THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

Cultivating Strategic Thinking in the National Security Council: A Critical Study of the Eisenhower and Kennedy Mechanism

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty of the

Department of Politics

School of Arts and Sciences

Of The Catholic University of America

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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By

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Washington D.C.

2016

Cultivating Strategic Thinking in the National Security Council: A Critical Study of the Eisenhower and Kennedy Mechanism

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the Eisenhower and Kennedy National Security Council mechanisms to explore the impact of organization on the cultivation of strategic thinking for grand strategy formulation. There is a substantial amount of scholarship on the Presidency, the National Security Council, and the National Security Advisor, but no scholarship on the practice of strategic thinking for strategy formulation. This research builds on presidential scholarship by introducing the work of strategic theorists Colin Gray, Harry Yarger, and Ross Harrison to study the correlation between National Security Council organization and the discipline of strategic thinking.

The work of this dissertation takes an historical and archival approach to studying two diverse organizational approaches to the National Security Council mechanism. President Eisenhower established formal organization for the integration of information, policy deliberation, and policy implementation. President Kennedy established informal organization for accelerated decision-making, innovative policy solutions, and decisive policy implementation. This dissertation studies the constituent parts of each National Security Council mechanism to assess which system fostered strategic thinking more efficiently. Further, this study examines the manner in which each President operated within the mechanism to practice

persuasion, increase his influence, and extend his span of control for the successful implementation of policy.

The argument made here is the importance of organization and staff work for strategic thinking to occur. In essence, strategic thinking is a disciplined approach to strategy formulation. It begins with the strategic appraisal, which helps the policymaker gain a greater understanding of the strategic environment. Continuing the appraisal process through the five competencies of strategic thinking, the policymaker can examine complex problems from different angles. This discipline results in the articulation of the strategic objective, the desired strategic effects, and the selection of a strategy and its supporting capabilities to achieve the end-state.

The research takes an organizational and historical approach to each President's National Security Council mechanism and how each used the mechanism to practice strategic thinking. For the modern Presidency, Eisenhower and Kennedy's methodologies for incorporating strategic thinking in the formulation of grand strategy and crisis management serve as instructive paradigms.

This dissertation by Raymond A. Millen fulfills the dissertation requirement for the doctoral degree in Political Science approved by Phillip Henderson, Ph.D. as Director, and by John K. White, Ph.D. and Wallace Thies, Ph.D. as Readers.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Archivist Kevin M. Bailey at the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Reference Archivist Stephen Plotkin at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, and Archivist James A. Yancey Jr. at the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library, as well as their archival specialists, for their assistance in finding documents relevant to my research on the NSC mechanism. Each diligently suggested files and special papers which proved invaluable in research.

The U.S. Army War College librarians, Greta Andrusyszn, Nancy Sneed, Dianne Baumgardner, and Kathy Hindman were godsends in helping me find obscure articles, documents, and out-of-print books through the vast contacts with other libraries. They saved me dozens of hours in locating these resources and providing them to me in record time. I hold them all in high esteem.

The strategic art and more specifically the discipline of strategic thinking are esoteric and difficult to articulate. I was blessed to have superb mentors, Dr. Harry R. Yarger, Dr. Ross Harrison, and Dr. Steven Metz, who patiently explained the strategic environment, the process of strategy formulation, and strategic thinking for NSC professionals. If I fell short in my articulation of this discipline, it is my own failing, not theirs. Discussions with them as well as their written works proved invaluable.

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CHAPTER 1

THE CONCEPTUAL CONTROVERSY AND EXISTING LITERATURE

Scholars on the modern Presidency continue to debate the optimal use of the National Security Council (NSC) mechanism in terms of decision-making, the formulation of policy, and crisis management. The Dwight D. Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy administrations stand at the forefront of this debate because they present two antipodal approaches to managing the Presidency. Accordingly, this study is a comparative analysis of the Eisenhower and Kennedy NSC systems to ascertain which proved more efficient and effective in foreign policy and national security strategy development and implementation as well as cultivating strategic thinking. It examines each NSC mechanism in detail—the basis for restructuring, the organizational structure, and its functioning in practice.

The Eisenhower Administration advocated a highly systematic approach to the NSC built on organization, procedures, and processes. It placed a premium on thorough staff work of policy proposals, educating the NSC principals on the various issues for NSC deliberation, and creating procedures for the implementation of presidential decisions. Eisenhower sought to harness the most effective features of large bureaucracies—viz., efficiency, routinization, predictability, and stability. He recognized that the combination of American constitutional structuralism and the general nature of bureaucracy resulted in ponderous political action, so he sought to create efficiencies within the Executive Office of the President.

In contrast, the John F. Kennedy Administration advocated a less confining structure built on informality, accentuating swift, decisive presidential decisions. Kennedy strove to pierce bu-

reaucratic logjams, create an environment for the free exchange of novel ideas and debate, and unfetter decision-making. Kennedy sought to invigorate and prod the government bureaucracy to action for the purpose of getting the "country moving again."[1]

From the Eisenhower Administration's perspective, the formulation of policy and strategy required a deliberative approach, with the NSC mechanism as the medium—viz. the Planning Board, the Council, and the Operations Coordinating Board (OCB). Special Assistant for National Security Affairs Robert Cutler described the process in broad terms as "Policy Hill" coordination. The Planning Board crafted policy paper drafts, forwarding them upwards to the Council at the summit for deliberation. Once the President made his decision, policies flowed down to the OCB for department implementation.[2]

The Kennedy Administration viewed the Eisenhower NSC mechanism as too cumbersome, lacking the agility and celerity to address urgent national security threats. Inspired by Richard Neustadt's *Presidential Power*, Kennedy sought to personalize presidential decision-making as the means to exercise decisive leadership when confronted with urgent challenges. Ideally, the accumulation of personal power enhanced the President's power of persuasion through public prestige, charisma, wise policy choices, professional reputation, and a series of successful endeavors.[3] According to Neustadt, presidential bargaining power stems from "his personal capacity to influence the conduct of the men who make up government. His influence

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[1] Garry Wills, *The Kennedy Imprisonment: A Meditation on Power* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1982), 170.

[2] Robert Cutler, "The Development of the National Security Council," *Foreign Affairs* 34, No. 3 (April, 1956), 448-449.

[3] Richard E. Neustadt, *Presidential Power: the Politics of Leadership From FDR to Carter*, 2d ed. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1980), 131.

becomes the mark of leadership."[4] Accordingly, Kennedy's system placed the President at the center of action with information flowing to him like the spokes of a wheel.[5] In place of the Planning Board and OCB, ad hoc task forces and the NSC special staff served as the medium of policy formulation and implementation.

Eisenhower designed his NSC mechanism to foster strategic thinking for high policy and grand strategy formulation (as well as subordinate policies and strategies). Educated on all aspects of policy issues, the NSC principals came prepared to NSC meetings for immediate deliberation. Likewise, members of the Planning Board and OCB, as well as the government bureaucracy, became more informed on the underlying issues confronting the White House. Hence, for the system to work effectively, Eisenhower established an operational routine, with weekly NSC meetings and the regular circulation of information supporting the Council.

Kennedy believed that crafting grand strategy was less important than addressing immediate security issues. In view of the putative Soviet threat and the Eisenhower Administration's apparent neglect of appropriate countermeasures, the Kennedy NSC system focused on mobilizing for action. Hence, the Planning Board and OCB were unnecessary bureaucratic impediments. Instead of using the Council for long-range planning and exercising strategic thinking, it would meet only when required, with ad hoc task forces and the NSC special staff providing critical studies for action.[6] Because the perceived threat was central to Kennedy's advisory system, two questions arise. First, was the Soviet threat as acute as claimed? Second, did the Eisenhower NSC's focus on grand strategy and strategic thinking result in a neglect of national security? This

[4] Ibid, vi, 4.

[5] Bromley K. Smith, *Organizational History of the National Security Council during the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations* (Reprint, Lexington, KY: University of Michigan Library, 25 June 2010), 17.

[6] Ibid, 9-12.

study addresses these questions, seeking to separate fiction from fact.

Eisenhower and Kennedy's backgrounds framed their weltanschauung. Eisenhower was an enthusiastic and inveterate organizer. Whether as a staff officer or a commander, he sought organizational efficiencies. These efforts were more apparent in the unified command systems he established during World War Two and later in NATO's integrated military system. Accordingly, his reform of the NSC mechanism reflected a unified structure for presidential decision-making. Eisenhower expected crises would arise, but these would be handled within the larger context of existing policies. Without a doubt, Eisenhower was an accomplished national security expert and strategist, but this begs the question whether his complex NSC mechanism was a practical model for future administrations. As political scientist I.M. Destler argued, "No single organizational scheme, whatever its built-in flexibility, can fully accommodate the differing personalities and priorities of different Presidents and Administrations."[7] This study investigates whether the Eisenhower NSC was in fact too complex to serve as a practical model.

Kennedy did not share Eisenhower's depth and breadth of experience in managing large bureaucracies, and because of his restless nature and desire for action, he had no desire to waste precious time learning the NSC system. Instead, his adoption of *Presidential Power* obviated the need to govern through the government bureaucracy and appealed to his leadership and management styles.[8] In essence, the Kennedy Administration embodied the New Frontier, with a new generation of American leadership dispatching international threats and challenges boldly and decisively. Crisis management would drive presidential decision-making as a way of shaking the

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[7] I.M. Destler, *Presidents, Bureaucrats, and Foreign Policy: The Politics of Organizational Reform* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1972), 10.

[8] Kai Bird, "McGeorge Bundy," in *Fateful Decisions: Inside the National Security Council*, Karl F. Inderfurth and Loch K. Johnson, eds. (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc, 2004), 183.

American government out of its doldrums. However, regardless of the merits of Kennedy's use of presidential power, what was his organizational legacy? This study examines whether Kennedy's informal system was a feasible model for the NSC.

The effectiveness of either system was by no means self-evident. Each Administration had its share of friction. As Amy Zegart notes in *Flawed by Design*, Eisenhower inherited a structurally weak Joint Chiefs of Staff, where the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff possessed little meaningful authority. Despite Eisenhower's efforts to instill a sense of teamwork in the service chiefs, parochialism and inter-service rivalries remained problematic.[9] David Jablonsky, Samuel Huntington, and Stephen Ambrose point out that Eisenhower was forced to act as his own Secretary of Defense debating military budgets, force ceilings, and nuclear weapons. Further, the Joint Chiefs of Staff thwarted Eisenhower's 1953 and 1958 defense reorganization initiatives.[10] As Eisenhower ruefully lamented, he had "made little or no progress in developing real corporate thinking," among the service chiefs to place national security above service parochialism.[11]

Inter-service rivalry drove the national security debate of the 1950s, which soon involved inter alia Congress, scientists, pundits, and journalists. Assertions of a Soviet-U.S. bomber gap, the missile gap, the nuclear gap, and the economic gap undermined public confidence in Eisenhower's New Look strategy to protect U.S. national security interests. Walter Lippmann ex-

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[9] Amy B. Zegart, *Flawed by Design: The Evolution of the CIA, JCS, and NSC* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), Kindle e-book.

[10] David Jablonsky, *War by Land, Sea, and Air: Dwight Eisenhower and the Concept of Unified Command* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010); Samuel P. Huntington, *The Common Defense: Strategic Programs in National Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961; Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower: The President* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984; reprint, 2014), Kindle e-book.

[11] Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change: 1953-1956* (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1963), 606.

pressed the sentiment of the times:

> The military power of the United States is falling behind that of the Soviet Union: we are on the wrong end of a missile gap. The American economy is stagnating: we are falling behind the Soviet Union and behind the leading industrial nations of Western Europe in our rate of growth. The United States is failing to modernize itself: the public services, education, health, rebuilding of the cities, transportation, and the like, are not keeping up with a rapidly growing urbanized population.[12]

Critics charged that Eisenhower's over-reliance on organization was the culprit to America's plight. The initial salvos painted the NSC as overly bureaucratic, focused on plodding procedures, and presided over by a complacent President.[13] In the midst of the controversy, Senator Henry Jackson convened a Senate Subcommittee in July 1959 to investigate the NSC mechanism so as to ascertain the reason for the perceived failure to respond effectively to the Soviet threat.[14]

Paul Hammond questioned the Eisenhower Administration's testaments of NSC effectiveness, arguing that organization is not a panacea for resolving complex policy issues because it is dependent on the frailties of men.[15] Roger Hilsman observed that it was an illusion to think of policy-making as "a tidy sequence of specialized actions in a logical division of labor . . . with each of the participants having well-defined roles and powers and performing a standardized function in the consideration of each issue that arises."[16] Similarly, I. M. Destler questioned whether organizational reforms could actually mitigate government parochialism. Even the pres-

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[12] Cited in Richard Reeves, *President Kennedy: Profile of Power* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993), 17.

[13] Some notable examples include: Hans J. Morgenthau, "Can We Entrust Defense to a Committee?" *New York Times Magazine* (June 7, 1959): 9, 62-66; Jackson, "To Forge a Strategy for Survival," 157-163; Marian D. Irish, "The Organization Man in the Presidency," *The Journal of Politics* 20 (1958): 259-277.

[14] Senate Committee on Government Operations, *Organizing for National Security: Hearing before the Subcommittee on National Policy Machinery*, 86th Congress, 11 August 1960. Jackson later published extracts of the hearings into a book. *The National Security Council: Jackson Subcommittee Papers on Policy-Making at the Presidential Level*, ed. Senator Henry M. Jackson (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, 1965).

[15] Paul Y. Hammond, *Organizing for Defense: The American Military Establishment in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1961), 4.

[16] Roger Hilsman, "The Foreign Policy Consensus: An Interim Research Report," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (December 1959), 362.

ident was susceptible, despite the "rational ideal of the wise, unbiased central decision-maker," because he is driven to achieve quick policies for his legacy, safeguard his own political standing, and contend with ex parte attempts to influence policies.[17] Thus, political considerations remain a significant if not predominant factor in policy formulation.

Richard Neustadt assessed that constitutional constraints on the executive branch had reduced the president to the role of "clerkship," beholden to constituents and badgered by their expectations, but garnering no reciprocal support for his policies due to self-interest. By implication, constitutional checks and balances militated against decisive action vis-à-vis emerging national security threats. In his view, Eisenhower exacerbated this state of affairs through a combination of indolence and torpidity, succumbing to the narcoleptic inertia of the NSC bureaucracy.[18] Essentially, Neustadt called for the eradication of the Eisenhower NSC system, replacing it with a dynamic presidency, which used the currency of power to superintend the policy process though overlapping Cabinet responsibilities and competition.[19]

Eisenhower later expressed his amazement that so many pundits were self-proclaimed experts on organization, and he questioned their qualifications. From his perspective, true expertise on organizational design is a product of extensive study, reflection, and experience; no amount of natural talent can serve as a substitute, much less in preparing one to become a senior executive.[20] In reply to his critics, Eisenhower wrote that organization does not create rigidity or

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[17] I.M. Destler, *Presidents, Bureaucrats, and Foreign Policy: The Politics of Organizational Reform* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1972), 4-5, 46, 84, 86-89.

[18]Neustadt, *Presidential Power*, 26, 119-122; Garry Wills, *The Kennedy Imprisonment: A Meditation on Power* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1982, 163.

[19] Ibid, 115-119, 133; See also Richard E. Neustadt, *Preparing to be President: The Memos of Richard E. Neustadt*, ed. Charles O. Jones (Washington D.C.: The AEI Press, 2000).

[20] Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 114-115.

inhibit imaginative ideas. “Its purpose is to simplify, clarify, expedite, and coordinate; it is the bulwark against chaos, confusion, delay, and failure.”[21]

In view of the controversies surrounding Eisenhower’s organizational reforms, this study examines the NSC mechanism and complementary structures to determine whether the criticism had merit.

Despite the confident expectations of the New Frontier, the Kennedy Administration experienced pronounced growing pains with its NSC system. Ad hoc task forces proved a poor substitute for the Planning Board and Operations Coordinating Board, failing to provide innovative and definitive policy alternatives.[22] These flaws became apparent with the Bay of Pigs fiasco, which critics attributed to a failure of organization, planning and leadership. In his investigation, General Maxwell Taylor reported that the failure as due to poor presidential management:

> There was no single authority short of the President capable of coordinating the actions of the CIA, State, Defense, and USIA. Top level direction was given through ad hoc meetings of senior officials without consideration of operational plans in writing and with no arrangement for recording conclusions and decisions reached.[23]

Recognizing Kennedy would not reinstate the Eisenhower NSC system, Special Assistant for National Security Affairs McGeorge Bundy devoted considerable effort to persuade Kennedy to adopt more efficient executive management practices and NSC reforms.[24] Moreover, at Kenne-

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[21] Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Waging Peace* (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1965), 630.

[22] McGeorge Bundy to President Kennedy, "Crisis Commanders in Washington" April 4, 1961, POF, Box 62). JFKL.

[23] Para-Military Study Group Taylor Report, Part I, Memorandum 2, 13 June 1961 Papers of the President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box 61 A, JFKL, 4.

Memorandum to the President, “White House Organization,” May 16, 1961, Papers of the President, National Security Files, McGeorge Bundy Correspondence, Box 405, Memos to the President, 5/6/61-5/28/61, JFKL; Memorandum for the President, “Current Organization of the White House and NSC for dealing with International Matters,” June 22, 1961, Papers of the President, National Security Files, McGeorge Bundy Correspondence, Box 405, Memos to the President, 6/61, JFKL; Memorandum for the President, “A Plans and Operations Committee of the

dy's behest, Bundy transformed the NSC Special Staff—the Bundy Group—into a mini-State Department. This study examines the effectiveness of Bundy's workarounds and whether presidential power was incompatible with a complex NSC mechanism like Eisenhower's.

Existing Literature

Appraisals of each NSC mechanism fall broadly into three categories: organizational design of the NSC, memoirs and biographies, and roles of the national security adviser. While the literature often addresses more than one category, arranging them in this manner provides greater coherency to the discussion.

Organizational Design of the NSC

To develop an understanding of the Eisenhower and Kennedy NSC systems, the political context is important. Douglas T. Stuart's 2008 book *Creating the National Security State* and Amy Zegart's 1999 *Flawed by Design* examine the development of the NSC, the JCS, and the CIA as a consequence of the Unification of the Services debate, which resulted in the 1947 National Security Act. The confluence of interdepartmental rivalry, compromise, and imprecise wording in the 1947 act resulted in rather ineffective NSC, JCS, and CIA structures. As such, presidents were free to seek reforms or workarounds in each, but the resolution of organizational flaws would remain problematic.[25]

National Security Council," April 2, 1963. Papers of the President, National Security Files, McGeorge Bundy Correspondence, Box 405, Memos to the President, 3/63-4/63, JFKL.

[25] Douglas T. Stuart, *Creating the National Security State: A History of the Law that Transformed America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); Amy B. Zegart, *Flawed by Design: The Evolution of the CIA, JCS, and NSC* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), Kindle e-book.

