, and conflated with other circumstances surrounding the Jupiters in 1961 and 1962, to produce the belief that Kennedy had ordered the withdrawal of the Jupiters, and was angry that his orders were disobeyed.

The Jupiter deployment decision was made in the Eisenhower administration, as one of the responses to Sputnik and the Soviet advantage in ballistic missiles that could be aimed at Europe. (No one then had fielded ballistic missiles with intercontinental range.) As the American ICBM program grew and the obsolescence of the Jupiters became apparent, Kennedy had ordered the Jupiter decision reviewed in the spring of 1961 with the White House and Pentagon clearly moving toward removal. But the Turks objected and then Khrushchev challenged Kennedy in Vienna, so in the summer of 1961 Kennedy allowed the deployment to proceed. All missiles were actually deployed in Turkey by March 5, 1962. Though some scholars have attached disproportionate importance to a military ceremony formally turning over operational control of the missiles (not the warheads) to the Turks during the crisis in October 1962, there is no evidence that any official—U.S. or Soviet—noticed this little ceremony at the time. All thought the missiles had long been operational in fact, and this was true. In August 1962, worried that Khrushchev might attempt to use the Jupiters as an excuse for sending missiles to Cuba, Kennedy ordered the Defense Department to do another study of "what action can be taken to get Jupiter missiles out of Turkey?" National Security Action Memorandum 181, 23 August 1962, in *FRUS 1961–1963*, vol. 10, p. 957. This idea then bogged down in the morass of State's plan for replacing all these older missiles in Europe with their envisioned multilateral nuclear force. Kennedy understood this and, as the next note indicates, had little use for State's scheme. The tapes show no evidence that Kennedy, himself, ever thought he had actually ordered the withdrawal of the Jupiters. But those close to him, remembering his anger over this episode, may understandably have forgotten and garbled the more complex story.

117. Kennedy had also tried to disrupt State's multilateral force plans on Saturday, October 20, when he ordered that the French be offered a program of U.S. nuclear assistance. He repeated the directive on October 21. A bit preoccupied with the crisis, he did not follow that up. The State Department smothered the idea. See May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, p. 199 n.13, p. 201 n.14, p. 212 n.8.

5
Model III:
Governmental Politics

Model II's grasp of government action as organizational output, partially coordinated by leaders, enlarges the classical model's efforts to understand government behavior as the choices of a unitary decision maker. But beyond the Model II analysis lies a further, more refined level of investigation. The leaders who sit atop organizations are no monolith. Rather, each individual in this group is, in his or her own right, a player in a central, competitive game. The name of the game is politics: bargaining along regular circuits among players positioned hierarchically within the government. Government behavior can thus be understood according to a third conceptual model, not as organizational outputs but as results of bargaining games. Outcomes are formed, and deformed, by the interaction of competing preferences. In contrast with Model I, the Governmental Politics Model sees no unitary actor but rather many actors as players: players who focus not on a single strategic issue but on many diverse intranational problems as well; players who act in terms of no consistent set of strategic objectives but rather according to various conceptions of national, organizational, and personal goals; players who make government decisions not by a single, rational choice but by the pulling and hauling that is politics.

The apparatus of each national government constitutes a complex arena for the intranational game. Political leaders at the top of the apparatus are joined by officials who occupy positions on top of major organizations to form a circle of central players, central in relation to the particular decision or outcome the analyst seeks to explain. Some participants are mandatory; others may be invited or elbow their way in. Beyond the central arena, successive, concentric circles encompass lower level officials in the

executive branch, the press, NGOs, and the public. Ongoing struggles in outer circles help shape decision situations among players who can affect the government's choice and action in the case in question. So Model III focuses on those who are actually engaged in this interaction.

The nature of foreign policy problems permits fundamental disagreement among reasonable people about how to solve them. Because most players participate in policymaking by virtue of their role, for example as secretary of the Treasury or the ambassador to the United Nations, it is quite natural that each feels special responsibility to call attention to the ramifications of an issue for his or her domain, e.g., international finance or world opinion. Both by charter and in practice, most players "represent" a department or agency along with the interests and constituencies their organization serves. Because their preferences and beliefs are related to the different organizations they represent, their analyses yield conflicting recommendations. Separate responsibilities laid on the shoulders of distinct individuals encourage differences in what each sees and judges to be important. The nation's actions really matter. A wrong choice could mean irreparable damage. Thus responsible citizens are obliged to fight for what they are convinced is right.

Individuals share power. They differ about what must be done. Differences matter. This milieu necessitates that government decisions and actions result from a political process. Foreign policy is thus the extension of politics to other realms (sometimes by other means). Sometimes one group committed to a course of action triumphs over other groups fighting for other alternatives. Equally often, however, different groups pulling in different directions produce a result, or better a resultant distinct from what any person or group intended. In both cases, the chess pieces are moved not simply for the reasons that support a course of action, nor because of the routines of organizations that enact an alternative, but according to the power and performance of proponents and opponents of the action in question.

These phenomena are not unique to American government. Students of crisis behavior in many governments readily find examples where actions can only be explained by the turmoil or bargaining of internal politics. The

conclusion holds for dictatorships as well as democracies.[1] Nazi Germany, for instance, was a political battlefield for the contending baronies of Hitler's cronies, leaving a chaotic record littered with odd and inefficient outcomes in matters as central to Hitler's attention as weapons procurement, intelligence efforts, and the deployments of forces.

This characterization captures the thrust of the governmental politics orientation. If problems of foreign policy arose as discrete issues and decisions were determined one game at a time, this account would suffice. But most issues—e.g., the Asian economic meltdown, or the proliferation of nuclear weapons, or trade with China—emerge piecemeal over time, one lump in one context, a second in another. Hundreds of issues compete for players' attention every day. Each player is forced to fix upon his issues for that day, deal with them on their own terms, and rush on to the next. Thus, the character of emerging issues and the pace at which the game is played converge to yield government "decisions" and "actions" as *collages*. Choices by one player (e.g., to authorize action by his department, to make a speech, or to refrain from acquiring certain information), resultants of minor games (e.g., the wording of a cable or the decision on departmental action worked out among lower-level players), resultants of central games (e.g., decisions, actions, and speeches bargained out among central players), and foul-ups (e.g., choices that are not made because they are not recognized or are raised too late, misunderstandings, etc.)—these pieces, when stuck to the same canvas, constitute government behavior relevant to an issue. To explain why a particular formal governmental decision was made, or why one pattern of governmental behavior emerged, it is necessary to identify the games and players, to display the coalitions, bargains, and compromises, and to convey some feel for the confusion.

This conception of foreign policymaking is uncomfortable. The accusation that officials are "playing politics with national security" is a serious charge. As people come to believe it is true, it reinforces their cynicism about government. The confusing welter of details presents a real challenge in investigation and communication. Few experts have the time to invest in mastering the players and operational details that shape the latest bargains. Not so many readers want to know so much about a single event. Opinion pieces in the pages of daily newspapers or journals such as *Foreign Affairs*

therefore rarely discuss the underlying political process that accounts for many of the actions and dilemmas they describe. What public expectation demands, the academic penchant for intellectual coherence reinforces. Internal politics is messy. It is hard to form transcendent generalizations out of idiosyncratic details. Some scholars also, rightly, reject portraits of chaos that deny the overarching significance of major institutions with great inherent power, such as the presidency, the Congress, or the Supreme Court.

The gap between academic literature and the experience of participants in government is nowhere wider than at this point. For those who participate in government, the terms of daily employment cannot be ignored. Within a framework of broad values and shared interests, government leaders have competitive, not identical operational objectives; priorities and perceptions are shaped by positions; problems are much more varied than straightforward strategic issues; management of piecemeal streams of decisions is more important than steady-state choices; making sure that the government does what is decided is more difficult than selecting the preferred solution. Coalitions are formed to produce the desired action. The coalitions may include relevant outsiders, legislators, lobbyists for an interest group, or even foreign officials, as if they were some different species of domestic power broker. In short, as the first Secretary of Defense, James Forrestal, once observed: "I have always been amused by those who say they are quite willing to go into government but they are not willing to go into politics. My answer . . . is that you can no more divorce government from politics than you can separate sex from creation."[2]

The Governmental Politics Model Illustrated

When officials come together to take some action, the result will most often be different from what any of them intended before they began interacting as a group. The first question then is: If someone is in charge, or in charge of the group, and if we know what that person wants, can we explain or predict the result? Model III analysis begins with the proposition that knowledge of the leader's initial preferences is, by itself, rarely a sufficient guide for explanation or prediction. That proposition is grounded in appreciation of the fact that authoritative power is most often shared.

No one has done more to clarify the distinction between power on paper and power in practice than Richard E. Neustadt, in his book, *Presidential Power*.[3] While attempts to analyze governmental action as the result of politics had been made earlier, Neustadt's work stands as the most forceful and subtle. President-elect Kennedy's enthusiastic recommendation of the book to inquiring columnists and his appointment of Neustadt as a principal transition adviser put the study on required reading lists among activists jockeying for a position in the new administration, and it has stayed on other reading lists ever since. (Kennedy claimed afterward to be the best publicity agent a political scientist ever had.)

The style of Neustadt's analysis reflects his experience in government, especially on Truman's White House staff. The model implicit in his thinking is thus most easily identified by characteristic phrases:

1. *Separated Institutions Sharing Power*

> The constitutional convention of 1787 is supposed to have created a government of "separated powers." It did nothing of the sort. Rather, it created a government of *separated institutions sharing powers*.[4]

Because participants in the government have independent bases, power (i.e., effective influence on outcomes) is shared. Constitutional prescription, political tradition, governmental practice, and democratic theory all converge to accentuate differences among the needs and interests of individuals in the government, and to divide influence among them. Each participant sits in a seat that confers separate responsibilities. Each is committed to fulfilling his responsibilities as he sees them. Thus, those who share with the president the job of governance cannot be entirely responsive to his command. What the president wants will rarely seem a trifle to the officials from whom he wants it. Besides, they are bound to judge his preferences in the light of their own responsibilities, not his.

2. *The Power to Persuade*

> Presidential power is the *power to persuade*:[5]

Underneath our images of Presidents-in-boots, astride decisions, are the half-observed realities of *Presidents-in-sneakers*, stirrups in hand, trying to induce particular department heads, or Congressmen or Senators, to climb aboard.[6]

In status and formal powers, the president is chief. Every other participant's business somehow involves him. But his authority guarantees only an extensive clerkship. If the president is to rule, he must squeeze from the formal powers a full array of bargaining advantages. Bolstered by his professional reputation and public prestige, the president can use these advantages to translate the needs and fears of other participants into an appreciation that what he wants of them is what they should, in their own best interest, do. His bargaining advantages are rarely sufficient to assure enactment of his will, but they are his only means of ensuring an impact on governmental action.

3. *Bargaining According to the Processes*

They [the participants] bargain not at random but *according to the processes*, conforming to the prerequisites, responsive to the pressures of their own political system.[7]

The game of presidential persuasion is not played at random. Rather, certain processes structure the play. Processes are regularized channels for bringing issues to the point of choice. Presidential attention becomes fixed, and bargaining earnest, only as issues are rendered actionable by moving along lines of process toward deadlines.

4. *Power Equals Impact on Outcome*

Not action as an outcome but his [the president's] *impact on the outcome* is the measure of the man.[8]
    The things a President must think about if he would build his influence are not unlike those bearing on the *viability of public policy.* .

. . This is a balance of political, managerial, psychological, and personal feasibilities. . . . [He needs] an operation that proves manageable to the men who must administer it, acceptable to those who must support it, tolerable to those who must put up with it, in Washington and out. Timing can be crucial for support and acquiescence. . . . The President who sees his power stakes sees something very much like the ingredients that make for viability in policy.[9]

The focus of Neustadt's attention is not action as the result of a bargaining game but rather presidential *choice.* To understand policy, one must peek over the president's shoulder. What *can* be done is best understood by looking over the shoulder of the president-in-boots. What *is* done can best be understood by examining the skill of the president-in-sneakers as he probes the demands, the risks, and the threats to his own personal influence as he persuades, cajoles, and spurs other members of the government to act accordingly.

5. *Intranational and International Relations*

Each [government] is a more or less complex arena for internal bargaining among the bureaucratic elements and political personalities who collectively comprise its working apparatus. Its action is the product of their interaction. . . . *Relationships between allies are something like relationships between two great American departments.*[10]

Neustadt takes his notion of shared power beyond the familiar context of intranational bargaining into relations between nations. The intranational games can indeed include foreign participants, leading some analysts to call such simultaneous internation-al/intranational interactions "two-level games." But they place a variety of domestic-international connections under that label.[11]International relations truly enters this national model of governmental politics in the exceptional case, particularly in relations among close allies, when a national government allows another country to participate directly and meaningfully in its intranational decisionmaking

process *before* the national government has decided on a policy. If nations are contemplating truly joint actions, or are otherwise so bound together that both governments can influentially participate in each other's intranational deliberations (as was often the case in the Anglo-American alliance during World War II), then Model III analysis helps explain a policy resultant involving more than one government.

The day after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, President Bush conferred with British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in Aspen, Colorado. Both governments supported the initial United Nations resolution condemning the invasion. But neither had then decided on further action. Both leaders were participants, in effect, in the other's intranational deliberations. In this way, they actually chose to share some of their national power. The policy resultant, refined after being discussed again with Thatcher a few days later in Washington, was substantially a joint policy. The leaders' firm agreement with each other, before Bush had fully engaged his Washington decisionmaking process and before Thatcher had even met with her Cabinet back in London, strongly influenced the residual intranational deliberations in both countries.

This case of joint policymaking illustrates ways in which a foreign official effectively participated in a national decision process. Foreign participation in each nation's central game affected the substance and timing of key *national* choices. Neustadt foreshadowed this approach in his study of Anglo-American relations and extended it in a provocative, now declassified, study for Kennedy of the Skybolt crisis that disrupted relations with Britain at the end of 1962.[12] The U.S. government cancelled a missile program, Skybolt, on which the British government had relied, and did so in a way that surprised and angered the British. For Kennedy, a key question was to discover why the British government had not participated more effectively in the Skybolt cancellation decision *before* Washington made it.

Returning to the Persian Gulf War example, the timing and circumstances of the Bush-Thatcher discussions affected the way decisions were made in both capitals. The two heads of government met in Aspen without either country's foreign minister, defense minister, or chief military advisers being present. But both were accompanied by their own security advisers (Brent

Scowcroft for Bush, Charles Powell for Thatcher), men who happened to agree with and reinforce the predilections of their chiefs.[13]

After several days in which the U.S. government completed an initial phase of policy decisions (to maintain the uncompromising political objectives of the UN resolution, deploy forces to Saudi Arabia, and organize a comprehensive embargo and military blockade of trade to Iraq), Washington then sought to persuade various other governments to go along. One such government was Turkey, and Secretary of State James Baker flew to Ankara on August 9–10. Though Turkey was a NATO ally, and the circumstances of Turkey had been considered along with the situations of many other countries, neither the Turkish government nor its agents had participated actively, directly in the formulation of the American policy. Instead, Turkey was presented with the policy, and invited to support it. The Turks indicated some additional actions that could secure their cooperation with American policy, and Baker then endeavored to meet their requirements.[14]

Unlike the Anglo-American interaction, the Turkish-American interaction falls outside the paradigm of Model III. It is described less by models of decisionmaking than by models of strategic interaction between states, such as the more purely intergovernmental theories of international relations that would also be applied to American action aimed at the Iraqi adversary.

Shared power within the executive branch of government mirrors the much more formalized sharing of power and inevitable bargaining more familiar in congressional politics. Studies of congressional politics has also gone much further to note the great significance of how problems are framed for decision, the structure and rules of the decisionmaking process, and the significance of various channels for taking action. Though some of this scholarship has been assigned to a school called "rational choice," its principal concern is really "group choice analysis," since its main findings concern how individual preferences come together into group choice and are thereby refracted, as light splits or converges through a prism, by the circumstances and structure of the group.[15]

The common proposition is that even in hierarchies in which the leader must formally make the final decision the nature, timing, and content of his or her choice are substantially affected by the interaction with many other seemingly lesser beings. To quote Neustadt once more:

> In form all Presidents are leaders nowadays. In fact this guarantees no more than that they will be clerks. Everybody now expects the man inside the White House to do something about everything. . . . But such acceptance does not signify that all the rest of government is at his feet. It merely signifies that other men have found it practically impossible to do their jobs without assurance of initiatives from him. . . . They find his actions useful in their business. . . . A President, these days, is an invaluable clerk. His services are in demand all over Washington. His influence, however, is a very different matter. Laws and customs tell us little about leadership in fact.[16]

Group Processes and Their Effects on Choices and Action

Government decisionmaking is a complex multi-participant process. About this descriptive fact, there can be no question. The more difficult issue is: what *particular* characteristics of multi-person decision processes have consequences for the content of the decisions and actions that emerge? This is an important question for political science as well as for economics, social psychology, decision theory, and a number of related fields of study.

It is a frustrating question. Scholars of the presidency, for instance, have the advantage of studying a multi-person decision process oriented around a single personality and office. Yet in 1965 a historian observed that "we know everything about the Presidents and nothing about the Presidency." A generation later a pair of scholars complained that "historians, journalists, and political scientists have produced a number of fine studies of individual presidents, yet we seem no closer to a framework that would allow us to make comparisons of patterns of behavior across administrations." Nearly a decade after that a different pair lamented: "What is it about the American

presidency that defies theoretical precision? Why can't we devise propositions that predict the behavior of presidents and explain presidential leader-ship?"[17].

Policy outcomes result from multiple causes that defy simple summary and easy generalizaton. *Essence of Decision* demonstrates this point in the realm of foreign policy. In domestic affairs one especially well-informed practitioner and sometime academic, Richard Darman, thought hard about an interesting case: the Reagan administration's 1981 success in enacting a radical tax cut despite opposition from a Congress controlled by Democrats. Why did this succeed? Darman identifies ten significant factors, which he allows are "tedious to recite." A quick review gives a sense for the layers of explanation, or multiple levels of analysis:

1. General national mood—bad economic conditions, opposed to status quo
2. National mood and public ideas—prominence of anti-government, anti-tax populism
3. Reagan and public opinion—purposeful but reassuring
4. Reagan and Congress—Reagan's personal and political appeal among more conservative Democrats worried about possible party realignment
5. Reagan and Congress—initial honeymoon of new president extended by his recuperation after he was shot
6. Inside Congress—convergent agreement of several groups of actors with inconsistent goals and rationales for action
7. Inside the administration—able problem framing and agenda setting by Reagan team
8. Inside the administration—legislative management by key "moderates" or "pragmatists" in the Legislative Strategy Group run by White House chief of staff James Baker and coordinated by Darman ("on hundreds, perhaps thousands, of issues we shaped the decisions and actions that allowed the giant tax bill to become enacted")
9. Inside the administration—critical role and personality of budget director David Stockman

10. Inside the administration—hubris among senior officials, especially the complementary overconfidence of Stockman and Darman (each sure they could manage the bill's problematic consequences)[18]

Darman considers at least six of these factors highly unusual, and judges that at least five of those six were required for enactment of the bill. "The odds of those five coinciding could reasonably be assessed at something like one in a million," he says. He also explains how the pragmatists were driven further from compromise and toward an even more radical outcome by the way their plans interacted with the strategies chosen by Democratic opponents in Congress.[19] An equally long list of factors could well be developed to explain failure, like the defeat of President Clinton's health care reform package in 1993–94. Include the fact that each of the items on the list are themselves labels for intricate stories of their own, and it is little wonder that generalizations about policymaking processes are elusive.

In sum, a broad array of causal factors must be taken into account in explaining results of group decisionmaking. Here we summarize and illustrate some of the major findings about the import of group decision processes under seven headings. (1) higher quality decisions; (2) the agency problem: principles, agents, and players; (3) participants: who plays? (4) decision rules; (5) framing issues and setting agendas; (6) group think; and (7) complexity of joint decisions and actions.

1. Better Decisions

To the extent a multi-person process ensures more thorough analysis of information about the situation, fuller consideration of the array of relevant values and interests and their operationalization as objectives; more imagination in identifying (and inventing) options; more accurate estimates of costs and benefits; and greater alertness to indications of failure and readiness to learn from mistakes, it is likely to produce better decisions. Not always, of course, but that is the way to bet it. Consider an improved process for picking stocks that increases the probability of success from 60 to 70 percent. It still will be wrong in three of ten recommendations. Thus the commonplace refrain—bad outcome, bad decision—is logically incorrect.

To make matters still more complicated, while it is true that more information and better analysis can produce better decisions, too much information and analysis can produce "analysis paralysis" that yields worse judgments or inaction. A good decision made an hour too late is, in effect, no decision at all. The specific arrangements for incorporating information and analysis must therefore be appraised in relation to the decision setting, including how the decision setting is structured in order to enlarge input while avoiding paralysis.

Alexander George has led the way in exploring the kinds of processes in foreign policy decisionmaking most likely to meet the requirements for better decisions.[20] From his work we draw three main conclusions:

Concentrate on the action channels, not the boxes. Traditionally efforts to improve the policymaking system produced ideas for reorganizing executive departments—changing the boxes in an organization chart. The results have been so disappointing that attention now focuses more on the design and management of the processes of policymaking; i.e., the way actors in the boxes interact to produce outcomes. Action channels "vest and weight particular interests and perspectives" by distributing formal powers, information, access, and bargaining advantages to players with predictable predispositions in regularized policymaking processes.[21]

Processes and action channels must be tailor-made, not bought ready-to-wear. "In brief, the present emphasis is on designing organizational structures to fit the operating styles of their key individuals rather than attempting to persuade each new top executive to accept and adapt to a standardized organizational model that is considered to be theoretically the best."[22] Richard Johnson and Roger Porter have each outlined three such models with descriptions that converge: (1) a "formalistic" or "multiple advocacy" approach with clear structure, division of labor, and well-defined procedures managed by an "honest broker" (the Eisenhower administration is the usual example); (2) a "competitive" or "centralized management" model that encourages competitive advice by allowing overlapping responsibilities and many formal and less formal channels of communication but filters information and advice in a small inner circle of top officials (e.g., the Franklin Roosevelt administration); and (3) a

"collegial" or "adhocracy" style which blurs responsibility and formal channels but emphasizes a team identified with the president (as in the Kennedy administration).[23] George emphasizes that none of these models are necessarily superior to others, but must be tailored to key people who will inevitably borrow elements from more than one.

Within any process, concentrate on innovations in information processing. These innovations tend to parallel the three models of process management. In fact George calls them the "formal options system," "multiple advocacy," and "the devil's advocate." The basic idea is to recognize the drawbacks of your management style and then pick elements from other styles as a damage-limiting complement.

More attention is needed, however, to less studied aspects of the action channels in which decisions are made, which we lump under "staffing procedures." Staffing procedures determine what information is acquired, to whom it is distributed and when, what analyses are performed in the normal case, and what form decision package or memos take. They specify matters as mundane as how participants are notified about a meeting, how relevant papers are copied and passed around, how the proceedings—and any decisions—are recorded, and how the result is communicated to interested individuals and organizations (which each have their own such procedures). Such procedures can affect outcomes in many ways, most obviously in the distribution of relevant information about a policy among potential players. This has been demonstrated in laboratory settings where "one of the major lessons of game theory is the sensitivity of outcomes to information conditions."[24]

Having discussed the start of Desert Shield above, we turn to the end of Desert Storm, the last day of the Gulf War, February 27, 1991, to illustrate these points. President Bush ordered hostilities to stop in part because he believed the ring encircling the Iraqi forces retreating from Kuwait was effectively sealed and those forces had been all but destroyed. Earlier that day, the theater commander, General Norman Schwarzkopf, delivered a televised briefing which the president and everyone else watched, announcing that "the gates are closed." Bush made the decision that a ceasefire to stop the killing should go into effect the next morning (in the

Gulf), which would give a little more time to wrap up ongoing operations. What Bush and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Colin Powell, and possibly even General Schwarzkopf, did not know was that the gates—the paths of retreat for Iraqi forces into Iraq—were not even nearly closed. The generals at the front line were stunned at what they thought was a premature suspension of their offensive.[25]

Though the core responsibility for this misunderstanding was within Schwarzkopf's command, it is possible to imagine additional White House or Defense Department staffing procedures for this decision that would have required a detailed update on the positions of American units in the field—as a matter of routine. Such a procedure would have made officers accountable for specific factual assertions about locations of troops, thereby stimulating or opening additional communication between the Pentagon and the field. If the inevitable "fog of war" surrounding a battlefield could not be penetrated, the president and his advisers could have chosen to wait for some of the fog to clear. They would have known better what they did not know.

More elaborate illustration of the processes for better decisions is provided by the British government's committee decisionmaking during the World Wars. These were developed to cope with the supreme test of unprecedented mobilization of national resources matched to worldwide strategic choices. The operator of the system during World War I and for years afterward was a civil servant named Maurice Hankey, one of the ablest managers of national security deci-sionmaking processes of the twentieth century. In 1928 Hankey drew up the lessons he had learned. He described various ways of organizing systems for committee decisionmaking but underlined two key requirements: "whichever of the above systems is adopted, the Supreme Control must be provided with: (a) coordinated advice on questions of detail; and (b) adequate . . . staff."[26]

No system could guarantee wisdom. Effectively utilized, it could encourage analysis of alternatives from multifaceted perspectives and insure acute peer review from all-too-interested colleagues. During World War II, Prime Minister Winston Churchill employed and extended this system, utilizing a War Cabinet and a Chiefs of Staff Committee. He selected brilliant generals

to chair and operate the system, such as General Sir Alan Brooke (from 1942) and Churchill's representative to the Committee, Sir Hastings Ismay. Churchill then found to his frequent dismay that the Chiefs of Staff Committee regularly disagreed with his initiatives. Still, for all his complaints about its emasculating his independence, rarely did Churchill overrule this Committee that so vexed him.

Once the Americans entered the war, the U.S. created its own Joint Chiefs of Staff and subordinate committees. The United States government also created a joint committee with the British to run the war—the Combined Chiefs of Staff Committee. The Americans approached the first major meetings of this committee with confidence in their wealth, strength, and capacity to produce whatever the war required. The British ate their lunch. One of London's representatives to the Combined Chiefs of Staff Committee in Washington found the Americans "completely dumb and appallingly slow." The key American planners agreed:

> They swarmed down upon us like locusts with a plentiful supply of planners and various other assistants with prepared plans . . . From a worm's eye viewpoint it was apparent that we were confronted by generations and generations of experience in committee work and in rationalizing points of view. They had us on the defensive practically all the time.[27]

But the Americans learned fast. The same American planner assessed that his government's departmental staffs were equal to British standards by November 1943. Indeed, an official working in the U.S. government in the 1990s would be hard-pressed to find analytical papers of the quality written practically every day during the mid-1940s.

Judgments on global military strategy had to be linked to decisions on how to organize every major facet of industry and commerce. Here, too, the Roosevelt administration and the Churchill government adopted systems of committees that produced increasingly high quality, durable judgments. In the United States a "Victory Program" had been prepared by interdepartmental analysis in 1941. Roosevelt kept refining his methods for coordinating industrial mobilization and grand strategy. The War

Department and U.S. Army were effectively reorganized in 1942, working with a War Production Board and, the next year, with a smaller but even more effective Office of War Mobilization directed by James Byrnes.[28] Many hard choices emerged, but their soundness grew more evident with time.

By contrast, no country had been more dedicated to preparing itself for war than Nazi Germany, with power concentrated in the hands of a ruthless dictator. No analogous system of delegated authority to committee decisionmaking existed there. As a result, key decisions were made by autonomous organizations or directly by Hitler—constantly intervening or adjudicating among the departments. The results are summarized by historian Richard Overy, in *Why the Allies Won the War,* as follows: "There is little doubt that throughout the war the German economy produced far fewer weapons than its raw resources of materials, manpower, scientific skill and factory floorspace could have made possible. The disparity between the two warring sides was always wider than the crude balance of resources. Indeed up to 1943 the much smaller British economy outproduced Germany and its new European empire in almost all major classes of weapon. . . ."[29]

Many key judgments by the Americans and British governments about strategy, resource allocation, and procurement cannot be attributed directly to Franklin Roosevelt or Winston Churchill at all. Where the preferences of the leaders were made clear, they were often refuted, compromised, or modified. In a larger sense, these powerful war leaders deserve credit for allowing delegations and deflections of their authority. They understood that in their pluralistic societies power was shared. They also grasped that the committee system when properly managed could make them wiser: hence Roosevelt's regard for Army Chief of Staff General George Marshall and Churchill's grudging tolerance for the stubbornly General Brooke.

How much the particulars of the committee system mattered is suggested by how quickly these systems and their associated qualities deteriorated. Contemplating war against Argentina to recover the Falkland Islands in 1982, Prime Minister Thatcher called in a veteran civil servant of long experience. This official confided later that: "We had a gin and she asked

me "How do you actually run a war?'" The official told her how to set up a War Cabinet, adding that "It's got to have regular meetings come hell or high water." That official was thinking of disasters like the Suez crisis of 1956 when another group of leaders, despite their experience in the Second World War, ran the crisis "in a hurried reactive almost furtive way . . . [which] . . . seemed to me to typify the dangers of trying to run something as if it were a private laundry and not, as we then were, a major country on the world stage engaged in a singularly difficult adventure."[30]

The Americans could just as readily forget the tenets of quality decisionmaking. By 1950 the American government had no contingency plans ready when North Korea invaded South Korea and had to improvise with ill-trained forces, learning a bloody lesson. Change not a word of the above "private laundry" description of British decisionmaking during Suez —it would summarize pointedly the conduct of the "Iran-Contra" policies that brought Ronald Reagan's administration to the edge of ruin in late 1986. It is still unclear whether President Reagan actually authorized his national security adviser and the adviser's staff to use profits from a covert operation secretly selling arms to Iran in order to fund the Contra rebels in Nicaragua, directly flouting a congressional ban on U.S. aid. The one time anything like such U.S.–arranged third country aid to the Contras was discussed in a formal interdepartmental meeting, Secretary of State George Shultz argued, quoting then-White House chief of staff James Baker, that such an arrangement would be "an impeachable offense."[31] The policy was thereafter handled in an informal ad hoc process that made Reagan's authorization as cloudy and ephemeral as the rest of the analysis from which this project sprung.

Thanks to the work of an industrious historian, Brian Villa, one of the best documented examples of an "orphan" action is the large Anglo-Canadian raid against the German-occupied port city of Dieppe in August 1942 that bloodily failed with a terrible cost among the mainly Canadian assault force. The responsible organization, the Combined Operations Command headed by Lord Louis Mountbatten, exhibited practically every symptom of groupthink (discussed later in this chapter) and went ahead without the necessary authorization from Prime Minister Churchill, the War Cabinet, or the Chiefs of Staff Committee.[32] The example is interesting, especially

because the British government had a high quality process supported by appropriate staffing procedures. Villa shows that the regular action channel had already been disrupted by Churchill and he also observes how, more subtly, warnings and caveats become sterile and less noticed with bureaucratic repetition. For him, though, the "clearest lesson" was in staffing procedures:

> [A]n unrecorded decision may well be, indeed should be, considered as a sure sign that something fundamental has gone wrong with the decision-making process; that one should also look for the presence of schemers who can impose projects on those who should know better; that one should also look for powerful external pressures reverberating through the decision-making process—pressures that cannot be resisted and lead to decisions for which there is no real acceptance of responsibility (and are therefore unrecorded). All of this serves to underline a point that is not stressed enough in the political-science literature: decision-making is fundamentally a process for assuming responsibility for a proposed action.[33]

By clarifying what is to be done or what has happened, staffing procedures assign responsibility. By doing so, they also indicate who is accountable.

We have deliberately drawn on World War II for examples of successful committee decisionmaking, and the contrast with a failed dictatorial system, as a counterpoint to the common belief that hard public problems can generally be solved only by concentrating authority. Political scientist James Q. Wilson observes that: "Whenever a political crisis draws attention to the fact that authority in our government is widely shared, the cry is heard for a 'czar' to 'knock heads together' and 'lead' the assault on AIDS, drug abuse, pollution, or defense procurement abuses. Our form of government, to say nothing of our political culture, does not lend itself to czars. . . ."[34] To Wilson's observation we only add that the Constitution of the United States, a durable and high quality policy resultant, was very distinctively the product of a group deliberation.[35]

2. The "Agency" Problem: Principals, Agents, and Players—Competing Objectives and Asymmetric Information

Increasing the number of participants in a decision process beyond a single mind helps a decision maker dodge many obvious pitfalls. He or she will be less likely to misconceive the issue, neglect relevant interests in settling on one objective rather than another, or misestimate consequences, among other dangers. But these benefits have a price: namely, the inclusion of additional, autonomous interests. As the economist Kenneth Arrow demonstrated in his "Impossibility Theorem," with even as few as three participants, each with different preferences among three options, it becomes impossible to reach a decision that meets the minimum transitivity requirements for rational choice, i.e., sharing a common rationale. The ordering of preferences will be distorted, or some members' preferences will dominate others.[36] Kenneth Shepsle's succinct summary, Arrow's theorem thus "cautions against assigning individual properties to groups. Individuals are rational, but a group is not, since it may not even have transitively ordered preferences." Thus Shepsle poses a vexing question: "If this is true, then how can one make reference to the *intent* of a group?"[37]

The central point is simple but its implications are far reaching. When the question arises about an important decision you have to make—for example, what car to buy—the image of a decision maker with unified goals and objectives reviewing options, assessing costs and benefits, and making a deliberate choice captures much of the mental process that shapes your choice. Thus the power of economists' propositions about the effect of significant changes in the price or safety of alternative cars on the decision you (or other consumers) make. When the same question arises in a joint decision process involving several people, the analyst can err in trying to model the decision as if it were made by a single decision maker. The point is most easily illustrated in artificial cases where two decision makers have competing objectives or payoff functions, as in the prisoner's dilemma game. It is also clear if one reflects on a decision about vacation plans between two spouses or partners, for example when one prefers the mountains and the other prefers the ocean or if one likes heat and the other likes cool weather.

Over the past two decades a lively discussion has developed, especially in the discipline of economics, under the heading of the "principal-agent" problem. The decision maker is the principal. The principal engages additional participants—the agents—to advise or assist in making decisions or taking actions. In the ideal theoretical case, the agent is envisaged as an essentially mechanical instrument of the principal performing a desired function—for instance, providing more information to help the principal judge how best a decision would be implemented. In the real world, however, when you go to a doctor or lawyer, for example, you are the principal who is selecting the agent and making the final decision. But the doctor typically knows immeasurably more about the disease of cancer and its alternative treatments than you, the decision maker—just as the lawyer typically knows far more about the law of tort and personal injury. While only you can ultimately make the decision, to say that you determined the content of the choice would be inaccurate. As you consider whether or not to have an operation, the information you receive from the agent and indeed the agent's judgment are critical. Your informal choice is likely to be better than if made without expert advice. You must also recognize that the interaction involves asymmetric information and expertise, and that the interests of the client and expert are not necessarily identical. The lawyer and doctor may have an interest in the fee they can charge for different choices, or they may find some choices intellectually or professionally more interesting.

In most complex decision processes, the individuals that principals engage as agents also have interests, information, and expertise that cannot simply be transmitted to the principal. Even in clear hierarchies where a single individual makes the decision, nominal agents are actually active participants. They assure proper attention to special interests and indeed represent such interests for the purposes of legitimation of the decision. Therefore, in most complex decision problems, agents are also "players" who do not just faithfully represent the interests of their principals. Most of us have heard or used the phrase, "Jones is not a player on that issue." Players are individuals with power to affect the outcome of the decision or action in question.

In , describing Model II, we also detailed some ways in which organizations and organizational cultures mold preferences of individual members. Our point here complements that discussion but goes beyond it in two dimensions. Actions explained by organizational behavior are those in which the identity of particular individuals is practically irrelevant; the organization designs its specialized routines precisely in order to achieve such irrelevance. Here we deal with individuals who go beyond routines to be come active, strategic players. These individuals often feel a special burden as the ambassadors representing their organization or community of interests to the rest of the government. But their individual calculations about what in their personal view is the government's best choice, and their effectiveness in marshalling bargaining advantages to try to make it happen matter.

The search for mechanisms to contain the negative consequences of the "agency problem" for purposive decisionmaking is ongoing. Some economists call for complex procedures that eliminate information asymmetries by "sharing all information costlessly" or arrange incentives to make agents' dominant interests approximate those of their principals. But as Kenneth Arrow has argued, the most promising prospects lie beyond the realm of traditional economic analysis in processes that create fiduciary duties, foster professionalism, and heighten agents' concern about their reputations.[38] But these methods just begin to address the challenge of government decision processes that engage dozens of agents, each embodying different interests, objectives, and expertise.

These layers of complexity in both agents and players appear vividly in the story of President Clinton's discovery that the U.S. had committed 20,000 troops to intervene in Bosnia. On a summer night in June 1995, at the close of a White House dinner for French President Jacques Chirac, Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke seized a moment to accost the momentarily idle President Clinton. Clinton had heard a briefing that morning about the besieged United Nations peacekeeping force in Bosnia. Aides argued over just what the U.S. government was obligated to do if the UN force (dominated by French, British, and Dutch troop contingents) decided it had to withdraw. Holbrooke describes the encounter:

"I hate to ruin a wonderful evening, Mr. President," I began, "but we should clarify something. . . . Under existing NATO plans, the United States is *already committed* to sending troops to Bosnia if the UN decides to withdraw. I'm afraid that we may not have that much flexibility left."

The President looked at me with surprise. "What do you mean?" he asked. "I'll decide the troop issue if and when the time comes."

There was silence for a moment. "Mr. President," I said, "NATO has already approved the withdrawal plan. . . . It has a high degree of automaticity built into it, especially since we have committed ourselves publicly to assisting NATO troops if the UN decides to withdraw."

The President looked at [Secretary of State Warren] Christopher. "Is this true?" he said.

"Yes, it appears to be," Christopher said tersely.

"I suggest that we talk about it again tomorrow," the President said grimly, and walked off without another word, holding Hillary's hand.[39]

Months earlier, in persuading allies to send their troops to Bosnia, Clinton had proffered help for withdrawal if they got in trouble. The allies sent their troops. Clinton's attention moved on to other pressing problems. Meanwhile NATO prepared a detailed plan, drafted with Pentagon experts, calling for 20,000 American troops to be deployed to Bosnia in an emergency to effect a safe withdrawal. The NATO Council approved that plan with the approving vote of the U.S. representative, who in turn acted on instructions cleared by officials layers below the president. But it is clear, from the exchange above, President Clinton did not understand what "his" government had decided.

The emergency had now arisen, and Clinton faced another decision. He was confronted with plans, hundreds of pages long, that he had never read. These specified at great length operational details on which he had never been briefed. The soldiers who prepared the plans had little interest in going to Bosnia, which was an action the military and the Pentagon civilians consistently opposed. But they were determined that if American soldiers

went, they would have the force needed to do a dangerous job. Clinton also confronted diplomats like Holbrooke, whose everyday concerns were dominated by anxiety about the strained NATO alliance. Holbrooke thought that if Clinton now did not follow through on America's commitment, "the resulting recriminations could mean the end of NATO as an effective military alliance, as the British and French had already said to us privately [i.e., to Holbrooke and his State colleagues]." Holbrooke, in turn, had been surprised and alarmed when he pushed the Pentagon into disclosing to him and Christopher the details of the two-year old Pentagon plans for U.S. intervention in Bosnia only six days before the conversation with the President noted above.[40] Preoccupied with domestic affairs and his battles against a newly Republican-controlled Congress, Clinton thus had a choice —but one prejudiced by the play to that point. He could choose between ordering tens of thousands of American soldiers into Bosnia in order to retreat, on the one hand, or sending equivalent numbers on a more hopeful mission, on the other.