An accurate depiction of the Eisenhower NSC mechanism is possible due to the numerous documents and literature available. Robert Cutler provides the most prolific descriptions in *No Time for Rest*, his numerous articles, NSC documents, and congressional testimony. He captures Eisenhower's intent with reasoning behind the NSC mechanism.[26] NSC Executive Secretary James Lay NSC report to Congress describes the interactive functions, structures, and procedures of the Planning Board, the Council, and the OCB in a comprehensive manner.[27] Senator Henry Jackson's *The National Security Council* addresses the prevalent criticisms of the NSC mechanism.[28]

In light of the cross-cutting nature of domestic and foreign policies, Eisenhower directed that NSC officials and Cabinet officials mutually attend Cabinet and NSC meetings. In addition to the Planning Board and OCB, he established a number of innovations in the Executive Office of the President: the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, the White House Chief of Staff, the Cabinet Secretariat, the White House Staff Secretariat, the Executive Branch Liaison Office and the Congressional Liaison Office, all of which expanded his span of authority. White House Chief of Staff Sherman Adams' *Firsthand Report* and Alfred Sander's *Eisenhower's Executive Office* provide a thorough account of these innovations and their interactions. Additionally, the White House pamphlet *Staff Work for the President and the Executive Branch* and Staff Secretary

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[26] Robert Cutler, *No Time for Rest* (Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press Book, 1965); "The Development of the National Security Council," *Foreign Affairs* 34, No. 3 (April, 1956): 441-458; *Report of Recommendations on the National Security Council* (16 March 1953), White House Office, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, Special Assistant Series, Presidential Subseries, Box 1, President's Papers 1953, DDEL.

[27] Congress, Senate, Committee on Government Operations, Subcommittee on National Policy Machinery, *Organizational History of the National Security Council*, Report prepared by James S. Lay Jr. and Robert H. Johnson, 86th Congress, 2d sess., 1960.

[28] *The National Security Council: Jackson Subcommittee Papers on Policy-Making at the Presidential Level*, ed. Senator Henry M. Jackson (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, 1965), 111-139.

Andrew Goodpaster's oral interview provides insights on Eisenhower's sense of organization.[29]

Integral to this study is Eisenhower's development and revisions of a formal U.S. grand strategy, popularly called The New Look. Robert R. Bowie and Richard H. Immerman's *Waging Peace* and Meena Bose's *Shaping and Signaling Presidential Policy* chronicle the impetus for the Project Solarium exercise, the core debates, as well as the development of NSC 162/2—the Basic National Security Policy.[30] Additionally, NSC documents and select oral interviews provide insights on Eisenhower's approach to the planning process: appraisal of the strategic environment, articulation of the U.S. strategic goal, examination of various strategies to attain the strategic goal, and the capabilities needed to fulfill the strategies.[31] These accounts reveal that Eisenhower drove the process: articulating the strategic goal, selecting strategies to achieve his goal, and selecting the necessary capabilities to support the strategies. What the accounts fail to establish however is the link between Eisenhower's planning process and his practice of strategic thinking. This study seeks to fill this gap.

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[29] Sherman Adams, *Firsthand Report* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961); Alfred Dick Sander, *Eisenhower's Executive Office* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999); *Staff Work for the President and the Executive Branch*, August 20, 1954. Organization, White House Office, Office of the Staff Secretary: Records, 1952-61, White House Subseries, Box 4, Organization, (2) and (3), DDEL; Andrew J. Goodpaster, Eisenhower Administration Project, Interview One by Ed Edwin, April 25, 1967, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library (OH—37).

[30] Robert R. Bowie and Richard H. Immerman, *Waging Peace: How Eisenhower Shaped an Enduring Cold War Strategy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Meena Bose, *Shaping and Signaling Presidential Policy: The National Security Decision Making of Eisenhower and Kennedy* (College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 1998).

[31] *Memorandum for the Record by the* Special Assistant *to the President for National Security Affairs (*Cutler*), "Project Solarium," 9 May 1953*; *Memorandum for the Record by the Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs (Cutler), "Solarium," 15 May 1953*; *Memorandum by the* President *to the* Secretary of State, "Project Solarium," May 20, 1953; Paper Prepared by the Directing Panel of Project Solarium, "Project Solarium," 1 June 1953; *Minutes of the 155th Meeting of the National Security Council, Thursday, July 16, 1953*; *Memorandum to the National Security Council by the Executive Secretary (Lay), "Project Solarium," July 22, 1953*; A Report of the National Security Council: Basic National Security Policy, *"NSC 162/2," October 30, 1953*; ; Interview with Robert Bowie, Episode 7: After Stalin, accessed on the website of The National Security Archive: Cold War, The George Washington University; *George F. Kennan and the Origins of Eisenhower's New Look: An Oral History of Project Solarium*, ed. William B. Pickett, Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies, Monograph Series 1, Princeton University, 2004.

In *The Common Defense*, Samuel P. Huntington explores the key competing views on national security policy which confronted the Eisenhower Administration (i.e., mobilization strategy versus containment strategy). As Huntington points out, though the Administration adopted containment as the core of the Basic National Security Policy, inter-service rivalries pitted Eisenhower against the Joint Chiefs of Staff throughout his tenure. The constant conflict over the defense budget and force management led to public controversies over continental defense, nuclear deterrence (i.e., strategic bombers and ballistic missiles), and the role of conventional forces in U.S. grand strategy. Taken together with Amy Zegart's *Flawed by Design*, David Jablonsky's *War by Land, Sea, and Air*, and the official history of the Department of Defense, a picture emerges of service chiefs driven by parochialism even to the point of undermining national security.[32] This study touches on whether the controversies were real or contrived.

Fred Greenstein's 1982 path-breaking revisionist book on Eisenhower, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, refutes existing stereotypes of the loyal soldier turned public servant. As Greenstein reveals, Eisenhower understood every facet of a policy issue, engaged in policy debates in the NSC (often passionately), and made clearly articulated decisions without exception. In contrast to the popular image of a lethargic, passive President, his weekly schedule was actually demanding—formal meetings with key Republican congressmen, informal meetings with the leading Democratic leaders, Cabinet meetings, pre-press conference meetings followed by the press con-

[32] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Common Defense: Strategic Programs in National Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961; Amy B. Zegart, *Flawed by Design: The Evolution of the CIA, JCS, and NSC* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), Kindle e-book.; David Jablonsky, *War by Land, Sea, and Air: Dwight Eisenhower and the Concept of Unified Command* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010); Richard M. Leighton, *History of the Office of the Secretary of Defense*, vol. 3, *Strategy, Money, and the New Look 1953-1956*, ed. Alfred Goldberg (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001); Robert J. Watson, *History of the Office of the Secretary of Defense*, vol. 4, *Into the Missile Age 1956-1960*, ed. Alfred Goldberg (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1997).

ferences, and NSC meetings. He operated energetically behind the scenes—through the Planning Board, the OCB, the White House Staff Secretariat, the Executive Liaison Office, the Congressional Liaison Office, and the Office of the Press Secretary—to guide America's strategic path.[33] As Vice President Richard Nixon recalled,

> He was a far more complex and devious man than most people realized, and in the best sense of those words. Not shackled to a one-track mind, he always applied two, three, or four lines of reasoning to a single problem and he usually preferred the indirect approach where it would serve him better than the direct attack on a problem.[34]

Early literature on the Kennedy Administration focuses predominately on his use of presidential power rather than any definitive descriptions of his NSC system. Naturally, Richard Neustadt's *Presidential Power* and his transition memos to President-elect Kennedy provide the framework for his management and leadership styles, but purposely avoids thoughts on organization.[35] Theodore Sorensen's 1963 book *Decision-Making in the White House* addresses the challenges of presidential decision-making but little on the planning process.[36] Earl Latham's 1972 compendium *J.F. Kennedy and Presidential Power* features previously written articles from prominent journalists, former White House officials, and intellectuals, describing Kennedy's leadership and management style.[37] Thomas Lane's *The Leadership of President Kennedy* provides criticism of Kennedy's executive skills, identifying organizational, management, and leadership defects, but he does not address the linkage between organizational weaknesses and these

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[33] Fred I. Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency: Eisenhower as Leader* (Baltimore: Basic books, Inc., 1982; Johns Hopkins Paperbacks, 1992).

[34] Richard M. Nixon, *Six Crises* (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1962), 161.

[35] Richard E. Neustadt, *Presidential Power: the Politics of Leadership From FDR to Carter*, 2d ed. (Reprint, New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1980); Richard E. Neustadt, *Preparing to be President: The Memos of Richard E. Neustadt*, ed. Charles O. Jones (Washington D.C.: The AEI Press, 2000).

[36] Theodore C. Sorensen, *Decision-Making in the White House: the Olive Branch or the Arrows* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963).

[37] *J. F. Kennedy and Presidential Power*, ed. Earl Latham (Lexington, Massachusetts: D. C. Heath and Company, 1972).

defects.[38] This study examines the Kennedy advisory system and establishes this linkage.

In *Groupthink*, Irving L. Janis examines the factors contributing to groupthink during the planning of the Bay of Pigs invasion in April 1961. Janis points out that in the absence of formal, routine NSC meetings, fertile ground existed for groupthink to dominate decisions—erroneous assumptions, over-optimism, illusion of unanimity, suppression of personal doubts, self-appointed mind-guards, acquiescence to presidential desires, and an intense inhibition to criticize external members of the group. All these factors created conformity to prevailing opinions.[39] Nevertheless, as Janis concludes, the Kennedy Administration learned from its mistakes and applied critical thinking during the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962. Accordingly, with the establishment of the formal Executive Committee (EXCOM), which encouraged dissension, skepticism, and frankness, Kennedy's circle of advisers successfully sought imaginative solutions through vigilant appraisal.[40] This study examines why the Kennedy Administration did not institutionalize the EXCOM.

Comparative literature on the various NSC systems, national security advisers, and presidential management styles provides greater details and insights on both NSC mechanisms. Alexander L. George's 1980 *Presidential Decision Making in Foreign Policy* revisits the Eisenhower and Kennedy NSC systems and develops a procedural tool, called "multiple advocacy." As George theorizes, multiple advocacy requires "considerable executive initiative and centralized coordination," accepts internal disagreements among advocates as normal and even constructive, and necessitates advocate access to "necessary analytical and bureaucratic resources." George

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[38] Thomas A. Lane, *The Leadership of President Kennedy* (Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, LTD, 1964).
[39] Irving L. Janis, *Groupthink*, 2d ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1982), 14-47.
[40] Ibid, 132-158.

concludes that Eisenhower's NSC system fostered genuine policy debate and conflict below the level of the Council and used both formal and informal policymaking functions: "The conventional depiction of Eisenhower's NSC system as an unimaginative, bureaucratic body laden with the preparation and presentation of cautiously formulated positions, therefore, is not justified."[41]

In the Kennedy model, George notes the President preferred frequent, small, informal meetings as the basis for debate and decision. As the center of policy action, Kennedy acquired information from both inside and outside of the NSC system. As long as Kennedy received the full benefit of various, well informed views, he could formulate effective foreign policy.[42] While George does not consider multiple advocacy as a "panacea that can ensure high-quality policy-making," he does feel it would "help prevent some very bad decisions and should generally improve the quality of information processing and appraisal."[43]

Phillip Henderson's *Managing the Presidency: The Eisenhower Legacy—From Kennedy to Reagan*, examines Eisenhower's organizational innovations with the NSC mechanism, the White House Chief of Staff, the White House Staff Secretariat, and the Cabinet. In addition to recounting Eisenhower's well-honed political skills, he addresses the various myths conveyed by scholars and journalists, and counters assertions of excessive delegation, organizational rigidity, and the impediments to innovation and creative thinking brought about by an alleged overreliance on process. Henderson then shifts his analysis to the Kennedy and subsequent administra-

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[41] Alexander L. George, *Presidential Decision Making in Foreign Policy: the Effective Use of Information and Advice* (Boulder Colorado: Westview Press, 1980), 140, 152-153; This book was an extension of George's 1972 article on multiple advocacy, attempting to "indicate how the policy-making system might be structured and managed so that internal disagreements might contribute to improving the quality of search and evaluation activities associated with choice of policy." Alexander L. George, "The Case of Multiple Advocacy in Making Foreign Policy," *American Political Science Review* (September 1972): 751-785.

[42] Ibid, 157-158.

[43] Ibid, 204.

tions, recounting the multitude of advisory challenges as they departed from the Eisenhower model. "It seems clear, in retrospect," concludes Henderson, "that Eisenhower's formal advisory processes are better suited to the multiple demands placed on modern Presidents than the informal, ad hoc approach to policy-making utilized by some of his successors."[44]

Similarly, in *How Presidents Test Reality*, John P. Burke and Fred I. Greenstein conclude that Eisenhower was much more engaged in the decision-making process than many believed, and categorically exercised his leadership during NSC deliberations. Accordingly, Eisenhower designed the NSC system to develop the gamut of policy alternatives from the government bureaucracy and his key advisers. The routinization of meetings and the policy formulation process, the use of procedures and processes to prevent back channel attempts to influence the President, and a meeting environment which encouraged candid discussion were common features of the Eisenhower NSC. Integral to Eisenhower's thought process was his propensity to talk through complex issues during meetings. As NSC officials noted, he "reformulated questions and broadened potential courses of action by considering factors, opportunities, trade-offs and other considerations that his associates had not previously mentioned." Within this decision-making framework, thorough staff work preceded policy deliberations.[45]

Charles E. Walcott and Karen M. Hult's *Governing the White House: From Hoover to LBJ* describes the characteristics of governance structures, whose properties comprise emergence (routinization) and stability (institutionalization). Walcott and Hult judge that Eisenhower's system was both formal and informal, yet at the same time systematic and methodical. Kennedy's

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[44] Phillip G. Henderson, *Managing the Presidency: The Eisenhower Legacy—From Kennedy to Reagan* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988), 143.

[45] See Chapter Twelve. John P. Burke and Fred I. Greenstein, *How Presidents Test Reality: Decisions on Vietnam 1954 & 1965* (New York: The Russell Sage Foundation, 1989).

system was basically informal, addressing issues in an ad hoc manner. With the exception of the Cuban Missile Crisis, this apparatus was less systematic, incapable of long-term planning, and generally intolerant to candid debate. Of significance, Walcott and Hult consider Eisenhower's organizational innovations as exemplars for efficient management of the government bureaucracy. In contrast, Kennedy's personalization of the White House led to the elimination or consolidation of innovations into one person or small group, resulting in bureaucratic chaos.[46]

John Prados' *Keeper of the Keys* and David Rothkopf's *Running the World* are invaluable for understanding the continuities of change from NSC to NSC as presidents adopted organizational reforms that befitted their management style and leadership. Recounting the various NSC organizations, management styles, leadership, and crises, both books provide unique perspectives on how each President approached national security policy and organized for its execution.[47]

Meena Bose's *Shaping and Signaling Presidential Policy* focuses on "the *process* of policy making and communication" within the Eisenhower and Kennedy Administrations. Bose argues that Eisenhower applied George's "multiple advocacy" consultative process in the development of the Basic National Security Policy as well as anticipating how various audiences would respond to its implications. The Eisenhower decision-making process explored policy options and their potential multi-ordered effects in a disciplined manner, ensuring all arguments were aired before the President made his decision. Accordingly, Eisenhower was able to process

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[46] Charles E. Walcott and Karen M. Hult, *Governing the White House: From Hoover through LBJ* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1995).

[47] John Prados, *Keeper of the Keys: A History of the National Security Council from Truman to Bush* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1991); David Rothkopf, *Running the World: The Inside Story of the National Security Council and the Architects of American Power* (New York: Public Affairs, 2006).

an immense amount of information without becoming overwhelmed.[48]

The Kennedy Administration, in contrast, rejected a formal grand strategy, which in Bose's view reflected Kennedy's "disjointed, incremental approach to decision making." Kennedy's informal system paid less attention to the systematic integration of policy options and discussion in a formal setting. Consequently, Kennedy was unable to process the vast amounts of information efficiently. While many Administration officials believed a formal grand strategy would provide foundational coherency to foreign policy and national security strategy, "Kennedy did not want the bureaucracy to think that the administration was committed in advance to particular policies." In its place, he adopted General Maxwell Taylor's "Flexible Response" as a pseudo-national strategy, directing its conceptual dissemination through public statements.[49]

Bose next examines the communication policies and strategies of both Administrations. While each President used speeches to inform and educate the public on White House policies, Bose notes that Eisenhower focused on well-structured, clear policy principles, whereas Kennedy preferred "more specific language" that was "vivid, energetic, and memorable." Where Eisenhower's speeches were non-provocative towards the Soviets, Kennedy's were unmistakably inspiring, yet provocative.[50] While Bose's book provides an insightful comparison of each Administration's decision-making and communications approaches, this study extends Bose's analysis by exploring the degree each NSC system cultivated strategic thinking within the NSC.

Memoirs and Biographies

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[48] Meena Bose, *Shaping and Signaling Presidential Policy: The National Security Decision Making of Eisenhower and Kennedy* (College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 1998), 52-57.

[49] Ibid, 52-57; See also Maxwell D. Taylor, *The Uncertain Trumpet* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1960); Paul Nitze, *From Hiroshima to Glasnost: at the Center of Decision* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1989).

[50] Bose, 67-78.

In his memoirs *Mandate for Change* and *Waging Peace*, Eisenhower reveals his philosophy on the broader perspective of national policy, foreign policy, and national security strategy. Recalling the domestic and foreign crises his Administration faced, Eisenhower shares his strategic approach to protect and promote national interests vis-à-vis the Soviet threat. Accordingly, he viewed his mandate as fostering a strong free market economy, safeguarding American spiritual strength from unwarranted fears (i.e., forestalling a garrison state mentality), and protecting democratic institutions. In the long term, these bulwarks of democracy would withstand if not defeat communism. Eisenhower also recounts the critical role of organization for complex bureaucracies—such as the U.S. government. While puzzled by the vehement attacks on organization, he was by no means opposed to making changes to his NSC system: "No specific organization is sacrosanct in its details; it is established and used by humans and it can be changed by them. Indeed, at times this may be necessary because of changing conditions or even by the entry of a new personality." In his view though, "If the principal assistants to the Executive are strong, understanding, and devoted individuals of integrity, they can make even a jerry-built organization function, at least haltingly. The ideal combination, of course, is to have capable personnel and a logical system."[51]

The personal accounts of Robert Cutler, Sherman Adams, Ellis Slater, Arthur Larson, and Robert Murphy offer insights on Eisenhower's organizational genius, management style, and leadership. A striking feature of these accounts is Eisenhower's penchant talking through prob-

[51] Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 114-115; Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 631.

lems to flesh out his thinking on complex issues.[52] Oral histories by Milton Eisenhower, Andrew Goodpaster, Gordon Gray and Robert Murphy provide depictions of Eisenhower's pursuit of innovative ideas, organizational efficiencies, and essential information for policy refinement.[53]

Biographies of Eisenhower provide greater insights into his development as a strategic thinker, supreme commander, and commander in chief. Eisenhower's autobiography *At Ease: Stories I Tell to Friends* offers the most detailed account of Eisenhower's childhood, West Point cadet life, and military career.[54] Stephen E. Ambrose's 1983 and 1984 biographies and his 1981 article, "The Ike Age" contribute substantially to the revisionist history of Eisenhower.[55] Michael Korda, Jim Newton, and Jean Edward Smith supplement these accounts, with attention to specific experiences. These accounts highlight the mentorship of Colonel Fox Conner, General John Pershing, General Douglas MacArthur, and General George C. Marshall, among others, who had a profound impact on Eisenhower's intellectual development, career progression, and strategic thinking—a unique combination which set him apart from other officers of his generation. Here, his aptitude for applied logic, planning, and writing made Eisenhower a valuable commodity among the Army's senior leaders. Equally important was his exposure to political-military affairs

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[52] Cutler, *No Time for Rest*; Adams, *Firsthand Report*; Ellis D. Slater, *The Ike I Knew* (Ellis D. Slater Trust, 1980); Arthur Larson, *Eisenhower: The President Nobody Knew* (New York: Popular Library, 1968); Robert Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors* (New York: Doubleday & Company, INC., 1964).

[53] Milton S. Eisenhower, "Reminiscences of Dr. Milton S. Eisenhower," interview by Herbert S. Parmet, Columbia Oral History Interview, June 19, 1969; Andrew J. Goodpaster, Oral History Interview by Malcolm McDonald, April 10, 1982 (OH—477), DDEL; Andrew J. Goodpaster, Eisenhower Administration Project, Interview One by Ed Edwin, April 25, 1967 (OH—37), DDEL; Andrew J. Goodpaster, Eisenhower Administration Project, Interview Two by Ed Edwin, August 2, 1967 (OH—37) DDEL; Gordon Gray, Oral History Interview by Maclyn P. Burg, June 25, 1975, DDEL; Robert D. Murphy, Oral History Interview with Robert D. Murphy by David C. Berliner, Columbia Oral History Interview, October 12 1972 (OH-224), DDEL.

[54] Dwight D. Eisenhower, *At Ease: Stories I Tell to Friends* (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1967).

[55] Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier and President* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983; reprint, 1990); Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower: The President* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984; reprint, 2014), Kindle e-book; Stephen E. Ambrose, "The Ike Age," *New Republic* (May 9, 1981).

as MacArthur's deputy in Washington D.C. and in The Philippines in the 1930s, as well as his positions as Supreme Allied Commander during World War II, Chief of Staff of the Army, and the first Supreme Allied Commander of NATO. As Korda and Smith underscore, no other President entered the White House with such foreign policy and executive management skills.[56]

To gain an appreciation of Eisenhower's exceptional grasp of military strategy, unified command, and political-military issues, his *Crusade in Europe*, Steven Ambrose's *Supreme Commander*, and David Jablonsky's *War by Land, Sea, and Air* are essential. Together, they illuminate his reasoning for unified command during World War II and for the peacetime establishment of NATO during the Cold War. Both experiences influenced his organizational approach to the Executive Office of the President and his attempts to reorganize the Defense Department in 1953 and 1958.[57]

For the controversy surrounding the missile gap, an Eisenhower 1964 oral interview, Robert Cutler's *No Time for Rest*, and Evan Thomas' *Ike's Bluff*, cover the evolution of Eisenhower's nuclear strategy, to include the U.S. nuclear triad (i.e., the bomber, missile, and submarine nuclear programs). Additionally, Thomas' revelations on the U-2 surveillance program and corresponding space surveillance satellite program set forth fresh insights regarding Eisenhower's knowledge of the Soviet Union's actual nuclear and missile capabilities.[58]

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[56] Michael Korda, *Ike: An American Hero* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2007); Jean Edward Smith, *Eisenhower in War and Peace* (New York: Random House, Inc., 2012); Jim Newton, *Eisenhower: The White House Years* (New York: Doubleday, 2011).

[57] Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe* (New York: Doubleday & Company, INC., 1948); Stephen E. Ambrose, *The Supreme Commander: The War Years of General Dwight D. Eisenhower* (New York: Doubleday & Company, INC., 1970); David Jablonsky, *War by Land, Sea, and Air*.

[58] Dwight D. Eisenhower, Dulles Oral History Interview: Princeton University, by Philip A. Crowl, 28 July, 1964 (OH-14), DDEL, 49-50; Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 348-351, 352-353; Evan Thomas, *Ike's Bluff: President Eisenhower's Secret Battle to Save the World* (New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 2012).

Biographies on Kennedy provide an array of analysis on his presidency. The most prolific writer on the leadership and management style of Kennedy, Theodore Sorensen recorded intimate details on the President's political philosophy and crusade to galvanize the nation against the Soviet threat. Ironically, Kennedy shared many traits with Eisenhower: a pragmatist who sought moderate solutions; a skeptic of expert opinions, notably after the Bay of Pigs fiasco; and a receptive mind to innovative solutions. Where Kennedy differed was his disdain of bureaucratic inertia, which he believed hindered an urgent national response to the Soviet threat, just as European democracies ignored the Nazi threat in the 1930s. Hence, his personalized, informal NSC system represented his desire for decisive government action.[59]

Arthur Schlesinger's *A Thousand Days* is a comprehensive account of the Kennedy Presidency, providing an insider's view of national security issues confronting the White House, to include the Bay of Pigs, Laos, Vietnam, Berlin, and the Cuban Missile Crisis. Schlesinger's account accurately records Kennedy's perspective and reaction to events, as well as capturing the spirit of the New Frontier and underscoring Kennedy's charisma, wit, and coolness.[60] Similarly, Kenneth P. O'Donnell's *Johnny, We Hardly Knew Ye* provides personal observations of Kennedy's leadership during the Berlin crisis.[61]

President Kennedy is not without his critics though. Author Victor Lasky in his book *J.F. K.: The Man and the Myth* recounts Kennedy's courting of the press and his flair for crafting an image of vitality. Lasky contends that Kennedy routinely spoke of restoring the U.S. military, economy, and inter-

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[59] Theodore C. Sorensen, *Kennedy* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1965); *The Kennedy Legacy* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1969); *Counselor: A Life at the Edge of History* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, May 2008).

[60] Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965).

[61] Kenneth O'Donnell, *Johnny, We Hardly Knew Ye* (Boston: Little Brown, 1976).

national prestige to a position of preeminence, but his rhetoric fell short of substance. He lambasts Kennedy for intentionally inciting fears of a missile gap during the election campaign, and he decries Kennedy's lax work discipline and obsession with his public image. In his judgment, Kennedy's advisory system discombobulated the Administration, creating a period of misgovernment.[62]

Garry Wills' *The Kennedy Imprisonment* extrapolates Kennedy's use of presidential power through style and charisma. Kennedy's style, reinforced by symbols of vigor and intellect, strove to inspire people to greater action. As such, public relations and managing the media assumed overriding importance—"to make style become substance." Kennedy's charisma embodied personalized leadership, which warranted the circumvention of traditional governance and diplomacy. Accordingly, Kennedy decimated the edifice of bureaucracy, which embodied continuity in governing, regularity of procedures and processes, delegation of authority, separation of the office from the officeholder, and the documentation of records. In its place, Kennedy created a "crisis-oriented government:" the President as the indispensible leader; a loose organization with the President at the center of action; a reliance on an inner circle of special assistants representing the President's authority; a personalization of the Presidency which undermined the principal of "a government of laws not of men;" and a system which eschewed paper trails. Ultimately, as Wills concludes, Kennedy's charisma created problems for the Presidency because this special power could not be bequeathed to others. Hence, his successors became prisoners of sorts to the image he had cultivated.[63]

David Halberstam's *The Best and the Brightest* covers Kennedy's interpersonal relation-

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[62] Victor Lasky, *J.F. K.: the Man and the Myth* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1963).

[63] Garry Wills, *The Kennedy Imprisonment: A Meditation on Power* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1982), 144-145, 149-150, 168-169, 171-174.

ships with his inner circle and the Bundy Group. Halberstam examines Kennedy's quest to bring perspicacious, confident intellects into the White House—particularly from Harvard—in order to implement his New Frontier agenda. Kennedy was fond of saying, "You can't beat brains," so in his mind, there was no challenge that could not be overcome once a team of intellects aspired to a solution. Yet, as Halberstam contends, the "Best and the Brightest" often erred, disastrously in the case of Vietnam. Contributing to this dysfunctional state of affairs was a disdain of formal structures, a penchant for shortcut solutions by circumventing government bureaucracy, and a distinctive arrogance towards non-White House officials. As such, Kennedy's lieutenants regarded themselves as guerrillas against the government and hence ravaged unity of national effort.[64]

In *President Kennedy: Profile of Power*, Richard Reeves studies Kennedy's executive management style and leadership. Referring to the oft used description of Kennedy's wheel hub-and-spoke structure for acquiring information directly, Reeves argues that Kennedy destroyed all sense of organization when he dismantled the NSC mechanism and the White House Staff Secretariat (becoming his own Chief of Staff). In view of his restless disposition as well as his severe health issues and reliance on pain medication, Kennedy would not have countenanced Eisenhower's formal system, particularly long meetings. As it was, McGeorge Bundy, continually prodded Kennedy to exercise greater discipline and adopt greater organizational management structures. While Kennedy occasionally showed interest in regular NSC meetings or promised to improve his self-discipline, he never followed through, placing the burden on Bundy to keep the

[64] David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest* (New York: Fawcett Book, 1969; Ballantine Books, 1993), Kindle e-book.

Administration functioning.[65]

Robert Dallek's 2003 biography and 2013 analytical study of Kennedy's inner circle provide a greater balance on the Kennedy Administration, adding details other books lacked as a result of recently declassified documents. Of particular interest was Kennedy's management of the Berlin crisis and its linkage to the Cuban Missile Crisis. Like Sorensen and Schlesinger, Dallek records Kennedy's skepticism of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the CIA's advice, as well as his frustration with the State Department's dilatory and unimaginative responses to requested studies. Dallek notes that during crises, Kennedy eschewed extreme policy alternatives, maintaining a dispassionate perspective of events and adopting measured responses. While Kennedy had his flaws, his pragmatism and middle-of-the-road decisions contributed to the peaceful resolution of complex international problems, despite Premier Nikita Khrushchev's often erratic behavior.[66] Notable to the Cuban Missile Crisis, Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow's revised 1999 *Essence of Decision* provides greater details and analysis of both Khrushchev's strategic designs and the Kennedy Administration's measured response to ending the crisis peacefully.[67] The Cuban Missile Crisis is instructive in that Kennedy practiced strategic thinking as a result of the EXCOM's deliberative planning process.

Roles of the National Security Adviser

The literature is replete with books, book chapters, and articles dedicated to the National Security Adviser, of which this study devotes a chapter. Robert Cutler provides useful insights in

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[65] Richard Reeves, *President Kennedy: Profile of Power* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993).

[66] Robert Dallek, *An Unfinished Life: John F. Kennedy, 1917 – 1963* (May 1, 2003), Kindle e-book; Robert Dallek, *Camelot's Court: Inside the Kennedy White House* (October 8, 2013), Kindle e-book.

[67] Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 2d Edition (New York: Longman, Inc., January 29, 1999), Kindle e-book.

No Time to Rest, describing his coordinator role of the Eisenhower NSC system.[68] In *Presidential Decisionmaking in Foreign Policy*, Alexander George describes the role of the adviser as a "custodian manager," performing several functions to include managing the NSC system, ensuring minority and unpopular views were presented, arranging for the presentation of external information, and monitoring the policymaking process for needed reforms. George also touches on the evolution of national security adviser roles: "policy adviser-advocate," "policy spokesman," "political watchdog for the president's power stakes," enforcer of policy decision," and "administrative operator."[69]

The Brookings Institute's 1999 forum of former national security advisers proves useful in distilling NSC best practices. Among the observations is the need for the national security adviser to operate as an honest broker, ensuring the views of primary Cabinet officers are fully presented to the President. As former National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft avers:

> If you are not the honest broker, you don't have the confidence of the members of the NSC. If you don't have their confidence, then the system doesn't work, because they will go around you to get to the president and then you fracture the system.

Other topics addressed include the advisor's responsibilities regarding the NSC system, the size and composition of the NSC staff, and the proper relationship between the advisor and the President, as well as with the Cabinet officers.[70]

In their 2004 anthology, *Fateful Decisions: Inside the National Security Council*, Karl F. Inderfurth and Loch K. Johnson devote two chapters on the roles and profiles of national security advisors to include Cecil V. Crabb Jr. and Kevin V. Mulcahy's typology of adviser roles—

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[68] Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 295-299, 301-307, 314-315.

[69] George, 195-196.

[70] *The National Security Council Project: Oral History Roundtables: The Role of the National Security Advisers*. Center for International and Security Studies at Maryland and The Brookings Institution (October 25, 1999).

administrator, coordinator, counselor, and agent. Other chapters included a forum on the role of the national security advisor, Colin Powell's description of the adviser as a process manager, and selected profiles on former national security advisers.[71]

In an insightful 1988 article on the NSC, Zbigniew Brzezinski observes:

> Over time the secretary of state or the secretary of defense in every recent administration has become a propagator of his own department's parochial perspective, even to the detriment of the broader presidential vision. Every president needs some arrangement that helps him develop policy and strategy, coordinate decision making, supervise policy implementation, provide him with personal advice that keeps his own presidential perspective and interests in mind, and articulates the policies he is pursuing.[72]

Of significance, Brzezinski laments the demise of the Operations Coordinating Board: "Probably not since Eisenhower's time has any systematic reassessment been made of how to supervise the execution of policy. It appears that even the most assertive NSC heads have failed to give enough attention to policy implementation."[73]

Andrew Preston's *The War Council* and Gordon M. Goldstein's *Lessons in Disaster* examine the efficacy of McGeorge Bundy and the U.S. intervention in Vietnam. As such, Bundy's legacy represents a fundamental change in the roles and responsibilities of the national security adviser. In Preston's view, "Bundy completely transformed the duties and prerogatives of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, elevating it to a status virtually, if unofficially, equivalent to that of a cabinet secretary," creating in practice a "Little State Department" in the White House. Correspondingly, Goldstein judges that "Bundy transformed what had been a post of marginal influence in the Eisenhower era into a dominant player in the management of Amer-

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[71] *Fateful Decisions: Inside the National Security Council*, ed. Karl F. Inderfurth and Loch K. Johnson (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc, 2004).

[72] Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The NSC's Midlife Crisis," *Foreign Policy*, no. 69 (Winter 1987-88), 94.

[73] Ibid, 96.

ican global strategy."[74]

John P. Burke's 2009 book, *Honest Broker?* analyzes the practice of honest brokerage. Citing a number of case studies, Burke notes the salutary effects on presidential decision-making when national security advisers practice honest brokerage and the detrimental effects when they deviate from it. Ultimately, he assesses that honest brokerage yields more positive presidential decisions than its absence. In his view, the NSC adviser's role as honest broker matters significantly to decision-making: "The presence of honest brokerage facilitates an informed and balanced deliberative process. The Eisenhower-era advisors provide early evidence of this." [75]

Ivo H. Daalder and I.M. Destler's *In the Shadow of the Oval Office* provides a history of national security advisers, categorizing them in a fashion similar to Cecil V. Crabb Jr. and Kevin V. Mulcahy. The authors address the national security advisers' roles and responsibilities, their cultivation of power, and their interpersonal relationships with the President on one hand, and the adviser and the principal advisers on the other. Mirroring Burke's conclusion, Daalder and Destler assess that national security advisers serve the president most effectively when they conduct honest brokerage and eschew becoming a policy spokesman.[76]

Methodology and Conceptual Findings

This study expands on the existing literature by taking a holistic view of the Eisenhower and Kennedy NSC mechanisms, examining the constituent parts and appraising the degree they

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[74] Andrew Preston, *The War Council: McGeorge Bundy, the NSC, and Vietnam* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 7; Gordon M. Goldstein, *Lessons in Disaster: McGeorge Bundy and the Path to War in Vietnam* (New York: Holt Paperback, 2008), 14.

[75] John P. Burke, *Honest Broker? The National Security Advisor and Presidential Decision Making* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2009), 7-8, 279, 281.

[76] Ivo H. Daalder and I.M. Destler, *In the Shadow of the Oval Office: Profiles of National Security Advisers and the Presidents they Served—from JFK to George W. Bush* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2009).

contributed to grand strategy formulation, strategic thinking and to the strategic effects each President sought. As Colin Gray explains, strategic effect is "the currency that produces political change . . . [and measures] the impact of strategic performance upon the course of events."[77] Harry Yarger adds that "The ultimate purpose of all strategy is to produce specific effects in the strategic environment that advance or protect the state's interests."[78] Ross Harrison avers that strategy has an inward and outward component. Inwardly, "strategy is about creating a multiplier effect on resources, making mutually reinforcing decisions, and developing processes that can propel organization beyond the realities of today to the desired futures of tomorrow." Outwardly, "strategy is energetic, dynamic, and interactive. It is not a static, abstract, or sterile process, but instead involves a back-and-forth jostling for competitive advantage. . . . Once the opening gambit is made, strategy becomes a battle of wits, force, and maneuver in an environment of uncertainty."[79]

NSC organization plays a central role in the debate between a formal and institutionalized approach to decision-making of the type used by Eisenhower, and the ad hoc, informal approach to decision-making that characterized the Kennedy administration. Are formal meetings of the NSC essential to policy formulation as Eisenhower contended, or are they a "waste of time," as Kennedy stated in an NBC News interview? Given that modern administrations have adopted elements of both the Eisenhower and Kennedy approaches to decision making, a systematic analysis of both approaches is warranted.

NSC Design and Performance

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[77] Colin S. Gray, *Modern Strategy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 8, 17, 19.

[78] Harry R. Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional: Strategic Thinking and the Strategy Formulation in the 21st Century* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2008), 116.

[79] Ross Harrison, *Strategic Thinking in 3D: A Guide for National Security, Foreign Policy, and Business Professionals* (Washington D.C.: Potomac Books, 2013), 3, 9, Kindle e-book.

The purpose of this study is first to answer a number of questions concerning the design of each NSC mechanism so as to provide the proper context for assessment: 1) What was Eisenhower and Kennedy's rationale for changing the NSC system? 2) What was the organizational design of each NSC mechanism? 3) To what extent was the rationale for change justified? Second, this study examines each mechanism in practice and the degree it cultivated strategic thinking: 4) To what extent did the mechanism provide each President and his principal advisors with relevant and sufficient information as well as feedback for national security strategy and foreign policy formulation? 5) To what extent did the mechanism optimize time and workload management for Administration officials, especially the President and other NSC members? 6) To what extent did the mechanism enhance the President's leadership and management style (e.g., persuasion, delegation of authority, strategic communications, policy coordination and coherency, and political freedom of maneuver)?

This study is enriched by the extensive use of presidential libraries for primary documents on the White House Staff Secretariat, NSC organization, and oral histories. The research includes on-line primary documents covering NSC meetings, correspondence, presidential directives, speeches, oral histories, and the case studies: Miller Center, Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, CIA Library, Foreign Relations of the United States Collection at the University of Wisconsin, Columbia Center for Oral History, Mount Holy Oak College School of International Politics, Department of State Office of the Historian, Foreign Relations of the United States, Federation of American Scientists, National Archives, The American Presidency Project, The George Washington University National Security Archive , and the Wilson Center Cold War International History Project.

The Discipline of Strategic Thinking

This study adds to the literature on the NSC mechanism by introducing the discipline of strategic thinking into the decision-making process. Integral to this inquiry is an assessment on the extent an NSC mechanism cultivates strategic thinking, for it remains an acute problem. Notably, Lieutenant General James Dubik deplored the strategic drift in U.S. foreign policy and national strategy in 2011. A year later, Professor Rosa Brooks argued that the "2010 National Security Strategy (NSS) is many things—press release, public relations statement, laundry list of laudable aspirations—grand strategy it ain't."[80] It is a void shared by Gray and Yarger as well.[81]

Yarger instructs that the process of strategic thinking ideally encompasses five competencies: critical thinking, systems thinking, creative thinking, thinking in time, and ethical thinking.[82] Strategic thinking is a discipline, derived from years of education, study, and experience. Its end-product is what war theorist Carl von Clausewitz calls strategic intuition, the ability to connect the strategic dots.[83] The purpose of strategic thinking is to help the President articulate strategic goals, effective strategies, and the required capabilities to attain the desired strategic effect. According to Ross Harrison, the application of strategic goals, strategies, and capabilities is integral to the decision-making process:

> Goals give strategy purpose and direction. The purpose of strategies is to create a desired outcome, or in some cases prevent an undesired outcome, and a goal is a clear representation of what that outcome is. Without clearly articulated goals, there is no way to know if

[80] James M., Dubik, "A National Strategic Learning Disability?" *ARMY Magazine*, September 2011, 19-20; Rosa Brooks, "Obama Needs a Grand Strategy," *Foreign Policy*, January 23, 2012.