The interests and objectives of Clinton, the Pentagon chiefs, and the State diplomats were far from identical. Their information and expertise were acutely asymmetrical. The outcome of their interaction could not reflect equally the preferences of all the actors. Instead someone would have to adjust and yield. That someone turned out to be President Clinton. The Pentagon's concerns were essentially defensive. It was the people at State, especially Holbrooke, who became advocates: "We had to find a policy that avoided a UN withdrawal. That meant a greater U.S. involvement." The U.S. would use its forces to coerce the combatants so that it would not have to use its forces to retreat from them. But the political struggle in Washington was not close to being resolved (and Clinton's national security adviser, Anthony Lake, tried to engage a different "agent" for his principal by attempting to push Holbrooke out of the central action channel). Thousands more Bosnians would be massacred, Croatia would go on the offensive, and the allies would start moving on their own before Holbrooke, backed by Christopher, would finally be able to win this argument.[41]

3. Participants: Who Plays?

As the Bosnia story suggests, results of a multi-person process for making a choice cannot be predicted without knowing who participates and in what roles. This simple proposition has been demonstrated repeatedly by social psychologists in laboratory experiments with different groups of individuals solving the same decision problem. It is also well understood by people who make their living by selecting which individuals will make decisions— for example, trial lawyers selecting jurors. Racist Klansmen who defied the law in Mississippi in 1963 boasted that no white jury in their state would ever convict a white man for killing a black man. Thirty years later they were convicted for just such killings by Mississippi juries that included both whites and blacks. Conversely, a mostly black jury acquitted O.J. Simpson of murder, while an entirely white jury subsequently found, in a civil case, that he had committed the crime. Although that civil jury also heard new evidence under different rules and a different burden of proof, other participants had changed too. There was a new judge and new lawyers. Another important difference was that in the criminal case, Simpson was a passive participant, exercising his right to remain silent. Deprived of this right in the civil case, Simpson had to become an active participant in the trial as a major witness. Changing participants made a dramatic difference in the presentation of the case, and in the results.

Veterans of government service often note the ways in which varying mixes of personalities alter policy outcomes. In his account of Reagan's 1981 tax cut, Darman not only drew attention to the importance of Reagan's own personality, but also singled out the policy influence of an especially energetic entrepreneur, David Stockman. Because the identity of the participants in group choice matters, choices about participation become a key variable in the policymaking process. When President Clinton created a presidential Task Force on National Health Reform in January 1993 to devise a program to restructure the nation's health care system, his most important initial decisions were to place his wife, Hillary Rodham Clinton, at the head of the task force and to give day-to-day operating responsibility to Ira Magaziner. Neither individual came from the existing executive departments. For better or worse, but certainly in ways the president did not foresee, these judgments about participation greatly influenced the content of the recommendations Clinton received.[42]

As suggested in the discussion of Model II, participants who represent certain organizations in a process are normally influenced by that organization's notions of its critical task, mission, programs, routines, and associated culture. Organizers of a process may want this, seeking to assure that prospective actions are evaluated against the checklist of appropriateness that an organization's representative is expected to carry in her or his head. Unless they are well-informed about the specific organization, or subunit of a larger organization, from which that participant comes, and its own distinctive habits and checklists, they may find themselves as surprised as President Clinton did when the major initiative of his first term crashed.

John Steinbruner provocatively generalizes that high-level decision makers have greater freedom to pursue their own purposes, to do more "uncommitted thinking." Experts, on the other hand, are more likely to be influenced by the "theoretical thinking" characteristic of the community of experts in their domain of knowledge. Lower-level bureaucrats are most likely to display "grooved thinking" of the kind portrayed in Model II.[43] Hugh Heclo underlines predictable differences between political appointees and bureaucrats. "Political executives have no common culture for dealing with the problem of governing, and it is seldom that they are around long enough or trust one another enough to acquire one. Political leadership is transient, in that it depends on a particular individual and his or her changing supplies of outside power." Bureaucratic power, on the other hand, is "nonproblematic and enduring. It is automatically attached to those people who continuously operate the machinery of government."[44]

In selecting the leadership of his health care task force, Clinton deliberately sought perspectives that he thought would be unencumbered by the logic of existing organizations. What he got, however, were individuals with pronounced habits of thinking and operating methods of their own, Steinbruner's "theoretical thinkers." Instead of the habits of government bureaucrats, Clinton had selected, in the case of Magaziner, habits acquired in private sector consulting.

Students of group choice have shown how deeply individuals can be affected not only by their organizational background, but also by long-

standing association with a community of like-minded professionals sharing distinctive outlooks on the world as a result of their chosen fields of expertise.[45] Such an "epistemic community" was recognized in the 1950s in the field of arms control, and then embodied in a new organization (the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency) created to insure that this perspective was regularly represented in national security policy deliberations.[46] It is no accident that the Council of Economic Advisers is populated by card-carrying professional economists.

Richard Betts warns against assuming that all officials from one kind of organization, like the military, are alike: "Where officers stand often does depend on where they sit, but soldiers sit in different places." There are differences between services, between branches of the same service, between different cliques within branches, between "Pentagon" officers and those in the field. And, as Betts added, "Those in the same office . . . sometimes differ sharply in their views simply because they are different people." They have different kinds of experiences, beliefs, attitudes, and styles. One seasoned general reflected that there is no such thing as a "military mind" except in the mind of the beholder.[47]

At every level, officials make judgments about who participates in decisionmaking groups. As we have seen, great attention is often given to the balance of perspectives that will be represented in a group. The temptation to jump on what one especially able former Defense Secretary, Robert Lovett, called the "merry-go-round of 'concurrences'" is acute. Lovett feared that "unless carefully and boldly policed, [this temptation] can become so fertile a spawner of committees as to blanket the whole executive branch with an embalmed atmosphere. . . . [T]he idea seems to have got around that just because some decision may affect your activities, you automatically have a right to take part in making it."[48]

4. Decision Rules

The impact of decision rules upon group choice is clearest where that choice is made by a formal vote. Issues that would be decided one way by a vote held under one set of rules can be decided differently under another set of rules. For example, because treaties embody the most solemn, binding

commitment of the nation, the Constitution requires that two-thirds of the U.S. Senate vote to ratify a treaty before it can take effect.

One effect of this decision rule requiring a super-majority of the Senate to ratify treaties has been to enlarge the role of key senators during the process of negotiating treaties. Secretary of State George Marshall invited the majority and minority leaders of the Senate to join his delegation negotiating with the Soviet Union in 1947. The Carter administration allowed congressmen to serve as advisers to the U.S. delegation in strategic arms control talks with the Soviets. The Reagan administration tried to reverse this precedent, but had to relent and accept a formal Senate Arms Control Observer Group that became a prominent feature of the treaty-making process. American positions in the negotiations incorporated key concerns of those Senators who could influence enough votes to jeopardize ratification. Soviet governments often complained that they were forced to negotiate twice: first with the U.S. government and then with the Senate. Ironically, since Russia has now created a democratic legislature that also must ratify treaties, the Russian Duma has refused to ratify the START II treaty. U.S. government officials are now the ones who have been heard complaining about having to negotiate with two independent governments.

A second unintended effect of facing the high hurdle of Senate ratification has been increased reliance on international commitments through "executive agreements," which require no Senate vote. Or presidents may simply act in parallel with other states. In the first hundred years after the Constitution was ratified, the majority of international commitments took the form of treaties. In the next hundred years, more than 90 percent were handled as executive agreements.[49] This has, of course, led Congress to react by finding its own informal and less visible ways to influence the chief executive.[50]

Where choices are made by formal votes, key questions include: (1) the number of votes each participant has (in democratic elections each citizen has one vote, but in institutions like the International Monetary Fund member governments' votes are weighted by economic criteria, the U.S., for example, has 18 percent of the votes); (2) whether any participant has veto rights (for example, the five permanent members of the Security

Council of the UN); (3) whether decisions can be made by a simple majority or require a super-majority (like the two-thirds majority required for treaty ratification) or even unanimity (as in decisions by the NATO Council);[51] (4) whether the percentage of votes required is of the entire body or just of the members present;[52] (5) whether votes are cast publicly (as in the Congress today or the UN) or secretly (as in citizens' voting in national U.S. elections);[53] (6) the size of the voting body, which drives the number of preferences that must be reconciled; (7) how issues are formulated for choice on the ballot;[54] and (8) the sequence in which votes are taken.[55]

Formal decision rules are just the most visible strands in a larger tapestry of rules and norms that together comprise the rules of the game. Both formally and informally, these rules shape expectations of group members about how they are to interact. Social psychologists have catalogued such rules variously, ranging from the kind of questions that seem permissible to ask, to appropriate ways of expressing dissent.[56]

In less formal decision processes, where votes are rare or are simply formalities that confirm a decision that has already been made, decision rules may still matter but in a more nuanced way. Established, continuing groups behave quite differently from ad hoc groups. Most continuing groups display deference for seniority and also frequently for members' recognized domain of interest or expertise. Small groups, for example interagency committees, congressional committees, or juries, tend to be consensus-seeking. Processes that require unanimous or near-unanimous decisions yield choices that are delayed when compared to the act of a single decision maker. There is also a familiar tendency to accept the easiest or vaguest choice, the lowest common denominator. Winning options will often be formulated in less operational generalities, shifting more intense bargaining to subordinates who must choose how the decision will be implemented.

5. Framing Issues and Setting Agendas

How a group responds to a problem, or indeed, whether it responds at all, often depends on the way the problem is framed and reaches the group's

agenda. John Kingdon offers a compelling framework for explaining how agendas are formed in policymaking. He identifies three streams of events in policymaking. Individuals recognize problems in the "problem stream," generate proposals for public policy changes in the "policy stream," and engage in political activities such as pressure group lobbying and election campaigns in the "political stream." Moving an idea from the public agenda to the *decision* agenda requires the convergence of the three streams. Problems must intersect with policy ideas, which must be joined to favorable political forces. The streams rarely converge naturally; instead they are joined together when a proposal is advanced by a policy entrepreneur.[57]

Policy entrepreneurs, Kingdon argues, are able to bring the streams together and persuade decisionmaking groups to pay attention to their proposals or problems by (1) controlling the agenda of the group that is responsible for making the decision and (2) by framing the problem in terms that make it look especially attractive or urgent. "The entrepreneurs are found in many locations. No single formal position or even informal place in the political system has a monopoly on them." But Kingdon finds that "when researching case studies, one can nearly always pinpoint a particular person, or at most a few persons, who were central in moving a subject up on the agenda and into position for enactment."[58]

Problem identification is crucial in setting agendas. The chances of a proposal's appearing on an agenda are dramatically increased if it is persuasively linked to a problem already considered important. Agendas are also set according to changes in the political stream: swings in the national mood, the election of new administrations, or the rise of new interest groups, for example. Skillful policy entrepreneurs take advantage of important problems or changes in the political stream to formulate the group's agenda in the terms of their own proposals and ideas.

In 1983, President Reagan announced a Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) to defend the American homeland against enemy ballistic missiles. The objective, as stated by the president, was "to render Soviet nuclear-weapons impotent and obsolete." Fifteen years and more than $75 billion later, neither objective is remotely in sight. The initiative, often referred to as

"Star Wars," appealed to a variety of audiences with very different goals. Reagan's specific decision and the timing of his stunning announcement have often been attributed to Reagan's entrancement with the idea or the zeal of its advocates in the scientific community. But as Lou Cannon's probing examination of the process shows, equally important was the entrepreneurial skill of Reagan's deputy national security advisor of the moment, a then little-known Marine officer named Robert McFarlane. For McFarlane, SDI was less about defending U.S. cities from Soviet missiles or neutering nuclear weapons than about what, for him, was a higher priority concern, namely surmounting the stalemate preventing procurement of a new generation of landbased American intercontinental ballistic missiles. He thus saw SDI as an opportunity for an initiative that would solve his problem. Even a weak defensive system might disrupt a Soviet strike enough to preserve the value of new U.S. ICBMs, or so it could be argued. McFarlane found an advocate in Joint Chiefs of Staff member Admiral James Watkins, who helped him garner support among the other chiefs. In a critical meeting with the president and Joint Chiefs of Staff, McFarlane and Watkins presented the Strategic Defense Initiative as a system capable of completely repelling a Soviet missile attack. Defense Secretary Casper Weinberger found the idea incredible and disagreed. Unaware that Watkins had done his homework and secured the backing of his fellow chiefs well before the meeting, Reagan asked the other chiefs what they thought of the plan. One by one, each agreed with McFarlane and Watkins.[59] It was McFarlane, thus, who fashioned the odd process that led to the announcement of a decision that surprised not only the American people but also key officials in Reagan's own administration.

Initiatives can come from policy entrepreneurs in Congress too. In what is the most significant U.S. policy initiative toward Russia in the post–Cold War period to date, not the chief executive but rather leaders in Congress both put the problem on the agenda and legislated the program of action to address it. "Nunn-Lugar" is the name rightly given to the legislative program providing funds to assist Russia and the other states of the former Soviet Union in securing nuclear weapons and weapons-usable nuclear material. The concept originated with Congressman Les Aspin's proposal to take $1 billion from the defense budget to provide targeted economic assistance to the Soviet Union. When that effort failed, Senators Sam Nunn

(D-Georgia) and Richard Lugar (R-Indiana) took the lead during the autumn of 1991 to win agreement from fellow senators for inserting $500 million into a Senate-House reconciliation of the defense budget authorization bill. The administration offered no support for the effort, but it also did little to oppose it. The program became the core of U.S. efforts to help Russia and the other states of the former Soviet Union move some 14,000 tactical nuclear weapons and more than 4,000 strategic nuclear weapons from non-Russian states back into more centralized control in Russia. It also inaugurated an ongoing effort to secure those weapons and material within Russia itself.

For a group to function, it must have some common understanding of why it was assembled, the agenda for discussion, and the choice to be made. Since individuals may define a problem in radically divergent ways, the definition of the agenda and decision situation can be pivotal. Sometimes the nominal head of the group will do this, but often this task may be performed by an executive secretary of an organization with lead action responsibilities.[60] Hence, in government, one can frequently discern quiet behind-the-scenes struggles over who will draft a meeting paper, including the proffer of competing drafts from which a group might choose to work. Especially important are the ways an action-forcing event is defined, alternatives delineated, or a nonoperational goal translated into a set of proposed operational objectives.[61]

Social psychologists have observed that people regularly make decisions in ways that violate the tenets of rational choice. People are, for example, less willing to risk losses than they are to take risks for proportionate gains. Thus, decision makers are still powerfully influenced by the terms in which the problem is framed for them, i.e., whether they are choosing to avoid losses or seek gains.[62] The political scientist Zeev Maoz has written about myopic decision-making, in which small steps turn into a large choice, and how this can be manipulated with "salami tactics." He gives the example of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982. The Israeli defense minister, Ariel Sharon, wanted to invade Lebanon and destroy the Palestinian forces and bases, push the Syrian army out of the country, and establish a friendly central government that would sign a peace treaty with Israel. The plan required the conquest of much of the country including its capital, Beirut.

With support from Prime Minister Menachem Begin, Sharon presented his plan to the Israeli cabinet in December 1981. No other member of the cabinet supported it, so the plan was rejected. Sharon came back to the cabinet with a scaled-back plan and then another—meeting resistance and rejection on four subsequent proposals in the next few months. Finally he asked for and won assent to an air strike that, he hoped, would provoke a retaliation and allow him to expand the war. The retaliation did not come. In May 1982 Sharon finally won majority support for a limited invasion, but seven dissenting ministers were too many; that plan too was shelved. Finally in June, following an attempt to kill the Israeli ambassador in London, the cabinet agreed to a small 25-mile incursion.[63]

As defense minister, Sharon managed the offensive, deliberately moving Israeli troops into positions where a clash with Syria was unavoidable if Israeli troops were to be properly protected. Thus ensued a sequence of occasions in which the cabinet found itself obliged to make one little decision after another that, in effect, accumulated to the massive invasion plan it had rejected six months earlier. As this became apparent, Sharon and his cabinet colleagues who had been dragged along were "thrust into the position of a losing gambler: to stop would mean sustaining an assured loss; to carry on might increase the loss but also the possibility of an ultimate success that would justify all the costs."[64] At each key decision point, Sharon managed to frame the choice as one between the certainty of loss now and the hope of victory later. In the end, the result for Israel was disastrous both strategically and in domestic politics.

6. Groupthink

One of the major insights from social psychology for government decisionmaking is Irving Janis's concept of "groupthink."[65] Janis and others have noted that key policy decisions are often made in small groups, often of six to twelve people, in which there is a high degree of cohesion. This cohesion produces a psychological drive for consensus, which tends to suppress both dissent and the consideration of alternatives. Janis writes not only of conflicts within a group brought on by their different roles in sharing power, but also about conflicts within each participant. "The most prominent symptoms of such conflicts are hesitation, vacillation, feelings of

uncertainty, and signs of acute emotional stress whenever the decision comes within the focus of attention." People facing such stress resort to techniques for "defensive avoidance," often by what Janis calls "bolstering." Bolstering includes such things as exaggerating favorable consequences, downplaying unfavorable consequences, denying uneasy feelings, exaggerating the remoteness of the action commitment, downplaying the extent to which others will see what is happening, and downplaying personal responsibility.

This phenomenon is more than an amendment to the purposive unitary decision maker in Model I because, as Janis argues, groups contribute to a collective pattern of defensive avoidance. He and his colleagues call the result "groupthink." In some small groups, but not all, "conformity pressures begin to dominate, the striving for unanimity fosters the pattern of defensive avoidance, with the characteristic reliance on shared rationalizations that bolster the least objectionable alternative."[66]

Unfortunately, Janis and his colleagues do not provide guidance about where groupthink is more likely to be dominant. Nonetheless, newly available evidence about decisionmaking in escalating the Vietnam War offers a telling example of the basic phenomenon. The case illustrates how group processes can lead to sequences of decisions that reach extremes well beyond the initial inclinations of any of the participants.[67]

Janis called attention to President Johnson's "Tuesday Cabinet," a group centered around a few civilian advisers, which had started out as a lunch group in the spring of 1965. The group illustrated the patterns of cohesion in defensive avoidance that Janis describes. Uniting around the conviction that they could not allow a defeat, and reading constant possibilities into a strategy of graduated pressure on North Vietnam to give in, they chose policies that could hardly have killed more people or done more damage to the United States.[68] The example is more complex, however, because Johnson did seek and receive advice from a very wide range of sources, including dissenters and a panel of "Wise Men." As one pair of authors put it, the irony of Vietnam was that the "system worked."[69] To be fair to Johnson and the others, "nothing as catastrophic as the Vietnam experience

had happened before in U.S. foreign policy, so [they thought] why should the doomsayers be right now?"[70]

A more subtle and more valid illustration of groupthink may actually be found in the decisionmaking of the American military leaders. Those decisions were made principally through the committee deliberations of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS). In 1965 and 1966 the most decisive options to win the war in South Vietnam would have involved a direct invasion or threat of invasion against part or all of North Vietnam, which was giving increasingly critical support and direction to the Viet Cong rebels battling the government in the South. The deeply ingrained instincts of the American military, especially the American army, from the Civil War to World War II, were to favor direct attack on the center of enemy power. The Korean War was thus remembered more for its frustrations than for its successes. Former President Dwight Eisenhower's reactions were typical. Briefed in 1965 on plans for escalation in Vietnam, Eisenhower reacted, "The first question to consider is what the end of all this can be." The only reason to build up would to be to take the offensive "and clear the area."[71] Yet the strongest options against North Vietnam were effectively removed from the table by the fear that the experience of Korea would be repeated and China would enter the war against the United States. The Chinese, it was believed, were willing to go to war in Vietnam against America. The Americans, however, were not willing to invite a war against China. For the civilian leaders, that asymmetry of fear was decisive.[72] Given that set of constraints, most senior American military officials felt uneasy, ambivalent, or outright opposed to plans for major deployments of ground combat forces in South Vietnam from late 1964 on into 1965. They had trouble devising any convincing analysis that led to victory. Yet from the winter of 1964–1965 onward, the Joint Chiefs of Staff produced unanimous recommendation after recommendation for escalating the American presence. The essential bankruptcy of the policy of escalation (with its hopes for encouraging the South Vietnamese and discouraging the North) had become clear to many military experts by 1966, including those at the top. But the JCS response, as a formal group, was to produce yet more recommendations for incremental escalation without any fundamentally different approach to the war.

Why? Reflecting on that question, after the fact, Army chief of staff Harold Johnson could offer "no logical rationale."[73] We start with abundant evidence that the various armed services and commands each had different strategic concepts for conducting the war and equally varying degrees of confidence (and internal dissent) about the prospects of the strategies. Former General Maxwell Taylor (the ambassador to Vietnam in 1965) wanted air and naval forces but resisted heavy deployment of ground troops. The field commander in Vietnam, William Westmoreland, hoped to wear down the enemy in pitched battles of attrition. Marine Corps commandant Wallace Greene thought Westmoreland's strategy would fail, and preferred to use a limited number of troops to protect coastal enclaves and concentrate on a more political approach to pacifying the countryside. There were widely varying views about bombing North Vietnam, from which most top generals (including Westmoreland) expected only modest results. Harold Johnson thought the enemy was ready to fight for twenty years and that America would need to maintain an expeditionary force of a half-million troops for at least five years. He was astonished and worried about the consequences when he learned that President Johnson would not go to the country and defend a callup of Army Reserves. Westmoreland's chief of staff later said he thought Johnson's escalation decision in July 1965 was a "major strategic mistake." As one scholar, Robert Buzzanco, has summarized: "American generals, rather than being naive or unduly optimistic, had forthrightly evaluated the risks and likely outcome of a campaign in Indochina."[74]

As a group, however, the Joint Chiefs of Staff made a maximum effort to present unified military advice. That is what the president seemed to want, telling them at one point in April 1965: "Now, I'm like a coach I used to know, and you're my team, you're all Johnson men. We played the first half of the game and the score is now 21–0 against us; now I want you to tell me how to win. You're graduates of the Military Academy and you should be able to give me an answer. I want you to come back here next Tuesday and tell me how we are going to kill more Viet Cong." After one meeting in which the Army chief of staff clashed openly with the Marine Corps commandant in front of the president, Defense Secretary McNamara told the JCS Chairman, Earle Wheeler, that he never wanted to see such a session again.[75]

As a group, the Chiefs also felt confined by decisions made by Johnson and his civilian advisers, especially McNamara whom they disliked. Individually, at least some of the military chiefs expected failure. As a group, they would not say so and could find refuge in their collective identity. Nor would they challenge Johnson's or McNamara's small and large deceptions in portraying the required extent of escalation to the American public. Told they should both limit the war and try to end it quickly, the Joint Chiefs—acting under the umbrella of the committee —"substituted proposals for escalation in place of strategic planning and thus left the greater burden for the war at the White House doorstep."[76] Lacking confidence in a path to success, unable to find an agreed-upon alternative to the strategy of graduated pressure they considered flawed, distrustful of the political leadership, the chiefs worked out their own interservice disagreements by finding the *highest* common denominator in an equation they considered fixed. So they agreed to look out for their own services, collectively making demands for more troops and resources that they suspected President Johnson could not meet and leaving civilian officials to specify the objectives of the commitments, the strategy, and the consequences of the overall policy. They exhibited many of the classic symptoms of "groupthink."[77]

The Joint Chiefs of Staff had come a long way from the model on which the group had been based. During the Second World War, British and American military committees had constantly told powerful heads of government what they could or should *not* do. Organized or staffed differently, led by a Matthew Ridgway rather than Earle Wheeler, the Joint Chiefs could have behaved quite differently, and plausibly have produced distinctly different results.

Changing the personalities, rules, relative powers, and structure of a committee can change its behavior. The decay of the Joint Chiefs as a decisionmaking committee eventually prompted Congress to reorganize the group on a new statutory basis in the Goldwater-Nichols Act adopted in 1986. During the preparations to go to war against Iraq, the White House and civilian defense secretary again expressed doubts about the initial military plans. This time the JCS Chairman, Colin Powell, took their point and oversaw formulation of a new, combined strategy that superimposed his

own views atop those of the field commander. Having accepted accountability for a plan of action, Powell then confronted President Bush with a massive request for additional forces, including hundreds of thousands of soldiers and airmen. This time the president just said yes. Bush recalled later, "I was determined not to haggle. The important thing was to be able to get the job done without leaks about divided views on force requirements which might tend to reinforce concerns on the part of the doubters."[78] The authority of the chairman of the JCS had been so enhanced and the chairman's and the committee's powers made so hierarchical that after the Persian Gulf war some commentators complained that the JCS had become too powerful and too able to overrun all but the most determined secretaries of defense, or even presidents.[79]

7. Complexity of Joint Action

Settings in which separate institutions share power over decisions and actions assure what Aaron Wildavsky and Jeffrey Pressman call a "complexity of joint decision and action."[80] When the executive must win independent consent from a legislature, from various state and local governments, or from other governments in a coalition, complexity grows. The number of forks in the decision tree increases; independent actors multiply; and the prospect of the results achieving any precise original intent declines. The underlying analytics of this process are evident in the earlier discussion of principals, agents, and players.

Wildavsky and Pressman develop the concept of "complex joint action" in an extended case study of an Economic Development Administration Program in Oakland, California. The program sought "simply" to construct an airport and create jobs for the hard-core unemployed, but Wildavsky and Pressman find, "the apparently simple and straightforward is really complex and convoluted." They explain why even they were surprised by the difficulties in building a terminal even though the money was there, the plans signed, and the people agreed that minorities should get a share of the jobs.

We are initially surprised because we do not begin to appreciate the number of steps involved, the number of participants whose preferences have to be taken into account, the number of separate decisions that are part of what we think of as a single one. Least of all do we appreciate the geometric growth of interdependencies over time when each negotiation involves a number of participants with decisions to make, whose implications ramify over time.

Their analysis traces the path of decisions and clearance points in the EDA public works program, identifying 30 key junctures that had to be passed in order for the program to be completed. Each of these involved an array of participants thus requiring up to 70 independent clearances for action. In a neat calculation, they compute the probability of success after 70 clearances, given various probabilities of agreement at each clearance point. If the probability of agreement at each clearance point is 80 percent, the probability of success after 70 clearances is 0.000000125 percent. At 99 percent probability of agreement at each clearance point, the likelihood of success is still less than half.[81]

Problems of joint decision have become more common as Congress has become a more active participant in foreign policy-making. In contrast to the Cold War era in which leadership in foreign policy was at least imagined to be a preserve of the executive, Congress is now enfranchised, decentralized, and individualized. With the executive and legislature often controlled by different political parties, trust and comity have become more exception than rule. Not just in traditional areas like treaty ratification or the confirmation of appointments, or appropriation of funds for forces and foreign actions, but also in legislating specific restrictions on executive programs, imposing sanctions (where Congress has mandated sanctions on more than one-third of the members of the United Nations), covert action (where procedural requirements for briefing congressional committees has made Congress nearly a co-manager), and in most other dimensions of foreign policy, Congress is now a player.

As Randall Ripley and James Lindsay argue in a balanced assessment of the post-Vietnam rise of Congress, claims that foreign and defense policy are "co-determined" or "co-managed" are exaggerated. "The President is the

most important actor and the Executive is the most important branch of government."[82] Yet they make a persuasive case for the proposition that "it is impossible to understand fully the foreign policymaking process in the United States today without taking account of Congress."[83] Specifically they distinguish among "crisis," "strategic," and "structural" foreign and defense policies. They demonstrate both how and why Congress's role is minimal in crisis decisionmaking, important in strategic decisions about foreign and defense policy goals and strategies, and roughly equivalent to its role in domestic policy in dealing with structural issues of how resources are used, including procurement, organization, and deployment of military personnel and material. In the arena of structural policy, decisions tend to be dominated by "sub-governments," consisting of bureaus, congressional committees, and other interested actors—all attentive to protecting their domain from outside intrusion, whether by president, secretary of defense, or congressional leader.[84] The ways in which Congress exerts its influence include legislating its policy preferences (for example, South African sanctions). But as noted above (p. 279), influence is also exerted by: (1) anticipated reactions; (2) procedural legislation; and (3) framing options quite different from the executive's preferences.

Recognizing the difficulty of joint action, the president and Congress agreed in the early 1970s that if Congress was free to judge every non-tariff trade problem brought before it, the U.S. would not be able to negotiate a new trade treaty. No treaty that affected hundreds of economic sectors could ever pass the gauntlet of clearances for each microeconomic adjustment, each besieged by special interests. In 1974 the two branches of government worked together to devise a shield called "fast-track authority." Under this law, Congress has to take only two actions: one to grant such general authority to negotiate a trade treaty and the other, under fast-track rules, to approve the entire treaty—take it or leave it—without amendment and by majority, not two-thirds vote. So all interest groups have no choice but to judge the package as a whole, denied the chance to break it apart into a labyrinth of separate decisions.[85] The North American Free Trade Agreement with Mexico, commonly referred to as NAFTA, could only have been passed under the fast-track rules. The Bush administration won congressional approval for the initial authority in 1991, and the Clinton

administration persuaded Congress to approve the treaty—by practically the same narrow margin—in 1994.

In foreign affairs, the complexity of joint action spotlights the question of congressional competence and its contribution to the quality of decisions. In the *Federalist Papers*, Alexander Hamilton had warned from the start that "the fluctuating and . . . multitudinous composition of that body forbids us to expect in it those qualities which are essential to the proper execution of such a trust. . . . The very complication of the business, by introducing a necessity of the concurrence of so many different bodies, would of itself afford a solid objection."[86]

When the implementation of actions involves not only the concurrent action of branches of one government, but the coordination of actions by several governments in the form of an international organization or tightly linked coalition, the complexity of joint action grows exponentially. We return to the Bosnian crisis mentioned above to see how a UN force formally committed to preventing attack on a city crowded with refugees failed to provide the protection upon which many of those civilians had staked their lives. Without any desire to allow a massacre, well-meaning governments that had combined for complex joint action allowed one to happen.

As President Clinton was pondering his newly revealed options in June 1995, Serb forces were preparing an assault against the city of Srebrenica. Srebrenica had been declared a safe area by the United Nations Security Council in 1993 in a resolution that gave the UN Protection Force for Bosnia (UNPROFOR) the mandate of deterring attacks against the safe areas and defending itself against attack. The great powers secured their freedom of action by thus guaranteeing only that UNPROFOR would *defend itself*, with the lesser commitment of trying to *deter* an attack against the safe areas. The resolution, as one UN official put it, was "a masterpiece of diplomatic drafting, but largely unimplementable as an operational directive."[87]

A naive Dutch government was persuaded to provide a battalion of peacekeeping troops to represent UNPROFOR in Srebrenica. The battalion soon became utterly dependent on the surrounding Serb forces for most

supplies, including food. After more than a year of difficulties and humiliations, the new commander of UNPROFOR, British Lieutenant-General Rupert Smith, became convinced that Serbian forces would launch an offensive in 1995. Smith requested guidance from UN headquarters in New York on the use of air power against the Serbs in order to deter the expected attacks against the safe areas, which were too weak and exposed to defend themselves. UN headquarters meant the office of the Secretary General and his department for peacekeeping operations. Only the Security Council itself, however, could interpret its own resolutions.

Even if the Security Council had clarified that air strikes were authorized under the resolution, the procedure for approving any particular strike was elaborate. The Dutch battalion in Srebrenica would make a request to its sector headquarters, in Tuzla, that would be relayed to Smith's headquarters in the Bosnian capital, Sarajevo. Smith could then make a request to his superior, the commander of all UN forces in the former Yugoslavia, the French general Bernard Janvier, who was headquartered in the Croatian capital, Zagreb. Then Janvier had to pass the request to the Secretary General's representative on the scene, a cautious Japanese international civil servant, Yasushi Akashi; then (if clearly within standing UN guidance, about which Akashi might confer with his superiors in the UN secretariat in New York), Akashi could submit Smith's request to NATO authorities for the approval of the organization and the member governments whose aircraft would actually fly the combat missions.

By 1995, bitter experience had conditioned most national and international officials to be skeptical, in any case, about the effectiveness of limited air strikes as a deterrent weapon against the Serbs. The Serbs had already shown that, if attacked, they could simply retaliate by seizing the most vulnerable set of peacekeepers that were handy and hold them as hostages. Generals Janvier and Smith understood this well. They told UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali in May 1995 that UNPROFOR either must be reinforced and given wide powers to use force to defend every exposed point it now occupied or it should withdraw its forces from the exposed positions in the most vulnerable safe areas, leaving behind a few observers that could direct air strikes. Boutros Ghali judged the first option infeasible, given the unwillingness of the major powers or NATO to provide serious

military forces to UNPROFOR. Janvier and Smith were thus left with the redeployment plan as the only option. They presented it to top generals at NATO, who agreed that something had to be done but could arrive at no consensus (the NATO decision rule) on what to do. In any case, the civilian leaders of their government would have to make the decisions. Janvier and Smith then went to New York and briefed the Security Council representatives.

Their proposal was effectively shot down by the United States ambassador, Madeline Albright. Albright had been constant and consistent in calling for a tougher line against the Serbs, with more air strikes. She agreed the situation was untenable and thought UNPRO-FOR needed to be strengthened. But no withdrawals of UNPROFOR out of the safe areas could be allowed. That option was flatly unacceptable. Albright's alternative was to propose NATO air strikes against the Serbs. Yet, paradoxically, her stance meant that strikes would be *less* likely. Only the UNPROFOR officials could request an air strike and the nations they represented had troops on the line, in danger, and at risk of being taken hostage if air strikes occurred. Albright offered no other alternative and would have had difficulty developing one, given the interdepartmental division back in Washington that produced her guidance.

Within a week, the scenario that Janvier and Smith feared materialized, as the UN reluctantly proposed and received authorization for an air strike which, as predicted, led to the Serbs taking UNPROFOR hostages. Frustrated and angry, the French government threatened to pull all of UNPROFOR out of Bosnia. In a move that appears to have been linked to the redeployment idea hatched by their UN–assigned generals, the British and French simultaneously dispatched a Rapid Reaction Force of their combat troops to Bosnia.

The threat of an UNPROFOR pullout forced the United States to consider the unpleasant issue Holbrooke and Christopher had pushed on Clinton, the American pledge to support an UNPROFOR evacuation with U.S. troops. With that as the alternative, the Janvier-Smith redeployment option looked better to the U.S. But a new policy could not be developed quickly, given the Clinton administration's own interdepartmental procedures and

divisions. It was also too late to use redeployment as a way to free up UNPROFOR and the new Rapid Reaction Force for action, since UN personnel had already been seized. Albright was, therefore, instructed to stop calling for air strikes.

With no viable military option to stop the Serbs, attention turned to diplomacy. In London a minister privately complained that "there was confusion among the great powers: the French talked of withdrawal, the British of reinforcement, the Americans and Germans seemed all over the place. There was considerable danger unless the members of the Contact Group spoke as one." The Contact Group he spoke of included the U.S., Britain, France, Germany, and Russia and had been formed to coordinate a common approach on Balkan diplomacy.[88] But they could not speak "as one."

Discouraged by his inability to redeploy UNPROFOR into safer positions, Janvier decided that his best remaining option was just to try to protect his personnel. There was no use in attempting to confront the Serbs. He and Smith agreed the "mission was dead." The new Anglo-French Rapid Reaction Force could do little while UNPROFOR's peacekeepers were so vulnerable. Janvier thus focused his attention in June 1995 on securing the release of the UNPROFOR hostages taken by the Serbs in May. Meanwhile, divided over what to offer the Serbs in the direct negotiations it had pursued, the Clinton administration refused to approve terms of a tentative deal that had been worked out by its negotiator with the Serbian president. The bilateral U.S.-Serbia negotiations were undertaken separately and without a full understanding of the separate choices being made by UNPROFOR, or what this implied for the safe areas. Instead, Washington chose a tough line. So diplomatic as well as military options for heading off a Serb attack had reached a dead end.[89]

The Serbs began their long-expected offensive with a series of ambushes and small massacres. After the expected Muslim reaction to their provocations, and watching for international reactions, the full Serbian attack fell on Srebrenica on July 6. After some of the Dutch peacekeepers had already surrendered, the Dutch commander asked that evening for air strikes against Serbs attacking other Dutch positions. The request was

passed through Tuzla, speedily endorsed by Smith's headquarters in Sarajevo, and passed on to Janvier in Zagreb.

Janvier convened a group discussion of his Crisis Action Team.[90] His team members recommended an immediate strike but Janvier hesitated, unable to see where the initial strikes might lead. He expanded the participants in the decision by inviting the Dutch general present to check with his national leaders in The Hague. Janvier also conferred with Akashi, and checked again with UNPROFOR headquarters in Sarajevo. The Dutch government did not object to a strike. Three hours after receiving the original strike request, Janvier made his decision: to warn the Serbs again that, if attacks continued the next morning, strikes would go ahead. The Dutch in Srebrenica, not part of that group choice, misunderstood and thought strikes would begin at daybreak. So when morning came the Dutch were waiting for the strikes, and Janvier was waiting for word on whether the Serbs were still attacking.

A new strike package passed through this gauntlet, and was launched the following day, but it did little damage to the attacking Serbs during the afternoon. Overrunning the town, the Serbs promptly threatened to kill their Dutch prisoners and shell the remaining Dutch defenders. After the Dutch peacekeepers relayed this threat to their government in The Hague, the Dutch ministers frantically bypassed the UN decisionmaking process and called NATO air controllers in Italy: "Stop! Stop!" Akashi and Janvier had reached the same conclusion. The town fell, and the Serbs began organizing the expulsion of more than 20,000 women and children and the massacre of the Muslim men. Those Dutch peacekeepers left in the town could only watch in horror. "Over the next week," Holbrooke writes, "the biggest single mass murder in Europe since World War II took place, while the outside world did nothing to stop the tragedy."[91]

UNPROFOR actions in Bosnia involved layers of group choices in a complex, loosely-coupled process.[92] Together these layers became the authoritative choices about UNPROFOR's orders and behavior. Those choices have actually been greatly simplified in this narrative by frequently using Model I to characterize many of the actors. Each group choice was made in a distinctive decision environment. Each setting had its own

participants, procedures, and decision rules. Appreciation of this complex array, however, is essential to understanding the full dimension of this terrible tragedy. In the post-Cold War world, complex and joint actions have become the norm. To prevent future Srebrenicas, policymakers will have to comprehend such intricacies more clearly and manage them more effectively.

A Governmental Politics Paradigm

The primary source of the paradigm is the model implicit in Neustadt's work, though his concentration on presidential decision has been generalized to resultants of political bargaining among substantially independent players. This paradigm has been utilized, implicitly or explicitly, in scores of studies since the original edition of the book was published in 1971.[93] Informed by these efforts, we can now formulate a more refined statement of its elements.

> **I.** *Basic Unit of Analysis: Governmental Action as Political Resultant.*
> The decisions and actions of governments are intranational political resultants: *resultants* in the sense that what happens is not chosen as a solution to a problem but rather results from compromise, conflict, and confusion of officials with diverse interests and unequal influence; *political* in the sense that the activity from which decisions and actions emerge is best characterized as bargaining along regularized channels among individual members of the government. National behavior in international affairs can be conceived of as something that emerges from intricate and subtle, simultaneous, overlapping, and often deadly serious games among players located in positions in a government. The hierarchical arrangement of the players constitutes the government. Games proceed neither at random nor at leisure. Regular channels structure the game; deadlines force issues to the attention of incredibly busy players. The moves, sequences of moves, and games of chess are thus to be explained in terms of the bargaining among players with separate and unequal power over particular pieces and with separable objectives in distinguishable subgames.

In analyzing governmental actions—for example, U.S. government efforts to retard the spread of nuclear weapons—one must examine all official actions of the U.S. government that affect this outcome. U.S. government actions affecting the spread of nuclear weapons include the State Department's efforts to gain adherence to the Nonproliferation Treaty, the Defense Department's programs for cooperative denuclearization with Russia and other republics of the former Soviet Union; presidential offers of guarantees to nonnuclear nations against nuclear blackmail; Department of Energy liaison with the International Atomic Energy Agency's programs for safeguards and promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear energy; decisions on whether to withdraw U.S. forces from the Far East (which may increase the concern of some Japanese, Koreans, or Taiwanese about their national security); Defense Department work on new military planning for "counterproliferation"; research and analysis by the Central Intelligence Agency's Nonproliferation Center; work at the U.S. mission to the United Nations on UN efforts to monitor the denuclearization of Iraq; controls on the export of sensitive technology devised by the Department of Commerce and enforced with the help of the U.S. Customs Service; judgments by the U.S. Congress and key legislators about adding or lifting trade sanctions against countries suspected of being engaged in nuclear weapons development; and U.S. government refusal to confirm or deny the reported presence of nuclear weapons aboard ships calling in foreign ports. As the list suggests, it is important to recognize that governmental actions relevant to issues are really an agglomeration or collage composed of relatively independent decisions and actions by individuals and groups of players in various games, as well as formal governmental decisions and actions that represent a combination of the preferences and relative influence of central players or subsets of players in more specific instances.

> **II.** *Organizing Concepts.* The organizing concepts of this paradigm can be arranged as strands in the answers to four interrelated questions: Who plays? What factors shape players' perceptions, preferences, and stance on the issue? What determines each player's impact on results? How does the game

combine players' stands, influence, and moves to yield governmental decisions and actions?

A. *Who plays?* That is, whose interests and actions have an important effect on the government's decisions and actions?

1. *Players in Positions.* The governmental actor is neither a unitary agent nor a conglomerate of organizations, but rather a number of individual players. Groups of players constitute the agent for particular government decisions and actions. Players are individuals in jobs.

Individuals become players in the national security policy game by occupying a position in the major channels for producing action on national security issues. For example, in the U.S. government the players include *Chiefs:* the president, the secretaries of State, Defense, and Treasury, the director of the CIA, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the president's National Security adviser (formal title: Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs), and, in some administrations, the ambassador to the United Nations;[94]*Staffers:* the immediate staff of each chief; *Indians:* the political appointees and permanent government officials within each of the departments and agencies; and *Ad Hoc Players:* actors in the wider government game (especially "Congressional Influentials"[95]), certain foreign diplomats or officials, members of the press, spokespersons for important interest groups, and surrogates for each of the groups. Other members of the Congress, press, interest groups, and public form concentric circles around the central arena—circles that demarcate limits within which the game is played.[96]

Positions define what players both may and must do. The advantages and handicaps with which each player can enter and play in various games stem from his position. So does a cluster of obligations for the performance of certain tasks. The two sides of this coin are illustrated by the position of the modern Secretary of State. First, in form and usually in fact, she (or he) is a senior personal adviser to the president on the political-military issues that are the stuff of contemporary foreign policy. Second, she is the colleague of the president's other senior advisers on problems of foreign policy, such as the secretaries of Defense and Treasury, and the National Security adviser. Third, she is the ranking U.S. diplomat in negotiations with

foreign powers. Fourth, she serves as the primary representative of the administration's foreign policy in Congress. Fifth, she is an educator of the American public about critical issues of foreign affairs and a defender of the actions of the administration. Sixth, she serves as an administration voice to the outside world. Finally, she is Ms. State Department or Ms. Foreign Office, "leader of officials, spokesman for their causes, guardian of their interests, judge of their disputes, superintendent of their work, master of their careers."[97] But she is not first one and then the other: all these obligations are hers simultaneously. Her performance in one affects her credit and power in the others. The perspective she gets from the daily work she must oversee—the cable traffic, for instance, by which her department routinely maintains relations with other foreign offices—conflicts with the president's requirement that she serve as a generalist and coordinator of contrasting perspectives. The necessity that she be close to the president restricts her ability to represent the interests of her department. When she defers to the secretary of Defense rather than fighting for her department's position—as she often must—she strains the loyalty of her officialdom. Thus, she labors under the weight of conflicting responsibilities.

A Secretary of State's resolution of the conflicts depends not only upon the position, but also upon the player who occupies it. For players are also people; their metabolisms differ. The hard core of the governmental politics mix is personality. How each person manages to stand the heat in his or her kitchen, each player's basic operating style, and the complementarity or contradiction among personalities and styles in the inner circles are irreducible pieces of the policy blend. Then, too, each person comes to his or her position with baggage in tow. The bags include sensitivities to certain issues, commitments to various projects, and personal standing with and debts to groups in the society.

There is no sure guide to predicting the proportional influence of position relative to personal factors in individual policymakers' behavior. As suggested in the cases summarized above, including Bosnia, Vietnam, and World War II, peculiarities of human beings remain an irreducible part of the mix.

B. *What factors shape players' perceptions, preferences, and stands on the issue at hand?*

1. *Parochial Priorities and Perceptions.* Answers to the question, "What is the issue?" are colored by the position from which the question is considered. Propensities inherent in positions do not facilitate unanimity in answering the question "What must be done?" The factors that encourage organizational parochialism (described in Model II) also exert pressure upon the players who occupy positions on top of or within these organizations. Representatives of the organization to a group decision process will be sensitive to the organization's orientation. The games the player can enter and the advantages conferred by representing the organization enhance these pressures. Thus, in many cases though certainly not all, propensities and priorities stemming from position are sufficient to allow analysts to make reliable predictions about a player's stand.

2. *Goals and Interests.* Although many national security interests are widely accepted, reasonable officials can frequently disagree about how broad national goals bear upon a specific issue. Thus other interests come into play, including personal interests, domestic political interests, and organizational interests. Career officials are prone to believe that the health of their organization is vital. Presidents and their senior appointees rarely fail to consider domestic political consequences of their choices.

3. *Stakes and Stands.* Games are played to determine decisions and actions. Decisions and actions advance and impede each player's conception of the national interest, his organization's interests, operational objectives, and other personal concerns. These overlapping interests constitute the stakes for which games are played. Stakes are the mix of individual interests, shaped by the issue at hand. In the light of these stakes, a player decides on a stand on the issue.

4. *Deadlines and Faces of Issues.* Solutions to strategic problems are not found by detached analysts focusing coolly on *the* problem. First the problem must be defined. "Getting people to see new problems, or to see old problems in one way rather than another, is a major conceptual and political accomplishment." This must then be

coupled with one of the ideas that "float around in and near government" and with an opportunity for action, possibly forced by an upcoming event.[98] Deadlines and events raise issues and force busy players to take stands. A number of established processes fix deadlines that demand action at appointed times. First, in the national security arena, the budget, embassies' demands for action-cables, requests for instructions from military groups, and scheduled intelligence reports fix recurring deadlines for decision and action. Second, major political speeches, especially presidential speeches, or events such as a summit or ministerial meeting can force decisions. Third, crises necessitate decisions and actions. Because deadlines raise issues in one context rather than in another, they importantly affect the resolution of the issue. They help determine the answer to a crucial question: What must be decided?

When an issue arises, players typically come to see quite different *faces of the issue.* For example, the May 1990 judgment on whether to cut off agricultural credit guarantees to Iraq was: to the deputy national security adviser an opportunity to show displeasure with Iraq's clandestine weapons program and threats toward Israel; to the Agriculture Department a judgment about the fate of a controversial program that helped agribusiness; and to State, a turn away from a strategy of constructive engagement that could influence Iraqi behavior toward the Arab-Israeli peace process (though there were at least three faces to the issue among different offices of the State Department). To the Treasury, the judgment was a threat to Iraq's readiness to continue paying its debts; to the Defense Department it was an occasion to reevaluate the posture of its central command; and to the president's congressional adviser it was an opportunity to remove an irritant in relations with the Hill.[99] (Chiefs, especially, tend to see several faces of the issue simultaneously.) The face of the issue that each player sees is not determined by his goals and interests alone. The channel in which an issue is raised and the deadline for decision also affect the face an issue wears.

C. *What determines each player's impact on results?*

Power (i.e., effective influence on government decisions and actions) is an elusive blend of at least three elements: bargaining advantages, skill and will in using bargaining advantages, and other

players' perceptions of the first two ingredients. The sources of bargaining advantages include formal authority and responsibility (stemming from positions); actual control over resources necessary to carry out action; expertise and control over information that enables one to define the problem, identify options, and estimate feasibilities; control over information that enables chiefs to determine whether and in what form decisions are being implemented; the ability to affect other players' objectives in other games, including domestic political games; personal persuasiveness with other players (drawn from personal relations, charisma); and access to and persuasiveness with players who have bargaining advantages drawn from the above. Power wisely invested yields an enhanced reputation for effectiveness. Unsuccessful investments deplete both the stock of capital and the reputation. Thus each player must pick the issues on which he can play with high probability of success.

D. *What is the game?* How are players' stands, influence, and moves combined to yield governmental decisions and actions?

1. *Action-channels.* Bargaining games are neither random nor haphazard. The individuals whose stands and moves count are the players whose positions hook them on to the action-channels. An action-channel is a regularized means of taking governmental action on a specific kind of issue. For example, one action-channel for producing U.S. military intervention in another country includes a recommendation by the ambassador to that country, an assessment by the regional military commander, a recommendation by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, an evaluation by the intelligence community of the consequences of intervention, a recommendation by the secretaries of State and Defense, a presidential decision to intervene, the transmittal of an order through the president to the secretary of Defense and the JCS to the regional military commander, the regional commander's determination of what troops to employ, the order from him to the commander of those troops, and orders from that commander to the individuals who actually move into the country. Similarly, the budgetary action-channel includes the series of steps between the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) annual call for estimates, through departmental, presidential, and

congressional review, to congressional authorization, congressional appropriation, presidential signature, OMB apportionment, agency obligation, and ultimately expenditure.

Action-channels structure the game by preselecting the major players, determining their usual points of entrance into the game, and distributing particular advantages and disadvantages for each game. Most critically, channels determine "who's got the action"—that is, which department's Indians actually do whatever is decided upon.

Typically, issues are recognized and determined within an established channel for producing action. In the national security area, weapons procurement decisions are made within the annual budgeting process; embassies' demands for action-cables are answered according to routines of consultation and clearance within State and then from State to other agencies and the White House (which has a special procedure for interdepartmental coordination of outgoing cables called a "crosshatch"); requests for instructions from military groups (concerning assistance all the time, concerning operations during war) are composed by the military in consultation with the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of State, and the White House; crisis responses are debated among White House, State, Defense, CIA, Treasury, and ad hoc players. Though these examples emphasize the executive departments of government, others could easily be cited that include congressional committees, the Congress as a whole, independent regulatory agencies, courts, and other entities.

2. *Rules of the Game.* The rules of the game, or the rules for choice, stem from the Constitution, statutes, court interpretations, executive orders, conventions, and even culture. Some rules are explicit, others implicit. Some rules are quite clear, others fuzzy. Some are very stable; others are ever changing. But the collection of rules, in effect, defines the game. First, rules establish the positions, the paths by which individuals gain access to positions, the power of each position, and the action-channels. Second, rules constrict the range of governmental decisions and actions that are acceptable. The Constitution declares certain forms of action out of bounds. In attempting to encourage a domestic industry—for example, the computer industry—to take advantage of certain international opportunities, American players are restricted by antitrust laws to a

much narrower set of actions than, for example, are players in Japan. Third, rules sanction moves of some kinds—bargaining, coalitions, persuasion, deceit, bluff, and threat—while making other moves illegal, immoral, dishonorable, or inappropriate.

3. *Action as Political Resultant.* Government decisions are made, and government actions are taken, neither as the simple choice of a unified group, nor as a formal summary of leaders' preferences. Rather, the context of shared power but separate judgments about important choices means that politics is the mechanism of choice. Each player pulls and hauls with the power at his discretion for outcomes that will advance his or her conception of national, organizational, group, and personal interests.

Note the *environment* in which the game is played: inordinate uncertainty about what must be done, the necessity that something be done, and the crucial consequences of whatever is done. These features force responsible citizens to become active players. The *pace of the game*—hundreds of issues, numerous games, and multiple circuits—compels players to fight to "get others' attention," to make them "see the facts," to assure that they "take the time to think seriously about the broader issue." The *structure of the game*—power shared by individuals with separate responsibilities—validates each player's feeling that "others don't see my problem," and "others must be persuaded to look at the issue from a less parochial perspective." The *law of the game*—he who hesitates loses his chance to play at that point and he who is uncertain about his recommendation is overpowered by others who are sure—pressures players to come down on one side of a 51 to 49 issue and play. The *reward of the game*—effectiveness, i.e., impact on outcomes, as the immediate measure of performance—encourages hard play. One seasoned Pentagon insider classifies no less than six major *types* of rivalries that are constantly going on in that building.[100] Part of this can be written off as narrow-minded parochialism, but much is the product of people caring passionately about what they do. Thus, most players come to fight to "make the government do what is right." The strategies and tactics employed are quite similar to those formalized by theorists of international relations.

Advocates fight for outcomes. But the game of politics does not consist simply of players pulling and hauling, each for his own chosen action, because the terms and conditions of players' employment are not identical. Chiefs and Indians are often advocates of particular actions. But staffers fight to find issues, state alternatives, and produce arguments for their chiefs. Presidential staffers—ideally—struggle to catch issues and structure games so as to maximize both the president's appreciation of advocates' arguments and the impact of presidential decision. Chiefs sometimes function as semistaffers for the president. The president's costs and benefits often require that he decide as little as possible, keeping his options open (rather than coming down on one side of an uncertain issue and playing hard).

When a governmental or presidential decision is reached, the larger game is not over. A policy decision is a work in progress. Decisions can be reversed or ignored. As Jonathan Daniels, an aide to Franklin Roosevelt, noted:

Half of a President's suggestions, which theoretically carry the weight of orders, can be safely forgotten by a Cabinet member. And if the President asks about a suggestion a second time, he can be told that it is being investigated. If he asks a third time, a wise Cabinet officer will give him at least part of what he suggests. But only occasionally, except about the most important matters, do Presidents ever get around to asking three times.[101]

And even if not reversed or ignored, decisions still have to be implemented. Thus formal governmental decisions are usually only way stations along the path to action. And the opportunity for slippage between decision and action is much larger than most analysts have recognized. For after a decision, the game expands, bringing in more players with more diverse preferences and more independent power, as illustrated by Pressman and Wildavsky's discussion of complex joint actions.

Formal decisions may be very general or quite specific. In some cases, the players who reach a formal decision about an action that the government should take will have no choice about who will carry it out. In other cases, a maze of competing subchannels leads from

decision to action. For example, negotiations with foreign governments are usually the concern of the State Department. But they can be assigned to a special envoy, or fall in the domain of better placed officials from another agency. In persuading the dictator of Haiti to abandon his office without a fight, for instance, President Clinton called on the services of retired General Colin Powell, U.S. Senator Sam Nunn, and former President Jimmy Carter. Where there are several subchannels, players will maneuver to get the action into the channel that they believe offers the best prospect for getting their desired results.

Most decisions leave considerable leeway in implementation. Players who support the decision maneuver to see it implemented, often going beyond the spirit and sometimes even the letter of the decision. Those who oppose the decision, or oppose the action, maneuver to delay implementation, to limit implementation, to raise the issue again with a different face or in another channel.

III. *Dominant Inference Pattern.* If a nation performed an action, that action was the resultant of bargaining among individuals and groups within the government. Model III's explanatory power is achieved by displaying the game—the action-channel, the positions, the players, their preferences, and the pulling and hauling—that yielded, as a resultant, the action in question. Where an outcome was for the most part the triumph of an individual (e.g., the president) or group (e.g., the president's team or a cabal) this model attempts to specify the details of the game that made the victory possible. But with these, as with "orphan" actions like those mentioned above, Model III tries not to neglect the sharp differences, misunderstandings, and foul-ups that contributed to what was actually done.

IV. *General Propositions.* The difficulty of formulating Model III propositions about outcomes can be illustrated by considering the much simpler problems of a theorist attempting to specify propositions about outcomes of a card game he has never seen before but which we recognize as poker. As a basis for formulating propositions, the analyst would want information

about (1) the rules of the game, e.g., are all positions equal in payoffs, information, etc., and if not, what are the differences? (2) the importance of skill, reputation, and other characteristics that players bring to positions; if important, what characteristics does each player have? (3) the distribution of cards, i.e., the advantages and disadvantages for the particular hand; (4) individual players' valuation of alternative payoffs, e.g., whether each simply wants to maximize his winnings or whether some enjoy winning more by bluffing than by having the strongest cards. This partial list suggests how difficult the problem is, even in this relatively simple, structured case. The extraordinary complexity of cases of bureaucratic politics accounts in part for the paucity of general propositions. Nevertheless, as the paradigm has illustrated, it is possible to identify a number of relevant factors, and, in many cases, analysts can acquire enough information about these factors to offer explanations and analyze the future.

A. *Political Resultants.* A large number of factors that constitute a governmental game intervene between issues and resultants.

1. The peculiar preferences and stands of individual players can have a significant effect on governmental action. Had someone other than Ariel Sharon been minister of defense in 1982, there is no reason to believe that there would have been an Israeli invasion of Lebanon up to the outskirts of Beirut.

2. The advantages and disadvantages of each player differ substantially from one action-channel to another. For example, the question of UNPROFOR redeployment was considered by the U.S. government in a political context, at UN headquarters. If the issue had arisen through political-military channels, from NATO military staff, back through Brussels directly to capitals, players in the British, French, Dutch, as well as American defense ministries would have had more leverage in pressing their preferences. This is one reason, though only one, why the Dayton peace accords were implemented by a force organized and managed under NATO auspices, discarding the UNPROFOR structure.

3. The mix of players and each player's advantages shift not only *between* action-channels but also *along* action-channels. Chiefs dominate the major formal decisions on important foreign policy

issues, but Indians, especially those in the organization charged with carrying out a decision, may play a major role thereafter.

B. *Action and Intention.* Governmental action does not presuppose government intention. The resultant of behavior of representatives of a government relevant to an issue is rarely intended by any individual or single organization. Rather, in the typical case, separate individuals with different intentions contribute pieces to a resultant. The details of the action are therefore not chosen by any individual (and are rarely identical with what any of the players would have chosen if he or she had confronted the issue as a matter of simple, detached choice). Nevertheless, resultants can be roughly consistent with some organization's preference in the context of the political game.

1. Most resultants emerge from games among players who perceive quite different faces of an issue and who differ markedly in the actions they prefer. Given different definitions of the problem, different solutions arise that may or may not be relevant or irreconcilable, once the participants come to share a more common understanding of the decision situation.

2. Actions rarely follow from an agreed doctrine in which all players concur. Instead agreement reflects the momentary operational convergence of a mix of motives.

3. Actions consisting of a number of pieces that have emerged from a number of games (plus foul-ups) do not reflect a coordinated government strategy and thus are difficult to read as conscious "signals."

C. *Problems and Solutions*

1. Solutions to strategic problems are not discovered by detached analysts focusing coolly on *the* problem. The problems for players are both narrower and broader than *the* strategic problem. Each player focuses not on the total strategic problem but rather on the decision that must be made today or tomorrow. Each decision has important consequences not only for the strategic problem but for each player's stakes. Thus the gap between what the player is focusing on (the problems he or she is solving) and what a strategic analyst focuses on is often very wide.

2. Decisions that call for substantial changes in governmental action typically reflect a coincidence of chiefs in search of a solution and Indians in search of a problem. Confronting a deadline, chiefs focus on an issue and look for a solution. Having become committed to a solution developed for an earlier, somewhat different issue, experts seek an opportune problem.[102]

D. *Where You Stand Depends on Where You Sit.* The diverse demands upon each player influence priorities, perceptions, and stands. Especially in structural issues, such as budgets and procurement decisions, the stance of a particular player can be predicted with high reliability from information about the person's seat.

No paragraph from the first edition of this book attracted more criticism than this one, sometimes referred to "Miles' Law." Some readers leaned a bit too hard on a strong definition of the word "depends" to mean "is always determined by." Instead we mean that where you stand "is substantially affected by" where you sit. The player may resist or ignore the conditioning that arises from the person's seat in government and placement in the action channel. But the proposition does assert that where one stands is influenced, most often influenced strongly, by where one sits. Knowledge of the organizational seat at the table yields significant clues about a likely stand.

E. *Chiefs and Indians.* The demands upon the president, chiefs, staffers, and Indians are quite distinct, first in the case of policymaking, and second in the case of implementation.

The foreign policy issues with which the president can deal are limited primarily by his crowded schedule. Of necessity, he must deal first with what comes next. His problem is to probe the special face worn by issues that come to his attention, to preserve his leeway until time has clarified the uncertainties, and to assess the relevant risks.

Foreign policy chiefs deal most often with the hottest issue *du jour*, though they can catch the attention of the president and other members of the government for most issues they take to be very important. What they cannot guarantee is that "the president will pay the price" or that "the others will get on board." They must build a coalition of the relevant powers that be. They must "give the president confidence" in the choice of the right course of action.

Most problems are framed, alternatives specified, and proposals pushed, however, by Indians. Indians' fights with Indians of other departments—for example, struggles between the bureaus of International Security Affairs of the Office of the Secretary of Defense and Political-Military Affairs of the State Department—are a microcosm of the action at higher levels. But the Indians' major problem is how to get the *attention* of chiefs, how to get an issue on an action-channel, how to get the government "to do what is right." The incentives push the Indian to become an active advocate.

In policy-making, then, the issue looking *down* is options: how to preserve my leeway until time clarifies uncertainties. The issue looking *sideways* is commitment: how to get others committed to my coalition. The issue looking *upward* is confidence: how to give the boss confidence to do what must be done. To paraphrase one of Neustadt's assertions, the essence of *any* responsible official's task is to persuade other players that his version of what needs to be done is what their own appraisal of their own responsibilities requires them to do in their own interests.[103]

For implementation of foreign policy decisions, vertical demands differ. The chief's requirements are two, but these two conflict. The necessity to build a consensus behind his preferred policy frequently requires fuzziness: different people must agree with slightly different things for quite different reasons; when a government decision is made, both the character of the choice and the reasons for it must often remain vague. But this requirement is at loggerheads with another: the necessity that the choice be enacted requires that foot-dragging by the unenthusiastic, and subversion by the opposed, be kept to a minimum. Nudging the foot-draggers and corraling the subversives constitute difficult tasks even when the decision is clear and the watchman is the president. And most oversight, policing, and spurring is done not by the president but by the president's people or the people who agree with the government decision. They (often staffers) are the guardians of the staffing procedures. Those who would move the machine to act on what has been decided demand clarity.

F. *The 51–49 Principle.* The terms and conditions of the game affect the time that players spend thinking about hard policy choices and the force and assurance with which they argue for their preferred

alternative. Because they face an agenda fixed by hundreds of important deadlines, reasonable players must make difficult policy choices in much less time and with much less agonizing than an analyst or observer would. Because they must compete with others, reasonable players are forced to argue much more confidently than they would if they were detached judges. They are not always dissembling. They internalize, often unconsciously, the demands made upon them by the game.

G. *International and Intranational Relations.* The actions of one nation affect those of another to the degree that they result in advantages and disadvantages for players in the second nation. Thus players in one nation aim to achieve some international objective by pursuing outcomes in their intra-national game that benefit those players in the second country who advocate an objective that, from the perspective of the first nation, seems complementary.

Certain nations may attempt to achieve an international objective by direct participation in another country's intra-national game, where circumstances permit this. Or, if the action-channel is for a joint policy of more than one nation (as in the Anglo-American committees of the Second World War) or the citizens of several nations (as in an international organization such as UNPROFOR) then the distinction between intranational and international objectives may become blurred into a single game aimed at both.

H. *The Face of the Issue Differs From Seat to Seat.* Where you sit influences what you see as well as where you stand (see point II-A-1 about players in positions). Rarely do two sets of eyes see the same issue. A function of the group choice process analyzed in Model III is to obtain at least limited agreement on the face of the issue, at least for the moment.

I. *Misexpectation.* The pace at which the multiple games are played allows only limited attention to each game and demands concentration on priority games. Thus players frequently lack information about the details of other players' games and problems. In the lower priority games, the tendency to expect that someone else will act in such a way that "he helps me with my problem" is unavoidable. In July 1995, everyone seemed to hope that someone

else would take the action to prevent a Serbian onslaught on Srebrenica.

J. *Miscommunication.* Both the pace and the noise level merge with propensities of perception to make accurate communication difficult. Because communication must be quick, it tends to be elliptic. In a noisy environment, each player thinks he or she has spoken with a stronger and clearer voice than the others have actually heard. The Dutch commander in Srebrenica thought that Janvier had decided to launch strikes at daybreak against a target list he had earlier submitted. Instead, Janvier had decided to consider strikes again at daybreak, and only against a more selected set of targets.

K. *Reticence.* Because each player is engaged in multiple games, the advantages of reticence—i.e., hesitant silence and only partially intended soft-spokenness—seem overwhelming. Reticence in one game reduces leaks that would be harmful in higher priority games. Reticence permits other players to interpret an outcome in the way in which the shoe pinches least. Reticence between chiefs and staffers or Indians permits each Indian to offer a charitable interpretation of the out-come—the proposal that simply never moves, for example, or the memo that dies at an interagency meeting of chiefs. And at least it reduces explicit friction between a chief and his subordinates.[104]

L. *Styles of Play.* There are important differences in the behavior of (1) bureaucratic careerists, whether civilian or military, (2) lateral-entry types, and (3) political appointees. The differences are a function of longer range expectations. The bureaucrat must adopt a code of conformity if he is to survive the inevitable changes of administration and personnel, whereas the lateral-entry type and the political appointee are more frequently temporary employees, interested in policy or some other measure of shorter term personal achievement. The political appointees have a very limited tenure in office and thus impose a high discount rate, that is, a short time horizon on any issue. Careerists know that presidents come and presidents go, but the Navy. . . .

Style of play is also importantly affected by the terms of reference in which a player conceives of his action. Some players are not able to

articulate the governmental politics game because their conception of their job does not legitimate such activity. On the other hand, Acheson maintained that the Secretary of State works "in an environment where some of the methods would have aroused the envy of the Borgias." The quality he distinguished from all others as the most necessary for an effective American Secretary of State was "the killer instinct."[105] Acheson exaggerated, a bit.

V. *Specific Propositions*

A. *Use of Force in Crises*

1. The probability of the U.S. government making a decision to use military force in a crisis increases as the number of individuals who have an initial, general, personal preference for more forceful military action increases in the following positions: president, National Security adviser, secretaries of Defense and State, chairman of the JCS, and director of the CIA. The president will seldom—if ever—choose forceful action without solid support from other "chiefs."

2. These individuals' perception of the issue will differ radically. The differences will be partially predictable from the pressure of their position plus their personality.

3. The outcome will be shaped by the way the problem was framed for action. Forceful action is more likely if the action is framed as an incremental move, the significance of which is uncertain and therefore susceptible to varying interpretations by the other players.

B. *Military Action*

1. For any military action short of nuclear war, decision and implementation will be delayed while proponents try to persuade opponents to get on board.

2. Major decisions about the use of military force tend not simply to be presidential decisions, or majority decisions, but decisions by a large plurality.

3. No military action is chosen without extensive consultation with the military players. In the United States, no decision for a substantial use of force, short of nuclear war, will be made against their advice,

and without at least a delay during which an extensive record of consultation is prepared.

VI. *Evidence.* Information about the details of differences in perceptions and priorities within a government on a particular issue is rarely available within a short time, and can only be reliably unearthed by serious study. Accurate accounts of the bargaining that yielded a resolution of the issue are rarer still. Documents often do not capture this kind of information, since they themselves are often resultants. Much information must be gleaned from the participants themselves. But, *ex hypothesis,* each participant knows one small piece of the story. Memories quickly become colored and complex narratives are smoothed out and simplified, even with the best of intentions. What is required, ideally, is access by an analyst attuned to the players and interested in governmental politics to a large number of the participants in a decision before their memories fade or become too badly discolored. Such access is uncommon. But without this information, how can the analyst proceed? As Neustadt, a master of this style of analysis, has stated, "If I were forced to choose between the documents on the one hand, and late, limited, partial interviews with some of the principal participants on the other, I would be forced to discard the documents." The use of public documents, newspapers, interviews of participants, and discussion with close observers of participants to piece together the bits of information available is an art.

Yet, as with most works of art, there is a foundation of craftsmanship, built from technique and training. Depending on the quality of the process and the staffing procedures, much can be done to reconstruct the game that produced a resultant. Once reconstructed, documents can also allow a clearer understanding of who participated, the faces of the issue, how the problem was framed for action, and how the outcomes were understood. Occasionally, extraordinary evidence may become available—as in the tape recordings of White House deliberations during the Cuban missile crisis. For every puzzling action of government, Model III offers tools to use in sorting evidence and spotting the gaps. Documentary material can sometimes sketch the

outlines of the portrait, even if other forms of information or imagination must then supply the color.

Notes

1. See, e.g., Glenn H. Snyder and Paul Diesing, *Conflict Among Nations: Bargaining, Decision-Making and System Structure in International Crises* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), pp. 355–56; Zeev Maoz, *National Choices and International Processes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 340; James L. Richardson, *Crisis Diplomacy: The Great Powers since the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 306–27.

2. James Forrestal, *The Forrestal Diaries*, ed. Walter Millis (New York: Viking, 1951).

3. The most recent edition is Richard E. Neustadt, *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents: The Politics of Leadership from Roosevelt to Reagan*, 5th ed. (New York: Free Press, 1990).

4. Ibid., p. 29 (emphasis added). As Neustadt repeatedly noted, when he wrote about powers he was describing effective influence on the conduct of others, not the formal authority found on paper.

5. Ibid., p. 11 (emphasis added).

6. Richard Neustadt, "Whitehouse and Whitehall," *The Public Interest*, no. 2 (Winter 1966), p. 64 (emphasis added).

7. Neustadt testimony, Senate Subcommittee on National Security and International Operations, Committee on Government Operations, *Conduct of National Security Policy*, 89th Cong., 1st sess., June 29, 1965, p. 126 (emphasis added).

8. Neustadt, *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents*, p. 4.

9. Ibid., p. 154–55 (emphasis added).

10. Neustadt testimony, *Conduct of National Security Policy*, p. 126 (emphasis added).

11. The thinking on two-level games was stimulated in an essay using this phrase by Robert D. Putnam. The best compendium on the subject, which includes Putnam's original essay, is Peter B. Evans, Harold K. Jacobson, and Robert D. Putnam, eds., *Double-Edged Diplomacy: International Bargaining and Domestic Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). However, writings on "two-level games" define the term much more broadly than we do here for our narrower purposes. See, for example, the introduction by Andrew Moravscik in *Double-Edged Diplomacy*, pp. 14–17.

12. The foreshadowing study was Neustadt's *Alliance Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970). The book discusses the Suez crisis along with a pale abridgment of the Skybolt study. That study, now declassified, is available through the Case Program of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. Report to the president, "Skybolt and Nassau," November 15, 1963, KSG Case C16–92-320.0. The study, supplemented by Neustadt's recent commentary informed by added research in now open archives, will be published soon by Cornell University Press. Jacqueline Kennedy later told Neustadt that her husband gave her this Skybolt study just before his fateful trip to Dallas, saying, "If you want to understand what my life is like, read this"

13. One of the authors (Zelikow) was with Bush in Aspen. For the most reliable account of the Aspen meeting that also gives some sense of how the Anglo-American deliberations tilted discussions in Washington and London, see above all George Bush and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* (New York: Knopf, 1998), pp. 315–22; see also Lawrence Freedman and Efraim Karsh, *The Gulf Conflict 1990–1991: Diplomacy and War in the New World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 74–76, 111; Michael R. Gordon and Bernard E. Trainor, *The Generals' War:*

The Inside Story of the Conflict in the Gulf (Boston: Little, Brown, 1995), pp. 36–37.

14. Bush had spoken on the phone with Turkish president Turgut Ozal before Baker's trip. While the calls featured genuine exchanges of view and information, they were too limited to allow a conclusion that Ozal was an influential participant within the American decision-making process. Zelikow was a notetaker for the calls and accompanied Baker to Ankara.

15. The phrase "group choice analysis" is borrowed from a concise introduction to the subject, Kenneth A. Shepsle and Mark S. Bonchek, *Analyzing Politics: Rationality, Behavior, and Institutions* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997).

16. Neustadt, *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents*, p. 7.

17. The quotes are from, in order: James MacGregor Burns, *Presidential Government: The Crucible of Leadership* (New York: Avon Books, 1965), p. xi; Richard Ellis and Aaron Wildavsky, *Dilemmas of Presidential Leadership: From Washington Through Lincoln* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1989), p. viii; and Thomas E. Cronin and Michael A. Genovese, *The Paradoxes of the American Presidency* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. vii.

18. Richard Darman, *Who's In Control? Polar Politics and the Sensible Center* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), pp. 79–85. We have reordered and summarized Darman's list.

19. Ibid., pp. 85–86.

20. Alexander L. George, *Presidential Decisionmaking in Foreign Policy: The Effective Use of Information and Advice* (Boulder: Westview, 1980), p. 10; see also I.M. Destler, *Presidents, Bureaucrats, and Foreign Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972); Graham Allison and Peter Szanton, *Remaking*

Foreign Policy: The Organizational Connection (New York: Basic Books, 1976), especially chap. 1.

21. Alexander L. George and Eric Stern, "Presidential Management Styles and Models," in Alexander L. George and Juliette L. George, *Presidential Personality and Performance* (Boulder: Westview, 1998), p. 200, See also Graham Allison and Peter Szanton, *Remaking Foreign Policy: the Organizational Connection* (New York: Basic Books, 1976), p. 21.

22. Ibid., pp. 200–01.

23. See Richard T. Johnson, *Managing the White House* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974); Roger B. Porter, *Presidential Decision-Making: The Economic Policy Board* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982). Porter documents a successful case in the Ford administration of the multiple advocacy model. Stephen Hess recommended "more nearly collegial administrations," but in terms closely akin to the formalistic, multiple advocacy model "in which Presidents rely on their Cabinet officers as the principal sources of advice and hold them personally accountable—in the British sense. . . ." Stephen Hess, *Organizing the Presidency* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1976), p. 154.

24. Robert O. Keohane, "Studying Cooperation and Conflict: Intra-Rationalistic and Extra-Rationalistic Research Programs," paper for American Political Science Association panel, 1996, p. 1. On the significance of information distribution in the congressional context, see Keith Krehbiel, *Information and Legislative Organization* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991).

25. On the gap in understanding between higher officials and generals and the field commanders, see Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, pp. 484–86; Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals' War*, pp. 400–32, 439. In general there were inadequate staffing procedures put in place by the National Security Council staff at the White House to insure needed analysis of how and when military operations should end, or to give Schwarzkopf adequate

guidance on the terms of a ceasefire. NSC staff and State Department officials were concentrating their analytic attention on another urgent set of decisions, relating to longer term arrangements for ending the war and limiting Iraqi military potential through the ingenious and unprecedented device of using a policing regime mounted by the United Nations. This issue of the encirclement of Iraqi field forces should, however, not be confused with the quite different and more problematical issue of whether the United States should have tried to persuade the allied coalition to alter its war aims and attempt to occupy Baghdad or all of Iraq.

26. Memorandum by the Secretary, Committee of Imperial Defense, "The Supreme Control in War," 24 May 1928, Public Record Office, CAB 104/24, discussed in Peter Hennessy, "A question of control: UK 'war cabinets' and limited conflicts since 1945," Centre for Social and Economic Research, University of the West of England, May 1996.

27. The British observation is from a December 1941 diary entry of Brigadier Vivian Dykes, quoted in Alex Danchev, ed., *Establishing the Anglo-American Alliance: The Second World War Diaries of Brigadier Vivian Dykes* (London: Brassey's, 1990), p. 80. The American quote is from then Brigadier General Albert C. Wedemeyer describing the Casablanca conference of January 1943, quoted in Maurice Matloff, "Ground Strategy and the Washington Command," in Matloff, ed., *American Military History* (Washington, DC: U.S. Army, 2nd ed., 1973), p. 448. Wedemeyer thought the Americans caught up to the British in analytical horsepower by the Teheran conference of November 1943. For broader glimpses into the operation of the British and American committee systems of decisionmaking, see Maurice Matloff, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1943–1944* (Washington: U.S. Army, 1959); Alex Danchev, *Very Special Relationship: Field Marshal John Dill and the Anglo-American Alliance, 1941–44* (London: Brassey's, 1986); John Ehrman, *Grand Strategy: August 1943-September 1944* (London: HMSO,

1956); and John Colville, *The Fringes of Power: 10 Downing Street Diaries, 1939–55* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1985).

28. On the military side of the system, see Forrest C. Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Organizer of Victory* (New York: Viking, 1973); Stanley D. Embick, "The Joint Strategic Survey Committee and the Military View of American National Policy During the Second World War," *Diplomatic History* 6 (Summer 1982): 303–21; on the civilian side, see Herman M. Somers, *Presidential Agency: The Office of War Mobilization and Reconversion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950).

29. Richard Overy, *Why the Allies Won* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1995), pp. 192, 198–99.

30. Hennessy, "A question of control," pp. 3–4, 8.

31. The discussion, in front of Reagan, was in a meeting of the National Security Policy Group on June 25, 1984. Baker was not present. Though he later agreed he had expressed the concern about legality to Secretary of State George Shultz and others, Baker did not remember using the "impeachable offense" phrase —although others besides Shultz remember him using it. Theodore Draper, *A Very Thin Line: The Iran-Contra Affairs* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1991), p. 76.

32. On the episode, as well as the way suspicions about it were quieted both during the war and afterward, when Churchill reinvestigated the matter while preparing his memoirs, see Brian Loring Villa, *Unauthorized Action: Mountbatten and the Dieppe Raid* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

33. Ibid., pp. 261–62. Villa earlier observed of the Chiefs of Staff Committee that "they were all exceptionally competent public servants, if one measures them against the larger backdrop of the immense demands of a global war. In that perspective Dieppe was a relatively small affair to them." (p. 260). Hence the even greater importance of following and enforcing staffing procedures in such

cases. Because of his high public profile and membership in the Royal Family, Mountbatten could later avoid too much inquiry into the circumstances of what he himself acknowledged was the "only unrecorded decision of the war."