[81] Gray, *Modern Strategy*, 7, 248; Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional*, 2-3.

[82] Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional*, 12-14.

[83] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. and ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 585-586.

> a strategy has succeeded or failed, and it will also be difficult to distinguish flurries of activity from strategy.[84]

"Strategy is about creating and then exploiting leverage over an adversary . . . to achieve a goal." The strategist can use direct leverage to overwhelm an adversary with force and/or indirect leverage, seeking to deprive the adversary of resources, partnerships, and international standing. To this end, strategists employ the state's instruments of power (i.e., diplomatic, informational, military, and economic) to bend adversaries to their will. Capabilities are raw or potential resources which are actuated to enable strategy. As Harrison notes, "resources have to be configured, combined, managed, and converted into a more muscular capability."[85]

Gray stresses that the formulation of strategy requires "a bureaucratic organization that staffs alternatives critically, coordinates rival inputs, and oversees execution and feedback on the effect of execution. This process is neither exciting nor heroic, but it is absolutely essential for superior strategic performance."[86] Thorough staff work, in Gray's view, is essential because "no individual, regardless of the wattage of his genius, the efficiency of his labour, or the duration of his working life, reasonably could aspire to perform as a Renaissance, let alone Enlightenment, Person for the subject [of modern strategy]."[87]

The Case Studies

This study features four case studies to examine how each NSC mechanism functioned in practice: Suez 1956, Lebanon 1958, Bay of Pigs 1962, and the linked Berlin and Cuba Missile

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[84] Harrison, 21.
[85] Harrison, 35, 52.
[86] Colin S. Gray, *Another Bloody Century: Future Warfare* (London: Phoenix, 2005), 334; Gray, *Modern Strategy*, 34.
[87] Gray, *Modern Strategy*, 115.

crises from 1961 to 1962. Each case study reviews the degree each NSC mechanism educated the president and his principal advisers on the background of the dilemma through the strategic appraisal process, the extent meetings shaped the decision-making process, and how each president employed the five competencies of strategic thinking to develop effective strategy.[88]

The Role of the National Security Advisor as the Lynchpin of the NSC Mechanism

This study also examines the role the National Security Advisor in managing the NSC mechanism for the President. This study observes that the President has plenty of advisers, so the question remains whether the national security adviser best serves the President as an intimate adviser or as an honest broker, ensuring the NSC mechanism functions properly for policy formulation. While the President has the prerogative to use his national security adviser in the capacity he deems most fitting, he should also remain cognizant of the pitfalls whenever he assigns additional duties to him. As Alexander George warned, overloading the national security adviser with additional roles can overextend his competency and exhaust him.[89] National Security Advisers must remain vigilant as well. For example, though Condoleezza Rice started off as an honest broker in the George W. Bush Administration, she compromised this role becoming a pol-

[88] Core readings include: David A. Nichols, *Eisenhower 1956: The President's Year of Crisis, Suez and the Brink of War* (New York: Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, 2011); David W. Gray, *The U.S. Intervention in Lebanon, 1958: A Commander's Reminiscence* (U.S. Army Command and General Staff College: Combat Studies Institute, August, 1984); Jack Shulimson, *Marines in Lebanon 1958* (Washington D.C.: Historical Branch, G-3 Division, 1966); Peter Wyden, *Bay of Pigs: The Untold Story*, 2d ed. (Reprint New York: A Touchstone Book, 1980); Jim Rasenberger, *The Brilliant Disaster: JFK, Castro, and America's Doomed Invasion of Cuba's Bay of Pigs* (New York: Scribner, April 5, 2011), Kindle e-book; Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 2d Edition (New York: Longman, Inc., January 29, 1999), Kindle e-book; Irving L. Janis, *Groupthink*, 2d ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1982).

[89] George, 197.

icy advocate as the invasion of Iraq in 2003 approached.[90]

Summary

The Eisenhower and Kennedy Administrations viewed organization, staff work, meetings, and decision-making from different spectrums. These differences had a profound impact on the character of the NSC mechanism in defining the roles of the special assistants, aides, secretariats, and NSC staffers.

Eisenhower was an inveterate organizer, always seeking ways to improve efficiency and effectiveness in any endeavor. By the time he became president, he was an accomplished staff officer, strategist, and supreme commander. As a product of his experiences, professional development, and education, he designed the NSC mechanism to assist the Administration develop foreign policy and grand strategy, commensurate with its position as a global power.

Kennedy viewed bureaucracy as an obstacle to decisive action. His perception of the Soviet threat was influenced by the appeasement of Nazi Germany in the 1930s, so he sought to mobilize the nation to action and demonstrate American global leadership. In his view, exquisite organization and long term strategy were of little use if the United States passively allowed the Soviet Union to dominate the global struggle. Hence, Kennedy instituted the tenets of presidential power in the NSC system to give him the authority to stimulate U.S. economic strength, military power, and resolute leadership.

Eisenhower's NSC mechanism was designed to cultivate strategic thinking as part of the

[90] Burke, Honest Broker?, 238, 245-249.; Rothkopf, 406-407, 433-434, 437, 440; Jeffrey Goldberg, "Breaking Ranks: What turned Brent Scowcroft against the Bush Administration?" *The New Yorker*, October 31, 2005, http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2005/10/31/breaking-ranks, 31 August 2015.

policy formulation process. The Planning Board, Operations Coordinating Board, and the Council served to education the NSC members on the issues under consideration. Accordingly, the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs managed the system, ensuring the supporting staffs operated in harmony. Further, Eisenhower extended his span of control through a number of organizational innovations.

Kennedy's NSC design placed him in the center of action, receiving information directly from ad hoc task forces and later, the Bundy Group. This approach flattened the structure, theoretically permitting decisive decisions and action. Kennedy depended on a trusted circle of advisers to assist him in the selection of alternatives. McGeorge Bundy became a pivotal figure in the Kennedy White House as he acquired more authorities and trust as the National Security Adviser.

This study seeks to determine if Eisenhower's devotion to organization hindered collegiality, innovative thinking, flexibility, and decisiveness in the pursuit of greater efficiencies and effectiveness in White House management. Correspondingly, this study seeks to determine if Kennedy's resolve to break the logjams of government bureaucracy hindered the practice of strategic thinking and the development of grand strategy.

Chapter 2

The Eisenhower National Security Council Mechanism

Dwight D. Eisenhower brought to bear all of his extensive education, experience, and acquired knowledge when he considered organizational changes to the White House, especially the NSC apparatus. Accordingly, Eisenhower's views on organization reflected an intention to create efficiencies and effectiveness in the Executive Office of the President, ensure the executive branch operated within the Constitutional boundaries as the Founding Fathers intended, draw deeply from government expertise, and most importantly, for the purposes of this study, he sought to cultivate strategic thinking in his presidency.[1] Like his former boss, General George C. Marshall, Eisenhower sought subordinates, who could operate independently without constantly checking with their bosses and who worked well within a team. As President, he imprinted principles which reflected his strategic values in his policy and national security decisions.

The first section of this chapter examines Eisenhower's rationale behind his NSC reforms and scrutinizes the NSC mechanism so as to understand the constituent parts, their interactions, and how the system served the President. The second section assesses the Eisenhower NSC mechanism by answering the following questions: 1) To what extent was the rationale for change justified? 2) To what extent did the mechanism provide each President and his principal advisors

[1] Strategic theorist Harry Yarger defines strategic thinking as "the capacity to apply strategic theory in the real world and formulate strategy that successfully advances specific state interests without undue risk of creating negative consequences for the state's other interests. It has aspects of both art and science that enable the possessor to synthesize the volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity that characterize the strategic environment, evaluate its unpredictability, and formulate a rational statement of strategy." Harry R. Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional: Strategic Thinking and the Strategy Formulation in the 21st Century* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2008), 11.

with relevant and sufficient information for national security strategy, foreign policy, and crisis management? 3) To what extent did the mechanism optimize time and workload management for Administration officials, especially the President and other NSC members? 4) To what extent did the mechanism foster the President's leadership and management style (e.g., persuasion, delegation of authority, strategic communications, policy coordination and coherency, and political freedom of maneuver)?

Eisenhower's Rationale for Change and Intent with his National Security Council Mechanism

After a long association with the highest levels of the U.S. government as well as extensive experience working with the British government during World War II, Eisenhower brought a keen sense of direction for his Administration. Eisenhower undertook to protect the economic health of the nation while preserving its national interests. He sought to reform presidential management and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the NSC, Cabinet, and White House staff.

In concert with his strategic values, Eisenhower embraced several "middle way" principles to guide the development of foreign policy and national security strategy: 1) avoiding a general war with the Soviet Union was imperative; 2) containing Soviet Communism required adequate American military readiness, collective security through alliances, and nuclear deterrence; 3) enhancing U.S. national security required a reduction in the size of the federal government, a vibrant market economy, and protection of democratic institutions; thus, balancing the federal budget, eliminating deficit spending, lowering taxes, and ending "paternalistic government" were

essential; and 4) reducing tensions with the Soviet Union through moderate policies, détente, arms control, and measured responses to challenges mitigated the chances of miscalculation; interaction with the Soviet Union required firm, reasonable, and confident actions. What Eisenhower sought to avoid was irrational fear gripping the nation, which could lead to excessive military expenditures, the militarization of society (i.e., the garrison state), the erosion of American spiritual strength, and the ruinous creation of a command economy.[2]

Eisenhower recognized that America could not approach the Cold War in a traditional way, that is, with a large, sustained mobilization because this course was economically ruinous. In his 1953 State of the Union message, Eisenhower said,

> Our economic strength had developed, historically, freely and without artificial and arbitrary governmental controls. In times of national emergency, . . . controls had a role to play, but our whole system was based on the assumption that controls were not the answer. We were living in an international situation that was neither an emergency demanding full mobilization nor was it peace.[3]

He believed that years of fiscal and monetary mismanagement had created a dilemma with no easy solution. "Between the Scylla of a deep deficit and the Charybdis of an inadequate military budget, we had to make a start without encountering either."[4]

In his address to the nation on 19 May 1953, Eisenhower explained that the Soviet strategy was to undermine Western liberal democracy by forcing it to adopt exorbitant military expenditures, which in the end would undermine the essence of capitalism and eventually cause

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[2] Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change: 1953-1956* (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1963), 17, 33, 38, 51, 64, 76, 78-79, 121-127,131-133, 138, 140, 144-146, 148, 201, 203, 431, 446; Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower: The President* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984; reprint, 2014), Kindle e-book; Eisenhower embedded these principles in the Basic National Security Policy. A Report of the National Security Council: Basic National Security Policy, "NSC 162/2," October 30, 1953, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v02p1/d100, 23 September 2011, 1, 6, 8, 15-18, 23.

[3] Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 124.

[4] Ibid, 131.

economic and military collapse.[5] As a presidential candidate, Eisenhower warned, "History taught that such a course could lead only to ruin—we would also in the process lose our freedoms."[6] Hence, attempting to match Soviet conventional military forces, warned Eisenhower, would bankrupt the country, and "'a bankrupt America . . . is a defenseless America.'"[7] Eisenhower had developed the "Great Equation" for national security: "Spiritual force, multiplied by economic force, multiplied by military force, is roughly equal to security."[8] From his military experiences in Washington D.C., Eisenhower recalled that the congressional-military budget process induced the military services to fight over appropriations rather than strategic planning. In his assessment of the Soviet threat, Eisenhower concluded that the United States was much more powerful in terms of its devotion to democracy and faith in humankind, its system of free enterprise, its industrial and economic might, its moral compass, and lastly its military strength. Taken together, the United States would endure while the Soviet Union would eventually implode.[9]

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[5] Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 131; Citing Eisenhower, Samuel Huntington wrote, "The Soviet leaders hoped . . . that their military threat would force upon the United States 'an unbearable security burden leading to economic disaster.' . . . Communist guns, in this sense, have been aiming at an economic target no less that a military target. As a result, the President believed that America security rested 'not upon the military establishment alone but rather on two pillars—military strength in being and economic strength based on a flourishing economy.'. . . Since economic strength and military programs affected security, the military leaders should consider both in making their recommendations." Samuel P. Huntington, *The Common Defense: Strategic Programs in National Politics* (New York: Columbia University, Press, 1961), 66.

[6] Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 51.

[7] Ibid, 37.

[8] Robert R. Bowie and Richard H. Immerman, *Waging Peace: How Eisenhower Shaped an Enduring Cold War Strategy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 44; Valerie L. Adams, *Eisenhower's Fine Group of Fellows: Crafting a National Security Policy to Uphold the Great Equation* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006), 2-3.

[9] Bowie and Immerman, 44-45, 47; Eisenhower held a comprehensive view of U.S. power, writing "American strength is a combination of its economic, moral and military forces." As President, he recognized that reducing taxes and balancing the budget had to occur gradually so as to protect U.S. strength: "Our effort to balance the budget without damaging the nation's security demanded that the existing level of revenue for the year be maintained. My promise to cut taxes had been predicated on a simultaneous balancing of the budget." Eisenhower was rightly concerned that an alliance like NATO would deteriorate if the United States did not pay due attention to it: "Difficulties…arise when allies, dedicated to the same principles and the same basic ideas, draw apart on the means of attain-

Throughout his Presidency, Eisenhower relentlessly pursued policies to reduce tensions through disarmament programs and peaceful uses of nuclear energy.[10] What sets Eisenhower apart from other Presidents was his acknowledgement that principles, goals, and rhetoric were not enough. In his view, sound organization and process were essential for the development of foreign policy and national security strategy.

Political scientist Fred Greenstein noted the importance Eisenhower placed on strategic values vis-à-vis decision-making: "Clear beliefs and policy positions founded on them are powerful instruments for leadership, since the leader who possesses them is better able to set priorities, communicate a public stance, and delegate specifics to associates by giving them clear guidelines for making detailed decisions." Correspondingly, Eisenhower regarded a strong economy as a national security imperative since excessive taxation and profligate government spending would have a deleterious effect on the economy, leading to diminished capital growth and higher inflation. In regards to containing international Communism, Eisenhower contended that collective security, resting on military, economic, and ideological values, was the most effective means of deterring the threat, until Communism's appeal with other states waned and détente between the free world and the communist bloc emerged.[11]

Commensurate with the rise of the United States as a global power, Eisenhower sought to inject more structure and discipline into presidential decision-making. From his personal observations, Eisenhower felt President Franklin D. Roosevelt's management style was too informal,

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ing their objectives. This was the history of coalitions." Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 187, 201, 606; Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Waging Peace* (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1965), 622, 629.

[10] Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 146, 252-255, 294; Ambrose, *Eisenhower: The President*. Kindle e-book.

[11] Fred I. Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency: Eisenhower as Leader* (Baltimore: Basic books, Inc., 1982; Johns Hopkins Paperbacks, 1992), 46-48, 50.

plagued by redundant, overlapping responsibilities, and resulted in poorly coordinated policies.[12] Although the National Security Act of 1947 and its 1949 amendment, provided President Harry S. Truman with a formal advisory system with greater access to and integration of relevant information, the President did not regularly preside over NSC meetings until the Korean War. According to NSC Executive Secretary Sidney Souers, Truman did not wish his presence and a "too early an expression of his own views" to stymie discussion.[13] Veteran NSC officials, James Lay and Robert Johnson recalled that Truman distanced himself from NSC meetings so as to "best preserve his full freedom of action with respect to the policy recommendations of the Council, including dissents thereto."[14] Nonetheless, during its inception period, the NSC suffered from organizational inefficiencies, which the Truman Administration failed to resolve.[15] Once the Korean War started, however, the Administration sought structural and procedural improvements to the NSC system. Of significance, Truman's attendance at Council meetings jumped to 87 percent

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[12] Eisenhower cited Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes' criticism of Roosevelt's management of the Cabinet: "The cold fact is that on important matters, we are seldom called upon for advice. We never discuss exhaustively any policy of Government or question of political strategy. The President makes all of his own decisions and, so far at least as the Cabinet is concerned, without taking counsel with a group of advisers. On particular questions he will call into his office persons directly interested, but it is fair to say that the Cabinet is not a general council upon whose advice the President relies or the opinions of which, on important matters, he calls for. Our Cabinet meetings are pleasant affairs, but we only skim the surface of things on routine matters. As a matter of fact, I never think of bringing up even a serious departmental issue at Cabinet meeting, and apparently the other members follow the same policy, at least to a considerable extent." Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 134.

[13] Truman chaired twelve of the 57 NSC meetings between 26 September 1947 and 23 June 1950. Congress, Senate, Committee on Government Operations, Subcommittee on National Policy Machinery, *Organizational History of the National Security Council*, report prepared by James S. Lay Jr. and Robert H. Johnson, 86th Congress, 2d sess., 1960, 5 n. 11; Truman initially did not attend NSC meetings for three reasons. First, he wanted to avoid any misperceptions that the NSC represented a delegation of Presidential authority. Second, he wanted the NSC to debate the issues candidly without his presence. Third, he wanted the latitude to make the final decision on NSC deliberations. Consequently, the NSC played no significant role in "defense policy-making or the administration of the military establishment." Paul Y. Hammond, *Organizing for Defense: The American Military Establishment in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1961), 233.

[14] James Lay was Assistant Executive Secretary from 1947 to 1950 and then as Executive Secretary until 1961. Robert Johnson was an NSC staffer from 1951 to August 1959, after which he served as the Director of the Planning Board Secretariat. *Organizational History of the National Security Council*, U.S. Congress, Senate 1960, i, 5.

[15] Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 125.

with NSC meetings scheduled an average of twice a month.[16]

In contrast to the Truman Administration, the Eisenhower Administration made the NSC its central forum for foreign policy, seeking greater efficiencies through organization. As a presidential candidate, Eisenhower had proposed to make the NSC "a principal mechanism for aiding the Chief Executive in making decisions on matters of high and necessarily secret policy."[17] Specifically, Eisenhower sought to create a unified authority in the White House and NSC in order to foster unity of command and unity of effort in his Administration.[18] In order for him to practice strategic thinking, he needed comprehensive staff work for strategic appraisals to assist the NSC in policy and strategy formulation. Accordingly, once in office, President Eisenhower directed Robert Cutler (among others) to study the NSC mechanism and recommend reforms to make it "a valuable tool for his constant use, correlative in importance with the Cabinet."[19] Cutler was a good choice since he had served as an Army staff officer in the Pentagon during World War II, where he gained the attention of Henry Stimson, George C. Marshall, and Gordon Gray

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[16] Some notable NSC organizational changes under Truman were the establishment of the Office of the Executive Secretary (progenitor to the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs), the Secretariat (later known as the NSC staff), the Senior Staff (predecessor of the Planning Board), and the Psychological Strategy Board (the precursor to the Operations Coordination Board). Eisenhower adopted these and other changes, including increased NSC membership, JSC participation on the Senior Staff and Council, policy paper staffing and format, and progress report formats. Truman attended 62 of 71 NSC meetings from 28 June 1950 to 9 January 1953. *Organizational History of the National Security Council*, U.S. Congress, Senate 1960, 8-22, 16 n. 29; Douglas T. Stuart, *Creating the National Security State: A History of the Law that Transformed America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

[17] Robert Cutler, "The Development of the National Security Council," *Foreign Affairs*, Volume 34, No. 3 (April, 1956): 443.