34. James Q. Wilson, *Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It* (New York: Basic Books, 1989), pp. 271–72.

35. For a fine account, see Jack Rakove, *Original Meanings: Politics and Ideas in the Making of the Constitution* (New York: Knopf, 1996).

36. Kenneth Arrow, *Social Choice and Individual Values*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), p. 59: "If we exclude the possibility of interpersonal comparisons of utility, then the only methods of passing from individual tastes to social preferences which will be satisfactory and which will be defined for a wide range of sets of individual ordering are either imposed or dictatorial" On the manipulation or imperfect translation of preferences in voting and other forms of group choice, see especially William H. Riker, *The Art of Political Manipulation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986); and Riker, *Liberalism Against Populism* (San Francisco: W.H. Freeman, 1982). See also Duncan Black, *The Theory of Committees and Elections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958); Robin Farquharson, *Theory of Voting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969); Peter C. Ordeshook, *Game Theory and Political Theory* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986); and William H. Riker and Peter C. Ordeshook, *An Introduction to Positive Political Theory* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1973).

37. Shepsle and Bonchek, *Analyzing Politics*, p. 71.

38. See John Pratt and Richard Zeckhauser, *Principals and Agents: The Structure of Business* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1991), especially chapters by Arrow, Robert Clark, and Mark Wolfson.

39. Richard Holbrooke, *To End a War* (New York: Random House, 1998), p. 68, emphasis added; see also Mark Danner, "Slouching toward Dayton," *New York Review of Books,* April 23, 1998.

40. Holbrooke, *To End a War,* pp. 66–67.

41. Ibid., pp. 67–68.

42. On these personnel choices, see Haynes Johnson and David S. Broder, *The System: The American Way of Politics at the Breaking Point* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1996), pp. 98–108.

43. John D. Steinbruner, *The Cybernetic Theory of Decision: New Dimensions of Political Analysis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974).

44. Hugh Heclo, *A Government of Strangers: Executive Politics in Washington* (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1977), p. 7.

45. For introductions to this area of scholarship, see Ernst Haas, "Collective learning: Some theoretical speculations," in George W. Breslauer and Philip E. Tetlock, eds., *Learning in U.S. and Soviet Foreign Policy* (Boulder: Westview, 1991), pp. 62–99; Peter M. Haas, "Introduction: Epistemic communities and international policy coordination," *International Organization* 46 (Winter 1992): 1–36.

46. On the rise of the arms control "community," see Emanuel Adler, "The emergence of cooperation: National epistemic communities and the international evolution of the idea of nuclear arms control," *International Organization* 46 (Winter 1992): 101–46; Coit D. Blacker, "Learning in the Nuclear Age: Soviet Strategic Arms Control Policy, 1969–1989," in Breslauer and Tetlock, *Learning in U.S. and Soviet Foreign Policy,* p. 429; and Robert A. Levine, "The Evolution of U.S. Policy toward Arms Control," in ibid., pp. 135–57.

47. Richard K. Betts, *Soldiers, Statesmen, and Cold War Crises*, Morningside Edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), quotes from pp. 116, 170. The quote from the general, attributed to J. Lawton Collins, is from a Betts interview, ibid., p. 171. Betts adds a perceptive mini-portrait of Edward Lansdale, a nominally military man fitting no mold, both a liberal idealist and a sometime intelligence officer, who had no firm organizational base yet for years exerted a great influence on military and government policy. See ibid., pp. 172–74.

48. Testimony of Robert A. Lovett to the Senate Subcommittee on National Policy Machinery, Committee on Government Operations, 23 February 1960, in Henry M. Jackson, ed., *The National Security Council: Jackson Subcommittee Papers on Policy-Making at the Presidential Level* (New York: Praeger, 1965), pp. 78–79. As Richard N. Haass notes in *The Power to Persuade* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1994), pp. 157, 163–66, shrewd officials are thoughtful about judging which meetings to avoid as well as which to attend.

49. See James M. Lindsay, *Congress and the Politics of U.S. Foreign Policy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), Table 3, p. 82.

50. "There are four principal ways in which Congress can influence foreign and defense policy. Only one of them—substantive legislation—is overt and obvious. The other three—anticipated reactions, procedural legislation, and the framing of opinion—are much less obvious but also important. . . . We think some observers miss much of the action in Congress because they ignore events in some of the less visible categories. . . ." James M. Lindsay and Randall B. Ripley, "How Congress Influences Foreign and Defense Policy," in *Congress Resurgent: Foreign and Defense Policy on Capitol Hill*, Ripley and Lindsay, eds. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), p. 35.

51. On the impact of the second and third points, see especially Keith Krehbiel, *Pivotal Politics: A Theory of U.S. Lawmaking*

(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), which explains how two supermajoritarian procedures (two-thirds vote to override a presidential veto and the 60 votes required to thwart a Senate filibuster) combine to frustrate most actions that lack such supermajorities—proposals that cannot win the veto and filibuster "pivots."

52. In the Senate reforms of the 1970s, the rules for cloture were changed from two-thirds of the members present (i.e., 67 if all 100 were there) to 60 senators in an effort to make cloture easier and reduce the use of filibusters. In fact this change may have made cloture more difficult.

53. Public voting makes vote-casters more accountable. Prior to the 1971 reforms most congressional votes were not publicly recorded. Since the change, members of Congress have been held more directly accountable by voters and watchful interest groups.

54. Duncan Black's *The Theory of Committees and Elections* shows how different decision rules can lead to any one of a given set of options being selected. To constrain this potential instability, most groups develop additional rules—for example Congress's closed rules restricting floor votes and jurisdictional separations. Such constraints produce "structure-induced equilibria," as shown by Kenneth A. Shepsle, "Institutional Arrangements and Equilibrium in Multidimensional Voting," *American Journal of Political Science* 23 (1979): 27–60.

55. Examples are analyzed in David P. Baron, "A Sequential Choice Theory Perspective on Legislative Organization," in *Positive Theories of Congressional Institutions*, ed. Kenneth A. Shepsle and Barry R. Weingast (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995).

56. For a list of ten such norms, see George, *Presidential Decisionmaking in Foreign Policy*, p. 99.

57. John W. Kingdon, *Agendas. Alternatives, and Public Policies*, 2nd ed. (New York: Longman, 1995); see also Robert Entman, "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm," *Journal of Communication* 43 (Autumn 1993): 51–58. In instances of important legislation, Krehbiel argues that opportunities in the political stream are linked mainly to electoral shocks that temporarily unite preferences of the president and large majorities in Congress (e.g., Darman's account of the 1981 tax cut). Krehbiel, *Pivotal Politics*, pp. 54–72, building on David R. Mayhew, *Divided We Govern: Party Control, Lawmaking, and Investigations, 1946–1990* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991).

58. Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, pp. 179, 180.

59. Lou Cannon, *President Reagan: The Role of a Lifetime* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991), pp. 319–33.

60. For more on agenda control, see Michael B. Levine and Charles R. Plott, "Agenda Influence and Its Implications," *Virginia Law Review* 63, no. 4 (1977): 561–604; and Baron, "A Sequential Choice Theory Perspective on Legislative Organization"; see also James M. Enelow and Melvin J. Hinich, *The Spatial Theory of Voting: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 131–47; and Kenneth A. Shepsle and Barry R. Weingast, "The Institutional Foundations of Committee Power," *American Political Science Review* 81 (1987): 85–194.

61. On the specification of alternatives, see Zeev Maoz, "Framing the National Interest: The Manipulation of Foreign Policy Decisions in Group Settings," *World Politics* 43 (October 1990): 77, 86–87; on operational objectives see Philip Zelikow, "Foreign Policy Engineering: From Theory to Practice and Back Again," *International Security* 18 (Spring 1994): 143–71.

62. See, e.g., George A. Quattrone and Amos Tversky, "Contrasting Rational and Psychological Analyses of Political Choice," *American Political Science Review* 82 (September 1988): 719–36.

63. Maoz, "Framing the National Interest," pp. 105–06. The two major sources on which Maoz relies are Avner Yaniv, *Dilemmas of Security: Politics, Strategy, and the Israeli Experience in Lebanon* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); and Zeev Schiff and Ehud Yaari, *Israel's Lebanon War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984).

64. Yaniv, *Dilemmas of Security*, p. 115, quoted in Maoz, "Framing the National Interest," p. 107.

65. Irving L. Janis, *Groupthink*, rev. ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1982); Irving L. Janis and Leon Mann, *Decision Making: A Psychological Analysis of Conflict, Choice, and Commitment* (New York: Free Press, 1977); see also the critique in Lloyd S. Etheredge, *Can Governments Learn? American Foreign Policy and Central American Revolutions* (New York: Pergamon, 1985).

66. Janis and Mann, *Decision Making*, pp. 46, 91–95, 133.

67. Social psychologists sometimes call this "group polarization." D.G. Myers and H. Lamm, "The Group Polarization Phenomenon," *Psychology Bulletin* 83 (1976): 602–27; see also S. Moscovici, "Social Influence and Conformity," and J. Rodin, "The Application of Social Psychology," both in Gardner Lindzey and Elliot Aronson, eds., *Handbook of Social Psychology*, vol. 2, 3rd ed. (New York: Random House, 1985), pp. 347–412, 805–81.

68. See Henry F. Graff, *The Tuesday Cabinet: Deliberation and Decision on Peace and War under Lyndon Johnson* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970).

69. Leslie H. Gelb and Richard K. Betts, *The Irony of Vietnam: The System Worked* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1978), and making a similar argument, David M. Barrett, *Uncertain Warriors: Lyndon Johnson and His Vietnam Advisers* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1993). The group-think critique, centered on the Tuesday Cabinet, acquires more explanatory power, however, from early 1966 onward, marked by Johnson's

decision to appoint Walt Rostow as his national security adviser in place of the weary and increasingly disillusioned McGeorge Bundy.

70. Robert D. Schulzinger, *A Time for War: The United States and Vietnam, 1941–1975* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 181.

71. Notes on Andrew Goodpaster's meeting with Eisenhower, 16 June 1965, quoted in Lloyd C. Gardner, *Pay Any Price: Lyndon Johnson and the Wars for Vietnam* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1995), pp. 228–29.

72. "The primary constraint on U.S. policy was the belief that provocative military measures against the North would bring Chinese troops into the war. President Johnson maintained that it would take only one stray bomb for the cloning of Korea. . . . According to Doris Kearns, Johnson 'lived in constant fear of triggering some imaginary provision of some imaginary treaty' between the Chinese and Hanoi." Larry Berman, *Planning a Tragedy: The Americanization of the War in Vietnam* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1982), p. 142. These fears were not illusory. The Chinese government conveyed dramatic warnings to President Johnson. Moreover, there really was a treaty. By mid-1965 Beijing had secretly agreed to deploy large numbers of support troops into North Vietnam. China had also promised the North Vietnamese that, if America or South Vietnam invaded the North, China would intervene with its own combat forces. Over 300,000 Chinese troops served in North Vietnam between 1965 and 1973. See Qiang Zhai, "Beijing and the Vietnam Conflict, 1964–1965: New Chinese Evidence," *CWIHP Bulletin*, nos. 6–7 (Winter 1995/1996): 233–50.

73. Bruce Palmer, *The 25-Year War: America's Military Role in Vietnam* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978), p. 213, n.26.

74. Robert Buzzanco, *Masters of War: Military Dissent and Politics in the Vietnam Era* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996),

pp. 177–231. The quote is from p. 350; also see H.R. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty: Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Lies That Led to Vietnam* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997), pp. 243–322.

75. For the April 1965 episode, see McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty*, p. 265; on McNamara and Wheeler, see Buzzanco, *Masters of War*, p. 194.

76. Buzzanco, *Masters of War*, p. 345.

77. For at least eight such symptoms (not all of which are identified in every case), see Janis and Mann, *Decision Making*, pp. 130–31.

78. The exchange was in a National Security Council meeting on October 31, 1990. See Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals' War*, p. 154.

79. For an illustration of that jointness may extend to an interagency committee without creating ways in which jointness in the component organizations, see C. Kenneth Allard, *Command, Control, and the Common Defense* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990). However, there is some evidence that the Joint Staff of the JCS has become so distinct an entity that it may be considered an organization in its own right (fitting more in a Model II paradigm), distinct from and competing with other Pentagon organizations, including the armed services from which the Joint Staff is drawn. "[T]he Joint Staff could begin to play the role of the common adversary." Perry M. Smith, *Assignment Pentagon: The Insider's Guide to the Potomac Puzzle Palace*, 2nd ed. (Washington: Brassey's, 1993), pp. 212–14. This may not materialize, given the points raised by Allard and, as General Smith acknowledges, because of the way the armed services still control the careers of the people they detail to the Joint Staff. Were the Joint Staff to develop in this way, we would expect the Joint Chiefs of Staff committee to become a scene for clearer rivalry between the service chiefs and the Chairman (who controls the Joint Staff). Were the chairman then to exert his

hierarchical power (the "chairman-in-boots" rather than the "chairman-in-sneakers"), we would expect the service chiefs to lobby for coalition partners from the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the theater commands, or the White House, and then try to have their issues adjudicated in new fora, where the chairman must share power, outside of the "tank" used by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

80. Jeffrey L. Pressman and Aaron Wildavsky, *Implementation*, 3rd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), chapter 5.

81. Ibid., p. 107.

82. Ripley and Lindsay, *Congress Resurgent*, p. 18. For a vigorous presentation of the argument that Congress has become an active "co-manager" in foreign policymaking, see Robert S. Gilmour and Alex A. Halley, *Who Makes Public Policy: The Struggle for Control Between Congress and the Executive* (Chatham, N.J.: Chatham House Publishers, 1994).

83. Ripley and Lindsay, *Congress Resurgent*, p. 6.

84. Randall B. Ripley and Grace A. Franklin, *Congress, the Bureaucracy, and Public Policy*, 5th ed. (Pacific Grove, Calif.: Brooks/Kohl, 1990), pp. 152–53.

85. See I.M. Destler, *American Trade Politics*, 2nd ed. (Washington, D.C.: Institute for International Economics, 1992), pp. 71–73

86. Alexander Hamilton, Federalist No. 75 (1787) in *The Federalist Papers*, Clinton Rossiter, ed. (New York: Penguin, 1961), p. 452.

87. Unless otherwise cited the following account is drawn from Jan Willem Honig and Norbert Both, *Srebrenica: Record of a War Crime* (New York: Penguin, 1996).

88. David Owen, *Balkan Odyssey* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1995), pp. 324–25. Owen, a former British minister, was

then about to depart from his position, held with Thorvald Stoltenberg of Norway, as the Contact Group negotiator. He was replaced by former Swedish foreign minister Carl Bildt.

89. The bankruptcy of the diplomatic option was not fully appreciated at first, since the Serbs agreed to talk with the Contact Group's new envoy, Carl Bildt. However, since the American position was the key to a deal and direct talks with the Americans (between Serbian president Milosevic and U.S. diplomat Robert Frasure) had just failed, Bildt had nothing that could interest the Serbs. Bildt was, one UNPROFOR official belatedly realized, "very much playing second fiddle." Honig and Both, *Srebrenica*, p. 172.

90. This team consisted of Janvier's two French military aides; a Dutch general; various staff officers from different countries responsible for intelligence, air operations, and NATO liaison; and a representative from Akashi's office.

91. Holbrooke, *To End a War*, p. 69. A grim irony in the fall of Srebrenica and another safe area, Zepa, two weeks later was that the Serbs had bloodily effected most of the redeployment Janvier and Smith had sought in May. The last exposed safe area, Gorazde, was secretly evacuated in August. With its once exposed positions now already lost, UNPROFOR and the Anglo-French Rapid Reaction Force could indeed operate more freely and, in late August and early September, they finally launched large-scale bombing and shelling of the Serbs at the same time that the Croatian army was inflicting a severe defeat on other portions of the Bosnian Serb forces. Serious peace talks began in Dayton, Ohio, in October 1995.

92. The Srebrenica case is not atypical. For another interesting recent case involving complex joint action, a case of action rather than inaction, see the Senate Armed Services Committee Report, "Review of the Circumstances Surrounding the Ranger Raid on October 3–4, 1993, in Mogadishu, Somalia," September 29, 1995.

93. Among the more influential general works, see Morton H. Halperin with Priscilla Clapp and Arnold Kanter, *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1974); Francis Rourke, *Bureaucracy and Foreign Policy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972); and Michael Brecher, *The Foreign Policy System of Israel: Setting, Images, Process* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972). Key earlier works that helped shape the original edition of the book were Gabriel Almond, *The American People and Foreign Policy* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Jovanovich, 1950); Samuel P. Huntington, *The Common Defense: Strategic Programs in National Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961); the studies by Paul Hammond and Warner Schilling in Herbert Stein, ed., *American Civil-Military Decisions* (Birmingham: University of Alabama Press, 1963); and Warner Schilling, Paul Hammond, and Glenn Snyder, eds., *Strategy, Politics, and Defense Budgets* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962); Richard C. Snyder, H.W. Bruck, and Burton Sapin, eds., *Foreign Policy Decision-Making* (New York: Free Press, 1963); and David Braybrooke and Charles E. Lindblom, *A Strategy of Decision* (New York: Free Press, 1963).

94. Other cabinet officials can become engaged depending on how the issue is defined. The U.S. trade representative and head of the National Economic Council would be chiefs if international economic issues were being discussed.

95. We treat congressional participants as ad hoc players, rather than chiefs, though we recognize their great significance in certain action-channels on certain issues, as discussed above.

96. Portraits of the game and key players are usefully assembled in Philip J. Briggs, *Making American Foreign Policy: President-Congress Relations from the Second World War to the Post–Cold War Era*, 2nd ed. (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefeld, 1994); and James C. Gaston, ed., *Grand Strategy and the Decisionmaking*

Process (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1991).

97. These points are drawn from Neustadt testimony, *Administration of National Security*, especially pp. 82–83.

98. Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policy*, pp. 115, 172.

99. See "Prelude to War: U.S. Policy Toward Iraq, 1988–1990," case study available through the Case Program of Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government.

100. Smith, *Assignment Pentagon*, pp. 154–59. General Smith also observes that "the best academic model for explaining the workings of the Pentagon is probably the bureaucratic politics model. Entrenched bureaucracies, fighting hard to enhance (or at least maintain) their policy and budgetary positions, are the norm" He then provides a useful thumbnail sketch of the relevant chiefs and other players. (pp. 196–98)

101. Jonathan Daniels, *Frontier on the Potomac* (New York: Macmillan, 1946), pp. 31–32.

102. This proposition was originally formulated by Ernest May. It is similar to Kingdon's concept of the policy window, discussed earlier in the chapter.

103. Neustadt, *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents*, chap. 3.

104. A classic illustration of international and intranational reticence is Neustadt's Skybolt study for President Kennedy, cited earlier.

105. Dean Acheson, "The President and the Secretary of State," in Don Price, ed., *The Secretary of State* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1960).

6
The Cuban Missile Crisis: A Third Cut

"The fourteen people involved were very significant—bright, able, dedicated people, all of whom had the greatest affection for the U.S.. . . . If six of them had been President of the U.S., I think that the world might have been blown up."[1] Whether or not Robert Kennedy was right, his remark reminds us that the men (and they were all men) advising President Kennedy differed sharply about what should be done. Given the difficulty of the challenge they confronted and the differences in their jobs and backgrounds, who should expect otherwise? That each fought hard for the course of action he judged best for the nation should not be surprising. With nuclear war in the offing, should anyone expect less?

Historians of great events tend to obscure differences among government leaders and to miss the gaps between these individuals' reasonable, competing recommendations and the chosen course of action. In retrospect, whatever is finally chosen generally seems the only appropriate choice—especially if events turn out successfully. Advocates of alternatives that were rejected are inclined to be less vocal. To many historians, the notion that events of great consequence should turn on ephemeral details like who was in the room or how effectively someone played the game appears radically disproportionate. But as Robert Kennedy's remark reminds us, judgments about how the U.S. should respond to Soviet missiles in Cuba covered the spectrum from doing nothing to launching a surprise strike on Cuba followed by an invasion. An understanding of why, on October 24, 1962, the United States was blockading Cuba (rather than invading or ignoring it) thus requires careful attention not only to the arguments for that course of action but also to the essentially political process by which the blockade emerged as the American government's choice.

Once it discovered ballistic missiles in Cuba, the American government organized its crisis decisionmaking around an informally selected inner circle of advisers that met either at the White House or at the State Department from October 16 through October 19. This process assumed a more regular, formal quality in successive meetings of the National Security Council on October 20, 21, and 22. The decisionmakers then narrowed again, to an inner circle, designated as the Executive Committee of the National Security Council, also known as the "ExCom." They met at the White House for the duration of the crisis (with subcommittees meeting elsewhere). After the crisis the ExCom continued to operate on other issues through the remainder of the Kennedy administration.

The participants in the first circle of American decisionmakers are listed in Figure 1. The list is inclusive, naming everyone who actively participated in crisis deliberations at the White House.

FIGURE 1
The Inner Circle: October 16–27, 1962

Dean Acheson, retired secretary of state (meetings at State on Oct. 17, 19; met separately with JFK on Oct. 18)

George Anderson, chief of Naval Operations and member of the JCS (White House meetings on Oct. 19, 21–22)

George Ball, under secretary of state (almost all meetings)

Charles Bohlen, ambassador to France; had just ended duty as ambassador-at-large for Soviet affairs (meetings at State on Oct. 16–17; met separately with JFK on Oct. 16)

McGeorge Bundy, special assistant to the president for national security affairs (almost all)

Marshall Carter, deputy director of Central Intelligence Agency (Oct. 16 only)

C. Douglas Dillon, secretary of the treasury (almost all)

Roswell Gilpatric, deputy secretary of defense (almost all)

Roger Hilsman, assistant secretary of state for intelligence and research (Oct. 22, possibly others)

U. Alexis Johnson, deputy undersecretary of state for political affairs (almost all)

Lyndon Johnson, vice president (almost all)

John F. Kennedy, president (White House meetings only)

Robert Kennedy, attorney general (almost all)

Curtis LeMay, chief of staff of the Air Force and member of the JCS (White House meetings on Oct. 19, 22)

Robert Lovett, former secretary of defense and undersecretray of state (met separately with JFK on Oct. 18; White House meetings on Oct. 20–24)

Arthur Lundahl, director of CIA's National Photographic Interpretation Center (almost all, at least in part)

Edwin Martin, assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs (all except White House meeting of Oct. 26)

John McCloy, former envoy to West Germany and assistant secretary of war (White House meeting of Oct. 26)

John McCone, director of Central Intelligence (almost all from Oct. 17)

Edward McDermott, director of the Office of Emergency Preparedness (Oct. 22–23, possibly others)

Robert McNamara, secretary of defense (all)

Paul Nitze, assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs (almost all from Oct. 19)

Kenneth O'Donnell, special assistant to the president (Oct. 22, possibly others)

David Ormsby-Gore, British ambassador to the United States (meetings with JFK and others from Oct. 21)

Walt Rostow, counselor of the state department and chair of State's Policy Planning Council (all from Oct. 24)

Dean Rusk, secretary of state (all except White House evening meeting of Oct. 18)

David Shoup, commandant of the Marine Corps and member of the JCS (White House meetings on Oct. 19, 22)

Theodore Sorensen, special counsel to the president (almost all)

Adlai Stevenson, permanent representative to the United Nations (met separately with JFK on Oct. 16; White House meetings of Oct. 20–21, 26)

Maxwell Taylor, chairman of JCS, had just ended duty as president's military representative (all)

Llewellyn Thompson, ambassador-at-large, had just ended duty as ambassador to the Soviet Union (almost all except White House meetings on Oct. 16 and evening of Oct. 18)

Earle Wheeler, chief of staff of the Army and member of the JCS (White House meetings on Oct. 19, 22)

Donald Wilson, acting director of the U.S. Information Agency (almost all from Oct. 21)

Note: President Kennedy designed and privately presented 34 individuals with silver commemorative calendars displaying the month of October 1962, highlighting the dates between October 16 and 28. In addition to almost all the individuals mentioned above, Kennedy presented the calendars to his wife, Jacqueline; his press secretary, Pierre Salinger; and his private secretary, Evelyn Lincoln. Robert Kennedy's own, highly subjective list of those in the inner circle included, aside from the president and himself, only (in alphabetical order) Acheson, Ball, Bundy, Dillon, Gilpatric, Alexis Johnson, Lovett, Martin, McCone, McNamara, Nitze, Rusk, Sorensen, Taylor, and Thompson.

A comparable list cannot be drawn up with equal confidence for the Soviet Union, but a preliminary sketch is offered in [Figure 2](#).[2] The Soviet team differed from the Americans in at least three obvious ways. First, the Soviet group more closely reflects the regular national security decisionmaking apparatus, centered on the governing Presidium, with no retired officials or other unexpected additions. Second, the Soviet group is smaller. As in the American case, it includes all those individuals we believe actively participated in Kremlin deliberations. But the actual participation was probably even narrower, reflecting Khrushchev's more dominant role. Third, the

FIGURE 2
Key Soviet Decision Makers: October 16–28, 1962

Leonid Brezhnev, chairman of the Supreme Soviet and member of the Presidium

Andrei Gromyko, minister of foreign affairs

Nikita Khrushchev, first secretary of the Party Central Committee, chairman of the Council of Ministers and chairman of the Presidium

Andrei Kirilenko, first deputy chairman of the Central Committee Bureau for the Russian Republic and member of the Presidium

Aleksei Kosygin, first deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers and member of the Presidium

Frol Kozlov, secretary of the Central Committee and member of the Presidium

Otto Kuusinen, secretary of the Central Committee and member of the Presidium

Vasily Kuznetsov, first deputy minister of foreign affairs

Rodion Malinovsky, minister of defense

Anastas Mikoyan, first deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers and member of the Presidium

Nikolai Podgorny, first secretary of the Ukranian Party and member of the Presidium

Dimitri Polyansky, chairman of the Russian Republic's Council of Ministers and member of the Presidium

Boris Ponomarev, secretary of the Central Committee responsible for liaison with nonbloc Communist parties

Vladimir Semichastny, chairman of the State Committee for Security (KGB)

Aleksandr Shelepin, secretary of the Central Committee for party control (party discipline), deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers and chair of that council's committee for state control (police, law)

Gennadi Voronov, first deputy chairman of the Central Committee Bureau for the Russian Republic and member of the Presidium

Nikolai Shvernik, chairman of the Central Committee's Party Commission and member of the Presidium

Mikhail Suslov, secretary of the Central Committee and member of the Presidium

Matvei Zakharov, chief of the general staff of the armed forces and First Deputy Minister of Defense

Soviet decisionmakers were principally officials with broad responsibilities for domestic governance. Few had foreign or defense policy expertise and there is little evidence that career diplomats or uniformed military officers participated at all.

Because of the centrality of this crisis to the presidency of John Kennedy, evidence about what members of the U.S. government were seeing, doing, and even thinking is much greater than for most events. With the publication of the secret tapes from the crisis, and most of the classified documents, one can document the perceptions and preferences of individual players with more confidence than usual. Unfortunately, even with the new evidence about the Soviet side of this equation, the Soviet decision process in deploying missiles to Cuba or withdrawing them remains more opaque.

The Imposition of a Blockade by the United States

The Politics of Discovery

The American government's choice to mount a blockade cannot be understood apart from the context in which the necessity for choice arose. First, consider the timing of the discovery. Though Robert Kennedy reported that a government postmortem on the crisis concluded "there was no action that the U.S. could have taken before we actually did act," this judgment is incorrect (and Kennedy's recollection is incomplete).[3] Had a U-2 flown over the western end of Cuba two or three weeks earlier, it could have discovered the missiles, allowing the administration more time to consider alternatives and to act before the danger of operational missiles in Cuba became a major factor in the equation.[4] Had the missiles not been discovered until two weeks later, blocking additional arms shipments to Cuba would have been futile, since the Soviet missile shipments would have been completed, including delivery of the IRBMs. Moreover, all the MRBMs would have been ready for action.

The "face" of the Cuban issue to American governmental officials formed a second crucial feature of the context. What the presence of Soviet missiles in Cuba meant to each individual depended on positions taken in earlier policy debates, both within the administration and before the country. A series of overlapping bargaining games determined both the *date* of the discovery of the Soviet missiles and the *impact* of the discovery on the administration. An explanation of the politics of the discovery is consequently a considerable piece of the explanation of why the U.S. chose the blockade.

Cuba was the Kennedy administration's "political Achilles' heel."[5] This vulnerability stemmed from three related causes. First, the failed attempt to overthrow Castro in the Bay of Pigs invasion of April 1961 raised the most serious internal doubts about the president's judgment, the wisdom of his advisers, and the quality of their advice. No subsequent major issue of national security was decided without bringing Robert Kennedy and Theodore Sorensen into the process. When the president referred to Cuba as

his "heaviest political cross," he referred to the inside of his administration as well as to the out-side.[6] Second, the Bay of Pigs catastrophe had taught the public unfortunate lessons: that Cuba constituted a serious threat to U.S. security and that calls for the overthrow of Castro's Communism had legitimacy. Third, the failure of the invasion had made Kennedy appear indecisive. After attempting to overthrow Castro with a clandestine force but bungling the job, the president and his advisers were left feeling an even greater obligation to be decisive in the next case. On the first day of crisis deliberations, Kennedy observed that the Soviet missile deployment "shows the Bay of Pigs was really right. We'd got it right." General Taylor replied, "I'm a pessimist, Mr. President. We have a war plan over there for you. [It] calls for a quarter of a million American soldiers, Marines, and airmen to take an island we launched 1,800 Cubans against, a year and a half ago. We've changed our evaluations. Well. . . ." Taylor left the rest unsaid.[7]

The Republican Party grabbed the administration by this vulnerability. The months preceding the Cuban missile crisis were also months before the off-year congressional elections, and the Republican Senatorial and Congressional Campaign Committee had announced that Cuba would be "the dominant issue of the 1962 campaign."[8] What the administration billed as a "more positive and indirect approach of isolating Castro from the developing, democratic Latin America," Senators Kenneth Keating (R-N.Y.), Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.), Homer Capehart (R-Ind.), Strom Thurmond (D-S.C.), and others attacked as a "do-nothing" policy.[9] In contrast to the administration's inaction, which was allowing additional Soviet arms shipments to Cuba, critics called for a blockade, an invasion, or simply "action." The idea of blockading Cuba had acquired, for Kennedy administration insiders, the stigma of having a "certain Capehartian ring to it." This was why, after choosing a type of blockade option on October 20, Kennedy walked out on the balcony of the White House with a few aides and remarked sardonically, "Well, I guess Homer Capehart is the Winston Churchill of our generation."[10]

The previous year the Kennedy administration had set in motion a secret CIA program, Operation Mongoose, aimed at undermining Castro's rule in Cuba. Even more secretly, CIA operatives were attempting to assassinate Castro. They never came close. Nor was Mongoose making much progress.

Led by McCone, the CIA pressed to expand the U.S. sponsorship of guerrilla operations, and sought presidential commitment to support the efforts, if necessary, with an American invasion of Cuba. Such a commitment was considered indispensable by the Cuban refugees. Yet President Kennedy steadfastly refused to make any such commitment, and said so privately to the leader of the Cuban exiles.[11]

As spring of 1962 turned to summer, the Mongoose program and other U.S. efforts aimed at Cuba were reaching a crossroads. The military had prepared contingency plans for invading or for blockading Cuba; the blockade was then conceived as a way to retaliate if the Soviets moved to cut off West Berlin.[12] Mongoose itself had become too big to ignore, while still too weak to have much chance of unseating Castro. The covert program had gathered intelligence, but little else. Even if Mongoose helped spark an internal revolt, some U.S. officials (especially at State and the White House) were fearful that the revolt might so entangle the American government that Washington would be sucked into an invasion of Cuba. For them, Mongoose had to be kept within clear limits. As early as March 1962, Robert Kennedy had also called attention to the possibility that the Soviet government might establish a base in Cuba that would rule out any U.S. invasion and pose new dangers.[13]

In July 1962, the small interdepartmental group running Mongoose (chaired by Robert Kennedy) judged that Phase I of Mongoose had run its course. The group began a complete review of the program's future, with options ranging from accepting Cuba as a Soviet ally and containing it, on the one hand, to provoking an attack as an excuse for an American invasion, on the other. The options were presented to Robert Kennedy's "Special Group (Augmented)" on August 10.[14] The CIA's operational representatives wanted to stimulate a revolt, but recognized the rebels would have to be backed by an American invasion. State's representatives (supported by the work of the CIA's analytical wing) wrote bluntly that: "It should be recognized at the outset that short of the employment of U.S. military force, the programs and actions of the U.S. aimed at the downfall of the Castro government will probably be only marginal." State was inclined to stay with the limited status quo and "avoid engaging U.S. prestige openly in operations, the success of which may be doubtful."[15]

This was the context, then, of prior positions and attitudes as reports began to stream in about Soviet shipments of conventional arms and military advisers to Cuba. Mongoose program director Edward Lansdale had called the State Department on August 10 to see if the paper evaluating the Soviet base contingency that Robert Kennedy had speculated about months earlier had been completed. It had not. A State official privately reminded his colleagues that "you will recall that it was decided that the possibility was too remote to waste time on."[16] At the August 10 meeting, however, McCone raised a warning flag not only about a Soviet base, but about Soviet deployment of ballistic missiles to Cuba. Nevertheless, the Mongoose review turned out about the way State had wanted: a stepped up "Course B" that added a little more harassment, but no new commitments to overthrow Castro. Officials admitted to each other that they did not expect the intended actions to produce Castro's downfall.[17]

As the reports of arms shipments piled higher, McCone used them in the Mongoose group to press his case for much more vigorous covert action against Cuba. Moreover, during a meeting that President Kennedy attended on August 23, McCone reinforced his argument by warning of the possible deployment of nuclear missiles. The meeting on August 23 turned into the first high-level deliberation on how to respond if Soviet missiles were found in Cuba.[18] In this decision setting, McCone was in the role of a policy advocate for more aggressive covert action against Castro. Since his policy position was unpopular (Robert Kennedy was McCone's only, half-hearted, ally), the CIA director's warnings about missiles were seen as part of his advocacy of attacking Castro. So officials who disagreed with McCone on Mongoose also discounted his missile warnings. Bundy, for example, deflected McCone with the argument that an attack on Cuba might cause a response in Berlin. Others feared a reaction against American Jupiter missiles in Turkey. Pressing his case, McCone downplayed the Turkey danger. He said the missiles in Turkey were useless and ought to be withdrawn. McNamara agreed they were useless, but said it was difficult politically to remove them.

Kennedy was plainly worried about McCone's predictions about Soviet missiles in Cuba. He wanted more study of the danger, and possible countermoves. He signed National Security Action Memorandum (NSAM)

181, which directed McNamara to identify ways to get the Jupiter missiles out of Turkey, asked for a broad analysis of the threat that might be posed by Soviet ballistic missiles in Cuba, and ordered review of two major policy options. One option was diplomatic, a warning to the Soviets. The other was military, a study of alternative ways of eliminating "any installations in Cuba capable of launching nuclear attack on the U.S." Kennedy also wanted an analysis of the pros and cons of invading Cuba "in the context of an aggravated Berlin crisis."[19]

McCone occupied an odd place within the Kennedy administration. Trained as an engineer, he was a businessman who had made a fortune, first as a steel executive and then with construction and engineering firms that built factories and merchant ships, filling huge orders during World War II. A lifelong Republican, during the Eisenhower administration McCone had served as chairman of the powerful Atomic Energy Commission. Politically very conservative and an ardent Roman Catholic, McCone was fiercely anti-Communist. Within the Eisenhower administration, he had opposed proposals to negotiate a ban on atomic testing. After the Bay of Pigs, when CIA Director Allen Dulles was pushed out, Kennedy chose McCone as a politically safe replacement. McCone's vocal policy views had made enemies among Democrats, but Kennedy rightly judged that McCone would be a capable manager, able to understand and handle the CIA's burgeoning development of technical intelligence. McCone also became the president's personal link to former President Eisenhower and came to be a personal friend of Robert Kennedy.[20] His friendship with Robert Kennedy proved important during the crisis.

Opinionated and stony where his predecessor had been amiable and witty, McCone was disliked, even mistrusted, by other Kennedy administration insiders, Robert Kennedy excepted. Whatever his faults, McCone was disciplined and smart. He reasoned that the Soviets could only be deploying such a comprehensive surface-to-air missile (SAM) system if they intended to protect more vital assets, such as ballistic missiles. At the same August 10 meeting where he warned of Soviet missiles in Cuba, McCone was shocked when McNamara alluded to the possibility of assassinating Castro. Then and later, McCone quashed any discussion of such schemes on moral as well as practical grounds. "I could get excommunicated," he affirmed

without a wink. (On this matter McCone was bypassed, and the necessary authority and supervision apparently came directly from Robert Kennedy.)[21]

Each week seemed to bring more worrisome news. The Republican critics in Congress smelled blood. Soviet SAM sites were firmly identified. To control leaks President Kennedy instructed the CIA to restrict that information to only a few officials, put it in a special box, "and nail it tight."[22] The CIA proposed low-level reconnaissance flights over Cuba by military aircraft to get further information. The recommendation was viewed with suspicion by some who presumed McCone might be seeking a provocation for American military action against Cuba.

Still opposed to McCone, Bundy urged President Kennedy to make a public statement saying that he knew what was going on in Cuba, and that it did not pose a new threat to the U.S. that would justify a major military operation against the island. But Kennedy should draw a line warning that there were certain things "we would not tolerate." Bundy proposed to distinguish between "defensive" weapons and "offensive" ones, i.e., nuclear missiles. Kennedy received from Bundy an analysis concluding that Soviet ballistic missiles in Cuba would indeed present "a very significant military threat" to the United States. McNamara came to the same conclusion. But unlike Bundy, he urged Kennedy not to settle for such a limited warning.[23]

Two years younger than Kennedy, McGeorge Bundy had served in the Navy during World War II, and risen rapidly through the ranks of Kennedy's alma mater to become dean of Harvard University's faculty of arts and sciences. From his earliest prep school days, Bundy was recognized as the smartest boy in the class. Detractors said he suffered from hyperlucidity.

A former president of Ford Motor Company, McNamara displayed little knowledge of the wider world of international affairs, or patience for irony. Instead, he had a ferocious appetite for analysis, the knottier and more quantitative, the better.

On September 4, Kennedy chose to take Bundy's advice. He instructed his press secretary, Pierre Salinger, to issue the public warning drawing the line at any Soviet deployment of "offensive" weapons. Everyone, including the Soviets, understood that this meant systems able to deliver nuclear weapons against the United States. As Bundy had explained to Kennedy, the White House statement was as significant for what it did not say—namely, that Washington *would* tolerate "defensive" weapons—as for what it said. This episode, therefore, carried much meaning privately for the continuing debate about the future of Mongoose, as well as publicly for the ongoing congressional attacks on Kennedy's policy. His best hope was to overwhelm the critics with a barrage of official statements disclaiming any Soviet provocation in Cuba, thus deflating the opposition's case.

The administration mounted a forceful campaign of denial designed to discredit opponents' claims. The president himself manned the front line of this offensive, and most administration officials participated. In his news conference on August 29, Kennedy attacked as "irresponsible" calls for an invasion of Cuba, stressing rather "the totality of our obligations" and promising to "watch what happens in Cuba with the closest attention."[24] His September 4 statement denied that Soviet actions in Cuba to date posed any serious threat to the U.S.[25]

On September 11, the Soviet government issued its own public statement denouncing American threats but stating plainly that Moscow saw no need to send nuclear missiles to Cuba. On September 12, Bundy—one of the few people helping to prepare for another press conference—sent Kennedy a memo that urged him to personally repeat what his press secretary had said on September 4. The reasoning was the same; Bundy was capitalizing on the Soviet promise. Bundy's memo tells the president that if he wants to invade Cuba he should *not* follow Bundy's advice (because it downplayed the Soviet threat).[26] At his press conference on the 13th, Kennedy did precisely what Bundy had suggested. He drew a line that accepted what was already discovered and excluded what the Soviets had publicly said they would not do.

Kennedy later told McCone: "You certainly had the situation sized up, but I was one of those who did not think the Soviets would put missiles in

Cuba."[27] But Kennedy's decision to draw the line he chose arose from an interdepartmental policy struggle about Mongoose, not missiles. Bundy's move in that game cleverly exploited his particular role in the White House to contain advocates of American action against Cuba. But the action chosen had unanticipated, fateful consequences when it turned out that the Soviets had been lying. Bundy dismissed that possibility, even in private, well into October.

When the missiles were discovered, Kennedy found himself cornered in ways that he would not have been had he made no statement at all. As he wondered aloud on the first day of deliberations: "Last month I said we weren't going to [allow it]. Last month I should have said that we don't care. But when we said we're *not* going to, and then they go ahead and do it, and then we do nothing, then I should think that our risks increase."[28]

The process of discovery was thus influenced by ongoing policy debates inside and outside the administration. But the politics of discovery had a second layer. Insiders also bargained over the permissible rules for aerial surveillance of Cuba. Again the debate pitted McCone against Bundy, but this time McCone's leading opponent was the secretary of state, Dean Rusk.

What the president and administration least wanted to hear, the CIA felt reluctant to say, at least without solid proof. When the CIA informed Kennedy on September 6 that they had spotted the coastal defense cruise missiles (not the ballistic missiles), the president's response seemed to convey more concern about a possible leak of such politically radioactive information than about the facts themselves. An internal CIA report of the briefing noted a "freezing atmosphere at the White House."[29] A new staffing procedure was devised to control distribution of information about Soviet weapons in Cuba. Reports would be further classified by the codeword "Psalm," to be circulated only to a list of named individuals.[30] Though on a honeymoon trip in the south of France, McCone could not stop thinking frequently about Cuba, bombarding his deputy at CIA headquarters repeatedly with cables urging more action, at least more aerial surveillance.

An interdepartmental group, the Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance (COMOR) planned U-2 surveillance flights. COMOR's recommendations to send U-2s directly over Cuba had been approved earlier. But on September 8, a U-2 operated by Nationalist China (Taiwan) was shot down on a mission over mainland China. This incident followed an August 30 mishap; an American U-2 had inadvertently flown into Soviet airspace over Sakhalin Island, triggering protests from Moscow. So when State Department officials noticed that U-2s were about to fly over Cuba, higher-level officials feared the worst.

Rusk asked Bundy to convene a September 10 meeting at the White House. Robert Kennedy attended too, along with Marshall Carter, acting CIA director (in McCone's absence), and the chairman of COMOR. Rusk complained to Carter, half-jokingly, "How do you expect me to negotiate on Berlin with all these incidents?" Robert Kennedy replied, perhaps also half-jokingly, "What's the matter, Dean, no guts!" The president's brother supported the CIA-proposed flight plan that would cover the areas of Cuba that had not been photographed for more than a month. Rusk, however, would not yield. The result was a compromise. The CIA proposal for a long flight on the edge of and over Cuba was put aside. In its place would be four short flights, two over international waters and two moving quickly over Cuba on short routes. The CIA also urged McNamara to approve low-level reconnaissance flights, but McNamara preferred to leave the job to the U-2s.[31]

The U-2s, however, were slow to fly. The State Department whittled away at the September 10 compromise, which had not been reduced clearly to writing. Rusk remained concerned about overflights directly over the island and managed to delay the process by proposing a new idea. Why not have the Organization of American States sponsor the flights? Analysis of this alternative consumed more time and effort. A flight along Cuba's periphery on September 17 gathered little useful data.[32]

As American officials argued, the huge MRBMs were unloaded in Cuba and trundled slowly to their field sites. They were noticed by agents in Cuba, and the reports began winding their way back to Washington on the journey we described in Chapter 4. But still, no U-2 photographs. The CIA

tried again with new proposals for aerial surveillance, discussed on September 20. Rusk deflected them again with another counterproposal asking that the various CIA alternatives be combined into a single option to be considered a week later. At this meeting McNamara took a more active role, using the opportunity to renew an old turf battle. Arguing that a shootdown of a military plane would be less embarrassing he insisted successfully that operational responsibility for the flights be moved from the CIA to the Air Force's Strategic Air Command.[33] Over strong opposition from CIA, this was agreed. Finally, on September 27, McCone, by now back in Washington, won grudging approval for overflights of Cuba's periphery. The flights discovered more air and coastal defense installations, but no nuclear missiles. Thus Undersecretary of State George Ball testified to a congressional committee on October 3: "Our intelligence is very good and very hard. All the indications are that this is equipment which is basically of a defensive capability and it does not offer any offensive capability to Cuba as against the United States or the other nations of the hemisphere."[34]

On October 4 at the next weekly meeting of the Cuba/Mongoose decision group, the Special Group (Augmented), McCone turned up the pressure. But again the mounting evidence of Soviet arms in Cuba was entangled in policy debate of the future of the Mongoose program. McCone complained of program inaction; Robert Kennedy sharply said they had approved whatever had been proposed. A consensus emerged that incremental change in Mongoose was no longer enough. More sabotage would be considered, even laying mines in Cuban harbors.[35]

McCone returned to the issue of overflights and criticized the administration statements, pointing out how little information the U.S. had of Cuba's interior—essentially nothing in the last month.[36] There had been bad weather; it was hurricane season. But though administration officials were to claim later that only bad weather had prevented overflights (and presented testimony saying so), the later assertions were not correct.

As September turned to October, a watchful president was keeping an eye on developments in Cuba and on U.S. contingency planning for military action against Cuba.[37] On October 9, bolstered by the human agent reports

that had now filtered up through the system, McCone won assent, including personal agreement from President Kennedy, to a COMOR-approved plan for direct overflights over Cuba. On October 10 McCone brought Kennedy news, from naval photography of crates aboard Soviet merchant ships, that IL-28 bombers, capable of carrying nuclear weapons, might already have landed in Cuba. Kennedy's first reaction was to think about leaks to the press. He worried aloud, McCone noted, that "a new and more violent Cuban issue would be injected into the campaign and this would seriously affect his independence of action." Kennedy wanted all further information suppressed. McCone said this would be dangerous. Certainly the necessary intelligence analysts had to be informed. McCone recalled Kennedy's concluding that "we'll have to do something drastic about Cuba" and that he looked forward to seeing the military contingency plan scheduled to be presented to him the next week.[38]

Four days later, however, on Sunday, October 14, on ABC's *Issues and Answers*, presidential assistant McGeorge Bundy denied the presence of Soviet offensive missiles in Cuba just as a U-2 was taking its first pictures of them. In response to a reporter's probe about the "interpretation of the military installations in Cuba which the administration emphasizes are defensive in nature and not offensive," Bundy asserted: "I *know* that there is no present evidence, and I think that there is no present likelihood that the Cubans and the Cuban government and the Soviet government would, in combination, attempt to install a major offensive capability."[39] (But of course, Bundy knew that the IL-28 bombers were in Cuba, weapons he had classified as "offensive" when declaring this line.) The day before the flight of the U-2 that discovered the missiles, Kennedy had campaigned in Capehart's Indiana against those "self-appointed generals and admirals who want to send someone else's sons to war."[40] On Monday, October 15, just as he finished delivering a speech to the National Press Club addressing the question of Soviet activity in Cuba and arguing that the buildup was "basically defensive in character," Assistant Secretary of State Edwin Martin received a phone call. The caller informed Martin that offensive missiles had been discovered in Cuba.[41]

Discovery of the missiles two weeks earlier or two weeks later could have made a significant difference in the outcome of the crisis. There is no

evidence that President Kennedy was trying to prevent discovery of the missiles. Robert Kennedy actually picked up McCone's arguments and made them cogently in the September 10 debate McCone missed. Instead, the timing was the product of pulling and hauling, a tug of war principally between McCone, on one side, and Rusk with Bundy on the other. McCone's credibility as an intelligence analyst warning of Soviet missiles was compromised by his advocacy of bolder action in the Mongoose operation. Moreover, the accident of his absence on his honeymoon during the crucial period left his case to subordinates less able to contend with the secretary of state.

The Politics of Choice

The U-2 photographs presented conclusive evidence of Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba. This revelation fell upon politicized players in a delicate situation. As one high official recalls, Khrushchev had caught us "with our pants down." What each of the central participants perceived, and how each sought to cover both his own nakedness and the administration's embarrassment, reflected what went before and framed the deliberations to follow.

Surprise fails to capture the character of President Kennedy's initial reaction. Rather, it was one of startled anger, most adequately conveyed by the exclamation: "He can't do that to me!"[42] That exclamation in this context was triple-barreled. First, in terms of the president's attention and priorities at that moment, Khrushchev had chosen the most unhelpful act of all. In a highly sensitive domestic political context where his opponents demanded action against Cuba, Kennedy was following a moderate course. In support of that policy he had drawn a distinction between "defensive" and "offensive" weapons, staked his full presidential authority on the flat statement that the Soviets were not placing offensive weapons in Cuba, and warned unambiguously that such weapons would not be tolerated. Second, Kennedy and his closest advisers had attempted to relieve tension, including making a substantial investment in assuring that all communications between the president and Chairman Khrushchev would be straightforward and accurate. Contact had been made; Khrushchev was reciprocating. He had assured the president through the most direct and personal channels that

he understood Kennedy's domestic problem and would do nothing to complicate it. He had given solemn public and private assurances that the Soviet Union would not put nuclear missiles into Cuba. But then *this*—the Chairman had lied to the president. Third, Khrushchev's action challenged the president personally. Did he, John F. Kennedy, have the courage in the crunch to start down a path that had a real chance of leading to nuclear war? If not, Khrushchev would win this round and gain confidence for the upcoming confrontation over Berlin. Kennedy had worried, as a consequence of the Bay of Pigs and after his June 1961 meeting with Khrushchev in Vienna, that the Chairman might have misjudged his mettle. This time Kennedy determined to stand fast.

With the issue framed in this way by this background, nothing short of a forceful response would suffice for this president of the United States. Whatever the foreign policy arguments, to fail to act forcibly would: (1) undermine the confidence of the members of his administration, especially those who in the previous weeks had so firmly defended his policy toward Cuba; (2) convince his permanent government that the administration had no leader, thus cultivating their willingness to challenge all of his policies; (3) cut the ground out from under his fellow Democrats (most of whom were standing for reelection on his Cuban policy) with the elections less than three weeks away; (4) destroy his reputation with all but a few members of Congress; (5) create public distrust of his word and his will; (6) reinforce his image from the Bay of Pigs failure, thereby sealing the fate of his administration: a short chapter in the history books entitled "Crucified Over Cuba;" and (7) feed doubts in his own mind about himself.

What weight each of these various considerations may have had in the president's mind is impossible to say. No doubt the calculations rehearsed above do not capture all his thoughts. In his mind, the distinctions we have drawn among them would dissolve, as would the distinction between a blow to him and a blow to his country—which tend to blur when seen from the seat of a president.[43] But it is clear that the entire circle of pressures to which he as president had to be responsive pushed him in a single direction: vigorous action. Well down that road, feeling the heat of the risks involved, alone with his brother, John Kennedy mused about whether he had any choice. There was more than hyperbole in Robert Kennedy's reply. "Well,

there isn't any choice. I mean, you would have been, you would have been impeached." "Well, I think I would have been impeached," the President replied.[44] The nonforcible paths—avoiding military measures, resorting instead to diplomacy—could not have been more irrelevant to *his* problem. Of course, he was not the only official around the table to focus on his personal version of the problem.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff wanted an invasion to eliminate this threat. But their new chairman, Maxwell Taylor, had his doubts about getting "our feet in that deep mud in Cuba." Better, Taylor explained, to gather more intelligence, pull it all together in the next few days while no one knew the missiles had been discovered, and then take the missiles, the bombers and MiG-21 aircraft, and the SAMs "right out with one hard crack." He estimated that it would take about five days to do the complete job from the air.[45]

For Dean Rusk, the initial issues were diplomatic. He did not articulate a clear view about how to resolve the underlying problem, but spoke instead to the need for consultation with key allies. His main suggestion was the idea of going directly to Castro, warning the Cuban leader that the Soviets were putting him in mortal danger and would happily sell him out for a victory in Berlin, in the hope of getting Castro to push the Soviets out. Kennedy thought the proposal had no prospects, and no one outside State spoke up for it.

For Secretary of Defense McNamara, the missiles were principally a political problem. In his view, the overall nuclear balance would not be significantly affected by the Soviet deployment. (This judgment was shared by his deputy, Roswell Gilpatric, but by no other relevant officials or analysts in the Pentagon.) At the start, therefore, McNamara was skeptical about the need for military action. He argued that no air strike could be considered if the Soviet missiles in Cuba were operational and could therefore be launched in a retaliatory strike against the United States. Taylor suspected McNamara was exaggerating the size of the required air strike in order to make it seem tantamount to an invasion. To State officials, McNamara seemed to be exaggerating the danger that an air strike would

trigger a revolt in Cuba that would suck the U.S. into an invasion. But uncertainties raised in this sparring did slow the rush to a military solution.

McNamara raised the idea of blockading future weapons shipments to Cuba, but his version of the option would do nothing about the missiles already deployed there except to warn the Soviets not to use them. "Now, this alternative doesn't seem to be a very acceptable one," he allowed. "But wait until you work on the others." At the end of the first day of deliberations, and only after President Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, Rusk, Taylor, and most other participants had left the room, McNamara restated his underlying skeptical premise, more candidly, to Bundy and Rusk's deputy, George Ball. "I don't believe it's primarily a military problem. It's primarily a domestic political problem." McNamara thought his approach might at least provide enough "action" to satisfy his notion of domestic political requirements.[46]

Bundy had framed the issue for the president in the weeks before discovery, but he was now uncertain about what to do. Bundy was always hard to read. As one of Bundy's colleagues is reported to have commented: "You don't know what he thinks. I don't know what he thinks. The president doesn't know what he thinks. And I sometimes wonder whether he knows what he thinks." As Bundy recalls his own reaction, "I almost deliberately stayed in the minority. I felt that it was very important to keep the president's choices open."[47] Having steered the policy of warnings that crashed when the missiles were found, Bundy was uncharacteristically reticent. Two days later, on October 18, he advocated taking no action, fearing that the Soviets would retaliate in kind against Berlin. Then the next day, after agonizing further over the question, Bundy changed his mind again and supported an air strike against the missiles.

By October 19 other positions had hardened. UN ambassador and former presidential candidate Adlai Stevenson joined McNamara in the ranks of the skeptics. McCone joined Taylor in urging an air strike. New overflights revealed for the first time that intermediate-range missiles had also been shipped to Cuba, impressing even McNamara with the scale of the Soviet effort. This news tipped Taylor join his JCS colleagues in support of an invasion to follow up the air strikes. Meanwhile, former Secretary of State

Dean Acheson joined those advocating an air strike, but, unlike Taylor and McCone, he called for a very narrow strike only against the missile sites, ignoring the Soviet bombers, fighter-bombers, and antiaircraft units. Arguments for this narrow version of the air strike seemed to be persuasive to Bundy, leaving him disdainful of the military's crude, massive attack.[48]

As discussions continued, additional participants injected new ideas. By October 18 Kennedy seems reluctantly to have agreed that any strike would have to be a large one, as the military suggested. Ball had vehemently raised a moral objection to any American surprise attack on another country, offering the potent analogy to Pearl Harbor. Robert Kennedy picked up Ball's argument, and Rusk chimed in, calling the surprise attack "this business of carrying the mark of Cain on your brow for the rest of your life." "If we do that to a small country," Robert Kennedy observed, "I think it's a hell of a burden to carry." But the most telling argument for President Kennedy, which he repeated in days to come, was the one he outlined for his subordinates on October 18. An attack on Cuba would cause a retaliatory attack on Berlin which in turn would instantly present Kennedy with no meaningful military option but nuclear retaliation. So he said, musing aloud, "the question really is to what action we take which lessens the chances of a nuclear exchange, which obviously is the prime failure—that's obvious to us."[49] Another prestigious outsider brought into the deliberations, former Defense Secretary Robert Lovett, reinforced Kennedy's worry that a surprise attack might prompt a reprisal in kind against Berlin.[50]

It is clear from Kennedy's taped recapitulation of a White House meeting on the night of October 18 and from the arguments he made to the unconvinced Joint Chiefs of Staff the next morning, that by October 18–19 the president was turning away from a surprise strike on the missiles.[51] This left the intermediate option, the blockade, originally broached by McNamara.

But, again, new participants injected new ideas. Two veteran diplomats and Kremlin-watchers, Charles Bohlen and Llewellyn Thompson, urged Kennedy to deliver an ultimatum to Khrushchev, giving him a chance to withdraw the missiles. Others argued, however, that a diplomatic

ultimatum, by itself, would entangle the U.S. in a fruitless diplomatic snarl.[52] Treasury Secretary Douglas Dillon was the first to suggest the idea of using a blockade as the vehicle for delivering and underscoring the ultimatum. On October 18, Thompson pushed for this conception of the blockade. The blockade would be accompanied, he explained, by a demand that the weapons in Cuba be dismantled. "If they are armed, we would then take them out." Thompson added, "I think we should be under no illusions, this is probably in the end going to lead to the same thing. But we do it in an entirely different posture and background and much less danger of getting up into the big war."[53]

On the morning of October 19 President Kennedy met with the Joint Chiefs of Staff and found them adamant in favor of an immediate air attack against Cuba that would retain the military advantages of surprise. Air Force chief of staff Curtis LeMay, confident of his own political base of support on Capitol Hill, was boldest in confronting the president. "This blockade and political action, I see leading into war. I don't see any other solution. It will lead right into war. This is almost as bad as the appeasement at Munich." After the meeting, Kennedy departed on a previously scheduled campaign trip to avoid letting the Soviets in on the U.S.'s secret. He asked Robert Kennedy and Sorensen "to pull the group together."[54]

Opinion was still generally divided between a blockade and an immediate air strike. Meetings at the State Department ran all day on October 19 and into the night. Bundy told his colleagues that in the course of a sleepless night, he had decided that an air strike was needed. Decisive action would confront the Soviets, and the world, with an American *fait accompli.* He said he had passed this advice to President Kennedy. Spurred by the arguments of Dean Acheson, the air strike option which had almost died after the White House meeting the night before, now revived. Dillon, McCone, and Taylor agreed generally with Acheson and Bundy, though there were differences among them about specifics of the air strike approach. McNamara was strongly opposed. Robert Kennedy then said, with a grin, that he too had spoken with the president and that a surprise attack like Pearl Harbor was "not in our traditions." He "favored *action,*" but action that gave the Soviets a chance to pull back."[55]

Rusk then proposed that the advisers divide into working groups to refine the blockade and air strike options. After hours of discussion within and among the working groups, McNamara emerged as the chief advocate of a blockade-negotiate option. He thought the U.S. would at least have to give up its missile bases in Turkey and Italy, and probably more. Robert Kennedy thought this went too far. He argued that "in looking forward to the future it would be better for our children and grandchildren if we decided to face the Soviet threat, stand up to it, and eliminate it, now. The circumstances for doing so at some future time were bound to be more unfavorable, the risks would be greater, the chances of success less good."[56]

This was the opening for advocates of the blockade-ultimatum idea, the blockade a first step backed up by readiness to strike. So when McNamara and other Pentagon officials conceded that a strike might still be viable *after* a blockade (with a consequent loss of surprise), Robert Kennedy "took particular note of this shift" and began portraying the blockade as only the first step, a prelude to further military action. The president's brother thought "it was now pretty clear what the decision should be." Sorensen agreed to write the first draft of a blockade speech.[57] Acheson retreated to his farm in Maryland. President Kennedy cut short his campaign trip, pleading a cold, and returned for a decisive White House meeting, formally a meeting of the National Security Council, on October 20.

The National Security Council meeting resembled a Greek drama in which the players maneuvered according to a plot, that moved inexorably toward the predetermined outcome. But, as experience had already shown, nothing could be considered sealed until every crucial detail had been decided. McNamara presented the blockade–negotiate approach. Following the blockade, he said, the U.S. would negotiate for the removal of missiles from Turkey and Italy and talk about closing the U.S. base at Guantanamo in Cuba. McNamara opposed an ultimatum demanding removal of the missiles, saying it was too risky. Stevenson supported him.[58]

Taylor, supported by Bundy, presented the case for an air strike, to begin two days later on Monday, October 22. Robert Kennedy agreed with Taylor that the present moment was the last chance to destroy Castro and the

Soviet missiles in Cuba. Sorensen, who was sympathetic to the blockade–negotiate approach, disagreed.

Robert Kennedy then argued for "a combination of the blockade route and the air strike route." The blockade would be coupled with an ultimatum demanding removal of the missiles. If the Russians did not comply, the U.S. would proceed with an air strike. That, he explained, would get away from the Pearl Harbor surprise attack problem. Dillon and McCone then supported this option. Dillon suggested a 72-hour interval between the demand and action; McCone agreed. Thompson also voiced his support for this approach, which he had helped devise.

Rusk described yet one more approach, a fourth major option. It was for a blockade, but instead of an ultimatum or an offer to trade U.S. assets, Rusk suggested that the objective should be simply to freeze the situation. The Soviet missile installations in Cuba would be monitored by United Nations observation teams.

President Kennedy first sharply ruled out the blockade–negotiate variant, feeling that such action would convey to the world that the U.S. had been frightened into abandoning its positions. He then ruled in favor of the blockade–ultimatum option, while urging that any air strike be limited only to the missile sites. The strike was to be ready for implementation by October 23. The group also agreed that the blockade would be narrowly focused on Soviet arms deliveries, not on all shipments of vital supplies—such as oil. The basic decision was made.

Advocates of the blockade–ultimatum approach were still suspicious that the blockade–negotiate proponents would try to win the day, probably through Sorensen's drafting of Kennedy's speech to the nation. McCone called both Kennedys later on October 20 to nail down the details. President Kennedy assured McCone that he had agreed both with the CIA director's recommendation and with his arguments.[59]

Nevertheless, as McCone had feared, the argument between the negotiate and ultimatum camps was reopened when the advisers reconvened to discuss Sorensen's draft speech the next day, October 21. Rusk also returned repeatedly to his freeze and inspect idea. President Kennedy

rebuffed Rusk, though he conceded that later, once American resolve was clear, he might consider a UN move to remove missiles in Cuba along with those in Turkey and Italy. Turning to the speech draft, Kennedy made a series of decisions that sided with the blockade–ultimatum faction. He removed language emphasizing the horrors of war. Backed by Thompson, McCone, and Dillon, he removed an invitation to Khrushchev to come to a summit meeting to talk about the crisis. First they would see how Khrushchev dealt with the missiles in Cuba. An offer to trade U.S. missiles or bases would, Kennedy thought, signal to Khrushchev that "we were in a state of panic." We "should be clear that we would accept nothing less than the ending of the missile capability now in Cuba, no reinforcement of that capability, and no further construction of missile sites."[60]

To achieve that result, McNamara warned, the U.S. would have to invade. Kennedy held his ground. In effect ruling against McNamara as well as Rusk and Stevenson (and in favor of his brother, the two Republicans in his cabinet, and a career diplomat), President Kennedy repeated that he was talking about the dismantlement of the missiles now in Cuba. Although he appeared to line up firmly with the blockade–ultimatum advocates, there are subtle indications that both President Kennedy and Robert Kennedy had not definitely decided just what would follow the ultimatum, and when. The operational questions of the moment would be settled consistent with the ultimatum–strike sequence, but no fixed time limit was set on the U.S. demand for removal of the missiles. Conscious of the awesome responsibilities he shouldered, President Kennedy held back from any unequivocal commitment about just when or how the U.S. might strike, or negotiate, once his government's resolve to get the missiles removed was plain to all.[61]

In sum, the missiles posed no single issue. The players who gathered at the pinnacle of the U.S. government perceived many faces of quite different issues, framed for them by their character, responsibilities, and experiences. In spite of efforts to classify the men as "hawks" and "doves"—a metaphor coined during this crisis—their reactions were much more complex than the metaphors suggest.[62]

At the outset of the crisis, the individuals who convened at the president's discretion as the ExCom whistled many different tunes. Before the final decision was made, the majority whistled a single tune: the blockade. That general approach, though, had then subdivided into at least three distinct options for presidential choice. A basic choice had yielded to a richer, more sophisticated menu of choices, enabling the president to calibrate U.S. actions more carefully, find the precise spot where he felt the greatest confidence, and give clear operational guidance to his subordinates. The process by which this happened is a story of the most subtle and intricate probing, pulling, and hauling, leading, guiding, and spurring.

The decision to blockade, and link the blockade to a demand for removal of the missiles from Cuba backed by the threat of more direct military action, thus emerged as a collage. Its pieces included the president's initial decision that something forceful had to be done; the resistance of McNamara and others to a surprise air strike; and the constant relationship, especially for President Kennedy, between Cuba and Berlin. To get from those impulses to a government decision that combined both the blockade and air strike approaches required an effort to forge the synthesis.

Though the ideas had not originated with him, Robert Kennedy was the engineer of consensus. According to his published recollection of the ExCom deliberations, "There was no rank, and, in fact, we did not even have a chairman."[63] But the others recall that, when President Kennedy was absent, Robert Kennedy "soon emerged as the discussion leader."[64] He recalled that "the conversations were completely uninhibited and unrestricted."[65] Sorensen remarked on the "sense of complete equality." Nevertheless, he allows that in "shaping our deliberations when the President was absent, the best performer . . . was the Attorney General."[66] Stevenson compared the attorney general to "a bull in a china shop." In another participant's words, "Bobby made Christians of us. We all knew little brother was watching; and keeping a little list of where everyone stood."[67] But there is no evidence that Robert Kennedy knew which option he favored from the start. He had not imagined the concept he ultimately advocated. The quality of the discussions, and the way they unfolded, helped him find just the mix he, and his brother, could choose.

Soviet Withdrawal of the Missiles from Cuba

Near the end of September 1962, one of Khrushchev's aides remembers the Soviet leader receiving a progress report on the missile deployment, turning quietly to the aide, and saying, "Soon hell will break loose." The aide replied, "I hope the boat does not capsize, Nikita Sergeyevich." Khrushchev thought for a moment, then answered, "Now it's too late to change anything."[68]

After his October 18 meetings with Kennedy and Rusk, Gromyko reported back that the overall situation on Cuba was "completely satisfactory." The Americans, he reported, are "amazed by the Soviet Union's courage in assisting Cuba." Gromyko had no inkling that the Americans knew about the missiles. He concluded his report by saying that "a USA military adventure against Cuba is almost impossible to imagine."[69]

As discussed in Chapter 4, the Soviet government was caught off guard by the American discovery of the missiles, even though Soviet soldiers in Cuba apparently detected the U-2 overflights of October 14, 15, and 17. The surmise at one of the White House meetings that Moscow had been caught "with its contingencies down," was not far from the truth. The Soviet deputy foreign minister later told a colleague, bluntly, that, "Khrushchev shit [in] his pants."[70]

The Kremlin plunged into its own crisis deliberations on October 22, after learning that Kennedy planned to address the American people. Unlike Kennedy, Khrushchev continued to rely upon his normal foreign policy process, consulting a small group of Presidium members aided by the defense and foreign ministers and the leading international expert from the Communist Party's Central Committee staff. When a formal decision was needed, Khrushchev convened the full Presidium.

Khrushchev worried that the Americans would attack Cuba. At one moment, he considered turning the nuclear weapons over to the Cubans and letting them respond. But in the next, he assured his colleagues, who presumably were alarmed by this suggestion, that he would not let Castro use the MRBMs against the United States. Perhaps the Cubans could deter

an invasion just by threatening to use the short-range tactical nuclear weapons against an invader.[71]

The Presidium first decided that Defense Minister Malinovsky should cable General Pliyev, commander of the Soviet troops in Cuba, ordering him to bring his troops to combat readiness and to use all Cuban and Soviet forces, except the nuclear arms, to meet an attack. Then the Presidium changed its position and considered sending a message authorizing use of the tactical nuclear weapons but not the ballistic missiles. Malinovsky was uneasy about this instruction, fearful that the Americans might intercept it and use it as a pretext for launching a first strike with nuclear weapons. So the Kremlin sent out the initial orders, reserving for Moscow any authorization for the use of nuclear weapons.[72]

After Kennedy's speech announcing the U.S. discovery of the missiles and the blockade, the Soviet government breathed a collective sigh of relief. The Americans had not attacked Cuba. A weaker response, the blockade left them room for political maneuver. So the Soviet government issued a flat, tough rejection of the American demands the next day, October 23. Khrushchev and his Presidium decided to halt most of the 30 ships en route to Cuba. But they directed the 4 carrying IRBMs and a fifth, loaded with nuclear warheads for the missiles, to proceed on course along with 4 submarines carrying nuclear-armed torpedoes. As Kennedy expected, the Soviets also considered a countermove against Berlin. Vasily Kuznetsov, first deputy minister of foreign affairs, proposed the idea of countering the blockade with pressure against West Berlin an initiative that had been suggested by Ambassador Dobrynin as well. One of those present recalls that the idea "provoked a sharp, and I would say violent, reaction by Khrushchev" that he could "do without such advice . . . we had no intention to add fuel to the conflict."[73].

Tension increased on October 24. The Soviet armed forces had increased their readiness for worldwide military action. Another cable from Dobrynin arrived, reporting on an October 23 meeting with Robert Kennedy and making it clear that the Americans would stop and board advancing Soviet ships. At this point, the 36 MRBMs (for 24 launchers) were in Cuba, along with their nuclear warheads. Nearly 100 other nuclear warheads were also

in Cuba for the coastal defense missiles, short-range rockets, and IL-28 bombers. The 24 nuclear warheads to be carried on the IRBMs (for the 18 launch sites still under construction) were also in Cuba, but the IRBMs themselves were at sea, heading toward the quarantine line.[74] Khrushchev was publicly defiant. Privately, however, he apparently reversed the Presidium decision of the previous day.

The ships carrying IRBMs stopped.[75] A few ships with more innocent cargoes, including the *Bucharest* and *Grozny*, sailed on—apparently to test American enforcement of the quarantine. The ship carrying the nuclear warheads had already arrived at a Cuban port. Procedurally, the decisions were odd. Khrushchev did not reconvene the full Presidium or advise them that he had reversed their previous ruling. Indeed, he spoke at the next Presidium meeting, October 25, as if the ships carrying IRBMs were continuing on their way.[76] Khrushchev had "blinked," but he may have tried to keep all his colleagues in the Presidium from knowing it at least at the moment.

By the morning of October 25, the Soviet leadership had received a tough, terse reply to Khrushchev's defiant pronouncement the previous day. Kennedy wrote "it was not I who issued the first challenge in this case." Kennedy underscored his "hope that your government will take the necessary action to permit a restoration of the earlier situation."[77] Khrushchev reconvened the Presidium. He told members he did not want to trade "caustic remarks" any longer with Kennedy. Instead, he wanted to turn around four ships still carrying missiles to Cuba—not telling them that he had already issued orders to stop the ships. Khrushchev told his colleagues that he was willing to "dismantle the missiles to make Cuba into a zone of peace"

Thus by the Thursday of showdown week, Khrushchev abandoned his hopes for changing the military balance to provide chips for his Berlin plan. We know almost nothing of the personal turmoil he must have experienced in making this painful choice. Nor do we know what internal political calculations influenced his apparent deceptions in telling his colleagues what orders he had given to which ships, and when. Instead, Khrushchev suggested a new offer to the Americans: "Give us a pledge not to invade

Cuba, and we will remove the missiles." He was also prepared to allow UN inspection of the missile sites. The Presidium approved his plan with the usual unanimous vote.[78]

Khrushchev said, however, that he wanted to "look around" some more and make sure Kennedy really would stand fast. Khrushchev waited for more news. He learned that the *Bucharest* had been allowed to proceed to Cuba. There is no indication that he and his colleagues agonized, as Kennedy's ExCom did, over what would happen in encounters at the quarantine line. All we know for sure is that Khrushchev kept the Presidium-approved offer for a negotiated settlement in his pocket. He sent no message to Kennedy.

On Friday, October 26, Khrushchev was stirred to action again. The reasons apparently had little to do with any American action and much to do with the Soviets' own strange system for getting information and analysis. Fursenko and Naftali find that on the morning of October 26 Khrushchev received a series of intelligence reports of increased U.S. military readiness and preparations. Among these, a KGB report from Washington stood out. It reported that, according to a well-connected American journalist, a U.S. attack on Cuba was "prepared to the last detail" and "could begin at any moment." The report was based on a KGB agent's conversations with Warren Rogers, a reporter for the *New York Herald Tribune*, who, not knowing his bartender might be a spy, had simply expressed his own freewheeling personal opinion over drinks at the National Press Club.[79] His status as the lead source on Khrushchev's desk that morning speaks volumes about the process that produced the Soviet government's intelligence and analysis.

Khrushchev also received a report cabled from his ambassador to Cuba, Alexeev. Alexeev said that Castro had approved of the Soviet action to avoid a confrontation on the quarantine line. However, Castro now wanted to shoot down "one or two piratic American planes over Cuban territory," i.e., American reconnaissance planes, which on October 25 had begun flying low-level reconnaissance missions directly over the Soviet bases. According to Alexeev, Castro did not take rumors of a possible American invasion very seriously.[80]

Moved by these and possibly other concerns, Khrushchev drafted and sent a long personal, rambling letter to Kennedy on October 26 suggesting the terms of a settlement. If the United States would promise not to invade Cuba, "the necessity for the presence of our military specialists in Cuba would disappear." It was more a hint than a concrete proposal. McNamara observed scornfully that the proposed deal was "full of holes . . . 12 pages of fluff. That's no contract. You couldn't sign that and say we know what we signed." Khrushchev's message reflected the discussion and decision approved by the Presidium the previous day, so he sought no further formal approval, but merely sent copies of the letter to the members.[81] While the Soviet ambassador at the UN disclaimed authority to negotiate any deal, the Americans saw confirmation of Khrushchev's readiness to negotiate when Washington's KGB resident, Alexander Fomin (real name: Feklisov), approached journalist John Scali, echoing similar terms.[82] The convergence of Fomin's message with Khrushchev's wishes was a coincidence. The KGB man apparently acted on his own, without instructions from Moscow, perhaps prompted by his own fears of nuclear war.

It is not clear how Khrushchev reacted to Alexeev's message reporting Castro's desire to start shooting down U.S. reconnaissance planes. Nor is there any evidence of Soviet interest in the American boarding of their chartered cargo ship, the *Marucla*. During the day on Friday Khrushchev probably heard that a Swedish cargo ship under Soviet charter, the *Coalangatta*, had successfully defied the blockade. But there is no available evidence about Soviet attention to Washington's concern about the continued movement of their ship, *Grozny*, toward the quarantine line. This directly contradicted the promise Khrushchev had made to UN Secretary General U Thant.

Sometime between about midday (in Moscow) on Friday and Saturday morning, October 27, Khrushchev reconsidered, concluding that the Americans could be pushed harder. Perhaps he or others in the Kremlin misjudged the signals from the Americans' selective enforcement of the quarantine. Khrushchev's son's view is that his father felt obliged to send at least one ship through (the *Bucharest*) and was surprised when the Americans failed to stop it. Alexeev later commented that the Americans' willingness to let some ships through meant that they had really just

established a paper blockade.[83] This perception was not quite accurate, however. The record showed that the Americans had actively considered reaching out even beyond the 500-mile quarantine line in order to "grab" a Soviet ship carrying arms to Cuba. At the same time, they hesitated to force a confrontation over ships that were not carrying arms. Yet some American officials, especially on Friday, were quite worried that their attempt to modulate subtly enforcement of the quarantine was sending mixed messages to Moscow.

Between Friday and Saturday, Castro flip-flopped, but in just the opposite direction from Khrushchev. Instead of the earlier relaxed dismissal of the possibility of an American invasion, Castro had now become alarmed and fearful. The Soviet commander reported to Moscow that the Cubans expected the air strike to come at any moment and were preparing to fire at American aircraft if there was an attack. General Pliyev added that he had dispersed nuclear warheads from central storage to their launch sites. Moscow endorsed these plans.[84]

Khrushchev, however, was less concerned. He reconvened the Presidium on October 27, and he told them that the U.S. would not dare to attack Cuba. Five days had passed since Kennedy's speech and nothing had happened. "To my mind they are not ready to do it now." So Khrushchev proposed to up the ante with an offer that added a new demand—for withdrawal of U.S. missiles from Turkey. With that, he said, "we would win."[85]

Available evidence provides limited insight into the personal and inter-personal calculations that led Khrushchev to conclude that the Americans would be more accommodating or add the Turkish missiles as a bargaining point. Though they were a long-standing irritant, the missiles had not been an important topic in any of the previous Presidium discussions during the crisis. Had Khrushchev included the Turkey idea in his private letter to Kennedy on October 26, the U.S. would likely have found a way to accept it. The Americans had feared, with cause, that Khrushchev's objective was Berlin, so they might have welcomed such a compromise. As Vice President Lyndon Johnson observed in the secret deliberations: "What we were afraid of was he would never offer this, and what he would want to do is trade Berlin."[86] No one in the Executive Committee spoke up for the

Jupiter missiles. Dillon and McCone, for example, were both quite open about their willingness to trade them. But introducing the idea at this point, in this way, should have raised some obvious questions from the Soviet perspective. Wouldn't the Americans now perceive this as a change in the Soviet negotiating position, inconsistent with the Friday letter, and with the proposal of the KGB resident in Washington? The Americans might think the Soviet leader was reneging on his earlier offer.

A student of negotiations would have cautioned Khrushchev on his bargaining tactics.[87] To change the terms of an offer before the party with whom one is negotiating has 24 hours to respond to the first offer was likely to generate confusion. It would raise doubts about his seriousness, or suggest that he was just trying to stall. In fact, the ExCom reacted in precisely this way. McNamara, for instance, had already begun moving beyond blockade to support direct military action. News of Khrushchev's Saturday letter pushed him further down that road. As he explained to his ExCom colleagues: "How can we negotiate with somebody who changes his deal before we even get a chance to reply, and announces publicly the deal before we receive it?"[88]

Moreover, Khrushchev's maneuver created an even larger problem. The lengthy, discursive, personal Friday letter suggesting withdrawal of Soviet missiles for a non-invasion pledge was sent secretly and considered by the ExCom in secret. The Saturday letter not only changed the terms of the deal, demanding withdrawal of Turkish missiles as well, but it did so in a *public* message. That fact only made it almost impossible for his American counterparts to accept this compromise.