[18] Eisenhower never articulated this goal, but in view of his creation of unified command as Supreme Allied Commander during World War II and with NATO, as well as his advocacy of the unification of the services during the 1946-1947 period, it follows that he sought to duplicate this type of structure in the White House and NSC. David Jablonsky, *War by Land, Sea, and Air: Dwight Eisenhower and the Concept of Unified Command* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

[19] Robert Cutler, *No Time for Rest* (Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press Book, 1965), 295; Joseph Dodge, Eisenhower's director of the Bureau of the Budget, conducted an immediate assessment of the NSC, rendering his report in January 1953. Likewise, the President's Advisory Committee on Government Organization (PACGO) provided its recommendations to the President in February 1953. For his study, Cutler formed study groups which used "round table discussions about the organization, operations, and problems of the NSC." Alfred Dick Sander, *Eisenhower's Executive Office* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), 73-75, 77. 78-80.

as an organizational expert. More recently, he served in the Truman NSC and had extensive organizational experience from both world wars and in banking.[20]

Eisenhower's immediate priority in establishing a fully functional NSC mechanism reflected his understanding of the problems plaguing the Executive Office of the President. In his memoirs, Eisenhower related that U.S. foreign policy challenges had become exponentially more complex with America's rise as a global power.

> This expansion in the size of the government largely paralleled its growth in complexity and responsibility. The functions of government had multiplied enormously during the period [1933-1952], both those of the President and those of the Congress. This made more necessary than ever an efficient White House Staff in 1953.[21]

In this regard, he told Cutler that "it was no longer possible for a President himself to integrate the intelligence and opinions flooding in from all sides."[22]

In his initial guidance, Eisenhower wanted frequent National Security Council meetings with him presiding as the chairman, serving as the epicenter of advice and decision-making. He told Cutler that he needed integrated viewpoints from the government bureaucracy (i.e., federal departments, agencies, and bureaus) with a dedicated planning staff, comprising qualified government representatives who enjoyed access to their respective Cabinet Secretaries or agency chiefs. He expected the planning staff to focus on the planning process so it would become accustomed to working and thinking as a team on complex problems. He also wanted to foster an

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[20] Cutler had served as a member of Truman's NSC Senior Staff and later the Planning Board of the Psychological Strategy Board. In the course of developing his study on NSC reform, Cutler interviewed over fifteen senior Truman Administration officials. Robert Cutler, "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," in *The National Security Council: Jackson Subcommittee Papers on Policy-Making at the Presidential Level*, ed. Henry M. Jackson (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, 1965), 126; Cutler, "The Development of the National Security Council," 456; Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 106; Sander, 71-72, 76-77, 80; David Rothkopf, *Running the World: The Inside Story of the National Security Council and the Architects of American Power* (New York: Public Affairs, 2006), 66.

[21] Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 116.

[22] Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 296.

atmosphere where the Council worked as a "corporate body," with his Cabinet secretaries providing their personal judgments. The planning staff would cultivate corporate thinking through good staff work and the education of principal advisers on salient issues prior to NSC meetings. In this manner, the Council could debate issues in the presence of the President confidently and candidly. The establishment of a routine was designed to foster camaraderie and bolster rational advice. He also wanted NSC membership expanded to include financial and economic perspectives as well as relevant outside specialists when needed. At the same time, Cutler was charged with limiting the size of NSC participants to promote candid discussions.[23]

Eisenhower noted that past Administrations had been plagued by "Cabinet bickering, personality conflicts, and end running, tail bearing, and throat cutting."[24] He also observed that personal animosities are often the cause of distorted judgments.[25] Cutler concurred, judging that Presidents were often afflicted with ex parte views, incomplete facts (both intentional and unintentional), "special pleading, imprecise guidance, and suppression of conflicting views."[26] James Forrestal, the first Secretary of Defense under Truman, recorded in his personal journal that eliminating human friction accounted for ninety percent of government administration.[27]

With this historical reference in mind, Eisenhower sought to root out pernicious political behavior from the advisory process.[28] According to Cutler, the President endeavored to use the

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[23] Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 131; The "corporate body" concept was important to Eisenhower because he wanted advisers to "seek, from their background experiences, the most statesmanlike answers to the problems of national security rather than attempt solutions representing only a compromise of agency positions." Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 296-298; Rothkopf, 66.

[24] Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 134.

[25] Ibid, 111.

[26] Cutler, "The Development of the National Security Council," 448; Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 300.

[27] James Forrestal, *The Forrestal Diaries*, Edited by Walter Millis (New York: The Viking Press, 1951), 300.

[28] Eisenhower was exceptionally savvy in the ways the military services vied for political influence. Counseling Secretary of Defense James Forrestal on ways to gain greater cooperation with service chiefs, General Eisenhower, Chief of Staff of the Army, wrote in 1948, "The old saying 'centralization is the refuge of fear' . . . is partially root-

NSC mechanism as a winnowing device to protect against partisanship, parochialism and special interest pressures, to check against issuing ambiguous guidance, and to mitigate the tendency of suppressing conflicting views. Moreover, the White House needed to guard against the practice of logrolling among departments and lowest common denominator policy papers which had afflicted the Truman NSC. Cutler was particularly keen to have the planning staff serve as a barrier to protect against parochialism, feeling that the presentation of one-sided views or incomplete analyses to the NSC would eventually create national security policy dilemmas:[29]

> The complexity and variety of the agenda items presented at a single Council meeting underline the risk which may attend decisions based on inadequate, nonrepresentative preparation or on the failure of participants to have studied and grasped the material prepared for their advance considerations. Without adequate preparation, few men have the over-all perspective to deal with long-range security issues.[30]

To this end, optimizing organization became the currency of the NSC mechanism, as Eisenhower reasoned in his memoirs:

> Organization cannot make a genius out of an incompetent; even less can it, of itself, make the decisions which are required to trigger necessary action. On the other hand, disorganization can scarcely fail to result in inefficiency and can easily lead to disaster. Organization makes more efficient the gathering and analysis of facts, and the arranging of the findings of experts in logical fashion. Therefore organization helps the responsible individual make the necessary decision, and helps assure that it is satisfactorily carried out.[31]

Eisenhower further explained that the process is not pedantic, mechanical, or perfunctory. Rather

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ed in the natural human feeling that every man wants under his own hand complete control and authority over every factor or unit that has a possible function in the discharge of this responsibilities." Eisenhower recommended that Forrestal use a disinterested administrative body "as the instrument for framing the agenda of discussions between the secretary and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. This body was to use the most recent Defense Department 'concept of war' formulation of the nation's overall military requirements and to identify exactly which department was doing what with how much expense and overlap in function. 'In this way,' he explained, 'the matter will be taken out of the realm of generality and brought down to specific recommendation.'" Cited in Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 118.

[29] Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 300; Cutler, "The Development of the National Security Council," 447-448; Sander, 72-73

[30] Cutler, "The Development of the National Security Council," 447.

[31] Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 114.

than stifling imagination or any other human quality, the purpose of organization is "to simplify, clarify, expedite, and coordinate; it is a bulwark against chaos, confusion, delay, and failure."[32] As it pertained to the NSC Cutler explained,

> The Council's purpose is to integrate the manifold aspects of national security policy (such as foreign, military, economic, fiscal, internal security, psychological) to the end that security policies finally recommended to the President shall be both representative and fused, rather than compartmentalized and several.[33]

Eisenhower did not profess he was introducing a new concept to government; rather, he merely pointed out that solid organization is the foundation of the American political system that the Founding Fathers had constructed. He emphasized that America is governed by laws and not arbitrary decrees, and for the American system of government to sustain the "union of self-governing people," organization is essential for nothing less than staving off the "threat of tyranny."[34] Eisenhower envisioned his organizational reforms of the executive branch as compatible with the Founding Fathers' system of government. Sound organization would provide "the means for performing systematically, promptly, and accurately the research and related work essential to the orderly presentation to the President of all pertinent facts and calculations which he must take into account in making a sound decision on any issue."[35]

After two months of research and feedback from Truman NSC officials, Cutler rendered his report to Eisenhower on 22 March 1953, which served as the framework for the NSC mecha-

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[32] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 630.

[33] Cutler, "The Development of the National Security Council," 441.

[34] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 630; Eisenhower considered organization essential to good governance. Along with the NSC and White House staff organizations, Eisenhower established the President's Advisory Commission for Governmental Organization (PACGO) to study ways to increase organizational effectiveness within the Executive branch. Located in the Executive Building, it comprised three members— Nelson Rockefeller as chairman, Milton Eisenhower (the President's closest confident), and Arthur Flemming. Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 110.

[35] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 631.

nism but with the President's proviso that adjustments would occur as necessary.[36] Succinct and analytical, the report ensured the organizational recommendations were aligned to the 1947 National Security Act and the 1949 Amendment as well as meeting Eisenhower's guidance.[37] Collectively, the Cutler report reflected the Administration's acceptance of the vast majority of recommendations proffered from Joseph Dodge, the Hoover Commission, the President's Advisory Committee on Government Organization (PACGO), the study groups, and NSC officials.[38]

Specifically, the NSC was tailored to the President's advisory needs with his selection of principal advisors, special assistants, and aides, all working as a corporate body to render a balanced view for national security decisions. Processes and procedures served to curb assertive personalities and dominant viewpoints from monopolizing Council meetings and the President's attention. Equally important, every government official was aware of Administration policy activities as well as the viewpoints of other departments. As Cutler later stressed, "In fact, balancing the scale is very important."[39] To this end, the proposed planning staff—the Planning Board—would serve to prepare the President and his principal advisers for NSC meetings.

In subsequent writing and testimony, Cutler stressed that Eisenhower did not ever regard the NSC or its supporting bodies as a "planning or operational mechanism" but as "a 'corporate body,' consisting of officials . . . advising the President in their own right and not simply as the

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[36] According to Greenstein, Eisenhower used the first year to assess the effectiveness of the NSC mechanism and make modifications before officially adopting it. Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 125.

[37] Cutler's twenty-three page report outlined the basic structure, processes, and procedures of the Eisenhower NSC mechanism with the exception of the Operations Coordinating Board which was established later on 2 September 1953. Robert Cutler, *Report of Recommendations on the National Security Council* (16 March 1953), White House Office, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, Special Assistant Series, Presidential Subseries, Box 1, President's Papers 1953, DDEL; Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 298-299.

[38] Sander, 73-85; The Hoover Commission recommended the creation of the position of Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs and White House Staff Secretary. Henderson, 17-19.

[39] Cutler, "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," 124.

heads of their respective departments."[40] From Eisenhower's experience, operational plans and execution were best left to the relevant echelons within the government bureaucracy because they were intimately familiar with local conditions and could adapt their plans accordingly. It followed that the most appropriate role for the NSC was to develop foreign policy and grand strategy, which guided force management (overall size, distribution, and composition of the military), defense expenditures, and geostrategic priorities. In the pursuit of promoting and protecting U.S. national interests, the President would determine which instruments of power (i.e., diplomatic, informational, military, and economic) to exercise.[41]

Eisenhower believed effective strategy formulation rested on efficient staff work, and the NSC was the mechanism to this end. He felt strongly that for a system like the NSC to function efficiently, it must be organized so as to delegate authority and establish responsibility at each echelon of the Administration, and that effective organization must have "the ablest, most dedicated and experienced men and women he [the President] can find."[42] The pursuit of talent applied not only to the principal advisors but also extended to the Planning Board and NSC Staff. According to Cutler, the selection of the best people was a major qualification for positions, calling it the "pursuit of excellence" in government.[43] As Vice President Richard Nixon recollected,

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[40] In Cutler's report on the NSC, Cutler wrote, "The Council is an advisory, not an operational, body. It is not appropriate for its permanent Staff to follow-up on policy performance, beyond the valid requirements now in effect for periodic progress reports and semi-annual status of projects reports. Cutler, *Report of Recommendations on the National Security Council*, 9; Cutler, "The Development of the National Security Council," 442; Cutler testified before the Jackson Subcommittee on National Security that by statute and intent, the Council provided advice to the President only. It was never a planning or operational organ. Cutler, "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," 112.

[41] Generally, the instruments of national power are Diplomatic, Informational, Military, and Economic. Harry R. Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional*, 68-73.

[42] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 631.

[43] Eisenhower certainly drew on his experiences with General Marshal, who selected subordinates with great care and gave them increasing responsibilities which tested their ability to solve problems without burdening their bosses. The Operations Coordinating Board was not established until late 1953. Cutler, "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," 134.

Eisenhower wanted to promote teamwork, selecting Administration officials based on merit rather than political connections, who were dedicated to "a set of principles which would guide his Administration in all its endeavors."[44] The President held the deep conviction that for his Administration to function most efficiently, the principle of subsidiarity must be exercised.[45]

Eisenhower's resolution to establish weekly NSC meetings, which he would personally chair (he presided over 90 percent of the NSC meetings), served several purposes.[46] He expected his closest advisors to consider the NSC as the central policymaking body: "My hope will be to make this a policy body, to bring before you and for you to bring up subjects that are worthy of this body as a whole."[47] At the same time, the President sought to promote Council cohesion and a close relationship with the executive office. Like a fellowship, officials would seek solutions to national security issues derived from their accumulated education, experience, and knowledge rather than "attempt solutions representing only a compromise of agency positions."[48] Ideally, Eisenhower wanted a Cabinet Secretary who "was free to be concerned not only with the affairs of his own department but with virtually any question that concerned the government. No one was relieved of his responsibility or the opportunity to think broadly and to make suggestions."[49] To promote candor and intimacy in meetings, the Cutler report advised limiting Council participation to a core of eight people (though in practice, the number of participants exceeded this

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[44] Richard M. Nixon, *Six Crises* (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1962), 140.

[45] Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 135.

[46] Henderson notes that Eisenhower chaired 329 out of 366 regular and special NSC meetings. Phillip G. Henderson, *Managing the Presidency: The Eisenhower Legacy—From Kennedy to Reagan* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988), 81.

[47] Cited in Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 105-106.

[48] Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 297.

[49] Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 99; White House Chief of Staff Sherman Adams underscored the widespread knowledge of the President's guidance: "Eisenhower made it plain that each Cabinet member was to have a voice not only in the affairs of his own department but in any other question that the government happened to be deliberating at the moment." Sherman Adams, *Firsthand Report* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961), 5.

number).[50]

The weekly NSC meetings were designed to encourage teamwork. The frequency of contact among NSC members, especially with the President, aspired to foster familiarity and frankness during deliberations. Eisenhower used the Council to impart his goals, reasoning, and guidance in regards to policy decisions.[51] Evidently, bureaucratic habits among his principal advisers were hard to overcome, so in October 1953 an exasperated Eisenhower formally explained that the Council needed to operate as

> a corporate body composed of individuals advising the President in their own right, rather than as representatives of their respective departments and agencies. Their function should be to seek, with their background of experience, the most statesmanlike solution to the problems of national security, rather than to reach solutions which represent merely a compromise of departmental positions. The same concept is equally applicable to advisory and subordinate groups, such as the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the NSC Planning Board [as well as the Operations Coordinating Board].[52]

Reflecting on the NSC dynamics, Eisenhower later wrote,

> In my view, a fair, decent, and reasonable dealing with men, a reasonable recognition that views may diverge, a constant seeking for a high and strong ground on which to work together, is the best way to lead our country in difficult times ahead of us. A living democracy needs diversity to keep it strong. For survival, it also needs to have the diversities brought together in a common purpose, so fair, so reasonable, and so appealing that all can rally to it.[53]

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[50] Specifically, the President, Vice President, Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, Secretary of the Treasury, Director for Mutual Security, and Director of Defense Mobilization. The statutory advisers were the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Special Assistant to the President for Cold War Planning. The Staff consisted of the Special Assistant to the President, the Executive Secretary, and the Deputy Executive Secretary. The President could invite observers and "participant" members through a standing request or on a temporary basis. This limitation excluded "Advisers, Observers, and the Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs and NSC Staff Members." Cutler, *Report of Recommendations on the National Security Council*, 5-6.

[51] Cutler, "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," 121-122; Ambrose, *Eisenhower: The President*. Kindle e-book.

[52] From the October 13, 1953 notes of the NSC. On July 1, 1957, the statement was revised to acknowledge the OCB. *Organizational History of the National Security Council*, U.S. Congress, Senate 1960, 30, 30 n. 61.

[53] Eisenhower understood that despite organization and talented subordinates, the complexity involved in developing policy was by no means simple: "Only a leadership that is based on honesty of purpose, calmness and inexhaustible patience in conference and persuasion, and refusal to be diverted from basic principles can, in the long run,

Reserving policy discussions and recommendations for Council sessions would permit the airing of differing viewpoints openly. In this manner, Eisenhower sought to minimize attempts to influence his decisions through intrigue and personal entreaties, which had plagued so many Administrations.[54] The iterative process of policy formulation would inure everyone in the NSC mechanism to working and thinking together on complex problems, leading to well-reasoned policy.

Eisenhower was particularly interested in the manner in which thorough and rational policy proposals were supplied to the Council for discussion. Generally, Eisenhower considered the government bureaucracy as the best resource given its extensive knowledge, experience, judgment, and familiarization with policy issues. He dismissed the idea of a large NSC Staff dedicated to the President or a permanent body of outside consultants for this purpose.[55] For the aforementioned reasons, neither approach could compete with the existing government bureaucracy, would foment mistrust, envy, and non-cooperation, and would create a layer between the President and his principal advisors.[56]

Eisenhower established a routine in the NSC mechanism with set Planning Board, OCB, and NSC meetings so as to increase cogent analysis as well as to accelerate requests for information during crises.[57] In order to optimize Council time, preparation of policy papers and meet-

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win out. I further believe that we must never lose sight of the ultimate objectives we are trying to attain." Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 193.

[54] Cutler, "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," 121-122; Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 17.

[55] "In order to bring to the Council deliberations a fresh, frequently-changing civilian point of view and to gain public understanding of national security problems through the use of civilians of stature," Cutler recommended the "ad hoc" use of "Civilian Consultants or small Civilian Committees as informal Advisers to the Council." They would not participate in NSC deliberations and only appear before the Council to render their reports. Cutler, *Report of Recommendations on the National Security Council*, 6.

[56] Cutler, "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," 125-126.

[57] The pursuit of routine was no pedantic exercise. Cutler recalled three crises in which the Council acted on an issue and had it implemented within three to four days. This required the Planning Board to work without a break to produce a quality draft planning paper. Cutler, "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," 138.

ings called for established procedures and structure. Draft policy papers required a standardized format for rapid reading and to guide discussions. Thus, with the principal advisers educated on the issues, the President could listen to all sides of an argument before making a decision. Further, the camaraderie and teamwork fostered during regular NSC meetings would pay dividends during crises and ensure coherency of the Administration's foreign policy.[58]

Finally, Eisenhower increased the breadth of the NSC beyond the coordination of the State and Defense Departments. Inclusion of the Secretary of the Treasury, the Budget Director, and the Director of Foreign Aid at the weekly NSC provided financial and economic perspectives on national security issues. Others, such as the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, the Attorney General, the Director of Civil Defense, and the Secretary of Commerce were invited as needed.[59]

Except for a few tweaks, the NSC mechanism in practice remained consistent with the Cutler report. Two factors account for this outcome. First, Cutler's experience on Truman's NSC, his research, and his interviews with key Truman officials provided him with a solid base for organizational reform. Second, Eisenhower's guidance helped Cutler shape the NSC mechanism in ways that met the President's needs.