Why the Soviets made the Saturday proposal, and broadcast it publicly, remains unclear. The offer was almost certainly not dictated by military considerations. A public deal might save face, but not if the Americans rejected it—which almost any analyst would have predicted would happen. The Turks publicly rejected the trade just as the Americans started to discuss it. Castro expected the Americans to reject such a deal, and Alexeev reported to Moscow that he comforted Castro with that very point.[89] The fact that the offer was made publicly seems to have been incidental. Chapter 4 offers an organizational explanation, the new proposal broadcast over the

radio simply in order to save the hours required by cumbersome transmission procedures.[90]

Saturday, October 27, was the longest and most difficult day of the crisis. As the members of the ExCom gathered on Saturday morning to fashion a response to the secret Friday letter, they received notice that Kennedy was handed a news ticker summarizing a special message from Khrushchev demanding withdrawal of the Turkish missiles as the price for withdrawal of Soviet missiles in Cuba. When the entire text was received, and analyzed by the members of the ExCom during the hours that followed, they speculated about many possibilities, including the possibility that Khrushchev had been overruled by his colleagues in Moscow.

Having dictated the new message to Kennedy, offering the Turkey-Cuba trade, Khrushchev and his colleagues did have second thoughts about Pliyev's dispersal of nuclear weapons. An order was quickly sent to the Soviet general reiterating that he should not use any nuclear weapons without express authorization from Moscow. Khrushchev also sent a message to Havana urging Alexeev to caution Castro against any rash actions.[91]

Soviets Kill an American U-2 Pilot

Castro had already ordered his air defense forces to start shooting at American planes entering Cuban airspace.[92] He had discussed the plan with Soviet commanders on the scene. Alexeev had reported the matter to Moscow, and the commanders may have also reported it in military channels. On October 27, Khrushchev sent instructions to Alexeev suggesting that Castro rescind the order but by then it was too late, even if Castro had wanted to heed the advice.

In a full state of alarm over the expected attack, the Cubans fired first at American reconnaissance aircraft flying low-level missions within range of the Cuban antiaircraft guns. At least one of the planes was hit, but not brought down. When a U-2 flew over, well beyond the range of any Cuban guns, it too was mistakenly perceived as a threat. Authority to fire had been delegated to Soviet field commanders in the event of an American attack.

The local Soviet air defense officers, unable to consult with Pliyev, chose to interpret their instructions liberally in order to assist their excited Cuban comrades.[93] A Soviet surface-to-air missile was fired. It hit the target, downed the U-2 and killed its pilot, Major Rudolph Anderson. Khrushchev did not grasp the fact that Soviet officers were responsible for this action until some time later. The next day Khrushchev sent a message to Castro that said "you shot down" one of the provocative American overflights, and Khrushchev warned Castro that such steps "will be used by aggressors to their advantage, to further their aims." At that time, Castro explained that he had mobilized all his antiaircraft batteries "to support the positions of the Soviet forces" and that "if we wanted to prevent the risk of a surprise attack, the crews had to have orders to shoot. Castro added that, "the Soviet Forces Command can give you further details on what happened with the plane that was shot down."[94]

The episode was even more dangerous than Khrushchev knew. The U.S. government had already developed plans and issued orders that, if a U-2 was shot down, a retaliatory air strike would be launched against offending air defense sites within minutes. McNamara proposed a strike at dawn the next day. Kennedy still held back. But Kennedy was the exception. Kennedy's added caution could not have been anticipated. An analyst in Moscow should have anticipated an immediate retaliatory response. As one State official put it, "you could have an undisciplined antiaircraft, Cuban antiaircraft outfit, fire. But to have a SAM site, with a Russian crew, fire is not any accident."[95]

The American official was right. The shootdown was no accident. Yet the action did not reflect the specific preferences of Khrushchev or the Soviet government. Nor had it simply been a matter of organizational routine. An explanation could only be found by exploring questions about the command environment in Cuba, the methods for communicating with higher authorities in Moscow, and the procedures that had been set in place for making military decisions in the field. The military officers probably thought they, or Alexeev on their behalf, had warned Moscow of what might happen in Alexeev's cable of October 25. Moscow had, it seemed, acquiesced. In their environment, a sense of solidarity with their Cuban counterparts was understandable. There was little time to decide, and they

were unable to consult General Pliyev. So they acted, interpreting their orders. It is possible that President Kennedy, one of the few combat veterans sitting at the ExCom table, intuitively understood this possibility, and that may be one reason why he paused.

The President and the Chairman

President Kennedy and Chairman Khrushchev now faced supreme decisions.

> Bullfight critics row on row,
> Crowd the enormous plaza de toros
> But only one is there who knows,
> And he is the one who fights the bull.[96]

There was more than irony in President Kennedy's recital of this poem in closing an off-the-record press conference on Tuesday, October 16. That was the day he learned the Soviets were installing offensive missiles in Cuba. In the preceding 635 days as president Kennedy lived with the knowledge that at any moment he might make a personal judgment that would put half the world in jeopardy. Every day this responsibility weighed on his thoughts and his sleep. The experience of this burden separated him, and his needs, from those around him—even his closest advisers. They could know his burden intellectually; he experienced it emotionally. As he put it in his year-end interview for 1962, "The president bears the burden of responsibility. The advisers may move on to new advice."[97]

Until October 1962, this weight hung around his neck as a prospective responsibility. Now events forced the nuclear toreador into the ring. What he experienced in those days we can only faintly imagine. The existential burden of responsibility for actually *making* judgments that might cause the quick death of millions of human beings must have been overwhelming. While he could involve others in the choice, he was responsible for the outcome. This qualitative difference in responsibility exaggerated the differences between his perspective and that of the men around him.

Perhaps only Kennedy's Soviet counterpart also knew what it was to be, in Richard Neustadt's apt phrase, a "Final Arbiter."[98] Khrushchev's statements about the crisis were, characteristically, more dramatic than Kennedy's. He recalled the "smell of scorching [that] hung in the air."[99] He warned Kennedy that if we "do not show wisdom . . . [we] will come to a clash, like *blind moles*, and then reciprocal extermination will begin." His secret October 26 letter concluded with the most penetrating metaphor of the crisis:

> If, however, you have not lost your self-control and sensibly conceive what this might lead to, then, Mr. President, you and I ought not now to pull on the ends of the rope in which you have tied the *knots of war*, because the more the two of us pull, the tighter the knot will be tied. And a moment may come when that knot will be tied so tight that even he who tied it will not have the strength to untie it, and then it will be necessary to cut that knot, and what that would mean is not for me to explain to you, because you yourself understand perfectly of what terrible forces our countries dispose.[100]

The nuclear crisis seems to have magnified both rulers' conceptions of the consequences of nuclear war, and each man's awareness of his special responsibility. This consciousness not only set each man apart from his associates, it set each apart in a way that left the two alone—together. For they were equally yoked with responsibility for irreparable consequences: either man could cause both to fail; each would have to cooperate if they were to succeed. Indeed, a central feature of the crisis was the unchosen partnership between these two men in a game against nuclear disaster.

The "Deal": Resolving the Turkish Problem

Until October 27, President Kennedy felt no necessity to consult anyone beyond the ExCom in making these fateful choices. But when Khrushchev linked NATO's MRBMs in Turkey with Soviet missiles in Cuba, he widened the game. As Kennedy put it, "so far all that really gets involved are us, the Russians, and Cuba. Beginning with the offer on Turkey, then [the allies] are really in it."[101] Because U.S. nuclear-armed missiles had

been stationed in Turkey by a decision of the NATO alliance, NATO would have to decide to remove them.

Kennedy had no difficulty accepting the terms proposed by Khrushchev's Friday letter: pledging not to invade Cuba if missiles were dismantled. As he had said to Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko the prior week, the U.S. had "no intention to invade Cuba." But how to answer Saturday's proposal to trade NATO missiles in Turkey for Soviet missiles in Cuba—that was the problem. The U.S. could simply reject it, as many members of the ExCom urged. But Kennedy found that unacceptable. As a member of the group noted: "Day and night we've talked about this. And we've said we'd be delighted to trade those missiles in Turkey for the same in Cuba."[102] Kennedy judged that, "we're going to be in an insupportable position [if we reject Khrushchev's proposition] . . . It is going to—to any man at the UN or any other rational man—it will look like a very fair trade."[103]

If, on the other hand, the U.S. traded NATO missiles in Turkey for Soviet missiles, what about the consequences for the NATO alliance and for American commitments elsewhere around the world? As Bundy put it: a trade would make it "clear that we were trying to sell out our allies for our interests. This would be the view of all NATO. Now, it's irrational and crazy, but it is a *terribly* powerful fact."[104] Returning to the point, Bundy argued: "I think that if we sound as if we want to make this trade, to our NATO people and to all the people who are tied to us by alliance, we are in real trouble . . . I think we should tell you [Mr. President] that this is the universal assessment of everyone in the government that's connected with these alliance problems."[105]

The struggle to avoid being impaled by one horn, or the other, of this dilemma made Saturday's deliberation the most intense and difficult of the crisis. Transcripts of those secret discussions allow a reader to become a fly on the wall, privy to the most intimate deliberations among leaders of a superpower contemplating war within the next 24 to 48 hours—a war most participants believed could escalate quickly to nuclear war. As Sorensen recalled: "our little group, seated around the Cabinet table in continuous session that Saturday felt nuclear war to be closer on that day than at any time in the nuclear age."[106]

The availability of such unusual evidence about an event of such consequence makes this a classic for students of high-level decision-making and diplomacy. From the outer shell of public pronouncements and spin, through successive layers of secret communication among adversaries and allies, secret deliberations within the U.S. government, and further secrets within subgroups in the U.S. government, one can unpack the *matryoshka*.[*] Inside each circle, and between it and the others, one finds an exquisite blend of debate, disclosure, deception, reflection, and bargaining. It is difficult to review this record without coming to agree with Kennedy's insight that serves as the epigraph of this book. To understand the essence of ultimate decision would require penetrating the impenetrable.

President Kennedy becomes the driver of the debate. We see a president as analyst-in-chief. On each issue, he presses his colleagues to probe deeper implications of each option; to explore ways of circumventing seemingly insurmountable obstacles; to face squarely unpalatable tradeoffs; and to stretch their imagination. In Saturday's discussion, the group agreed quickly on one central conclusion: the Soviet rush to complete the missiles must cease immediately. Otherwise, their operational missiles would become a *fait accompli.* Saturday afternoon's news of the shootdown of the U-2 and firing upon low-level reconnaissance aircraft forced the U.S. to make the next move—now. If it retaliated against the sites that had fired the first shots, it would kill substantial numbers of Russian and Cuban soldiers. If it cancelled reconnaissance flights, it would be blind to fast-changing military developments at the sites essential for targeting their destruction. Thus, proposition one in the U.S. response demanded that work stop. That message was clear in Saturday morning's public statement, in a memo to U Thant of the UN, and in the formal response to Khrushchev.

Still more vexing was Khrushchev's demand that the U.S. sacrifice the Turkish missiles. Reviewing the Saturday afternoon debate, one finds a President who is not prepared to let the Turkish missiles come between him and a settlement that avoids war with the Soviet Union. He searches for every possible way to win the Turks' and NATO's agreement in advance. He is convinced that if NATO knew what the ExCom knew, and understood the real alternatives at this crossroads, it would agree to the trade. But as he and his colleagues explore ways to call a meeting of the NATO Council, or

meet separately with the Turkish Prime Minister, or even send an ultimatum to the Turkish Prime Minister, the president becomes convinced that there is no way to get to "yes" quickly enough.

In a marathon discussion that continues for almost four hours, Kennedy pushes his colleagues to think beyond the next move in the game:

> What we don't want is for the deal to be turned down by them [NATO] without realizing that the turn-down puts us in the position of having to do something. What we are going to be faced with is that, because they wouldn't take the missiles out of Turkey, we are either going to have to invade or [have] a massive strike on Cuba which may lose Berlin. That's what concerns me.[107]

Bundy objects: "If we appear to be trading the defense of Turkey for a threat to Cuba, we'll just have to face a radical decline in the effectiveness [of the NATO alliance]." Kennedy responds: "If we reject [the trade] out of hand and then have to take military action against Cuba, then we'll also face a decline [in the alliance]."[108]

> I'm just thinking about what we're going to have to do in a day or so, which is 500 sorties, in 7 days, and possibly an invasion, all because we wouldn't take the missiles out of Turkey.[109]

> We know how quickly everybody's courage goes out when the blood starts to flow, and that's what's going to happen to NATO. When we start these things and they [the Soviets] grab Berlin, everyone's going to say "well that [the trade for Turkish missiles] was a pretty good proposition"[110]

> They're [the Turks] not going to want to do it, but we may just have to do it in our interest.[111]

It's going to look like we're caving in . . . To get it done, you'd probably have to . . . take all the political effects of the cave-in of NATO.[112]

Some members of the ExCom found the President persuasive. McCone minced no words: "I would trade these Turkish things right out. I wouldn't be talking to anybody about it."[113] The most ingenious support came from McNamara, who proposed that the U.S. unilaterally render the Jupiter missiles in Turkey "inoperable" in order to "minimize the Soviet response against NATO following a U.S. attack on Cuba."[114] In an extraordinary analytic display, especially in the midst of an ongoing debate, he laid out his case in a series of specific propositions: (1) the Soviets have downed a U-2 and fired on U.S. surveillance aircraft over Cuba—the U.S. will have to respond by attacking SAMs and low-level groundfire in Cuba; (2) "that means 500 sorties at a minimum"; (3) "if we do this and leave those missiles in Turkey, the Soviet Union may, and I think probably will, attack the Turkish missiles"; (4) "if the Soviet Union attacks the Turkish missiles, we must respond; the minimum response by NATO to a Soviet attack on Turkish Jupiter missiles would be a response with conventional weapons by NATO forces in Turkey"; and (5) "one way to avoid it is to defuse the Turkish missiles before we attacked Cuba."[115]

If this were the best way to protect Turkey, others asked, what about the consequences for Berlin? To this, McNamara had no reply.[116]

The participant who knew the Soviets best emerged as one of the strongest opponents of any such trade. As Thompson said plainly: "Mr. President, if we go on the basis of a trade, which I gather is somewhat in your mind, we end up, it seems to me, with the Soviets still in Cuba with planes and technicians and so on, even though the missiles are out. And that would surely be unacceptable and put you in a worse position."[117] Thompson judged that Khrushchev had "upped the price, and they've upped the action"; that "he's now getting the idea that he can get a lot more"; that "any indication that we're going to accept anything on Turkey is clearly unacceptable" because it will signal weakness and encourage Khrushchev to demand more.[118]

After almost three hours, he deliberations approached stalemate. In Robert Kennedy's words:

> There were sharp disagreements. Everyone was tense; some were already near exhaustion; all were weighted down with concern and worry . . . When we almost seemed unable to communicate with one another he [the President] suggested with a note of some exasperation that(inasmuch as I felt so strongly that the State Department's various efforts to respond were not satisfactory—Ted Sorensen and I should leave the meeting and go into his office and compose an alternative response.[119]

President Kennedy also left the room. When he, Robert Kennedy, and Sorensen returned, the president announced no decision, but nonetheless signaled his own conclusion: "We can't very well invade Cuba, with all the toil and blood it's going to be, when we could have gotten them [the Soviet missiles] out by making a deal on the same missiles in Turkey. If that's part of the record, then I don't see how we'll have a very good war."[120] Recognizing that many others in the room disagreed strongly, especially about the Turkish issue, he adjourned the meeting: "I think we've got two or three different proposals here. Can we meet at 9:00 PM and everybody can get a bite to eat."[121]

At 8:00 PM, the RFK-Sorensen draft of the public message to Khrushchev was simultaneously transmitted to Moscow and released to the press. According to this letter, "the first thing that needs to be done is for *work to cease* on offensive missile bases in Cuba, and for all weapons systems in Cuba capable of offensive use to be rendered inoperable, under effective UN arrangements." On the Turkish question, the letter said only that "if the first proposition were accepted, the effects of such a settlement on easing world tensions would enable us to work towards a more general agreement regarding other armaments as proposed in your second letter which you made public."[122]

But as the meeting concluded, Kennedy invited a smaller group to join him in the Oval Office to discuss the message Robert Kennedy would convey

personally to Ambassador Dobrynin. This "ExCom within the ExCom" went well beyond what had just been agreed. McGeorge Bundy summarized that meeting as follows:

> A smaller group moved from the Cabinet room to the Oval Office to talk over the second means of communication—an oral message to be conveyed to Ambassador Dobrynin. [That group included Rusk, McNamara, Robert Kennedy, Ball, Gilpatric, Thompson, Sorensen, and Bundy.] One part of the oral message we discussed was simple, stern, and quickly decided—that the time had come to agree on the basis set out in the President's new letter: no Soviet missiles in Cuba, and no U.S. invasion. Otherwise, further American action was unavoidable . . . The other part of the oral message was . . . that we should tell Khrushchev that while there could be no deal over Turkish missiles, the President was determined to get them out and would do so once the Cuban crisis was resolved.[123]

Bundy's next carefully chosen words reflect his unease: "Concerned as we all were by the costs of a public bargain struck under pressure at the apparent expense of the Turks, and aware as we were from the day's discussion that for some, *even in our closest councils*, even this unilateral private assurance might appear to betray an ally, we agreed without hesitation that no one not in the room was to be informed of this additional message."[124] Reflecting the contract implicit in the proposal, he added: "Robert Kennedy was instructed to make it plain to Dobrynin that the same secrecy must be observed on the other side, and that any Soviet reference to our assurance would simply make it null and void."

Robert Kennedy left immediately to meet Dobrynin at the Justice Department and deliver the private message. It was a masterful example of diplomatic doublespeak:

> I told him that this [the U-2 shootdown] was an extremely serious turn in events. We would have to make certain decisions *within the next 12 or possibly 24 hours. . .* I said those missile bases had to go and they

had to go right away. We had to have a commitment by at least tomorrow that those bases would be moved. This was not an ultimatum, I said, but just a statement of fact. He should understand that if they did not remove those bases, then we would remove them. His country might take retaliatory action, but he should understand that before this was over, while there might be dead Americans, there would also be dead Russians.

He then asked me about Khrushchev's other proposal dealing with removal of the missiles from Turkey. I replied that there could be no quid pro quo—no deal of this kind could be made . . . If some time elapsed—and . . . I mentioned *four or five months*—I said I was sure that these matters could be resolved satisfactorily.[125]

Dobrynin heard the offer clearly and conveyed it to Moscow.[126]

The "Deal": Resolving the Cuban Problem

Before the U.S. had to make the final decisions about military action, Khrushchev moved. Events of October 27, including the shootdown of a U-2 over Cuba and penetration of Soviet territory by another U-2, punctured any sense of complacency in Moscow. To make matters worse, a message from Castro reached Moscow early on the morning of Sunday, October 28 (Moscow time). In it, Castro wrote that an American attack in the next 24 to 72 hours "is almost inevitable," probably a massive air strike, but possibly an invasion. If the Americans did invade, Castro urged Khrushchev to consider "elimination of such a danger," by using Soviet nuclear weapons against the Americans. "However difficult and horrifying this decision may be," Castro wrote, "there is, I believe, no other recourse."[127]

Alexeev also reported back Castro's reaction to the Soviet public proposal of October 27. Castro felt sure the Americans would reject it. While reassuring his Cuban colleagues there was no danger that the Soviets would reject their "obligations," Alexeev reminded Castro that "in the present circumstances it would not be fitting to aggravate the situation and initiate provocations." Castro said he understood, but that "considering the rise in

the army's martial spirit and the Americans' warning, our friends were compelled to take such a step."[128]

Khrushchev appears to have been alarmed by the message from Castro urging him to use nuclear weapons against America. In a subsequent message to Castro, he referred to this "very alarming" message in which "you proposed that we be the first to carry out a nuclear strike against the enemy's territory." "Naturally," Khrushchev added, "you understand where that would lead us. It would not be a simple strike, but the start of a thermonuclear world war."[129]

Kennedy's terse, public message reached Khrushchev on Sunday morning, October 28, in Moscow. It insisted that the Soviets withdraw their missiles from Cuba and offered in exchange a lifting of the quarantine and pledge not to invade Cuba. Khrushchev opened the special session of the Presidium at noon on October 28 with a very different assessment from the day before. He warned his colleagues that they were "face to face with the danger of war and of nuclear catastrophe, with the possible result of destroying the human race." He went on, "In order to save the world, we must retreat."[130]

After this opening statement, but before Khrushchev had proposed specific terms of retreat, Dobrynin's cable of his conversation with Robert Kennedy arrived. It conveyed both the threat and the concession. Specifically, the cable stated: "The USA government is determined to get rid of those bases —up to, in the extreme case, of bombing them," unless the Soviet Union agreed to "halt further work on the construction of missile bases in Cuba and take measures under international control that would make it impossible to use these weapons. . . . The president doesn't see any insurmountable difficulties in resolving this issue [of withdrawing U.S. missiles from Turkey]. We need 4-5 months, taking into account the procedures that exist within the NATO framework." According to Dobrynin's cable, Robert Kennedy ended the conversation by emphasizing that "The current situation, unfortunately, is such that there is very little time to resolve this whole issue. Unfortunately, events are developing too quickly." Dobrynin concluded with the comment, "I should say that during our meeting R. Kennedy was very upset; in any case, I've never seen him

like this before. He didn't even try to get into fights on various subjects, as he usually does, and only persistently returned to one topic: time is of the essence and we shouldn't miss the chance.[131] This report from Washington stiffened Khrushchev and his Presidium's inclination to say "da" and to say it quickly.

A report that at 5:00 P.M. Moscow time (or 9:00 A.M. in Washington), Kennedy would be making another speech to the American people fueled fears that an American military action was imminent. Apparently the report was a rebroadcast of Kennedy's October 22 speech. An urgent, conciliatory message agreeing to "dismantle the arms which you describe as offensive and to crate them and return them to the Soviet Union" was prepared and hurriedly broadcast over the radio to be sure it reached Washington in time.

In the aftermath of the crisis, Kennedy's final move was characterized as a "Trollope Ploy," recalling a recurring scene in the writings of that Victorian novelist in which an eager maiden interprets a squeeze of her hand as a proposal of marriage. In the light of the evidence from the Soviet files, however, a more apt analogy is *Rashoman*, Kurasawa's classic film in which a bandit appears intent upon raping a maiden who is seeking to seduce him. To end this crisis, Kennedy was prepared to pay more, and Khrushchev to accept less, than the other required or understood. Kennedy offered the Turkish missiles, but before Khrushchev learned that Kennedy had sweetened his offer, he had chosen to withdraw Soviet missiles from Cuba in exchange for a noninvasion pledge alone.

As Radio Moscow was broadcasting the public message, two further messages were rushed to Dobrynin in Washington, saying "quickly get in touch with R. Kennedy" and pass on the following "urgent response: 'The thoughts which R. Kennedy expressed at the instruction of the President finds understanding in Moscow. Today, an answer will be given by radio . . . and that response will be the most favorable.'" A second message said: "In my letter to you of October 28, which was designed for publication, I did not touch on this matter because of your wish, as conveyed by Robert Kennedy. But all of the offers, which were included in this letter, were given on account of your having agreed to the Turkish issue raised in my

letter of October 27 and announced by Robert Kennedy, from your side, in his meeting with the Soviet ambassador that same day."[132]

There had been no time to consult with Castro. He learned of Khrushchev's decision from the radio, along with the rest of the world. Pliyev was chided for having been in such a "hurry" to shoot down the U-2. All Soviet jets were to be grounded to avoid any more clashes.[133]

With Khrushchev's announcement that the missiles would be withdrawn, the moment of maximum tension passed. But the crisis was not over. For several days thereafter, the evidence was ambiguous. Low-level reconnaissance missions of October 29 appeared to show that construction was actually continuing. The Joint Chiefs of Staff argued that Khrushchev's move was a ruse to delay American action. Meanwhile U Thant pressured the United States not to conduct any more surveillance while he was visiting Havana and arranging UN inspection of the missiles and their removal.

Kennedy found his position awkward. The public thought the crisis was essentially over, and expected proof of the missiles being pulled out. There was no such proof to give them. Kennedy had little evidence beyond his own belief that Khrushchev was sincere, a belief fortunately reinforced by intelligence about Cuban and Chinese anger at what they seemed to regard as a Soviet betrayal.

Dobrynin delivered Khrushchev's second, private letter referring to the Turkish missiles to Robert Kennedy on October 29. The next day he was recalled by the younger Kennedy who, in effect, flung the letter back in the ambassador's face. That day, Robert Kennedy jotted down that he said: "No quid pro quo as I told you. The letter makes it appear that there was." The missiles would leave Turkey. "You have my word on this and that is sufficient. . .; if you should publish any document indicating a deal then it is off." Dobrynin promised that nothing would be published. He took the letter back and the U.S. government kept no record of ever receiving it.[134]

On October 30, Khrushchev sent another letter to Kennedy omitting any mention of the Jupiters and treating the crisis as settled. Saying that he was

interested in the "remnants of the dangerous crisis which you and we have in the main liquidated,"[135] Khrushchev asked for immediate removal of the quarantine and hoped Kennedy might consider giving up the American base at Guantanamo. But the tone of the letter was friendly. "You evidently held to a restraining position with regard to those forces which suffered from militaristic itching," Khrushchev added. "We found a reasonable compromise" and "evidently, your role here was restraining."

Kennedy remained wary, reviewing the invasion planning, holding all military preparations in place, and resuming U.S. air surveillance as soon as possible. As McNamara and others had expected, U Thant's mission had produced no mechanism for UN inspection. Castro refused to play his part in the deal; he would not cooperate in any verification regime or aerial inspection on the island of Cuba.[136] The alternative to a UN regime was, of course, American surveillance—which raised the familiar concerns in Washington about planning to attack Cuba if a plane was shot down. Fortunately, on November 1 the U.S. surveillance aircraft detected positive signs that missiles were being prepared for removal from Cuba. Both U-2 and low-level reconnaissance flights continued in November.

Meanwhile, the American negotiating team in New York found that the Soviet negotiator did not count the IL-28 bombers as offensive weapons. At the beginning of October, the Kennedy administration had been willing to overlook the aircraft rather than provoke a crisis. Now they had become part of the threat Kennedy had publicly pledged to erase.

The two problems, lack of verification and the status of the IL-28s, were the principal issues as talks dragged on in New York through the month of November.

These issues were essentially resolved with an outcome that was announced by President Kennedy at a press conference on November 20. The IL-28s would come out of Cuba within 30 days. There would be no UN inspection regime, but U.S. forces would be allowed to observe the departing Soviet ships, whose cargoes would be made visible to such scrutiny. America would use its own reconnaissance methods to monitor compliance in Cuba. The blockade would finally be lifted. American forces mobilized in higher

defense readiness would return to normal peacetime deployments. The Strategic Air Command would end its airborne alert.

Left less clear at President Kennedy's press conference, except for those who studied his words with care, was the status of the original October 27–28 deal which traded verified withdrawal of Soviet "offensive weapons" for an American pledge not to invade Cuba. The U.S. government had concluded that if Cuba would not allow verification of the settlement, the Cuban part of the deal was off. There would be no noninvasion pledge beyond the safeguards any country enjoyed under international law. President Kennedy told Soviet envoy Anastas Mikoyan directly that if the original agreement with UN inspection was not upheld to the letter, then the U.S. president "can only act in the best way the situation permits."[137]

But Kennedy was no more anxious to invade Cuba than he had been six months earlier. The Americans and Soviets had cobbled together a new deal which was even more one-sided and did not require Cuban cooperation. The Soviets also instructed their forces in Cuba not to shoot down any American reconnaissance aircraft. Periodic U-2 flights continued until satellite photography took their place. U.S. forces remained poised to attack Cuban antiaircraft sites if an American plane was shot down.[138]

By the summer of 1963, the CIA operations against Castro had returned to about what they had been in the summer of 1962, before the Soviet arms shipments began. Washington was again back to a policy judged to have low risk and a low return—petty harassment that was probably not enough to bring down Castro, but also not enough to drag the United States into an open or direct intervention in Cuba.

Also left out of Kennedy's November 20 press conference was any discussion of the Jupiter missiles. The matter was not forgotten, but was handled by the Americans in the proper channel, through NATO, as part of broader reviews of NATO nuclear force posture and possible creation of a multilateral NATO nuclear force. Rusk and McNamara discussed the plan with their Turkish and Italian counterparts during the next meeting of NATO ministers, in Paris in December 1962. It was a meeting marked, as one delegate put it, by an almost "intolerable serenity," amid deep

satisfaction with American management of the Cuban crisis. Out of the public spotlight, in the warm atmosphere of success, the Turks became relaxed about the possible replacement of the Jupiter missiles with a more modern NATO deterrent.[139] The Jupiters were dismantled by the end of April 1963. A Polaris missile submarine took up station in the Mediterranean. All the "missiles of October" were gone.

Notes

1. Robert Kennedy interview, quoted by Ronald Steel, *New York Review of Books*, March 13, 1969, p. 22.

2. The information in [Figure 2](#) is drawn principally from Merle Fainsod, *How Russia Is Ruled*, rev. ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963) leavened by consultation with Timothy Naftali. The portrait in Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble": Khrushchev, Castro and Kennedy 1958–1958* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997), describes crisis decision-making by Khrushchev in direct consultation principally with the members (full members, not candidate members) of the Presidium and one nonmember, Malinovsky. Though Semichastny has mentioned a "special group" formed by the Presidium that worked "day and night" during the crisis, we have no information on the composition of this group and cannot evaluate the significance of its work. Interview with Vladimir Semichastny, 29 August 1995. We have omitted officials who played only a staff role with no active participation in Kremlin decisionmaking even though some of them, such as Oleg Troyanovsky on the Soviet side, became valuable much later as sources for what transpired.

3. Robert F. Kennedy, *Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1969), p. 29. The two most thorough postmortems on the performance of the intelligence community in the crisis were done internally by the CIA and, separately, by the president's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board (PFIAB), chaired by James Killian. The Killian report praised the intelligence community's crisis performance but was sharply critical

of its precrisis work. The CIA study, supervised by McCone, must be the one Robert Kennedy was thinking of, since it concluded that "photography obtained prior to about 17 October would not have been sufficient to warrant action of a type which would require support from Western Hemisphere [or] NATO allies." In other words, the construction was detected only at about the time its dangers were manifest and demonstrable to others.

Yet McCone had also explained candidly to the president that, on balance, aerial surveillance of Cuba had not been pressed urgently enough and that analysts had been too ready to discount the possibility of missiles being deployed. McCone's judgment shaped a consensus joined, at the time however grudgingly, by Bundy, McNamara, and Rusk. For the Killian report and the CIA study, see PFIAB to President Kennedy, 4 February 1963; McCone to President Kennedy, 28 February 1963, both in *CIA Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis*, pp. 361–71, pp. 373–76. For the summarized consensus, see Bundy to Rusk, McNamara, and McCone, 19 February 1963, in *FRUS: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, vol. 11, pp. 702–05; and, for more candid insight on McCone's views (as expressed to President Kennedy but not put down in a memo for circulation around the White House), see also McCone to Record, "Meeting with the President in Palm Beach, Florida—9:45 A.M.—Saturday—5 January 1963," 7 January 1963; and McCone to the Record, "Meeting with the President—4:30 P.M.—4 March 1963," 4 March 1963, in ibid., pp. 651–53, 713–14.

4. Theodore C. Sorensen, *Kennedy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 675.

5. Ibid., p. 670.

6. Ibid., p. 669.

7. Ernest May and Philip Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes: Inside the White House During the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 91.

8. Sorensen, *Kennedy*, p. 670.

9. Ibid., pp. 669 ff; see also, on Keating's activities, Mark J. White, *The Cuban Missile Crisis* (London: Macmillan, 1996), pp. 89–114.

10. Interview with Sorensen by Carl Kaysen, 15 April 1964, John F. Kennedy Library Oral History Project, JFKL, pp. 52, 60, 64. Winston Churchill was then known to all as the statesman who had warned prophetically, in the 1930s, about the coming conflict with Hitler's Germany.

11. On the status of Mongoose in the spring of 1962, see, e.g., "Guidelines for Operation Mongoose," 14 March 1962; Harvey to McCone, "Operation Mongoose," 10 April 1962, both in *FRUS: Cuba, 1961–1962,* vol. 10, pp. 771–72, 786–90. On assassination attempts, see Edwards to Record (and Robert Kennedy), "Arthur James Balletti et al—Unauthorized Publication or Use of Communications," 14 May 1962, in ibid., pp. 807–09.
   On President Kennedy's (and, echoing him, Bundy's) plain refusal to make the desired commitment to a U.S. invasion, see U. Alexis Johnson notes accompanying, "Guidelines for Operation Mongoose," 16 March 1962, in ibid., note on p. 771; Memcon for Bundy meeting with Cuban exile leaders, "Cuba," 29 March 1962, in ibid., pp. 777–78; Hurwitch to Martin, "The Cuban Exile Community, the Cuban Revolutionary Council, and Dr. Miro Cardona," 19 April 1962, in ibid., pp. 797–98; and Passavoy to Record, "Topics Discussed during Meeting of Dr. Miro Cardona with the President," 25 April 1962 and Goodwin to President Kennedy, 14 April 1963 (describing the same 1962 meeting), both in National Security Files, Box 45, Cuba: Subjects, Miro Cardona, Material Sent to Palm Beach, in JFKL. Others present at President Kennedy's meeting with Miro Cardona were Ernesto Aragon, Robert Kennedy, and Richard Goodwin.

12. See Joint Staff paper, "Blockade of Cuba in Reprisal for Soviet Actions in Berlin," DJSM-572–62, 1 May 1962, in *FRUS Cuba 1961–1962,* vol. 10, pp. 801–02.

13. Lansdale (?) to Special Group (Augmented), "US Policy in the Event USSR Establishes a Base(s) in Cuba," 31 May 1962, in ibid., p. 824; see also Lansdale to Special Group (Augmented),

"Status of Requested Studies, Operation Mongoose," 8 June 1962, in ibid., pp. 828–29.

14. The Special Group (Augmented) was chaired by Robert Kennedy. The senior representatives to it were usually Taylor (then the president's military representative) and Bundy for the White House, U. Alexis Johnson from State, Gilpatric for Defense, and McCone himself or Richard Helms from the CIA. Key action officers for Mongoose were William Harvey at the CIA, Robert Hurwitch at State, and General Benjamin Harris at Defense. The Mongoose program was directed by Edward Lansdale.

15. Hurwitch paper, "Political and Economic," 7 August 1962, attachment to Lansdale to Special Group (Augmented), "Stepped Up Course B," 8 August 1962, in ibid., pp. 899–917.

16. State paper, "Thoughts for 2:30 Meeting," 10 August 1962, in ibid., p. 923.

17. At the August 10 review, McNamara raised the idea of assassinating Castro, and it was firmly quashed. See Taylor to President Kennedy, 17 August 1962 ("there is no reason to hope that it will cause the overthrow of the regime from within"); see also Editorial Note and Lansdale to Special Group (Augmented), "Alternate Course B," 14 August 1962, in ibid., pp. 944–45, 923–24, 928–29; see also McCone's revealing complaints in McCone to Record, "Memorandum of Meeting . . .," 16 August 1962, in ibid., pp. 940–940.

18. President Kennedy recorded some or all of the meeting, but as of August 1998 the recording had not yet been declassified.

19. See McCone's record of the meetings on August 21 (at State) and August 23 (at the White House) and NSAM 181, in ibid., pp. 947–49, 953–55, 957–58.

20. In 1965 Robert Kennedy recalled that "I had a very good personal relationship with John McCone. . . . He liked Ethel very much

because, when his wife died, Ethel went over and stayed with him. So he had a good deal of feeling for us, and I think he liked the President very much. But he liked one person more—and that was John McCone." Interview with Arthur Schlesinger, JFKL Oral History Project, in Edwin O. Guthman and Jeffrey Shulman, eds., *Robert Kennedy: In His Own Words* (New York: Bantam, 1988), p. 14. As Robert Kennedy explains, this account was already colored by some bitterness because, when the Cuban missile crisis was over, McCone carefully (and accurately) deflected blame for an intelligence failure by reminding people of his own prescience. During this period, in early 1963, McCone's longstanding tension with McNamara flared into more open conflict. To Robert Kennedy, the episode showed that McCone was not really *loyal*, a cardinal virtue. (In the same oral history, and other sources, Robert Kennedy repeatedly denied that McCone had accurately predicted the Soviet missile deployment, denials that were untrue.) So the reader should take the 1965 recollection of close friendship, and imagine the quality of the friendship before the divisive events.

21. At the August 10 meeting McCone reportedly said (to McNamara), "The subject you just brought up. I think it is highly improper. I do not think it should be discussed. It is not an action that should ever be condoned. It is not proper for us to discuss and I intend to have it expunged from the record." McCone is also remembered to have told McNamara that "I could get excommunicated" for such actions. Church Committee testimony of Walt Elder and others, quoted in Richard Reeves, *President Kennedy: Profile of Power* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993), pp. 337, 713; see also Ray Cline's recollection in Michael R. Beschloss, *The Crisis Years: Kennedy and Khrushchev 1960–1963* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), pp. 417–18.

The best evidence to date on plotting to assassinate Castro appears to indicate that the idea germinated at the end of the Eisenhower administration, though those involved at the CIA did not want to tell their bosses much about it, thinking (rightly or wrongly) that their bosses did not want to know much about it. It is not clear that Allen

Dulles or Eisenhower actually authorized attempts to assassinate Castro before Kennedy took office. The operation to approach mobsters for help had fizzled by early 1962. Robert Kennedy was reportedly angry about cooperating with such criminals, so that stopped. But Robert Kennedy, and President Kennedy, were apparently willing to support an assassination operation, as they had been since taking office. Only circumstantial evidence, however, links President Kennedy to such activities. CIA operatives, led by Richard Helms and William Harvey, worked the problem on their own in 1962 and 1963, but they say they did this working directly for Robert Kennedy, without telling McCone. Direct CIA planning to arrange the assassination of Castro ended when Lyndon Johnson took office. The evidence gathered by the Church Committee in 1975 has generally stood the test of time and subsequent disclosures. See *Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders: Interim Report of the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1976). For a good summary of the evidence on Castro, see John Ranelagh, *The Agency: The Rise and Decline of the CIA,* rev. ed. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), pp. 383–90; see also Peter Grose, *Gentleman Spy: The Life of Allen Dulles,* pbk ed. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), pp. 493–95, 500–06.

22. Kirkpatrick to McCone, "Action Generated by DCI Cables Concerning Cuban Low- Level Photography and Offensive Weapons," n.d.; Tidwell to Record, "Instructions Concerning the Handling of Certain Information Concerning Cuba," 1 September 1962, in *CIA Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis,* pp. 39, 33 (both on President Kennedy's talk with Marshall Carter on August 31).