The National Security Council Mechanism: Organization and Procedures

In light of so many distortions of the Eisenhower NSC mechanism in later years, a detailed description of the system is necessary. The system comprised three synergistic bodies: the Planning Board, the Council, and the OCB. Impressed by Cutler's work on the report, Eisenhow-

[58] Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 297.
[59] Ibid, 297.

er appointed him as the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, giving him the task of managing the NSC mechanism.[60] In this capacity, Cutler presided over the Planning Board, served as the executive officer for NSC meetings, and sat as an observer on the OCB. Finally, the small NSC Staff served as the secretariat for the mechanism.[61]

The Planning Board

As Cutler had proposed, the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs chaired the Planning Board, whose specific function was to produce policy papers for Council consideration. Eisenhower insisted on thorough staff work of policy papers over several weeks so as to focus NSC discussions: "Without an integrated, advance-prepared text as a discussion base, loose debate among busy men preoccupied with departmental duties seldom produces helpful results."[62] The "traffic of ideas" did not emanate from the Council only. The Planning Board sought policy ideas from the government bureaucracy, Planning Board and Operations Coordinating Board (OCB), among other sources.[63]

The Planning Board was the initiator of action for the NSC mechanism. True to Cutler's design, the Planning Board served two functions. First, it anticipated and identified national security problems and commenced drafting studies and policy papers. Second, it facilitated

> the formulation of policies, during the process of drafting policy recommendations, by marshalling the resources of the respective departments and agencies; by identifying the possible alternatives; by endeavoring to achieve acceptable agreements; by discussing differences; by avoiding undesirable compromises which conceal or gloss over real differences; and by reducing differences to as clearly defined and narrow an area as possible

[60] Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 298.

[61] The Operations Coordinating Board was one of the tweaks to the system when it became apparent coordination of policy implementation was beyond the NSC Staff. Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 311.

[62] Cutler, *Report of Recommendations on the National Security Council*, 11; Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 300, 351.

[63] Cutler, *Report of Recommendations on the National Security Council*, 12; Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 296, 305, 351.

prior to reference to the Council.[64]

In light of the President's desire to include the economic implications of policy decisions, the Council of Economic Policy worked closely with the Planning Board.[65]

Planning Board members comprised "the senior policy advising officers of the constituent departments," holding the rank of assistant or under departmental secretary.[66] Cutler envisioned the Planning Board as an elite body, with membership viewed as a distinction; thus high caliber people with keen intellect and a willingness to work long hours was essential. Serving on the Planning Board was a *full time job* with authority vested in the member's seniority, a Presidential appointment, and a close association with his Cabinet boss. Members used this authority to garner policy input from their parent organizations. As Greenstein described the staff work process, members "were at once immersed in planning department policy and in generating the sharply focused NSC–meeting briefing papers that stimulated intense, clearly focused policy debate."[67] Hence, policy papers and studies represented the integrated expertise of the government bureaucracy, presenting both minority and dissenting viewpoints.[68]

The selection process began with a meeting between the Special Assistant for National Security and the respective Cabinet official. Together they discussed the best qualified and mu-

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[64] Cutler, *Report of Recommendations on the National Security Council*, 10.

[65] Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 311.

[66] Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 126-127; The following representatives comprised the Board: Members—Special Assistant to the President, Department of State, Department of Defense, Department of the Treasury, Director for Mutual Security, and Office of Defense Mobilization; Advisers—Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Central Intelligence Agency, and Psychological Strategy Board; and Staff—Executive Secretary, Deputy Executive Secretary, and Coordinator of Board Assistants. Cutler, *Report of Recommendations on the National Security Council*, 10; Seating Protocol: The State Department representative sat to the chairman's right and the Executive Secretary on his left. Representatives from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Department of Defense, and the CIA sat across the table. Representatives for Planning Board members as well as invited participants sat around the wall. Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 298, 312.

[67] Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 126-127.

[68] Cutler, *Report of Recommendations on the National Security Council*, 10-12; , "The Development of the National Security Council," 444; Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 296.

tually agreeable candidates. Planning Board membership involved a close association with and unfettered access to the respective Cabinet officials so as to keep them apprised on the fundamental issues under discussion and to receive guidance. In turn, Cabinet officials empowered members to utilize the resources of their parent organizations. *Once the Special Assistant for National Security approved the candidate*, the Cabinet official submitted a formal letter to the President, which the Special Assistant for National Security discussed with the President. The President secured the prestige of membership with a Presidential letter of appointment. Each member had the formal title "Special Assistant to the (Cabinet official) for NSC Affairs" and was permitted to have as many assistants from his parent organization as required. Hence, Planning Board tenure carried both high status and heavy responsibility.[69]

The tremendous workload and statutory requirements demanded a well-honed system. As the Planning Board identified issues for NSC consideration, its members prompted their respective parent organizations for supporting papers.[70] The Board met in the Executive Office Building three times a week (shortened to twice a week in 1955) with sessions lasting three to five hours. The Planning Board devoted two to four sessions (sometimes more) to each draft policy paper with the NSC Staff Assistants revising the drafts.[71] Although the government bureaucracy supplied the lion's share of initial drafts, the NSC Staff performed the administrative function of analyzing, summarizing, and clarifying them for the Policy Board's use. In particular, the Special

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[69] Cutler, "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," 127; Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 298; Cutler, *Report of Recommendations on the National Security Council*, 11.

[70] The State Department prepared the initial drafts for all country and regional studies. For other papers, the agency or department which had primary interest in the topic wrote the initial draft. Occasionally, the Planning Board Committee submitted a draft, and even the Planning Board or the Planning Board Assistants wrote papers as a result of Planning Board discussions. *Organizational History of the National Security Council*, U.S. Congress, Senate 1960, 32.

[71] For example, the annual review of basic national security policy averaged approximately twelve meetings covering two to three months. Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 312, 314-315; *Organizational History of the National Security Council*, U.S. Congress, Senate 1960, 30.

Staff of the NSC Staff made "independent analysis and review of each Planning Board paper at each stage of its development."[72] Employing the critical thinking process, the Planning Board framed the problem associated with a policy issue: clarifying the terms, breaking down the discreet parts for study, and reassembling the issue in a comprehensive policy paper for the NSC. In the truest sense, the work of the Policy Board reflected the integrated efforts of government bureaucracy.[73]

During the first two years of the Eisenhower Administration, the Planning Board (115 meetings) reviewed and revised all existing national security policies from the Truman Administration (fifty total) in order to provide continuity of government foreign policy. In the meantime, the Council produced 20 new national security policies as well as responding to a number of crises.[74] New policy issues and ideas emanated from various sources: 1) reviews of prior Administrations' policies for revision or replacement; 2) policy ideas generated from former or current Administration policy reviews; 3) progress reports from Operations Coordination Board; 4) annual reports on policy program implementation from departments and agencies; 5) ideas generated from Council deliberations, which continually assessed the effectiveness of policies and the need to adapt to the changing security environment; 6) the result of events or crises requiring new or revised policy attention; 7) ideas, studies, and rhetorical research questions from departments and agencies as they struggled with the daily problems; 8) ideas from the President; 9) ideas generated from Cabinet or Council meetings; 10) ideas generated from Planning Board meetings; and 11) ideas coming from individuals in the government (submitted through the

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[72] Cutler, "The Development of the National Security Council," 456-457; U.S. Congress, Senate 1960, 33.
[73] Cutler, "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," 116-117.
[74] Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 299-300; Cutler, "The Development of the National Security Council," 444-445; Cutler, "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," 112.

channels).[75] In Cutler's view, ideas originating from the government bureaucracy were probably the most effective way to address policy issues. Because they remained closely engaged in their areas of expertise, government bureaucrats could use the Planning Board to alert the Administration of potential problems before they became acute. This process ensured that relevant issues received careful study and scrutiny before they were brought to the NSC.[76]

The preparation process began with the Planning Board digesting the national intelligence estimate, relevant departmental background and analytical studies, and other germane documents from functional or regional experts in the government bureaucracy (e.g., intelligence, military, political, economic, fiscal, and psychological impact studies). Usually, a departmental staff study accompanied the initial draft, which helped generate discussion. Frequently, senior departmental leaders would attend meetings to offer their expertise and provide tentative recommendations.[77] Soliciting initial input from the government bureaucracy enhanced interest from those departments likely to implement the policy. It also enhanced teamwork, a sense of meaningful contribution to the Administration, and buy-in to the adopted policy.[78]

Quite a bit of Planning Board time and effort was spent in the scrutiny, revision, and integration of views in iterative drafts, which Cutler called the "acid bath" for refining papers, resulting in "either agreement on clarity and accuracy of text, correctness of facts, and validity of

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[75] Special Assistant for National Security Dillon Anderson (1955-1956) recalled that most ideas for policy papers came from the departments. Dillon Anderson, "The President and National Security," *Atlantic Monthly*, CXCVII (January 1956), 44; Cutler, "The Development of the National Security Council," 450-451.

[76] Cutler, "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," 135.

[77] James Lay reported that whenever the head of an agency submitted a paper for Council consideration, the Planning Board discussed it and sometimes appended comments for Council consideration. Any oral presentation scheduled for the NSC was often made first to the Planning Board. Reports by outside groups, consultants, and special committees were also discussed first in Planning Board meetings. In this manner, NSC members were informed of the material prior to the meeting. *Organizational History of the National Security Council*, U.S. Congress, Senate 1960, 33-34.

[78] Cutler, "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," 114, 116, 133; *Organizational History of the National Security Council*, U.S. Congress, Senate 1960, 32.

policy recommendations, or as is often the case, sharp differences of opinion on basic major recommendations or statements."[79] Neither in intent nor in practice did Cutler gloss over conflicting viewpoints among members or settle for the lowest common denominator of consensus in draft policy papers. Irreconcilable differences were identified in draft policy papers as "policy splits," which were delineated in parallel columns to help readers compare agency stances.[80] Incidentally, Cutler estimated that two-thirds of all draft policy papers contained policy splits requiring Council arbitration.[81] Cutler recalled that this intellectual activity resulted in precise, written products:

> Out of the grinding of these minds comes a refinement of the raw material into valuable metal; out of the frank assertion of differing views, backed up by preparation that searches every nook and cranny, emerges a resolution that reasonable men can support. Differences of views which have developed at lower levels are not swept under the rug but exposed.[82]

As part of the drafting process, the pursuit of precise language and the normalization of differing terminologies assumed critical attention. Cutler urged Planning Board members "to seek for a better word, a more explicit phrase, a sharper set of alternatives, a more distinct expression of divergent views, and to bring out every inflection and side of an issue."[83] The overriding goal was to produce "agreement on clarity and accuracy of text, correctness of facts, and

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[79] Cutler, "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," 115; The Planning Board would continue examining an issue by eliciting the knowledge of appropriate department officials, reviewing intelligence estimates, questioning key agency officials on the facts and the bases for recommendations. By running through the gamut of specialists Cutler wanted the Board to "squeeze out of the material all the juice that it contains." Cited in Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 128.

[80] In his March 1953 report, Cutler clearly articulated the need to expose disagreements for Council consideration. Cutler, *Report of Recommendations on the National Security Council*, 10, 12; Cutler, "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," 115; During the process of drafting a policy paper, multiple revisions required the staff to draft and circulate the changes for members to confer with the principal NSC advisors so as to garner their guidance for the next Planning Board meeting. Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 128.

[81] Cutler, "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," 117; Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 305; James Lay also recorded this estimate in his report. U.S. Congress, Senate 1960, 33.

[82] Cutler was describing the end state of the NSC process, but left little doubt that the preparation of draft Policy Papers was integral to the whole. Cutler, "The Development of the National Security Council," 442.

[83] Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 313, 314-315.

validity of policy recommendations." The intent of this interaction was to mitigate interagency friction and rivalry, fostering cooperation in the government bureaucracy.[84]

The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) circulated its formal military views on draft policy papers in a separate paper to Council members prior to the meeting. Although the JCS had a representative on the Planning Board, he provided no formal input into the papers. Acting as a JCS liaison, the representative's responsibility was to denote the military implications of policy recommendations.[85] This approach exemplified the military establishment's subordination to civilian authority. It separated the military from policy formulation, protecting the NSC from the brand of militarization. But most importantly, it provided a way for the military to contribute to policy formulation through specialized assessments.

The standardized policy paper format allowed Council members to review the main issues for deliberation rapidly and was organized as follows: general considerations, objectives, courses of action, financial appendices, and the supporting staff study.[86] General considerations were drawn from the national intelligence estimate and departmental factual and analytical work. The general objectives were U.S. policy goals. The courses of action were detailed policy guidance proposals. Because Eisenhower wanted the Council to "recognize the relationship between military and economic strength," draft policy papers included an estimated program expenditure appendix, detailing financial costs of the policy proposal, aggregate military and economic expenditures, and supporting factual data. Depending on the issue, a draft policy paper could range

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[84] Cutler, "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," 115.

[85] Ibid, 115; *Organizational History of the National Security Council*, U.S. Congress, Senate 1960, 34.

[86] James Lay recounted that some experimentation occurred with the format. In 1955 and 1956, section titled "policy conclusions" was inserted after "general considerations," providing a short statement of main policy guidelines. In 1957, the policy conclusions section was eliminated and "courses of action" were renamed "major policy guidance," and included main policy guidelines. *Organizational History of the National Security Council*, U.S. Congress, Senate 1960, 32.

from 10 to 50 pages, including appendices.[87]

The diligent and exceptional staff work of the Planning Board reaped tremendous dividends for the Council. Whereas single issue papers (e.g., country or area) were usually dealt with in one Council session, special task force reports or the annual Net Evaluation Study required months of preparation and a couple of Council sessions to digest. However, the recommendations and digestion of additional comments emanating from these reports and studies normally took several months of Council meetings to resolve. The influence of these papers exerted a profound, long-lasting impact on Council members and national security policy. For example, the annual review of the Basic National Security Policy normally consumed several months and tremendous effort.[88] Consequently, the Planning Board's contribution to the NSC system was comprehensive: preparing policy issues for NSC consideration, effectively tapping the government bureaucracy and outside experts, and educating Cabinet officials on relevant policy issues.[89] Accordingly, by the time a draft policy paper arrived at the NSC, every Council member was intimately familiar with all aspects of the issue at hand and prepared to debate. Hence, NSC meetings wasted no one's time and went straight to business.

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[87] The practice of including estimated costs in papers began on 20 July 1953. Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 131-132; Cutler, "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," 114; Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 298-299; Cutler, "The Development of the National Security Council," 446; While the NSC Staff crafted the financial appendices, the responsible departments or agencies provided the data. Estimates were based on past expenditures and extrapolated for the new policy or program. *Organizational History of the National Security Council*, U.S. Congress, Senate 1960, 33, 33 n. 63.

[88] The purpose of the Net Evaluation Study was to assess "'the objectives, commitments and risks of the United States in relation to our actual and potential military power;' and sought to cope with sudden crises in world affairs." The Planning Board normally consumed two to three months in preparing the draft document, and contained between six to twelve irreconcilable issues for the Council to resolve. Council resolution could take as many as six Council meetings. The initial 115 NSC meetings included these reviews. Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 299-300, 306-307.

[89] Although the Board normally met three times a week during Eisenhower's first term, during times of intense activity it met more frequently. During the first term, the Planning Board focused on immediate international challenges, issues surround major national security programs, examination of alternative strategies and policies, a general review of existing national security policies, and the development of new policy issues. *Organizational History of the National Security Council*, U.S. Congress, Senate 1960, 30-31.

The National Security Council

As important as the Planning Board was to the NSC system, the Council was the pivotal body for foreign policy and national security strategy formulation. The President felt the Council was the most effective way for learning the views of his principal advisers and vice versa, since they were responsible for implementing his foreign policy and national security strategy decisions.[90] There was no doubt in anyone's mind that the President was in charge of the meeting, that he was fully informed and engaged with the issues being debated, and that his decision was the final word.[91] It was a highly disciplined process, designed for diligent executives, who were responsible for the most urgent foreign policy issues of the nation.

Reflecting Eisenhower's commitment to create an established routine in the Executive Office of the President, the NSC convened in the White House Cabinet Room every Thursday at 10:00 am for two to three hours.[92] Ten days prior to the Council meeting, the Planning Board distributed the meeting agenda to all the scheduled participants, followed shortly (at least seven days) by the draft policy papers up for discussion in the NSC. The Special Assistant for National Security briefed the President on the pertinent draft policy papers one to two days prior to the Council meeting, permitting the President to discuss and absorb the core issues. In similar fashion, Planning Board members briefed their respective Cabinet bosses, allowing them to absorb the key information and study the policy splits.[93] A typical NSC meeting would cover three to

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[90] Cutler, "The Development of the National Security Council," 453.

[91] Ambrose, *Eisenhower: The President*. Kindle e-book.

[92] During Eisenhower's second term, this changed to 9:00 am for 2-2.5 hours. Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 298-299, 312; Cutler, "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," 112.

[93] Draft papers were circulated approximately ten days before the relevant NSC meeting so as to allow NSC members to absorb the information, consult with their department boards or staffs, and then prepare their defense of policy splits. Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 128.

four draft Policy Papers.[94]

Even though the President was the chairman of the Council he "left the Council mechanics of operation" to the Special Assistant, who in essence served as the "principal executive officer of the Council." Like clockwork, the Special Assistant for National Security would escort the President 30 seconds before the meeting commenced and announce his entrance. The President habitually took his seat, greeted the participants, and opened the Black Book (i.e., the agenda), signaling the commencement of the meeting. Eisenhower was exacting about meetings starting on time, and no one was late for a meeting, at least not twice.[95]

CIA Director Allen Dulles opened each NSC meeting with a fifteen- to twenty-minute intelligence update, supplemented often with graphs and charts. The intelligence brief for the NSC was an innovation that provided the Council with the latest events or trends likely to affect policy. The President and Special Assistant for National Security felt it was important for the Council in its entirety receive intelligence directly from the CIA Director.[96] The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff would then provide a short military situation report, followed by any progress reports on policy implementation.[97]

At this point, the Special Assistant for National Security opened the policy issues for discussion. To set the stage, he would take five to twelve minutes to summarize each issue, provid-

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[94] The meeting agenda should not be confused with the forward agenda, which depicted all issues the Planning Board was working on or planning to address in the future. The Special Assistant periodically provided the President with the "forward" NSC agenda for review and approval. He also distributed a weekly "forward" agenda to Council members for their edification. Cutler, "The Development of the National Security Council," 446. Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 298-299, 301; Cutler, "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," 115-116.

[95] Eisenhower did not like to be late. If he was delayed, he would tell Cutler to have the Vice President or Secretary of State to chair the meeting in the meantime. He would often slip in unobtrusively so as not to disturb the proceedings. Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 302-303; *Organizational History of the National Security Council*, U.S. Congress, Senate, 1960, 26.

[96] Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 302, 304; Cutler, "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," 116.

[97] Sander, 110.

ing a concise background statement, explaining what issues required a decision, and highlighting the general considerations, the objectives, the policy guidance, and appendices. He also summarized the policy splits. With the draft policy papers at their disposal for reference, Council members would begin the discussion. Cutler recalled that ninety-five percent of the issues were presented orally since the draft policy papers had provided the substance for discussion.[98]

Points of dispute were debated with participants providing point-counterpoint stances. Because time was of the essence, Council members observed strict rules for concise exchanges of views, but no one was denied the right to speak. If a point of dispute was important to a member, then the Special Assistant for National Security would extend the time of debate (with the President's concurrence) in order to ensure no issue or perspective was ignored. Cutler saw intellectual added-value to people intensely debating an issue. Not only did the forum foster an environment for meaningful solutions, it also ensured a good idea—even if a minority viewpoint—was aired.[99] The President listened to and encouraged debate without commenting initially. He consciously resisted the temptation to intervene too early in discussions, cognizant of the fact that presidential opinions could unduly influence Council members and compromise candid debate.[100] Thus, Eisenhower's reliance on process and procedures ensured he heard all sides of an issue.