23. Bundy to President Kennedy, "Cuba," 31 August 1962, in *FRUS: Cuba 1961–1962,* vol. 10, pp. 1002–06. "In sum," the analysis concluded, "the expectation is that any missiles will have a substantial political and psychological impact, while surface-to-surface missiles would create a condition of great alarm, even in the absence of proof that nuclear warheads were arriving with

them." Such missiles would, Bundy noted in his cover memo, be a matter of "elemental national security. It is not the same as missiles in Turkey. . . . I myself believe that if we make it clear that short of war we have done everything we can and that war is not justified by antiaircraft installations, we shall be on fairly solid ground."

24. *New York Times,* August 30, 1962.

25. *New York Times,* September 5, 1962.

26. Bundy to President Kennedy, "Memorandum on Cuba for the Press Conference," 13 September 1962, in National Security Files, JFKL.

27. McCone to Record, "Meeting with President—4:30 P.M.—4 March 1963," 4 March 1963, in *FRUS: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath,* vol. 11, p. 714.

28. May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes,* p. 92.

29. Kirkpatrick to McCone, "Action Generated by DCI Cables . . . Concerning Cuban Low-Level Photography and Offensive Weapons," undated, in *CIA Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis,* pp. 39, 40.

30. For more on the September 7 White House briefing (which he dates on September 6) and the aftermath, see Dino A. Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball: The Inside Story of the Cuban Missile Crisis,* ed. Robert McCort, rev. ed. (New York: Random House, 1991), pp. 122–128.

31. On the September 10 meeting, see Berkaw to Elder, 28 February 1963, "Genesis of White House Meeting on 10 September," in *FRUS: Cuba 1961–1962,* vol. 10, pp. 1054–55; Kirkpatrick to McCone, "White House Meeting on 10 September 1962 on Cuban Overflights," 1 March 1963, in *CIA Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis,* pp. 61–62.

32. Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, pp. 139–40, 151.

33. Ibid., pp. 153–55.

34. On September 27, McCone and Robert Kennedy had a private conversation with President Kennedy about Cuba, but the content remains unknown. Kaysen to Record, 27 September 1962, in *FRUS: Cuba 1961–1962*, vol. 10, pp. 1094–95. For Ball's testimony, see Hearings before the House Select Committee on Export Control, 87th Cong., 2d sess., 1963, p. 811.

35. The idea of mining Cuban harbors was raised again during the first day of crisis deliberations on October 16. Bundy brought it up, possibly in order to get the idea killed once it was considered by new people in a new context. If that was his goal, he succeeded. See May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, p. 103.

36. As a sampling of participation at this level of the Special Group (Augmented), the October 4 meeting attendees were Robert Kennedy (chair), McCone, Gilpatric, Alexis Johnson, Taylor, deputy CIA director Carter, Herbert "Pete" Scoville (CIA), Lansdale, and Colonel Ralph Steakley. Both Scoville and Steakley were there to comment on aerial surveillance issues. See McCone to Record, "Memorandum of Mongoose Meeting Held on Thursday, October 4, 1962," 4 October 1962; McCone to Record, "Memorandum of Discussion with McGeorge Bundy Friday, October 5, 1962, 5:15 P.M.," both in *CIA Documents*, pp. 111–17; and Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, pp. 159–64.

37. Kennedy met with the Joint Chiefs of Staff on September 14 and was already wondering about the feasibility of an air strike against SAM sites. On September 21, he reminded McNamara about the need to keep the plans up to date. On October 2, prodded by the Chiefs, McNamara offered them an expansive list of contingencies for possible action, led by a move on Berlin or the Soviet deployment of "offensive" systems to the island. See Kennedy to McNamara, 21 September 1962, in *FRUS: Cuba 1961–1962*, vol. 10, p. 1081; McNamara to Taylor, 2 October

1962, in *FRUS 1961–1963: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, vol. 11, pp. 6–7.

38. McCone to Record, "Memorandum on Donovan Project," 11 October 1962, in *FRUS: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath,* vol. 11, p. 18.

39. Quoted in Elie Abel, *The Missile Crisis* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1966), p. 13 (emphasis added).

40. *New York Times,* October 14, 1962.

41. Edwin McCammon Martin, *Kennedy and Latin America* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1994), pp. 399–400; Roger Hilsman, *To Move A Nation: The Politics of Foreign Policy in the Administration of John F. Kennedy* (New York: Doubleday, 1967), p. 194.

42. See Richard Neustadt, "Afterword: 1964," *Presidential Powers*, 2d ed. (New York: John Wiley, 1964), p. 187. For an extreme version of this argument, see I.F. Stone, "The Brink," *New York Review of Books,* April 14, 1966.

43. And not just from his seat. Douglas Dillon, a Republican member of the cabinet, passed a blunt note across the table to Sorensen at one ExCom meeting (probably on October 21): "Have you considered the very real possibility that if we allow Cuba to complete installation and operational readiness of missile bases, the next House of Representatives is likely to have a Republican majority? This would completely paralyze our ability to react sensibly and coherently to further Soviet advances." Sorensen, *Kennedy*, p. 688 (the original note is preserved in the JFKL). On the broader point about the blurry distinction between presidential and national interests, see Richard Neustadt, *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents,* 1990 ed. (New York: Free Press, 1990), pp. 155–56.

44. May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes,* p. 342.

45. Ibid., pp. 59, 85.

46. On the reactions to McNamara's perceived exaggerations, see, for example, ibid., p. 98; for the quotations see ibid., p. 113–14.

47. Patrick Anderson, *The President's Men* (New York: Doubleday, 1968), p. 270.

48. After the crisis Bundy also recorded the recollection that, in supporting an air strike, he was playing the role of devil's advocate, on instruction from the president. He said that Kennedy, just before departing on October 19 for his campaign trip, asked him to keep the air strike option open until Kennedy returned. Notes excerpted from Bundy's private papers by Francis Bator and shared in a letter to Zelikow and Ernest May, April 1998.

49. White House meeting at 11:00 A.M., October 18, in May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes,* p. 149, 145.

50. This is how Kennedy summarized Lovett's argument in dictating a brief account of the late night White House meeting on October 18. Ibid., p. 172. Kennedy at the time recalled Lovett not being convinced that any action was desirable. Kennedy may have remembered the argument better than he remembered C.S. Lovett's conclusion (or the discussion may have confused Lovett's conclusion from the Berlin argument with the different conclusion Bundy had reached—at that time—from the same argument). Two years later, Lovett recalled having advocated the blockade/ultimatum approach, rather than the option of doing nothing and Lovett's account seems credible to us. Lovett interviewed by Dorothy Fosdick for JFKL Oral History Project, November 19, 1964, relevant portion reprinted in ibid., pp. 169–71.

51. See ibid., pp. 171–171, 17–17.

52. If the U.S. message simply demanded withdrawal of the missiles, Khrushchev could equivocate while the missiles became

operational. If the message threatened military action on a specific date unless the missiles were withdrawn, Khrushchev could counteroffer with another date, or ask for a summit meeting, and then the U.S. would appear to be spurning negotiations. Or Khrushchev might resent the tone of such a specific ultimatum so much that it would harden his resistance and make war more likely. Sorensen, who struggled with the task of how to draft an appropriate ultimatum, remembered that such a specific demand would constitute "the kind of ultimatum which no great power could accept." Sorensen, *Kennedy*, p. 685. Readers who may recall the Bush administration's use of such a time-specific ultimatum to Saddam Hussein before the Persian Gulf War may infer, correctly, that the Bush administration neither expected nor wholly wanted Iraq to accept it. By late 1990, many officials in the Bush administration had become convinced that the U.S. needed, somehow, to find a way to take violent action that would cripple Iraq's war machine and development of weapons of mass destruction.

53. Thompson in the 11:00 A.M. meeting on October 18, in May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, p. 137. Dillon had first described the blockade/ultimatum concept in a memo sent to Kennedy late on October 17. "Memorandum for the President," reprinted in Laurence Chang and Peter Kornbluh, eds., *The Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962: A National Security Archive Documents Reader* (New York: New Press, 1992), pp. 116–18.

54. May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, p. 178; Sorensen, *Kennedy*, p. 692.

55. There are several sources for the October 19 meetings, but the quotations are from minutes prepared by Deputy State Department Legal Adviser Leonard Meeker, in *FRUS 1961–1963: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, vol. 1s1, pp. 116–22.

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid.; Sorensen, *Kennedy*, p. 692.

58. This and the following discussion of the meeting is drawn from Minutes of the 505th Meeting of the National Security Council, October 20, 1962, 2:30–10:10 P.M., in *FRUS 1961–1963: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, vol. 11, pp. 126–36.

59. McCone to File, October 20, 1962, in ibid., pp. 137–38.

60. This and subsequent descriptions are from Minutes of the 506th Meeting of the National Security Council, October 21, 1962, in ibid., pp. 141–49.

61. Robert Kennedy's phrase, in a meeting on the morning of October 21 with the Air Force strike planner, General Walter Sweeney, was to start with the blockade and thereafter "play for the breaks." McNamara, "Notes of October 21, 1962 Meeting with the President," reprinted in Chang and Kornbluh, *The Cuban Missile Crisis*, pp. 144–45.

62. The metaphor of hawks and doves may have been coined by McGeorge Bundy, who used it in an ExCom meeting on October 28, and it then passed into general circulation by Joseph Alsop and Charles Bartlett in their *Saturday Evening Post* article of December 8, 1962, the first to portray the crisis with considerable aid (and steering) from the Kennedy White House. For Bundy's comment, see May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, p. 635; see also Abel, *The Missile Crisis*, p. 70.

63. Kennedy, *Thirteen Days*, p. 46.

64. Abel, *The Missile Crisis*, p. 58.

65. Kennedy, *Thirteen Days*, p. 46.

66. Sorensen, *Kennedy*, p. 679.

67. Abel, *The Missile Crisis*, p. 58. This latter participant went on to say, "This had a healthy effect in stimulating real discussion. It inhibited the striking of attitudes. Having him there in the

conference room was perhaps better, because it was less inhibiting, than having the President there."

68. Oleg Troyanovsky, "The Caribbean Crisis: A View from the Kremlin," *International Affairs* (Moscow), April–May 1992, p. 150.

69. Gromyko cabled report to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, 19 October 1962, in *CWIHP Bulletin*, Issue 5 (Spring 1995), pp. 66–67;s see also the gloating tone and complete misreading of both Kennedy and Rusk apparent in the final paragraph of Gromyko's longer report on his conversation with Rusk, Gromyko to Central Committee, 20 October 1962, in ibid., p. 69.

70. Georgi Kornienko quoted in Vladislav M. Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), p. 266.

71. Aleksander Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble": Khrushchev, Castro, and Kennedy, 1958–1964* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997), pp. 238–39, 245–46.

72. Ibid., pp. 240–41, superseding the account in Anatoli Gribkov, "The View from Moscow and Havana," in Gribkov and William Y. Smith, *Operation ANADYR: U.S. and Soviet Generals Recount the Cuban Missile Crisis*, ed. Alfred Friendly, Jr. (Chicago: Edition q, 1994), p. 62.

73. Fursenko and Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble"*, pp. 247–247; Troyanovsky, "The Caribbean Crisis," p. 152.

74. Gribkov, "The View from Moscow and Havana," pp. 45–46.

75. For McCone's report on Soviet signal traffic to these ships at midmorning (Moscow time) on October 24, see May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, p. 348.

76. Fursenko and Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble"*, pp. 252–53.

77. May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, p. 421.

78. Fursenko and Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble"*, pp. 257–58.

79. Ibid., pp. 255–56, 258–60.

80. Alexeev to Foreign Ministry, October 25, 1962, CWIHP/Harvard Collection.

81. Fursenko and Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble"*, p. 261; for the McNamara comments see May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, pp. 495, 585.

82. Zorin to Foreign Ministry, 27 October 1962, in CWIHP/Harvard Collection.

83. See Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, *We All Lost the Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 115; Raymond L. Garthoff, *Reflections on the Cuban Missile Crisis*, rev. ed., (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1989), p. 67 n. 107.

84. Fursenko and Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble"*, pp. 269–71.

85. Ibid., p. 272.

86. Johnson, on October 27, in May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, p. 582.

87. Troyanovsky, "The Caribbean Crisis," p. 153.

88. May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, p. 509.

89. Havana to Moscow, 27 October 1962, in CWIHP Collection.

90. Troyanovsky, "The Caribbean Crisis," p. 153.

91. Gribkov, "The View from Moscow and Havana," p. 63; Fursenko and Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble"*, pp. 274–75.

92. Fursenko and Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble"*, p. 266.

93. See Alexeev in Bruce J. Allyn, James G. Blight, and David Welch, eds., *Back to the Brink: Proceedings of the Moscow Conference on the Cuban Missile Crisis, January 27–28, 1989,* CSIA Occasional Paper no. 9 (Lanham: University Press of America, 1992), p. 30; Garthoff, *Reflections on the Cuban Missile Crisis*, pp. 84–85.

94. Khrushchev to Castro, 28 October 1962 and Castro to Khrushchev, 28 October 1962. This correspondence was published by the Cuban government in 1990 and Soviet sources verified its accuracy. Copies are available from JFKL. Castro's fears were not unwarranted. McNamara had explained on October 26 how the U.S. might use its low-level reconnaissance flights to help pave the way for an air strike.

95. U. Alexis Johnson in May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, p. 576.

96. Robert Graves, from his *Oxford Address on Poetry*, cited in Abel, *The Missile Crisis*, p. 54.

97. *Washington Post*, December 18, 1962.

98. Neustadt, *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents*, p. 182.

99. "Khrushchev's Report on the International Situation—1," *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, vol. 14, no. 51, January 16, 1963, p. 7.

100. Khrushchev letter of October 26, as received in the White House, reprinted in Larson, *"Cuban Crisis,"* pp. 175–80.

101. May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes,* p. 619. On the meeting with Gromyko, see the State Department memorandum of

conversation, 18 October 1962, in Cuban Missile Crisis Files, 1992 Releases Box, National Security Archive, Washington, DC

102. Ibid., p.582.

103. Ibid., p.498.

104. Ibid., p. 500.

105. Ibid., p. 529.

106. Sorensen, *Kennedy*, p. 714.

107. May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, p. 546.

108. Ibid., p. 530.

109. Ibid., p. 548.

110. Ibid., p. 548.

111. Ibid., p. 568.

112. Ibid., p. 564.

113. Ibid., p. 585. Minutes later, McCone put his point even more clearly: "I wouldn't try to negotiate a deal. I would send him a threatening letter. I'd say: you made public an offer. Now we'll accept that offer. But you shot down planes today before we even had a chance to send you a letter . . . Now we're telling you, Mr. Khrushchev, that we are sending unarmed planes over Cuba. If one of them is shot down, we're going to take your installations out, and you can expect it. And therefore, you issue an order immediately." p. 586.

114. Ibid., p. 538.

115. Ibid., pp. 580-581.

116. Ibid., p. 582. Vice President Johnson raised a further objection: "If you're willing to give up your missiles in Turkey . . . why don't you say that to him and say we're cutting a trade there [and] save all the invasion, lives, and everything else?"

117. Ibid., p. 548.

118. Ibid., p. 599. In Thompson's view, U.S. demands for withdrawal of Soviet bombers or technicians would be met by demands for equivalent withdrawals of NATO equipment from Turkey, which was unacceptable: "This is missile for missile, and technician for technician, and plane for plane." (p. 597.) Dillon clarified Thompson's concern about Khrushchev's escalating demands as follows: "Oh, I see what you are talking about. A week ago, it was that they'd take everything out of Cuba and we'd just take the missiles out of Turkey, whereas now he's [going to be] saying: 'I'll take the missiles out of Cuba. You take missiles out of here. I take airplanes out. You take airplanes out.'" (p. 592.)

119. Robert F. Kennedy, *Thirteen Days,* p. 102.

120. May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes,* p. 262.

121. Ibid., p. 603.

122. Ibid., p. 604.

123. McGeorge Bundy, *Danger and Survival: Choices about the Bomb in the First Fifty Years* (New York: Random House, 1988), pp. 432-433.

124. May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes,* p. 606, emphasis added. The idea Rusk proposed had originally been suggested by U.S. ambassador to Turkey Raymond Hare in a message that at least both Rusk and Bundy had read earlier that day.

125. Robert Kennedy to Rusk, 30 October 1962, President's Office Files, JFKL (emphasis added). Kennedy's account in this memo

(declassified in 1991) is substantively identical to the report of the talk sent back to Moscow that night by Dobrynin. *CWIHP Bulletin,* no. 5 (Spring 1995), pp. 79–80. On the circumstances that prompted Kennedy to write the note to Rusk, see Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr*., Robert Kennedy and His Times* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1978), pp. 522–23. Schlesinger quotes some of Kennedy's handwritten notes on the matter, also accurately describing the substance of the discussion on Turkish missiles. Since the memo does not appear in Rusk's files, and the original is in the JFKL in the President's Office Files, it is possible that Robert Kennedy drafted the memo to Rusk, showed it to his brother, and that the president then kept the memo in his files, so that it was never sent to Rusk.

126. Despite Robert Kennedy's warning that the U.S. "would have to make decisions within the next 12 or possible 24 hours" and that "this matter could not wait and that he had better contact Mr. Khrushchev and have a commitment from him by the next day," Dobrynin conveyed this message through normal channels, which require about 8 hours, rather than using the phone. When questioned on this decision, Dobrynin explained, "We had no custom or precedent for sending phone calls." Interview with Allison, November 6, 1998.

127. Alexeev to Foreign Ministry, 25 October 1962; Castro to Khrushchev, 26 October 1962, both in CWIHP/Harvard collection; Gribkov, "The View from Moscow and Havana," p. 63.

128. Alexeev to Foreign Ministry, 27 October 1962, in CWIHP/Harvard Collection. Alexeev's report was oddly ambiguous in describing whether Soviets or Cubans had shot down the U-2.

129. Khrushchev to Castro, 30 October 1962, in released correspondence at JFKL; Gribkov, "The View from Moscow and Havana," p. 63.

130. Fursenko & Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble"*, p. 282.

131. *"Dobrynin's cable to the Soviet Foreign Ministry, October 27, 1962," CWIHP Bulletin*, Issue 5 (Spring 1995), pp. 79–80, reprinted in *Fourteen Days in October: The Cuban Missile Crisis* on Operations Center Website, http://tqd.advanced.org.

132. Fursenko and Naftali, p. 286.

133. See ibid.; Foreign Ministry to Washington (handwritten by Gromyko in Soviet archives), 28 October 1962, in *CWIHP Bulletin*, Issue 5 (Spring 1995), p. 76; Fursenko and Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble"*, p. 284.

134. Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy and His Times*, p. 523. Dobrynin's account of this unpleasant meeting was different. He reported to Moscow that Robert Kennedy had refused to accept such a letter with the claim that it "could cause irreparable harm to my political career in the future." Dobrynin to Foreign Ministry, 30 October 1962, CWIHP/Harvard Collection.

135. The letter was declassified in 1992 and is available at the John F. Kennedy Library.

136. USUN New York 1585, 1 November 1962, reprinted in Chang and Kornbluh, *The Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962*, pp. 249–51.

137. See, for example, Martin to Alexis Johnson, "Invasion," 30 October 1962; Ball through Bundy to President Kennedy, "Suggested Policy Line for Cuban Crisis," 10 November 1962; the State briefing papers for the November 20 press conference; and President Kennedy's explanation on this point to Mikoyan in the Memorandum of Conversation for their meeting, 29 November 1962, all in Cuban Missile Crisis Files, 1992 Releases Box, National Security Archive.

138. See Bromley Smith to File, "Summary Record of Executive Committee Meeting No. 27," 19 November 1962, in National

Security Files, Box 316, Executive Committee Meetings, vol. III, Meetings 25–32a, JFKL; and Gromyko to Mikoyan (then in Havana), 18 November 1962, CWIHP/Harvard Collection.

139. See Ankara 619, 13 November 1962, National Archives, Decimal Files, 782.56311/11–1362; Deptel 1151, "Jupiter Missiles," 18 December 1962, in *FRUS 1961–1963: West Europe and Canada*, vol. 13, pp. 460–61. On the "intolerable serenity" see Paris Secto 22 (Eyes Only from Rusk to President Kennedy and Ball), 15 December 1962, in ibid., pp. 458–59.

7
Conclusion

In the preceding chapters, we have taken a walk around the Cuban missile crisis, with pauses at three vantage points. This allowed us to explore the central puzzles of the crisis. While the chapters do not settle the matter of what happened and why, they do uncover many new or previously underemphasized features, and they afford a rich source of hypotheses about the causes of various outcomes. At the same time, the three case studies offer evidence about the nature of explanations produced by different analysts. None of the three analysts—Model I: The Rational Actor, Model II: Organizational Behavior, and Model III: Governmental Politics— simply described events. In attempting to explain what happened, each distinguished certain features as the relevant determinants. Each combed out the numerous details in a limited number of causal strands that were woven into the most important "reasons" for what happened. Moreover, each emphasized quite different factors in explaining the central puzzles of the crisis. The source of the differences is the conceptual model each employed.

The conceptual models are much more than simple angles of vision or approaches. Each conceptual framework consists of a cluster of assumptions and categories that influence what the analyst finds puzzling, how he formulates the question, where he looks for evidence, and what he produces as an answer. The three cuts at the missile crisis demonstrate both the complexity of the models and how each offers different explanations.

Summing Up: Differences in Interpretation

In generating hypotheses about the missile crisis from alternative conceptual angles, chapters 2, 4, and 6 present a number of significant

differences in emphasis and interpretation. Disagreements, reinterpretations, and revision are familiar in historians' accounts of events. Interpretations of the missile crisis in this book, however, reflect not only new evidence from Soviet files and American tapes, but also reinterpretations of that evidence as we shift from one lens to the next. Use of a microscope, rather than a telescope, produces a different image of the same fundamental reality.

A Model I analyst can generate various hypotheses about why the Soviet Union decided to send nuclear missiles to Cuba: to defend Cuba, rectify the strategic nuclear balance, or provide an advantage in the confrontation over Berlin. With more details about the chronology of Soviet decisionmaking and the particular deployment, the Cuban defense hypothesis becomes less plausible and the missile power hypothesis more. But as the Model I analyst includes still more information about Khrushchev, his personal stakes and commitments, and what he said and thought at the time (much of it newly available), the story acquires a new shape, linking the missile power hypothesis to a strategy for success in Berlin. The explanation is reinforced by Khrushchev's personal emphasis on Berlin prior to the missile crisis and his abandonment of it after the missiles in Cuba were withdrawn. This was the missing piece in the "rational actor" puzzle Thompson posed about Khrushchev's Berlin policy in the summer of 1962.

The American decision to respond with a blockade reflects, for the Model I analyst, Kennedy's reasoning, revealed for the first time by the secret tapes. He sees his choice as one between a nuclear crisis over Cuba in October or a nuclear crisis over Berlin—and under less advantageous circumstances— in November. An attack on Cuba could provoke a riposte against Berlin. A blockade (applied only to items not being transported to Berlin) seems a logical middle ground. The United States announces its demand, displays its resolve, leverages its local military superiority—all without a direct attack. The tapes and other newly declassified documents reveal a more complex set of options than previously understood, including two critically different variants of the blockade. For the Model I analyst the Soviet decision to yield follows logically from the United States' combination of strategic and theater military superiority, once American resolve becomes evident.

Model II focuses attention on what the relevant government organizations could do, could not do, and would be disposed to do without magisterial direction. Many aspects of the Soviet deployment to Cuba could not be explained by Model I (and were therefore puzzling to the Washington officials applying such an implicit model to the Soviet actions). Informed by Model II's questions and new evidence from the Soviet side, we understand how components of the Soviet military transformed Khrushchev's initial decision to send some nuclear weapons to Cuba into a massive deployment. This included deployment of IRBMs simultaneously with MRBMs, as well as scores of nuclear warheads for coastal defense cruise missiles. Though the Soviet military's plans went well beyond Khrushchev's objectives for the deployment, his decision becomes the occasion for their action. Khrushchev included tactical nuclear weapons to deter the U.S. from attack. But during the public confrontation as the Americans considered an air strike or invasion, these organizations never thought to warn the Americans about these arms, since their procedures sought to hide information from the enemy, not provide it. The Americans, in turn, never imagined they were facing such a nuclear arsenal in Cuba. Even more than the far smaller arsenal of tactical nuclear missiles (which was Khrushchev's idea, picked from an organizational menu), these essentially organizational decisions about the cruise missiles could have been the fuse to a thermonuclear war had the Americans actually carried through their planned invasion, especially had they started with the surprise attack favored by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Through the Model II lens and new Soviet evidence, the causes of inadequate camouflage become clearer as well, rooted not in incompetence or a clever policy design but instead in established routines designed for settings in which camouflage had never been required, and a tradeoff between readiness and concealment made by the Strategic Rocket Forces in terms of its priorities. Discovery of the missiles during deployment, an organizational output of American intelligence, would not have happened at all had extraordinary capacities and routines not been developed months and years earlier for a different purpose.

For the Model II analyst, Kennedy's choice of a blockade is a choice foreshadowed by the preexisting capacities of large organizations: an Air

Force that cannot deliver the strike Kennedy wants and a Navy that can organize a blockade that achieves Kennedy's goals. But this blockade creates new dangers, for example, conducting antisubmarine tactics against submarines that, unbeknownst to Washington, were nuclear-armed. Kennedy sets his military forces in motion to signal Khrushchev, but the Model II story again sets in motion vast organizational actions that interact with others in frightening ways that the president can barely imagine (try as he does, for example, in the case of the Emergency Defense Plan for Turkey). When Jupiter missiles in Turkey become a focal point in the crisis, new evidence reveals that Kennedy encountered a State Department that had plugged his concerns into its preexisting plans for a multilateral nuclear force, however irrelevant that plan was to the exigencies of a nuclear crisis.

Model III dissects Khrushchev's decisionmaking under a powerful new light, revealing his appreciation of the situation to have been cloudy at best, his judgments bereft of any attribute of high-quality deliberations. Relying on haphazard and often incorrect information, and without any sustained analysis of the sort commonplace in the American process, he manages a sullen, sporadic group of advisors and rivals. Indeed, his most competent expert on American affairs is not even informed that the missiles are being deployed.

In Washington, discovery of the Soviet missiles is a story of a political tug of war between powerful officials. McCone pulls for surveillance, but his advice is prejudged because he offers it as an advocate in a group deciding the future of the Mongoose program against Castro. He narrowly prevails, but it is only at the eleventh hour. To win the policy argument against McCone and other advocates of invading Cuba, Bundy helps his president stake out a politically-defensible public commitment. But when the Soviet deception is unmasked he discovers his successful stratagem to defeat the advocates of invasion has backed Kennedy into a corner in which he finds himself threatening war.

Model III also reinterprets the choice of the blockade. Days of deliberation pass before a blockade option can be formulated in a way that attracts Kennedy's support, and the formulation comes from Republicans and a career diplomat. One of the president's most valued advisors, Bundy, veers

from advocating doing nothing one day (waiting for the coming confrontation in Berlin) to supporting an air strike the next.[1] Another critical adviser, McNamara, is revealed to have been the leading "dove" in the first week's deliberations, supporting the blockade/negotiate/trade approach. But in the second week he seems so resigned to military action that he sees new virtues and possibilities in trying a surprise attack against Cuba.

In the final resolution of the crisis, Model III helps us see new dynamics. Khrushchev's assessments flip practically 180 degrees from one day to the next, tugged by new bits of information—some true, some false. Soviet officers deliberately shoot down a U-2, killing its American pilot. The Americans imagine that Moscow gave the order but Khrushchev does not even grasp that his own government's forces fired the SAM. Model III uncovers subtle differences between perspectives shared by Kennedy and Khrushchev and views of their colleagues—differences that proved decisive in finally resolving the crisis. When Castro refuses to go along with the U.S.-Soviet deal, its terms are rewritten and the American pledge not to invade Cuba is quietly withdrawn. Meanwhile Cuba tries to reignite the crisis in November, seeking to shoot down U.S. surveillance planes. But this time the Soviet government has clarified its instructions; its air defense officers will not help, and they control the missiles.

For Model III, Kennedy and Khrushchev remain key characters in the story. But it is a story in which they are informed, misled, persuaded, or ignored by the officials around them, in some cases for better and in some for worse. Almost every day the choices the leaders must make are reshaped by the way information and circumstances are brought to them for action. Model III also sees the leaders as influenced by their place and peculiar responsibilities, the singular burden that falls on the one person with ultimate authority to order nuclear war. It is a lonely burden the president and the chairman share, and at the climax of the crisis a bond that helps them find a way out.

The need for all three lenses is evident when one considers the causal bottom line. The painful "but for which" test demands that one identify

major factors, *but for which* the outcome would not have occurred, or would have been materially different.[2]

With a different Soviet leader, or a different way of reaching momentous decisions, it is hard to imagine the impulsive chain of decisions in the Soviet government that led Khrushchev out on what he himself called the "precipice" over Berlin and then prompted him to reach for such a risky solution. Paradoxically, Khrushchev's own fears of nuclear escalation seem sincere, passionate emotions that helped him, once his gambit was revealed, to dismiss suggestions for retaliating against America in Berlin and finally to back down rather than risk war.

In Washington, it is hard to imagine any U-2 flights over Cuba at all but for the stubborn advocacy of McCone. Had the missiles not been discovered until after they had all been deployed and Khrushchev's "fait" was "accompli," the blockade would have been a fruitless gesture. The scene of confrontation could have shifted—as Khrushchev had intended—to the even more explosive issue of Berlin.

For Kennedy, the 1961 Bay of Pigs failure etched deeply in his consciousness key lessons of crisis decisionmaking. Never thereafter did he deliberate about major foreign ventures without involving his brother Robert and his trusted wordsmith Sorensen. Had the missile crisis occurred before this failure, or Kennedy's performance on this occasion mirrored that of the Bay of Pigs, the results could have been catastrophic.

Had today's rules of the game governed in 1962, the pervasive press and frequent leaks would have forced Kennedy to decide in one or two days rather than four or five. Alone but on tape in the Oval Office, the Kennedy brothers speculated on just this point. Robert Kennedy: "I mean, if the facts got out, you'd have had to make up your mind, and forced to move. . . . That would've been awful tough. I think we would have just. . . ." President Kennedy: "[Unclear] air strike?" Robert Kennedy: "Yeah."[3] Had the air strikes triggered a response by Soviet forces in Cuba, or against missiles in Turkey, and escalated from there to war, who would note the critical importance of this easily neglected factor?

Different advisors played key roles at different moments. McNamara, above all others, slowed the rush to military action on the first day of the crisis. Had Curtis LeMay been chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, putting a positive spin on what his tactical air could do in order to win his policy argument, the air strike would have seemed more tempting. If Acheson had been Secretary of State, the strike would have been pressed much more powerfully. If no one had developed a blockade option that found a middle ground using military force but between attack and negotiation, the choice would have been framed quite differently. The temptation to invade Cuba was never far from Robert Kennedy's thoughts, and certainly the presence of calming outside influences like Robert Lovett could not be assumed.

President Kennedy had also drawn British ambassador Ormsby-Gore into his circle of advisers. It was Ormsby-Gore who suggested pulling the blockade line back so that the first Soviet ship would not cross it during the night and be stopped at dawn on October 24, but instead would be stopped in the late morning, four or five hours after dawn. We now know that Soviet instructions to ships were sent during the night and that ships were confirmed to be turning around only late in the morning of October 24. If, but for Ormsby-Gore's advice, the Soviet ships had been intercepted at dawn, the ship that would probably have been stopped first (which the Americans called the *Kimovsk*) carried the most valuable and sensitive weaponry in the entire Soviet arsenal—intermediate range ballistic missiles. What that ship would have done if stopped, and what orders for that contingency were being carried by the nuclear-armed submarine that was escorting the *Kimovsk,* we do not know. But it is clear that the U.S. Navy would have attacked the submarine rather than risk being attacked by it. In deference to McNamara's warning, Kennedy had agreed not to interfere either with this organizational plan or with the radio silence being maintained by the American ships.

The might-have-beens go on and on. They include many seemingly unimportant organizational details like the few minutes taken to notice and order withdrawal of an American intelligence ship positioned just off the shore of Cuba, thereby keeping the *U.S.S. Oxford* from suffering the violent fate that later befell successor intelligence ships like the *U.S.S. Liberty* or the *U.S.S. Pueblo*. On October 27, Kennedy pulled back from ordering the

retaliatory strike against Soviet air defenses that had shot down the U-2, though he had made the contingency judgment to launch just such strikes only four days earlier, and had then almost delegated the authority to order such strikes automatically to the Secretary of Defense, under certain conditions.[4]

On the Soviet side, new evidence and closer analysis using the alternative models rewrites the story of how that government decided to give in, not from the blockade but from fear of an attack on Cuba and consequent war. As it now appears, a false intelligence warning of an imminent American invasion moved Khrushchev to yield. Had he instead received accurate intelligence that caused him to doubt, rather than fear, the resolve of top American officials, we cannot be sure he would have made the same decisions on October 25, 26, 27, or 28. By analyzing organizational details, such as the slow process for sending coded cables between the Kremlin and its Washington embassy, a hypothesis emerges about the Soviet decision to make the Jupiter offer publicly rather than privately, a choice that then obliged the Americans to demonstrably reject the offer and renew the threat of attack. This same combination of organizational routines delayed arrival of the message from Robert Kennedy's private conversation with Dobrynin until after Khrushchev had decided to retreat. Despite the evident urgency of a message that threatened military action in 12 hours and offered a significant carrot to avoid war, Dobrynin followed procedures in sending the cable. President Kennedy and eight of his closest advisers chose to give Khrushchev the private promise to withdraw the Jupiters eventually, unilaterally, and kept that critical fact even from those around the table at the ExCom.[5]

Summing Up: Different Answers or Different Questions?

Competing interpretations reflect each model's tendency to produce different answers to the same question. But as we observe the models at work, what is equally striking are the differences in the ways the analysts conceive of problems, shape puzzles, unpack summary questions, and dig into the evidence in search of an answer. Why did the United States

blockade Cuba? For Model I analysts, this "why" asks for reasons that account for the American choice of the blockade as a solution to the strategic problem posed by the presence of Soviet missiles in Cuba. For a Model II analyst, the challenge is to identify outputs of key organizations without which there would be no blockade. A Model III analyst understands the basic "why" as a question about the political bargaining among players with distinctive interests, quite disparate conceptions of what was to be done, and different views about the process by which competing preferences blended and blurred in the selected action.

Typically, what is to be explained is identified only in the most general terms, for example, the blockade. Relevant features of the occurrence are left to an unstated, most-often implicit, appendix. So, for the archetypical Model I analyst, "blockade" is an aggregate act. The perceived context, formal decision, and implementation are aspects of one coordinated rational choice. The Model II and Model III analysts insist on splitting up the blockade into component elements. The Model II analyst focuses more on questions, such as *when* the missiles were discovered, *how* the relevant organizations defined the options for action, and the *details* of the blockade's execution. The Model III analyst focuses on sharply different views among decisionmakers about the issue Soviet missiles posed, as well as on competing judgments about what was to be done.

To explain the blockade, the Model I analyst examines the U.S. strategic calculus: the problem posed by the Soviet missiles, relevant American interests, the relation to other commitments like the defense of Berlin and U.S. capabilities versus those of the Soviet Union. Explanation means placing the blockade in a pattern of purposive response to the strategic problem. For our Model II archetype, given the need for action, the particular "solution" is the by-product of organizational behavior. The analyst emphasizes organizational capacities and constraints both in choice and implementation. Organizational behavior explains identification of the problem on October 14 (rather than two weeks earlier or later); organizational routines defined the options; organizations implemented the blockade. Explanation starts with existing organizations and their repertory of routines at t-1 and attempts to account for what is going on at time t. The Model III analyst makes vivid the action of players in the relevant games

that produced pieces of the collage that is the blockade. Bargaining among players who shared power but saw separate problems yielded: discovery of the missiles on a certain date in the context of a given policy debate; definition of the problem in a way that demanded action; emphasis on subsets of options from the menu of possibilities; and imagination in analyzing some issues and weakness in analyzing others. The blockade eventually emerges from the mix of these considerations. In the absence of a number of particular characteristics of players and games, the action chosen would have been materially different.

The information demanded by Model II and Model III exceeds that needed by Model I. An armchair strategist (in Washington or even Cambridge or Charlottesville) can produce accounts of U.S. or Soviet national costs and benefits. Understanding the value-maximizing choices of nations demands chiefly an analytic ability in vicarious problem solving. Analyses that concentrate on capacities and outputs of organizations, or on bargaining among individuals, demand more information. Some observers (particularly players in the game) rely on a version of Model III for their own government's behavior, while retreating to a Model I analysis of other nations. Thus *information costs* account for some differences among explanations.

Distinct demands for information, however, are no more critical than the differential capacity of different models to recognize the relevance of additional evidence acquired. For the typical Model I analyst, information about the timing and logistics of overhead photo reconnaissance constitutes a technical aside, not essential evidence about a decisive factor. Only Model II analysts are prepared to make the effort to gather and analyze information about existing organizational structures and routines. Model III's fascination with how issues are framed and reframed from day to day, attention to the advantages and disadvantages of particular players, and insistence on recalling options advocated but neglected, strikes other analysts as an undue concern with ephemeral eddies in a larger current. The information costs of tracking the eddies are too high; for them the danger of distraction from the real picture is too great.

Thus, our response to the question—"Different answers or different questions?"—is: Both. While at one level three models produce different explanations of the same happening, at another level the models produce different explanations of quite different occurrences. The glasses one wears magnify one set of factors rather than another in ways that have multifarious consequences. Not only do lenses lead analysts to produce different explanations of problems that appear, in their summary questions, to be the same. Lenses also influence the character of the analyst's puzzle, the evidence assumed to be relevant, the concepts used in examining the evidence, and what is taken to be an explanation. None of our three analysts would deny that during the Cuban missile crisis thousands of people were performing actions that had, or could have had, significant impact on the event. But in offering his explanation, each analyst emphasizes what he judges relevant and important, and different conceptual lenses lead analysts to different judgments about what is relevant and important.

What this implies for serious analysts can be summarized in two related imperatives. First, clarify what philosophers call the *explanandum*, that is, whatever is being explained or predicted. Second, rather than prejudging the case by characterizing the explanandum as "choice," "output," or "resultant," begin with a phenomenon: an occurrence or happening that one could imagine capturing in a photographic snapshot or a sequence of frames in a movie. Note that the phenomenon can be described at various levels of abstraction or detail. At the most abstract level, the blockade was a forceful U.S. military response to the Soviet Union's duplicitous deployment (in contrast to no response or no use of force). But one can further delineate features of the picture of naval vessels surrounding Cuba in a series of specific descriptors (a, b, c,. . . n) that would include (a) a naval blockade; (b) along an arc 500 miles out from Cuba; (c) on October 23, 1962 and thereafter; (d) prohibiting shipments of arms (but not oil or food); (e) supplemented by ASW hunter-killer operations in the Atlantic; (f) as part of a move to DEFCON 3; and so on. Much of the apparent conflict among interpretations dissolves when the specific descriptors being explained are explicitly and more precisely identified.

Whatever the level of detail, explanation seeks to identify causes that account for the *difference* between what actually happened, on the one

hand, and some specified or assumed alternative states of the world, on the other. Thus, when explaining the blockade, one starts with the unusual fact of American ships surrounding Cuba—in contrast to the absence of any equivalent activity several months earlier or later. Within that puzzle, one can go on to explain not just blockade versus no blockade, but rather why, among military responses, a blockade rather than an air strike; or a blockade 500 miles out from Cuba rather than 800 miles; and so on. To highlight this implicit contrast, we urge our students to diagram alternative outcomes using the language of decision trees from game or decision theory. They can thereby clarify precisely what they are attempting to explain. The study of foreign affairs sorely needs more precise language and metrics with which to identify the phenomena to be explained in terms that facilitate comparison with similar events. Because most events of special interest, like missiles in Cuba, have so many unique features, they invite unique explanations. While this is appropriate for some purposes, generalization across cases requires characterization of these phenomena at a more general level. Here, the efforts of Bueno de Mesquita and Lalman, noted in [Chapter 1](#), make a suggestive start.[6]

Where Do We Go from Here?

The argument developed in the chapters above has an array of implications for American foreign policy, policymaking, and the analysis thereof. Today, the clarity of focus and unity of purpose seen in Cold War confrontations with what seemed a supreme, urgent threat has given way to uncertainty and competing conceptions about the U.S. role in the world. The international system is in flux, unipolar, at least in some dimensions, but for how long? The influence of shared conceptions of values and interests has declined, and the weight of government bureaucracy, interest groups, and their advocates within the Executive and Congress risen. Both in studies of foreign policy, and of foreign policymaking, these changes necessitate radical *rethinking:* asking more fundamental questions than were required during the Cold War. In searching for answers we must stretch beyond familiar terrain. A number of implications of our argument deserve essay-length treatment in themselves. Here we simply state four implications succinctly: (1) cookbook questions for Models I, II and III outline an ad hoc working synthesis; (2) important differences in model-based expectations

are evident in lessons drawn from the missile crisis about risks of war; (3) opportunities for rethinking the entire foreign policy agenda can be illustrated by rethinking nuclear threats to Americans today; (4) unfortunately, Model I alone will not do. Multiple, overlapping, competing conceptual models are the best that the current understanding of foreign policy provides.

1. *Cookbook questions for Models I, II, and III outline an ad hoc working synthesis.*

The outline of a partial, ad hoc working synthesis of analysis using these three models begins to emerge as one considers the core questions each model leads one to ask in pursuing explanation or prediction.

Model I Questions Include:

1. What are the objective (or perceived) circumstances that the state conceives as threats and opportunities (e.g., the Soviet Union's vulnerability to strategic nuclear coercion in 1962)?
2. What are the state's goals (e.g., survival, maximization of power, etc.)?
3. What are the objective (or perceived) options for addressing this issue?
4. What are the objective (or perceived) strategic costs and benefits of each option?
5. What is the state's best choice given these conditions (e.g., stationing nuclear-armed MRBMs in Cuba)?

Model II Questions Include:

1. 1. Of what organizations (and organizational components) does the government consist (e.g., Strategic Rocket Forces, KGB, military intelligence, etc.)?
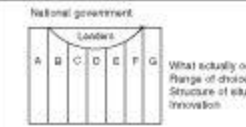
2. What capabilities and constraints do these organizations' existing SOPs create in producing *information* about international conditions, threats, and opportunities?
3. What capabilities and constraints do these organizations' existing SOPs create in generating the menu of *options* for action?
4. What capabilities and constraints do these organizations' existing SOPs establish for *implementing* whatever is chosen?

Model III Questions Include:

1. *Who* plays? That is, whose views and values count in shaping the choice and action?
2. What *factors* shape each *player's* (a) perceptions; (b) preferred course of action; and thus (c) the player's stand on the issue?
3. What *factors* account for each *player's impact* on the choice and action?
4. What is the *"action channel,"* that is, the established process for aggregating competing perceptions, preferences, and stands of players in making decisions and taking action?

Model I emphasizes that the objective, and perceived, context—the international strategic market conditions—creates incentives and pressures for a government to choose a particular course of action. National (or governmental) objectives and axioms create propensities to respond in certain ways. Shared objectives and axioms summarize important differences between behavioral tendencies of nations and times. Were one ignorant, for example, of the differences between American national attitudes in the late 1990s and the mid-1960s, or between the mid-1960s and those of the mid-1930s, fundamental factors in shaping the foreign policy of the United States would be overlooked. Shared presumptions of national leaders and pressures perceived from the strategic marketplace influence the baseline of a nation's action. Factors summarized by Model I affect assumptions of players in the Model III game, the kinds of arguments that they can make, and the range of outputs that organizations are able to produce. For some purposes, therefore, Model I can provide a satisfactory big picture.

Summary Outline of Models and Concepts

The Paradigm	Model I	Model II	Model III
	National government Black box labeled... National state Generic state Identified state Personified state	National government Leaders A B C D E F G What actually occurs Range of choice Structure of situation Innovation	National government A B z t y y C D E n t z x y f F t Players in positions (A–F) Goals, interests, stakes, and stands (n–z) Power Action-channels
Basic unit of analysis	Governmental action as choice	Governmental action as organizational output	Governmental action as political resultant

Organizing concepts	Unified National Actor
	The Problem
	Action as Rational Choice
	  Goals and Objectives
	  Options
	  Consequences
	  Choice
		Organizational actors
		Factored problems and fractionated power
		Organizational missions
		Operational objectives, special capacities, and culture
		Action as organizational output
		  Objectives—compliance
		  Sequential attention to objectives
		  Standard operating procedures
		  Programs and repertoires
		  Uncertainty avoidance
		  Problem-directed search
		  Organizational learning and change
		Central coordination and control
		Decisions of government leaders
			Players in positions
			Factors shape players' perceptions, preferences, stands
			  Parochial priorities and perceptions
			  Goals and interests
			  Stakes and stands
			  Deadline and faces of issues
			Power
			What is the game?
			  Action-channels
			  Rules of the game
			  Action as political resultant

Dominant inference pattern	Action = value maximizing means toward state's ends	Action (in short run) = output close to existing output Action (in longer run) = output conditioned by organization view of tasks, capacities, programs, repertoires, and routines	Governmental action = resultant of bargaining

General propositions	Increased perceived costs = action less likely
	Decreased perceived costs = action more likely
		Existing organized capabilities influence government choice
		Organizational priorities shape organizational implementation
		  Special capacities and cultural beliefs
		  Conflicting goals addressed sequentially
		Implementation reflects previously established routines
		  SOPs, programs and repertoires
		Leaders neglect administrative feasibility at their peril
		Limited flexibility and incremental change
		Long-range planning
		Imperialism
		Directed change
			Political resultants
			Action and intention
			Problems and solutions
			Where you stand depends on where you sit
			Chiefs and Indians
			The 51-49 principle
			International and intranational relations
			Misexpectation, miscommunication, reticence, and styles of play

But more frequently, when an explanation (or prediction) is sought for a specific action, the question arises in context. That context includes a *ceteris paribus* clause in which the factors that allow Model I to produce a general understanding of what was done are already well understood. Thus, in asking why American troops were in Bosnia in 1996, the facts about the killing there, Serbian ruler Milosevic, American interests and capabilities—all the items cited in President Clinton's explanatory justification—are stipulated.[7] The question is: Given that these factors were also present in 1993, 1994, and most of 1995, when no American troops were sent to Bosnia, why then were troops there in 1996? To answer that question it is necessary to examine Model II and III factors that help explain a phenomenon that market pressures and shared objectives made possible but less than 50 percent likely.

Thus the models can be seen as complements to each other. Model I fixes the broader context, the larger national patterns, and the shared images. Within this context, Model II illuminates the organizational routines that produce the information, options, and action. Model III focuses in greater detail on the individuals who constitute a government and the politics and procedures by which their competing perceptions and preferences are combined. Each, in effect, serves as a search engine in the larger effort to identify all the significant causal factors that determine an outcome. The

best analysts of foreign policy manage to weave strands from each of the three conceptual models into their explanations. A number of scholars whom our analytic chapters have squeezed into a single box display impressive intuitive powers in blending insights from all three models. By integrating factors identified under each lens, explanations can be significantly strengthened.

2. *Important differences in model-based expectations are evident in lessons drawn from the missile crisis about risks of war*.

As noted in the introduction, these conceptual models can be used in an array of assignments beyond explanation. By emphasizing one causal dynamic rather than another, each framework yields different expectations. Each directs the analyst or manager to allocate scarce attention and effort in one area rather than others. In analyzing an issue and seeking to identify the optimal choice, policy analysis begins with the core logic of Model I. Model II reminds even the line analyst that previously established organizational structures and procedures provide and authenticate the information likely to be most important, generate the menu of options that will likely be judged realistic, and exhaust the options that can be executed with high confidence. Model III forces the analyst to recognize that within the decisionmaking structure, there will be multiple competing policy analyses, that each is likely to reflect predictable perspectives and responsibilities, and that specific characteristics of the established process for aggregating among competing views are certain to shape the ultimate choice and action. Similarly, alternative causal stories lead to differences in predictions, divergent assessments of assignment of responsibility, and distinct demands upon leadership and management for effective policymaking. Leaders of aggregate agents, including businesses, units of governments, and governments themselves strive vigorously to infuse central purposes through layers of subordinate choice and action. But contrary to images of frictionless deduction of subsidiary tasks from a broader objective, or uniform compliance with statements of general purpose or specific choices, Model II and III help managers take account of administrative feasibility in making choices. Indeed, they bring to the fore the importance of the design of organizations and their routines prior to the

issue in question, including specifically the Model III processes for aggregating among competing views within the structure.

The story of the missile crisis provides many opportunities for one to use alternative lenses in reanalyzing questions members of the U.S. government, and the Soviet government, answered at that time. For example, in preparing for President Kennedy's meeting with Foreign Minister Gromyko on Thursday, October 18, the question arose whether Gromyko and his colleagues in the Soviet central circle expected the U.S. to discover the missiles being installed in Cube before they became operational. Would Gromyko reveal the missiles to Kennedy? Should Kennedy say something to him? Evidence of what the Soviets had actually done in constructing missiles in Cuba, including the standardized features of ballistic missiles at each of the sites, the absence of camouflage at the sites, and the near certainty that U-2s flying over these areas would take photographs of the missiles (as they in fact did), led some in the U.S. government to conclude that the Soviet government *must* have expected the U.S. to discover the missiles. Indeed, the extraordinary and effective disguise of the missiles during shipment from the Soviet Union to sites in Cuba, on the one hand, and the absence of any equivalent camouflage at the sites, on the other, suggested to some that the Soviet government expected the U.S. to discover the missiles at about this time. If the Administration had accepted that judgement, it might have developed a different script for the conversation with Gromyko. Today, each of us can address this question ourselves. With the evidence available on October 18, should one conclude that the Soviet government expected, or alternatively that it did *not* expect, the U.S. to discover the missiles at about this time? Here, Model II competes directly with Model I and yields precisely contrary conclusions.

The missile crisis maintains its special claim on policymakers and citizens alike because no other event so clearly demonstrates the awesome crack between the *unlikelihood* and the *impossibility* of nuclear war. The further one gets from the event, the harder it becomes to believe—existentially— that nuclear war could really have happened. But the evidence marshaled above should help one understand how close the United States and the Soviet Union came to making the impossible happen.

How could this crisis have gone nuclear?[8] In the evidence provided above, we have identified more than a dozen plausible paths that start with the actual course of events and end in nuclear war. To stimulate the reader's imagination in finding these (and others we have not identified), we will summarize what happened in the form of a scenario, and then spell out one path to Armageddon. Actual events are represented by eight steps.

1. The Soviet Union puts missiles in Cuba clandestinely (September 1962).
2. American U-2 flight photographs Soviet missiles (October 14, 1962).
3. President Kennedy initiates a public confrontation by announcing the Soviet action to the world, demanding Soviet removal of their missiles, ordering a U.S. quarantine of Soviet weapon shipments to Cuba, putting U.S. strategic forces on alert, and warning the Soviet Union that any missile launched from Cuba would be regarded as a Soviet missile and met with a full retaliatory response (October 22).
4. Khrushchev orders Soviet strategic forces to alert and threatens to sink U.S. ships if they interfere with Soviet ships en route to Cuba (October 23).
5. Soviet ships stop short of the U.S. quarantine line (October 24).
6. Khrushchev private letter says the necessity for the Soviet deployment would disappear if the U.S. will pledge not to invade Cuba (October 26), followed by a second, public, Khrushchev letter demanding U.S. withdrawal of Turkish missiles for Soviet withdrawal of Cuban missiles (October 27).
7. U.S. responds affirmatively to first Khrushchev letter but says that, first, missiles now in Cuba must be rendered inoperable and urges quick agreement. Robert Kennedy adds privately that missiles in Turkey will eventually be withdrawn but that the missiles in Cuba must be removed immediately and a commitment to that effect must be received the next day, otherwise military action will follow (October 27).
8. Khrushchev publicly announces that the USSR will withdraw its missiles in Cuba (October 28).

Consider, however, one obvious scenario for nuclear war beginning with steps one through seven above but then proceeding hypothetically as follows:

1. Khrushchev reiterates that any attack on Soviet missiles and personnel in Cuba would be met with a full Soviet retaliatory response (October 28).
2. Soviet and/or Cuban forces fire upon U.S. surveillance aircraft over Cuba on October 28. A series of air strikes begins against Soviet missiles (destroying all operational ballistic missiles and killing a limited number of Soviet personnel) (October 29 or 30).
3. Soviet aircraft and/or medium-range ballistic missiles attack Jupiter missiles in Turkey (destroying ballistic missiles and killing a small number of Americans); Soviet and East German forces interfere with traffic moving into Berlin; nuclear weapons in Cuba are dispersed to remaining operational forces on the island (October 31 and November 1).
4. In accord with obligations under the NATO treaty, U.S. aircraft in Europe attack bases in the Soviet Union from which attacks against the Turkish bases had been launched; Berlin confrontation intensifies; U.S. preparations to invade Cuba advance (November 4).

At this point, if not a step or two earlier, the Soviet government would be intensively considering possible preemptive nuclear strikes against the United States, especially command and control centers like Washington, in order to limit the damage inflicted by the overwhelming first strike they fear could come at any moment. If the Soviets preferred to leave the burden of first use of nuclear weapons on the Americans, Moscow could use its conventional military forces to seize all of Berlin, thus forcing the Americans to decide whether they would indeed keep their promise to use nuclear weapons first to defend their allies. This scenario moves from frame to frame by a Model I analysis. Use of Model II and Model III would greatly enlarge the menu of nightmarish possibilities, adding misinformation, false warnings, accidents, and inadvertent clashes to the mix.

The most frequently cited lessons of the Cuban missile crisis have emerged from Model I analysis. These include: (1) since nuclear war between the United States and Soviet Union would have been mutual national suicide, neither nation would choose nuclear war, and nuclear war was therefore not a serious possibility; (2) given its strategic nuclear advantage at the time, the United States could choose lower-level military actions without fearing escalation to nuclear war; and (3) nuclear crises are manageable, as the Cuban missile crisis shows, since in situations where vital interests are at stake, leaders of both nations will think soberly about the challenge and their options and find limited actions to resolve disputes short of war.

Model II and Model III analysts caution against confidence in the impossibility of nations stumbling—irrationally in Model I terms—into the use of nuclear weapons, in the manageability of nuclear crises, or in understanding the recipe for successful crisis management. Through Model II lenses, the United States' success included crucial organizational rigidities and even mistakes. Except for the organizational and political factors that delayed an immediate military attack on Cuba, the probability of war would have been much higher. Except for the organizational and political dynamics that produced sufficiently persistent displays of American resolve to tilt Khrushchev's wildly oscillating estimates of American determination, Khrushchev might have proceeded with his plan to stage a nuclear confrontation in Berlin that could have proved even more dangerous. Only barely did the leaders of both governments manage to control organizational programs that threatened to drag both countries over the cliff. In several instances, both Americans and Soviets were just plain lucky.

The lesson from Model II: Nuclear crises between large machines, such as the United States and Soviet governments of 1962, are inherently chancy. The information and estimates available to leaders about the situation reflects organizational capacities and routines as well as facts. The options presented to the leaders are much narrower than the menu that analysts might consider desirable. The execution of choices exhibits unavoidable rigidities of SOPs. Coordination among organizations is much less finely tuned than leaders demand or expect. The prescription: Considerable thought must be given to the routines established in the principal

organizations before a crisis so that during the crisis organizations will be capable of adequately performing the needed functions. In a crisis, the overwhelming problem will be that of control and coordination of large organizations. Given insurmountable limits to control and added dangers that can be created or compounded by the interacting plethora of the safety routines themselves, such crises must be *avoided*.

Lessons that emerge from Model III provide even less reason to be sanguine about our understanding of nuclear crises or about the impossibility of nuclear war. Actions advocated by leaders of the U.S. government covered a spectrum—from doing nothing, to seeking a diplomatic bargain with Khrushchev at a summit meeting, to an invasion of Cuba. The process by which the blockade emerged included many uncertain factors. Had the Cuban missile crisis been Kennedy's first crisis, the participants in the decisionmaking group would have been different. Had McNamara been less assured, the air strike could well have been chosen in the first day or two. Had Kennedy proved his mettle domestically in a previous confrontation, perhaps the diplomatic track would have prevailed and a major Berlin crisis could have erupted in November and December of 1962.

The lessons in Model III terms, then, are: (1) leaders of the U.S. government can choose actions that they believe entail real possibilities of escalation to war; (2) the process of crisis management is obscure and exceedingly risky; and (3) the interaction of internal games, each as ill-understood as those in the White House and the Kremlin, could indeed yield war, even nuclear war as an outcome. If a president and his associates have to manage a nuclear crisis, the informal machinery, free-wheeling discussions, and devil's advocacy exemplified by the ExCom have many advantages. But the mix of personality, expertise, influence, and temperament that allows such a group to clarify alternatives even while it bargains over separate preferences must be better understood. On the evidence of the Cuban missile crisis, or much more recent stories, clarification is scarcely assured.

3. *Opportunities for rethinking the entire foreign policy agenda*

can be illustrated by rethinking nuclear threats to Americans today.

Einstein observed that the discovery of nuclear weapons "changed everything but our thinking."[9] The end of the Cold War has changed more than we yet realize. Fundamental rethinking is required across the foreign policy agenda; structures designed to pursue Cold War strategies must be reinvented. This should be an extraordinarily exciting time to be a student of foreign affairs. The likelihood that the major forces shaping the principal threats, or creating opportunities for addressing them, are essentially equivalent to those identified during decades of Cold War studies are slim. Conventional divisions in the study of foreign affairs, for example between security and economics, or international security and international political economy, are clearly anachronistic. The challenge is no less than to rectify the conceptual geography of major issues in foreign affairs.

To illustrate ways in which the conceptual models can assist in this rethinking, consider the issue of nuclear threats to Americans' lives and liberties as they enter the 21st century.[10] The question is: What specific threats do nuclear weapons pose for Americans today and, precisely, how? To jump to the bottom line: In the aftermath of the Cold War, has the risk of nuclear weapons exploding on American soil, killing one million or even ten million Americans, gone down or up?

Current conventional wisdom is reinforced by Model I inclinations. The end of the Cold War, it is said, sheathed the nuclear "sword of Damocles" that terrified Americans for two generations. As President Clinton has argued, because our Cold War adversary has become our strategic partner, "the spectre of nuclear annihilation has dramatically receded"[11] Since the principal source of nuclear threat was not the weapons themselves, but hostile intent, a friendly Russia's nuclear arsenal need present little more threat than the arsenals of Britain or France. A good Model I analyst would, however, post a warning sign about the durability of today's friendly intentions.

In this environment, the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* moved the hand on its "doomsday clock" from two minutes to midnight back to 11:46 P.M. U.S.

policy continues to focus predominantly on reducing the number of strategic nuclear warheads, observing START II limitations that call for reductions of active strategic arsenals to a level of 3,500 weapons, even though the treaty has not yet been ratified by the Russian Duma. Plans for START III call for further reductions to levels of between 2,000 and 2,500 weapons. A former commander of U.S. strategic forces has led a group of distinguished colleagues in making the case that the elimination of all nuclear weapons should now become the objective of American policy.

Strategists using Model I also note that the decline of Russia's conventional military capabilities has increased reliance on nuclear weapons, and is likely to continue to do so. Heightened reliance on nuclear weapons for contingencies that would otherwise be met by conventional forces increases risks of use. Moreover, Model I can remind us of other states seeking nuclear weapons, like Saddam Hussein's Iraq, which spent more than $10 billion attempting to build its own weapons. They may now become buyers in a market in which Russia, or at least some Russians, could be sellers.

Through Model II lenses, one sees a different world. Model II analysts have focused on two particular sources of increasing threat: (1) Russia's deteriorating command and control systems, both technical and human, that increase risks of unauthorized or accidental launch of nuclear weapons; and (2) "loose nukes." The Russian Mir space station provides a vivid metaphor for all complex technical systems in the former Soviet Union today. Repeated failures of on-board computers, oxygen systems, and docking devices reflect aging technologies inadequately maintained under conditions of budgetary famine. Ingenious Russian professionals have repeatedly averted disaster, sometimes with significant American financial assistance. But the possibilities of the station's failure, even catastrophic failure, loomed large even before the decision was made to discard it.

Today, Russia's satellite warning systems are deteriorating rapidly, as are its ground-based radar warning systems, command, control, and communications systems for deployed ICBMs and SLBMs, electronic locking devices on those nuclear weapons that are equipped with permissive action links (to restrain unauthorized use), rocket launchers, and even the warheads themselves. As former Senator Sam Nunn and Bruce

Blair have argued, these developments "increase the risk that Russian commanders might receive false signals of an attack and launch their missiles on an unsuspecting United States."[12]

A second and even larger source of nuclear threat to Americans is now known by the term "loose nukes."[13] The threat is that Russian nuclear weapons will be stolen, sold to terrorists or rogue states, and used against Americans at home or American forces abroad. This threat takes operational form in 7,000 active nuclear warheads mounted on missiles, 5,000 tactical nuclear weapons deployed, 12,000 additional nuclear weapons in various storage facilities in Russia, and approximately 70,000 nuclear weapon equivalents in stockpiles of highly enriched uranium and plutonium. In a supreme irony, history left a superpower arsenal in the midst of a society convulsed by an ongoing revolution in which all central authority is disintegrating. Since 1991, Russian society has become increasingly free, chaotic, and criminalized. Numerous cases of attempted theft and sale are fully documented, and many others known in the classified literature.[14] The biggest surprise so far is that successful theft and sale of a weapon has not yet happened, or been announced. This too reflected the power of Model II phenomena that lead MINATOM, Russian nuclear labs, and the 12th main directorate of the Ministry of Defense to persist in routines and sustain missions even in the most dire circumstances. But as one of us has argued repeatedly, we are "living on borrowed time."

Through Model III lenses we see additional sources of risk. The first question is: Which players can decide to launch nuclear weapons? Given President Yeltsin's health and habits, other actors clearly have the physical capacity to launch weapons. (During the 1991 coup, the symbolic nuclear suitcase was separated from the president for some time.) To underline the Russian government's failure to pay troops manning nuclear forces, General Alexander Lebed, governor of Krasnoyarsk, has proposed both to pay and to control units on his territory. As the Russian government's claim on the loyalty of unpaid troops wanes, and the center's hold on the regions weakens, independent actions by such units become more likely. These could include not only willingness to sell or barter weapons, but even more extreme scenarios more common in technothrillers such as an attempt by a regional nuclear unit to blackmail the Russian government.

Moreover, consider Yeltsin's successor and the conditions he will face. A Russian ruler or collection of leaders who sought to blame the West for Russia's travails, in circumstances where hollowed conventional forces necessitated excessive reliance upon nuclear threats, would substantially increase nuclear risks. In an analogous case in the 1950s and early 1960s, Americans deployed large numbers of tactical nuclear weapons as "equalizers" to counter overwhelming Soviet conventional superiority in Europe—spreading physical control widely with increased risks.

The Model III analyst also questions Model I's confidence that nations will avoid actions that could prove fatal. The designer of Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, Admiral Yamamoto, told the members of the Japanese government accurately: "In the first 6 months to a year of war against the United States and England I will run wild, and I will show you an uninterrupted succession of victories; I must also tell you that, should the war be prolonged for 2-3 years, I have no confidence in our ultimate victory."[15] But Japan attacked. Such a precedent suggests three key questions. One: Could any member of the government solve *his* problem by attack? What patterns of bargaining could yield attack as a resultant? Two: What stream of decisions might lead to an attack? At what point in that stream do potential attackers' politics lie? Three: How might miscalculation and confusion generate foul-ups that yield attack as a resultant? If a crisis in the Baltics, for example, led to a conventional war, what information would be available to key members of the central game? While Russia's recent politics have been benign, and its posture towards the West cooperative, a successor government in a failing state with economic conditions resembling those of Germany in the aftermath of the Great Depression or worse, could well see very nasty domestic politics. If so, nuclear risks to Americans would rise significantly.

Weighing the factors uncovered by each of the models, and adding to them the reader's good sense, the reader can judge whether the risks of one or 10 million Americans dying as a consequence of nuclear explosions on American territory has increased or decreased in the past decade. Our judgment is that the direct nuclear threat to Americans has increased—increased substantially. If radical rethinking of the risks of nuclear war

today diverges this dramatically from accepted wisdom, how much more so on issues of less ultimate importance?

> **4.** *Unfortunately, Model I alone will not do. Multiple, overlapping, competing conceptual models are the best that the current understanding of foreign policy provides.*

To conclude that current understanding of issues as important as the actions of national governments, even acts that affect risks of nuclear war, is so limited and incomplete is disappointing. The argument that multiple, overlapping, and competing conceptual frameworks constitute the best that we can do at this stage is uncomfortable. For practical people with no interest in the methodological debate, the idea that they should have to keep in their head and use multiple, separate lenses when examining international affairs is inconvenient. Nevertheless, our conclusion is that this is where understanding of foreign affairs now stands.

Contributions of the Classical Model to our explanations, predictions, and analyses of foreign policy are considerable. By submerging the internal complexities of governmental decisionmaking in the simplification of a unified, purposive actor, Model I allows us to package otherwise confusing and even contradictory details in terms of a single dynamic: the choice of the best alternative for achieving specific objectives. Thus, the RAM permits us to translate the question "Why did *X* happen?" into a simpler question: namely, "Why did this nation do *X*?" This question is then interpreted to mean: "What international problem was the nation solving (and what objective was the nation pursuing) in choosing *X*?" The Classical Model allows us to answer the last question in ways similar to those in which we would answer a question about an individual's action. Indeed, the conception of nations in international politics as coordinated, intelligent human beings is so ingrained in most thinking that most analysts rarely remember that they are reasoning by metaphor.

If one picks up today's newspaper and reviews the front-page articles, one is likely to find at least one story about international affairs. Nation A is reported to be taking some action, or contemplating some action, that affects the interest of Nation B: providing foreign aid, seeking cooperation

in trade or peacekeeping, or threatening a use of force. If the story offers an explanation, it is most likely to be in terms of a constructed calculation according to which Nation A has reasonably chosen to make the move it is taking. In providing the explanation, the analyst proceeds as if the assignment were to identify objectives Nation A could plausibly have that permit the reader to understand how, given the problem Nation A faced, he would have chosen the action taken, if he had been playing its hand.

As discussed in [Chapter 1](#), the model here is one of the most fundamental methods employed by human beings in attempting to come to grips with the buzzing, blooming confusion around them. By conceiving of happenings not as simple phenomena, but rather as action—that is, behavior expressing some intention or choice—we explain the behavior of others in the same terms that we explain our behavior to ourselves. In the conditions I faced, I wanted *X* and therefore chose *Y*. For explaining and predicting the behavior of individuals, the general assumption of purpose and rational choice is generally satisfactory. That rationality is, of course, bounded by the actor's ability to perceive information, estimate costs and benefits, and calculate (or, more broadly, the Vickers conception of the related value, reality, and instrumental judgments that combine in an appreciative system). But as a baseline, when one understands an individual's conditions and the ways in which he has defined his problem, the individual's objectives provide a major clue to his or her behavior.

Even in explaining the behavior of individuals, it is possible to get it wrong. Stand back and consider the number of ways one can mispredict the action of an associate one knows very well, even when one understands well the conditions that associate faces. One can imagine that he wants *X*, when in fact he wants *X* and *Y*; one can misread his appreciation of the situation (the dimensions the associate judges most important, whether the associate sees opportunity or threat, etc.); one can misunderstand his or her estimate of costs or of benefits; one can miss the slip between action and consequences, particularly unintended consequences or side-effects that were, for the actor at the time, thought to be extraneous. Moreover, in retrospect, after the event has occurred and therefore can be thought to be 100 percent determined, one can mistake an actor's choice of an option he thought had a

60 percent likelihood of success (but a 40 percent likelihood of failure) and blame the actor for choosing an option that now seems bound to fail.

Still larger difficulties arise when what is to be explained is not behavior of an individual, but rather that of an aggregate actor: a university, an airline, or even a government. In complex, multi-person processes, almost never is there a single solution "on the merits." Never do all of the actors whose views count in shaping the action agree about the best solution. Though they share basic objectives at one level of abstraction, rarely do they agree on a single, simple operational objective. Each of the terms in the Model I simplification are, therefore, "more complicated than that." Even where the model most closely approximates reality, for example, in dictatorial decisions such as the Soviet deployment of missiles in Cuba, the framework gets its script from an auxiliary analysis of the peculiar decisionmaking process that allowed Khrushchev to impose such a major decision with so little serious deliberation or analysis.

Nonetheless, Model I offers not just a convenient, but also a powerful, first approximation. By analyzing the objective conditions in which a state finds itself and assuming minimum objectives for the state, an analyst could infer, as we have seen above, that the Soviet Union would become concerned in 1962 about the window of vulnerability it faced. Imagine another Chernobyl-like failure of a nuclear power plant tomorrow. Identify its location, for example, in the Russian Far East, and one could make a good guess about which states would be most concerned (those adjacent and thus most directly affected), and which would be likely to pay to help redress the consequences (for example, those with interests and capacity). Thus, from objective factors and a utility function for an identified state with a specific history, culture, and shared values, one can make first approximation inferences that narrow the choices to one hemisphere, and sometimes even one quadrant, on the map of possible outcomes. For example, when one asks why Soviet missiles were sent to Cuba in 1962 rather than 1942, objective factors include the existence of missiles, the U.S.-Soviet competition, and the Soviet-Cuban alliance, as well as more specific Soviet perceptions of the threat posed by the American strategic nuclear buildup, American efforts to overthrow Castro, and Soviet technological and financial constraints. All these would lead a betting man to believe that the

possibility the Soviets would take such an action might be at least one in three.

But these factors relieve general puzzlement or curiosity about what has happened, not the specific puzzle as it arises in a specific context. In context, the question is why, given the world of 1962 and the shared values, the perceptual predispositions, the operational code of the Soviet government, and so on—why, with all these factors in one's *ceteris paribus* (other things being equal) clause, Soviet missiles appeared in Cuba. In this context, but for which further causal factors would this not have occurred?

To answer this question, it is necessary to open the black box and look within the state actor to its disaggregated moving parts. While models of organizational behavior and governmental politics entail greater complexity and demand greater information, they provide additional specific expectations for second and third approximations. Moreover, they provide concepts and checklists as points of departure in the effort to identify more fine-grained hypotheses, and ways to combine them in explanations and predictions.

As the reexamination of the post-Cold War study of foreign policy and international politics proceeds, we offer our judgment that the largest payoffs will come from extending the welcome trend toward a more inclusive and textured analysis of state behavior. Rather than concentrate on simplistic single variable system-level analysis, the best work will continue to investigate (1) multiple determinants *within* the state actors and (2) *interactions* between these factors and identified features of the external setting. By identifying features of the international system beyond pure power differentials—for example, technology—recent realist analyses make a useful start. The challenge for serious students of domestic factors is to identify the most important internal causes, and delineate more precisely their interaction with external factors in causing important events in international affairs like war, even nuclear war. Snyder's *Myths of Empire*, Zakaria's *From Wealth to Power*, and Van Evera's *Causes of War* illustrate how good analysis can be done by combining international and domestic factors in explaining the behavior of nations in international affairs.[16]

Our conclusion will disappoint many scholars of foreign affairs whose research programs attempt to explain state behavior by system-level or external factors alone. But their expectation that most of the important differences in whether states go to war, join alliances, or compete could be found exclusively in system-level variables was misguided. This misconception arose from the conjunction of two basic conceptual mistakes, both propounded by the most influential international relations text of the past two decades, namely Waltz's *Theory of International Politics*.

First, as Fearon's thoughtful review, "Domestic Politics, Foreign Policy, and Theories of International Relations" has explained clearly, Waltz's claim that a bright line divides "a systematic theory of international politics" from a "theory of foreign policy," is mistaken. Waltz asserts that it is an "error to mistake a theory of international politics for a theory of foreign policy," that "international politics is not foreign policy." But in fact, as Fearon shows: "the subject of systemic theories in their original domain is and should be states' foreign policies and their consequences." Only by perverse definition can the claim that these are sharply distinct domains be defended.[17]

The first error is compounded by a second, rooted in a misunderstanding of the elementary economic analogy that served as Waltz's point of departure.[18] The analogy between firms in economic markets, on the one hand, and states in international systems, on the other, is suggestive. In perfectly competitive markets, external market forces explain and predict pricing and output decisions of profit-maximizing firms. But like most other students of international politics, Waltz is principally interested in the behavior of major powers. Their analogue in economics are oligopolies: small numbers of large firms that together dominate a market. Where there are few sellers, each aware of the behavior of the others, economists readily acknowledge that a theory of markets has little to say. Prices will generally be higher and quantities generally lower than in perfectly competitive markets. But oligopoly theory cannot say how much higher or lower, or much else beyond those directional bets. To explain the behavior of oligopolies, economists and business analysts have found it necessary to go inside firms to examine strategies and structures. Consider, for example, the

long distance telephone business after the breakup of the Bell system. AT&T, the Baby Bells, MCI, Sprint, and others have each pursued distinctly different strategies. If economists have yielded to business strategy analysts in addressing these questions, can students of international politics reasonably expect to do less? A theory of foreign policy is thus an inherent and inescapable component of a theory of international politics; likewise a theory of the international setting is an essential component of a theory of the behavior of states in such settings. Systematic identification of causal factors at both levels is necessary to explain and predict phenomena in international affairs.

Notes

1. As noted in [chapter 6](#), Bundy later said that he held the air strike option open on October 19-20 at President Kennedy's request, a request made on the morning of October 19. If Bundy's account were true it would mean, at a minimum, that Kennedy either remained strongly tempted by the option or that Kennedy had been more influenced than he let on by the strong and united opinions he had received on the morning of October 19 from the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

2. For an analogous argument offering an outline example of the many (thirteen) independent variables needed to explain a specified set of dependent variables for a single important episode—the unification of Germany—see the illustration in the new preface to the paperback edition of Philip Zelikow and Condoleezza Rice, *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed: A Study in Statecraft*, ppk ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), pp. vii-ix.

3. Conversation on the evening of October 23, in Ernest May and Philip Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes: Inside the White House during the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 344.

4. ExCom meeting on October 23, in ibid., pp. 297-99.

5. On the twentieth anniversary of the crisis, Messrs. Ball, Gilpatric, McNamara, Rusk, and Sorensen acknowledged the offer, which was originally revealed in full by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. in *Robert Kennedy and His Times* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1978). Like Robert Kennedy at the time, they explain there was no "quid pro quo." But they say: "This . . . assurance was kept secret because the few who knew about it at the time were in unanimous agreement that any other course would have had explosive and destructive effects on the security of the U.S. and its allies." In justifying this "secret diplomacy, including a secret assurance," they argue: "When it will help your own country for your adversary to know your settled intentions, you should find effective ways of making sure that he does, and a secret assurance is justified when a) you can keep your word, and b) no other course can avoid grave damage to your country's legitimate interests." See *Time*, September 27, 1982, p. 85.

6. See the continuum of eight possible outcomes in a confrontation between two states, note 100, [Chapter 1](). See also, James D. Fearon, "Causes and Counterfactuals in Social Science: Exploring an Analogy between Cellular Automata and Historical Processing" in Philip E. Tetlock and Aaron Belkin, eds., *Counterfactual Thought Experiments in World Politics: Logical, Methodological, and Psychological Perspectives* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996) pp. 66-67.

7. Why were American troops sent to Bosnia as part of a NATO peacekeeping mission at the end of 1995? President Clinton's announced extension of the mission gave what his aides called the "Clinton doctrine" for the use of troops overseas. Speaking about the Bosnian judgment, Clinton said "the United States cannot and should not try to solve every problem in the world. But where our interests are clear and our values are at stake, where we can make a difference, we must act and we must lead." *New York Times*, November 16, 1996. His blended explanation and justification of American intervention in Bosniainvokes a purposive calculus that

begins with American interests and values, assesses where the U.S. can "make a difference," and selects the action required.

8. The following draws upon the Afterword by Richard E. Neustadt and Graham T. Allison to Robert F. Kennedy, *Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1968).

9. *The Quotable Einstein*, ed. Alice Calaprice (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 131.

10. For an earlier statement of questions each model raises about nuclear risks, see the original edition of *Essence of Decision* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971), pp. 34-35, 98-100, 183-84.

11. President William Clinton, "A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement," July 1994, p. 2.

12. Bruce G. Blair and Sam Nunn, "From Nuclear Deterrence to Mutual Safety," *Washington Post*, June 22, 1997; see also Bruce G. Blair, *Strategic Command and Control: Redefining the Nuclear Threat* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1985); and John Steinbruner, "Beyond Rational Deterrence: The Struggle for New Conceptions," *World Politics* 28 (January 1976): pp. 223 ff.

13. See Graham T. Allison, Owen R. Coté, Jr., Richard A. Falkenrath, and Steven E. Miller, *Avoiding Nuclear Anarchy: Containing the Threat of Loose Russian Nuclear Weapons and Missile Material* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996).

14. Ibid., pp. 23 ff.

15. Roberta Wohlstetter, *Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962), p. 350.

16. Jack Snyder, *Myths of Empire: Domestic Policies and International Ambition* (Cornell University Press, 1991); Fareed

Zakaria, *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998); Stephen Van Evera, *Causes of War: Power and the Roots of Conflict* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, Forthcoming 1999).

17. James D. Fearon, "Domestic Politics, Foreign Policy, and Theories of International Relations," *Annual Review of Political Science* 1 (1998): 289-313.

18. See Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979), pp. 88-93, 121-23. Waltz imagined the construction of a theory of markets without a theory of the firm. But in economic theory the concept of a theory of disembodied markets without a theory of the firm is unintelligible. The theory of markets focuses on relations between the structure of markets (competitive, oligopolistic, monopolistic) and performance in the short run (price, quantity, and efficiency) and in the longer run (innovation, income distribution, and long-term efficiency), always assuming explicitly and of necessity a theory of firms who are principal actors in the market. Generally, economists employ a simple theory of the firm, namely that it is a rational profit maximizer. See, e.g., N. Gregory Mankiw, *Principles of Economics* (Fort Worth: Dryden Press, 1988), pp. 337 ff. In defending himself against these two charges, Waltz would presumably quote other paragraphs in his *Theory of International Politics* which recognize the need for both a theory of international politics and a theory of foreign policy in explaining international phenomena (see pp. 122-23). In fact, in his earlier *Man, the State, and*

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