Council business was not pro forma for the NSC principals. Cutler's successor, Dillon Anderson recounted that the President made it clear to his principal advisors that they were his

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[98] Cutler recalled that introducing topics for discussion succinctly was the hardest part of his job because he needed to be the most informed and summarize the pertinent points in order to stimulate discussion quickly. He estimated that he devoted four hours per week in preparation to include final preparation the night before and a fifteen-minute brush up prior to the meeting. Cutler, "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," 116; Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 300, 301-302, 304; Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 129.

[99] Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 304-305; Cutler, "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," 133.

[100] Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 304-305; Cutler, "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," 117; Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 129.

intimate advisers and not a rubber stamp for the President.[101] Anderson observed that the Council's formulation of long-term foreign policy was designed to factor in the historical experience, to assess current threats and existing commitments, and to articulate national goals clearly. Underlying this organized effort was the ability of the United States to continue its stewardship of the international system.[102]

The Special Assistant for National Security and his deputy took notes during discussions to record the essential viewpoints. Once he sensed all points had been made, the Special Assistant for National Security would inform the Council that consensus had been reached and give a short summary statement. If all agreed that the issue was settled, particularly the President, he would have the statement recorded for the President's consideration and move onto the next agenda issue. According to Cutler and former Secretary of Defense Robert Lovett, Eisenhower's insistence on written records of meetings was unprecedented and invaluable. Although they detracted a bit from the intimacy of meetings, written records permitted participants to refer back to exactly what had been decided, making the Council and the government bureaucracy more responsive to the President's will.[103]

The vehicle for the President's decision was the Record of Action. Immediately after the meeting, the Special Assistant for National Security and his deputy or the NSC Executive Secretary prepared a three- to four-page draft Record of Action, summarizing the contents of the meeting and the resolution of each disputed issue. The Special Assistant for National Security would distribute the Record of Action to each Council member for review and comment before submis-

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[101] Anderson, 45.
[102] Ibid, 46.
[103] Cutler, "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," 122, 136-137; Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 305.

sion to the President. A few days following the NSC meeting (usually Saturday), the President finalized the Record of Action after reviewing departmental comments (if any) and making edits. Upon receipt of the finalized Record of Action, the Special Assistant for National Security produced the policy statement, comprising three to four concise paragraphs, which reflected Eisenhower's insistence that strategic policy provide "general direction, principle, and guidance, but should not be spelled out in detail."[104] As Special Assistant for National Security Gordon Gray explained,

> The record of action then became one which everybody knew, everybody understood and accepted because it was the presidential decision. And they knew what it meant; they were there; they heard the arguments for and against if there were any; and they knew the reasons for the President's decision.[105]

The NSC Executive Secretary would then distribute a memorandum of the President's policy statement to the departments and agencies, identifying the lead agency, and advising them that the OCB would clarify questions and assist in coordination.[106]

For routine and straightforward policy issues, Eisenhower typically made immediate decisions at NSC meetings, but for complex problems, he deferred a decision until he had thought through the implications. This was part of his strategic thinking process, mulling over the competing variables and the potential repercussions of policy action. Some issues required several NSC sessions before the President was satisfied they had been sufficiently vetted for final decision. During crises, as Greenstein noted, "Eisenhower would summon small groups of key policy

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[104] Gordon Gray noted the Record of Action was circulated for comment on accuracy within 48 hours and rarely came back with a Department reclama. Gordon Gray, Oral History Interview by Maclyn P. Burg, June 25, 1975, DDEL, 17-18; Eisenhower rejected guidance that had "too much detail" and "lack of clarity." Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 300.

[105] Of interest, Eisenhower had initially instructed Cutler that he wanted no minutes of the meetings because the discussions were "highly privileged. Nevertheless, Cutler brought in historian S. Everett Gleason, who along with Deputy Special Assistant took detailed meeting notes. Eisenhower never objected. Gray Interview, DDEL, 18-20.

[106] Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 299, 306; Cutler, "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," 117-118, 125, 137.

makers into his office (often immediately after an NSC meeting) for informal discussion during which he made operational decisions."[107]

While Cutler had recommended that core membership remain limited to eight members in his original report on the NSC, in practice, he later recorded that eleven participants were the norm, reiterating that a small circle was essential "to make possible genuine exchange of ideas and foster free discussion."[108] Henderson notes, "White House records show that an average of twenty or more individuals were [*sic*] allowed to attend Council meetings. All told, however, there were only about eleven or twelve actual participants in Council debate at a typical meeting."[109] Thus, differences of opinion and classified issues could be debated candidly and vigorously without the presence of outsiders. In accordance with the 1947 National Security Act and the 1949 amendment, the statutory members were the President, Vice President, Secretary of State, and Secretary of Defense. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Director of Central Intelligence were statutory advisers.[110] In order to underscore his belief that a vibrant economy was integral to national security, the President included the Secretary of the Treasury and the Director of the Budget. He also extended membership to the Director of Foreign Aid and

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[107] Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 133-134; See also Cutler, "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," 117; Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 306.

[108] Cutler, *Report of Recommendations on the National Security Council*, 5; Cutler, "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," 122; Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 298; According to Greenstein, the core group comprised a dozen people. Aside from the statute members, major agency chiefs with national security responsibilities (i.e., intelligence, foreign aid, and overseas information) would attend. Eisenhower also had a number of aides sit along the wall to take notes and assist in coordination of tasks. Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 125-126.

[109] Henderson, 82.

[110] The positions of Director for Mutual Security, Chairman of the National Security Resources Board, Chairman of the Munitions Board, and Chairman of the Research and Development Board were abolished by various reorganization plans and hence no longer statutory members. Congress, Senate, *National Security Act Of 1947*, 80 Cong., No. 235, 61 Stat. 496, July 26, 1947, accessed on the website of the U.S. Senate at http://intelligence.senate.gov/nsaact1947.pdf, 6 March 2012.

the Director of the United States Information Agency.[111] The Special Assistant for National Security, NSC Executive Secretary, and Deputy Executive Secretary participated in the meetings as staff.[112] Often overlooked yet critical, the Vice President provided executive continuity in the absence of the President and brought the added benefit of his background and position as the presiding officer in the Senate.[113] Others were invited as the President deemed necessary for discussion of particular issues, as well as invitations to Special and Ad Hoc committees and consultants. The Special Assistant for National Security had the unenviable task of managing the size of NSC meetings, which was difficult since everyone in government wanted to participate, and the President sometimes extended invitations to other officials.[114]

Tending the size of the Council was one of the Special Assistant for National Security's critical management tasks. More art than science, regulating the size of a particular NSC meeting came down to balancing efficacy with camaraderie. As Cutler recalled, "You have to have as many people at a meeting as the President, who is in charge, feels are necessary for the expression of the various points of view that he thinks should be expressed. You should not leave out a small voice with a real interest just because it is small."[115] Yet, Cutler maintained that an "invisi-

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[111] The Secretary of the Treasury was the President's chief advisor on the provision of national security funding, and the Director of the Bureau of the Budget provided the global view of national spending. Anderson, 43-44; Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 311; Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 447; Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 125-126.

[112] Seating Protocol was as follows: President at the head of the table with the Secretary of State on his right and the Secretary of Defense on his left. The Vice President sat opposite the President with the Secretary of the Treasury on his right and the Director of Foreign Aid on his left. The National Security Advisor sat to the right of the Secretary of the Treasury, followed on his right by the Executive Secretary and his Deputy. Other participants were seated either at the table or around the wall. Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 311-312.

[113] Anderson, 43; Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 311.

[114] In addition to the above participants, the Special Assistant for Foreign Economic Policy and the Director of the US Information Agency sat in as observers. The most frequent ad hoc participants were the Chairman (Admiral Elliott Strauss) for the Atomic Energy Commission, the Attorney General, the Federal Civil Defense Administrator, the Secretaries and Chiefs of Staff of the Military Services, the Ambassador to the United Nations, and Secretary of Commerce with respect to foreign trade issues. Cutler, "The Development of the National Security Council," 452.

[115] Cutler, "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," 124.

ble line" existed regarding the number of participants, which if exceeded stymied candid, intimate and productive discussion, and sometimes even the voicing of opinions.[116] While the topic of discussion determined the size of any one meeting, the President took note of the attendance size if he deemed it excessive. For example, Eisenhower once took Dillon Anderson to task for having more NSC participants than he expected, and Cutler recalled he could sense the President's displeasure whenever the Council began to look like a "town meeting."[117]

The Council's use of consultants and committees was discrete and issue-specific, such as for the revision of the Basic National Security Policy, the study of ballistic missile technology (Killian Committee), or examination of continental defense issues (Gaither Committee). Cutler regarded their use on occasion as beneficial and recalled using them on fifteen occasions for studies ranging from two days to six months. Cutler recognized the potential benefits of outside experts providing fresh perspectives and expertise with complex issues as well as increasing public understanding of national security problems through distinguished civilians.[118] To create diversity in the committees, he sought consultants with extensive and varied backgrounds, from different parts of the United States, from different occupations and without partisan agendas.[119] Nevertheless, Cutler did not think the regular use of outside consultants was practical. He deemed them too detached from the daily workings of the Administration and felt they would

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[116] Cutler, "The Development of the National Security Council," 453; Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 298-299; Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 17; Rothkopf, 78.

[117] Sander, 112; Cutler, "The Development of the National Security Council," 453.

[118] Cutler, "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," 133; James Lay reported consultants were used over twenty times. *Organizational History of the National Security Council*, U.S. Congress, Senate, 1960, 35.

[119] Cutler, "The Development of the National Security Council," 454; Cutler, "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," 130; Cutler, *Report of Recommendations on the National Security Council*, 6.

theorize rather than provide practical advice.[120] Eisenhower, on the other hand, did see value in civilian consultants because he wished to avoid an ivory tower mentality taking root in his Administration; naturally, the President's desires prevailed.[121]

Cutler weighed three factors when considering the use of outside consultants: the time it took Administration officials to instruct them on the task at hand and provide them with the necessary security clearances; the likely added value of outside expertise; and the amount of friction resulting from having outside experts intruding into the business of Administration officials. Cutler believed the final consideration was the most important factor, empathizing that Administration officials took leave from their civilian careers and felt resentment whenever "distinguished consultants" intruded on their work schedule. To mitigate frictions and help consultative committees adjust to their assignment, Cutler tasked representatives from the NSC Special Staff to assist.[122] For instance, the Special Projects Office under Frederick Morrow assisted committees with funding, office space, and advice, as well as assigning an executive secretary to them.[123]

James Lay recalled that consultants discussed their recommendations with the Planning Board prior to submission to the NSC. In the case of studies and specific recommendations, the Planning Board submitted them to the relevant department for comment prior to Council meetings. Often, the NSC and Planning Board dedicated months of study to these projects and normally expanded on consultant recommendations; hence the Administration viewed their contri-

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[120] From Cutler's perspective, the time involved getting consultants prepared and cleared for classified information distracted from his normal busy duties. Cutler, "The Development of the National Security Council," 454; Cutler, "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," 130; Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 297-298.

[121] Sander, 85, 97.

[122] Cutler, "The Development of the National Security Council," 454; Cutler, "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," 130, 132; Cutler, *Report of Recommendations on the National Security Council*, 14.

[123] Andrew J. Goodpaster, Eisenhower Administration Project, Interview One by Ed Edwin, April 25, 1967, (OH—37), DDEL, 41.

butions as highly valuable.[124]

Cutler made it clear to consultants that the President was under no obligation to adopt any of the recommendations or act on them immediately.[125] Some panels, like the Gaither Committee, were solely for exposition and information and were not invited to participate in Council deliberations. Because of a committee's size (sometimes up to forty people), Cutler would reserve them for one NSC session in order to extract information quickly for Council consideration.[126]

While not acted on, one of the most frequent recommendations to the Administration was to include a circle of outside "wise men" or "Nestors" into the Council permanently because they would be free of government responsibilities and would have time to add fresh perspectives on issues for the Council. Although the idea had its merits, Cutler feared their contributions would mostly be theoretical, even "ivory tower," because they were divorced from the practical day-to-day problems confronting government bureaucrats. He also believed that because they were brilliant thinkers and had time to ponder issues deeply, they might try to dominate Council meetings with ruminations. Moreover, keeping such a group up-to-date would be overly burdensome for the Planning Board, NSC Staff, and OCB. Cutler worried that inserting Nestors into the system would disrupt traditional access between the President and his Secretaries, creating a layer which would undermine the principal advisor's position, authority, and status, and making it much more difficult to attract high quality people to run the big departments.[127]

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[124] *Organizational History of the National Security Council*, U.S. Congress, Senate, 1960, 35.

[125]Cutler, "The Development of the National Security Council," 454; Cutler, "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," 130.

[126] Cutler, "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," 123.

[127] Cutler, "The Development of the National Security Council," 453; Cutler, "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," 128-129; John Prados, *Keeper of the Keys: A History of the National Security Council from Truman to Bush* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1991), 75.

The National Security Council Staff

In general terms, the permanent NSC Staff comprised 28 personnel and functioned as the secretariat for the NSC mechanism.[128] Illustrative of both Eisenhower and Cutler's value placed on talent, the permanent NSC Staff comprised high caliber people and provided continuity from one Administration NSC to another. Including the NSC Executive Secretary and the Deputy Executive Secretary, the NSC staff consisted of seventeen administrative and secretarial personnel as well as eleven "think people." According to Cutler, its primary task was to help the Special Assistant for National Security "cope with the inundating flood of papers that must be read, analyzed, dissected, digested, kept abreast of, and channeled." Cutler believed a permanent core staff of 12 to 14 competent, well-paid "think people" was ideal. He wanted to attract intelligent people as career NSC staffers with good salaries and interesting work.[129] Hence, limiting the size of the permanent NSC staff to around 14 personnel was prudent. A large NSC staff might tempt an Administration to assume tasks best left to the government bureaucracy or worse become an operational arm of the White House, become a layer between the President and principal advisors, and become more bureaucratic over time, sacrificing its flexibility and responsiveness.

As a consequence of changes made on 01 July 1957, the NSC Staff was configured into five units—the Office of the Executive Secretary, the Policy Coordinating Staff, the OCB Staff (addressed in the OCB section), the Internal Security Coordinating Staff, and the Research and Intelligence Liaison Staff.[130] The Executive Secretary supervised the entire NSC Staff overall.

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[128] John Prados wrote that in aggregate, the NSC Staff was composed of 37 people, which suggests only nine people were on loan from the departments. Prados, 74; Hammond, 355; Anderson, 44.

[129] Cutler, "The Development of the National Security Council," 455-456; Cutler, "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," 127-128.

[130] In his original report, Cutler recommended that the permanent NSC staff comprise five sections: 1) the Executive (six)—Executive Secretary, Deputy Executive Secretary, Administrative Officer, Administrative Assistant, secretary, chauffeur-messenger; 2) Internal Security (three)—Internal Security Officer, one Assistant, and one secre-

He provided direct supervision of staff functions for the Council as well as general guidance to the Administrative Office, which provided administrative, logistical, and personnel support to the NSC Staff. The Deputy Executive Secretary supervised the Policy Coordinating Staff which comprised two sections—the Policy Coordinating Special Staff and the Planning Board Secretariat—managing their "assignments, work load, and functioning." Consisting of eight exceptionally talented people, the Policy Coordinating Special Staff performed several essential functions: 1) "assist the Special Assistant and the Executive Secretary by preparing for them an independent analysis and review of each Planning Board paper at each stage in its preparation;" 2) prepare briefing notes of the draft policy papers for the Special Assistant during NSC meetings; 3) prepare staff work for the Special Assistant for National Security when he attended other interagency meetings; 4) study existing national security policies for gaps and consider the policy implications of unfolding developments; 5) represent the NSC Staff for ad hoc and Planning Board committees; and 6) help prepare "annual status reports on national security programs." The Planning Board Secretariat provided secretariat support to the Planning Board, and its director served as the chairman of the Planning Board Assistants. As the name implies, the Internal Security Coordinating Staff provided support for Internal Security, and its director provided "staff analysis, advice and assistance on behalf of the NSC Staff," regarding the foreign intelligence initiatives of federal agencies. Lastly, the Research and Intelligence Liaison Staff served as the "clearing house on research of national security problems being done inside and outside the Government."

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tary; 3) Registry (eight)—Assistant to the Executive Secretary, Administrative Assistant, six secretaries/clerks; 4) Board Assistants (three)—Coordinator of Board Assistants, Research Assistant, secretary; 5) Special Staff (eight)—three Staff members, two Staff Assistants, Administrative Assistant, two secretaries. The Special Assistant and his secretary were part of the White House Staff. Cutler, *Report of Recommendations on the National Security*, 15; The Board Assistants were called the Staff Assistants in the Truman NSC Staff, retaining the same duties. *Organizational History of the National Security Council*, U.S. Congress, Senate, 1960, 25-26.

In this capacity, this staff provided knowledge management of relevant national security issues for the Planning Board, the OCB, the Special Assistants for National Security Affairs and Security Operation Coordination, and applicable elements of the NSC Staff. The staff also assisted other agencies with research access, and it interfaced with intelligence and other relevant NSC agencies to gather intelligence and background information for the NSC Staff and the Special Assistants.[131]

The Operations Coordinating Board

The final component of the advisory mechanism was the Operations Coordinating Board (OCB), created by Executive Order 10483 in September 1953, and replacing the Truman Administration's defunct Psychological Strategy Board.[132] The creation of the Operations Coordinating Board was based on the President's Committee on International Information Activities' recommendation of an agency "for better dovetailing of the programs of the departments and agencies

[131] In the Special Assistant's absence, the Executive Officer or his deputy chaired the Planning Board and managed the Council meetings, as well as assisting him with other duties. The Director of Internal Security Coordinating Staff occasionally served as a Policy Coordinating Special Staff member for relevant issues. On 1 June 1960, the OCB Intelligence Liaison Staff (formerly called the Special Projects Staff) was absorbed into the new Research and Intelligence Liaison Staff. While part of the OCB, it principally provided the "President's representative and the Executive Officer current background information on foreign political, military, economic and social developments affecting the implementation of national security policies." It also provided staff support and special assignments for the President's representative. *Organizational History of the National Security Council*, U.S. Congress, Senate 1960, 27, 33, 46-49; Because of this intense workload, Cutler sought people with "intellectual breadth and acuity, general experience, capacity for work, selflessness, tact and ability to work with others, rather than any specialized knowledge in a particular field." His one exception was the desire to have one member with a scientific background. Cutler, *Report of Recommendations on the National Security*, 15.

[132] Executive Order no. 10483, *Establishing the Operations Coordinating Board,* 18 FR 5379, 1953 WL 6009 (September 2, 1953), accessed on the website of *The American Presidency Project* at http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=60573, 3 April 2008; The Psychological Strategy Board was originally based on the premise that a U.S. psychological strategy was needed to persuade the world of the rectitude of American policies and to counter Soviet propaganda. The main reason for its dissolution was that it was not needed. Most believed that U.S. policies and actions by their very virtue of action were self-evident and open to scrutiny by the free press, creating favorable world opinion. It was burdened by an overly large staff of 130, a lack of coordination or information sharing due to secrecy, and State Department resistance because it was not the lead agency. Prados, 50-56; Cutler, "The Development of the National Security Council," 448; Rothkopf, 69-70.

responsible for carrying out approved national security policies."[133] Throughout his two terms, Eisenhower pursued a number of organizational reforms of the OCB as he sought to optimize the coordination and implementation of foreign policy.

The OCB's mission was to assist and monitor the implementation of NSC policy decisions. While the NSC and OCB provided guidance and procedures for policy implementation, both left the detailed planning to the government bureaucracy.[134] Cutler explained that the function of the OCB was "to coordinate, 'ride herd on,' and report to the Council on the performance by the departments and agencies charged with responsibility to carry out national security policies approved by the President, and to be constantly mindful of such policies' and performances' psychological implications."[135] Because the President demanded broad but concise policy statements, the OCB's initial focus was devoted to clarifying questions by the implementing department.[136] The President imposed restrictions on the manner in which the OCB assisted in the coordination and expedition of policy implementation. It was not authorized to direct how policy was to be implemented or relieve the government bureaucracy of its responsibilities for policy implementation. Departments and agencies reserved the right to refuse advice or assistance. If an impasse developed, the matter was brought to the President for resolution. While the OCB was not authorized to initiate or change policy, it was "authorized to initiate new proposals for action

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[133] Mr. William H. Jackson chaired the committee, rendering its report on 30 June 1953. Aside from Jackson, the committee included Robert Cutler, Gordon Gray, Barklie McKee Henry, John C. Hughes, C.D. Jackson, Roger M. Kyes, and Sigurd Larmon. *Organizational History of the National Security Council*, U.S. Congress, Senate, 1960, 36, 36 n68; Cutler, "The Development of the National Security Council," 448; Greenstein observed it was "established to harness the major governmental bodies and personnel in an effective planning process that covered the entire policy cycle from agenda setting, though discussion and decision, to implementation." Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 132-133.

[134] Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 133.

[135] Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 311.

[136] Cutler, "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," 125.

within the framework of national security policies."[137]

The organization of the OCB was a three-tier interagency: the Board itself, the Board Assistants, and the 45 working groups. The Board was tasked with two primary responsibilities in support of departments charged with the "integrated implementation of national security policies." First, provide advice on the details of their implementation plan; conduct interdepartmental coordination to insure that all involved actors contributed to the implementation plan; ensure all phases and aspects of the plan were executed in a timely and coordinated manner; and superintend the subordinate tasks of the plan to ensure they were aligned with overarching national security goals and with international opinion the United States sought to foster. Second, initiate new national security ideas for Board consideration as a result of the policy implementation process; execute other advisory functions the President deemed necessary; and submit periodic reports to the Council in regards to the implementation of policies.[138] Special Assistant for National Security Dillon Anderson added that the OCB ensured new policies did not conflict with existing policies.[139]

Pursuant to continual organizational changes made throughout the Eisenhower Presidency, Board membership by 1960 comprised the Special Assistant for National Security as chairman, the Special Assistant to the President for Security Operations Coordination as the vice chairman, the Undersecretary of State, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, the Director of Central

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[137] Cutler, "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," 129; Cutler, "The Development of the National Security Council," 449.

[138] *Organizational History of the National Security Council*, U.S. Congress, Senate, 1960, 38; The charter of the OCB remained unchanged between the two Executive orders. Executive Order no. 10700, *Further Providing for the Operations Coordinating Board*, 22 FR 1111, 1957 WL 8006 (February 25, 1957), accessed on the website of *The American Presidency Project* at http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=60615, 2 March 2012; Executive Order no. 10483; Bromley K. Smith, *Organizational History of the National Security Council during the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations* (Reprint, Lexington, KY: University of Michigan Library, 25 June 2010), 13.

[139] Anderson, 45.

Intelligence, the Director of the U.S. Information Agency, and the Director of the International Cooperation Administration.[140] Additionally, the implementing department was directed to assign an Undersecretary-level representative "when the Board is dealing with subjects bearing directly upon the responsibilities of such head," enjoying the same status as the other board members. The Chairman of the Atomic Energy commission, the Undersecretary of the Treasury, and the Deputy Director of the Budget of the Bureau became "Standing Request" members in March 1957.[141]

The Board vice chairman performed essential functions for the OCB apparatus: determining the work schedules and agendas for OCB meetings in consultation with the OCB Executive Officer; working with chairman and OCB Executive Officer to manage the OCB operations; attending and furnishing NSC meetings with OCB progress reports; serving as the OCB advisor on the Planning Board as well as other relevant advisory bodies; maintaining close communications with the Special Assistant for National Security; and performing other duties which the President deemed necessary for the coordination of security operations. Later in his second term, Eisen-

[140] Eisenhower made several changes in OCB membership during his second term, with Executive Order 10700 superseding Executive Order 10483, in his quest to make the OCB more effective. Originally, the Undersecretary of State was the designated chairman, and the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs attended on OCB meetings as vice chairman. The President's representative was the Special Assistant for Cold War Planning. With Executive Order 10700, the President now designated the chairman and vice chairman. Accordingly the Undersecretary of State remained as chairman, the newly established Special Assistant to the President for Security Operations Coordination served as vice chairman (and as the primary Presidential representative), and the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs continued as the second Presidential representative on the Board. Finally, on 13 January 1960, the President designated his Special Assistant for National Security Affairs as the chairman. U.S. Congress, Senate, 1960, 39, 41-42; Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Letter to Gordon Gray Designating Him Chairman of the Operations Coordinating Board." (January 13, 1960) accessed on the website of *The American Presidency Project* at http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=12142, 2 March 2012.

[141] Over time, other changes in Board membership occurred. The Director of the Foreign Operations Administration was dropped after the agency was abolished. The Director of the U.S. Information Agency was raised from observer to member by Executive Order 10598 on 28 February 1955. And the Director of the International Cooperation Administration was also added. In accordance with Executive Order 10700, Eisenhower's representatives were the Special Assistant for Cold War Planning and the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs. The presence of both representatives reflected the President's desire for greater follow-up on policy implementation. Executive Order no. 10700; Executive Order no. 10483; *Organizational History of the National Security Council*, U.S. Congress, Senate, 1960, 38, 38 n. 72, 39-40.

hower underscored two principal duties for the vice chairman: initiation of new proposals for OCB consideration in accordance with NSC policy parameters and review of OCB actions to ensure they had a positive effect on international opinion.[142]

The Board Assistants provided staff support for their respective Board members, assisting with "intradepartmental and interdepartmental cooperation on subjects dealt with by the Board and aid[ing] their agency's working group members in meeting OCB requirements." Chaired by the OCB Executive Officer, the weekly Board Assistants meeting reviewed papers (usually prepared by the working groups) for Board consideration. The working groups were either standing or ad hoc, comprising agency representatives (i.e., desk officers) detailed with the implementation of a tasked policy and a representative from the OCB staff. The working groups served two functions: "a regular mechanism at the working level for consulting and for coordinating actions to implement national security policies or action on other matters of mutual concern, . . . reports (periodic or special) and operations plans for consideration by the Board."[143]

The staffs supporting the OCB, both internally and within the federal government, were fairly large, reflecting the amount of work needed to assist implementation. According to John Prados, the OCB Staff consisted of 40 personnel, many of whom were detailed from the government bureaucracy. Additionally, within the government bureaucracy, 92 personnel in aggregate worked on OCB issues. In an attempt to integrate the efforts of the NSC and OCB further, Eisenhower assimilated the OCB Staff into the NSC staff on 01 July 1957, thereby establishing "a closer relation between the formulation and the carrying out of security policies."[144]

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[142] *Organizational History of the National Security Council*, U.S. Congress, Senate, 1960, 41-42, 42 n. 83.

[143] Ibid, 38.

[144] Citing a December 1958 survey, Prados wrote that 54 professionals and 38 secretarial staff were dedicated to OCB issues: the Office of the Secretary of Defense—nine professional and seven secretarial; Joint Chiefs of Staff—

The OCB Staff was organized into four units: the Office of the Executive Officer and Deputy Executive Officer, the OCB Secretariat, the Area Staff, and the Information, Education, and Special Projects Staff. Aside from chairing the Board Assistants, the Executive Officer served as the primary staff officer for the Board, rendering staff papers, providing advice to the OCB Board and agencies engaged in OCB business, and alerting the Board of matters which he judged important. The OCB Secretariat provided secretariat support to the Board and Board Assistants as well as administrative support to the OCB Staff, liaised with the NSC Staff, and performed functions not conducted by the working groups. The Area Staff supplied members for the working groups, applying area expertise to specific national security policies. The Information, Education, and Special Projects Staff was a functional staff providing the Board with input on "information, communications, education, cultural and ideological fields."[145]

Each Wednesday at 1:00 pm, Board members held an informal working lunch before the formal meeting. Although the Executive Officer attended all the luncheon meetings, no agenda was set nor were minutes recorded. Instead, members conversed with one another on "important matters of mutual concern within the wide range of the Board's interests." During these discus-

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six professional and four secretarial; Department of State—six professional and five secretarial; CIA—four professional and five secretarial; and the White House Staff Secretariat assigned five full-time staffers. Additionally, 42 OCB working groups required even more officials. Prados, 74-75; The quotation is from a White House Press Release, dated 25 February 1957 and cited in *Organizational History of the National Security Council*, U.S. Congress, Senate, 1960, 41, 46-47; Bromley Smith recorded that the OCB staff consisted of around 50 people. Bromley Smith, 13.

[145] The OCB Staff experienced numerous organizational changes as the President began to stress the follow-up features of policy implementation. The Executive Officer oversaw the organization of staff products for the Board and elicited the assistance of outside agencies for the staffing of papers when necessary. He selected the staff personnel and supervised the work of the working groups. The OCB Secretariat was the successor to the Office of the Executive Assistant. The Area Staff was originally called the Secretariat, providing executive secretaries to the working groups for drafting papers and staff support for the Executive Officer in their areas of expertise. Through a 1954 reorganization of the OCB Staff the Communications Staff was formed, later renamed the Media Program Staff, then the Information and Education Projects Staff, and finally in 1957, the Information, Education, and Special Projects Staff. *Organizational History of the National Security Council*, U.S. Congress, Senate, 1960, 40-41, 47-48.

sions, agreements could be concluded, referred to a working group for further study, or directed the issue to the appropriate agencies. The Executive Officer recorded the Board conclusions and shared them with the appropriate agencies.[146]

From 2:15 to 5:15 pm, the formal portion of the Board meeting convened for the purpose of "review[ing] papers dealing with security policy performance, 'country plans' to carry out security policies in detail, and performance reports to the National Security Council." Working group documents were presented by the working group chairman and frequently an assistant secretary from the same department. Unlike the Council, no directives emanated from the OCB Board; rather, members sought agreement on reconciling differences on documents and on the actions to be taken. If differences could not be reconciled, the document was submitted to the appropriate department leadership, or failing that, to the NSC for Presidential resolution.[147] The process of developing working group operations plans served "to identify, clarify and resolve differences of policy interpretation, operating responsibility, or required actions." It also exposed impediments to implementation and allowed for more grounded guidance to tasked departments. Of greater import, planning drafts were distributed to diplomatic missions abroad for comment. The OCB plan was then issued via the appropriate departments to the respective Chiefs of Mission (normally ambassadors) and unified commands (currently called combatant commands). Plans were living documents in that they were reviewed as progress reports when necessary.[148]

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[146] Ibid, 42-43.

[147] Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 313; Cutler; "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," 112; Working group documents consisted of operations plans (i.e., foreign countries, regions, or functional areas), progress reports for the NSC, appraisals of policies in terms of soundness and assessments of their implementation, OCB activity reports, working group special reports as requested by the OCB or NSC for specific information, and oral reports for background papers. *Organizational History of the National Security Council*, U.S. Congress, Senate, 1960, 43.

[148] Operations plans contained two sections: objective and major policy directives, and operation guidance. Similar to Planning Board draft Policy Papers, splits were highlighted for Board consideration. Annexes included

Through his interaction with the OCB, Robert Cutler gained a profound appreciation of its activities. While recognizing the mosaic of OCB "personalities, capacities, and [political] philosophies" affected policy guidance for implementation, this was true of any organization. He contended that the OCB set the conditions for effective policy implementation by encouraging the most favorable arrangement of department plans to carry out an approved security policy, so as to make the ultimate execution of that policy as effective a step as the United States can take in the area.[149]

Eisenhower thought there was always room for improvement in the NSC mechanism though, which accounted for the continual organizational reforms, especially in the OCB. As he later wrote: "No specific organization is sacrosanct in its details; it is established and used by humans and it can be changed by them. Indeed, at times this may be necessary because of changing conditions or even by the entry of a new personality." However, in a veiled reference to the Kennedy Administration, Eisenhower noted, "If the principal assistants to the Executive are strong, understanding, and devoted individuals of integrity, they can make even a jerry-built organization function, at least haltingly. The ideal combination, of course, is to have capable personnel and a logical system."[150]

Elmer Staats, a veteran of Truman's Psychological Strategy Board (PSB) and the executive officer of the OCB felt it ran "pretty well," recalling that the OCB functioned best when business was conducted informally. The informal luncheons became open forums, encouraging

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agreements or arrangements between the United States and the subject country, implementation programs statements from the tasked agency, U.S. financial assistance and programs provided to the country, and "an estimate of Sino-Soviet activities and intentions with respect to that country." *Organizational History of the National Security Council*, U.S. Congress, Senate, 1960, 44.

[149] Cutler, "The Development of the National Security Council," 449.

[150] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 631.

open discussion on any topics of concern. These luncheons also fostered social interaction, which improved communication and cooperation through friendships.[151] Gordon Gray, later chaired the OCB and thought the informal luncheons were "vital" though "less tangible" in terms of effectiveness, informing the President that

> the Board has facilitated smoother teamwork among members of your Administration who have worked together in the Board [OCB] and under its auspices. More over, the easy availability of the Board for interdepartmental consultation and the systematic scrutiny by the Board of overseas planning and results constitute strong deterrents to uncoordinated actions or unnecessary interdepartmental conflicts.[152]

To outsiders, the OCB had a pejorative reputation as a paper mill.[153] On the other hand, Staats contended that "papers were really less significant than the fact that you had people who met and who had to discuss these things and had to exchange views, exchange ideas. That was the real worth of the thing."[154]

Although Eisenhower believed the OCB functioned well, in hindsight, he felt it would have been more effective under "a highly competent and trusted official with a small staff of his own, rather than by a committee whose members had to handle the task on a part-time basis." Eisenhower envisioned someone of authority such as a Deputy Chairman of the National Security Council, implying a rank on par with the Secretaries, but with his authority confined to ensuring the departments and agencies implemented presidential policy decisions. "In short, he could help insure that the President's policies were scrupulously observed and that the actions of one department would not negate those of another."[155] Gordon Gray in slight contrast thought the

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[151] "Pretty well" comment cited in Sander, 139; Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 263, n. 39.

[152] Sander, 149.

[153] Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 263, n. 39; Recalling his chairmanship of the OCB, Gordon Gray also thought the OCB had grown too large and churned out too many papers, though the informal luncheons provided invaluable service. Sander, 149.

[154] Cited in Sander, 132.

[155] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 634-635.

Special Assistant for National Security serving as the chairman of the OCB would insure it remained "president-oriented rather than state department oriented."[156] McGeorge Bundy later assessed that the main weakness of the OCB was an issue of authority. None of the eight members had authority over the rest, so unanimity became problematic. Particularly acute, in his view, was the problem of harmonizing the efforts of the lower echelons within the departments.[157] Notwithstanding these imperfections, the OCB did foster cooperation, assist coordination, and clarify issues without necessitating constant NSC attention.

Thus, the OCB was not simply an oversight committee. It served as a conduit between the Presidency and the government bureaucracy to clarify policy statements and provide the President with feedback from the practitioners. It also served as a clearing house for new policy ideas from the government bureaucracy for the Planning Board to study. Perhaps of greater significance for subsequent Administrations frustrated by bureaucratic intransigence or resistance to White House policies, the OCB served to engage government bureaucrats rather than issuing edicts from the President. It follows that the government bureaucracy, given the opportunity to contribute to high policy, was more apt to comply rather than resist policy decisions.

Second Term Changes

Illustrative of the NSC as a learning organization (and often overlooked), Eisenhower made several changes to NSC practices during his second term. He determined that the Administration had established a solid base for policies and strategy for the departments to conduct

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[156] Sander, 149.

[157] McGeorge Bundy, "The National Security Council in the 1960's," in *The National Security Council: Jackson Subcommittee Papers on Policy-Making at the Presidential Level*, ed. Senator Henry M. Jackson (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, 1965), 277.

business. He thus directed that the Council devote more time to discussing issues rather than churning out policies. In view of the frenetic pace and high pressure which characterized the production of draft policy papers, Council deliberations, and OCB support activities, Eisenhower wanted to lighten the load in order for NSC personnel and key advisers to devote greater attention to contemplation.[158] Eisenhower apparently wanted his subordinates to set aside more time for reflection on security challenges and policy solutions. As Eisenhower well understood, time for contemplation was integral to strategic thinking.

The change created a shift in focus of the Council from production of policy *documents* to greater debate of policy *issues* (Cutler's emphasis). The Planning Board produced shorter discussion papers addressing a few issues at a time, collated into a larger draft policy paper, for the Council. Cutler remarked that the Planning Board was able to accelerate production time of these papers but not a reduction in the number of "splits."[159] The shift to several, smaller discussion papers was Eisenhower's attempt to have time-sensitive issues reach the Council faster and reflect the current pulse of international events.[160] Specifically, discussion papers focused on reevaluating the Basic National Security Policy and subordinate security policies. Accordingly, greater attention was given to emerging issues, such as burgeoning nuclear and ballistic missile capabilities in the United States and the Soviet Union, the proliferation of new states as a result of decolonization, and the exploration of space. Thus, the Council devoted greater attention to discussing current and future policy issues, but not for decision. In a similar vein, greater use of consultants and policy papers were devoted to exploring policy alternatives without recommendations. Lastly, long-range studies, looking out five to ten years, were designed to assist in the

[158] Cutler, "The Development of the National Security Council," 445.
[159] Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 348.
[160] Cutler, "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," 113.

development of future policies.[161]

Another innovative idea involved fostering a greater understanding of the military establishment among NSC, Planning Board, and OCB members. Eisenhower directed that Administration officials make formal visits to military installations and ships in order to gain a greater appreciation of military capabilities and concerns. Eisenhower believed these visits would expand the horizons of his subordinates, offering them a firmer grounding on practical matters as opposed to theoretical or unrealistic concepts.[162]

As a sign that he wanted to shape foreign affairs more effectively, Eisenhower sought more comprehensive preparations for international conferences and directed the establishment of a special committee, chaired by the Special Assistant for National Security, to prepare position papers ahead of these important conferences. Heretofore, the State Department prepared position papers without consulting other agencies.[163]

Robert Cutler observed that the NSC mechanism continued to evolve as a learning organization, continuing to seek improvements in organization, procedures, and processes. He regarded the shift from the formulation of policy to a greater emphasis on discussing expansive policy issues as a positive development.[164]

Adjunct Offices Complementing the NSC Mechanism

White House Cabinet

The White House Cabinet was structured differently than the NSC, focusing on domestic

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[161] *Organizational History of the National Security Council*, U.S. Congress, Senate, 1960, 31.
[162] Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 348.
[163] Ibid, 351.
[164] Cutler, "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," 136.

issues, though not insulated from foreign policy issues.[165] White House Chief of Staff Sherman Adams was not involved in policy-making but served only as a coordinator for the President's domestic policies.[166] As Adams recalled, "Eisenhower simply expected me to manage a staff that would boil down, simplify and expedite the urgent business that had to be brought to his personal attention and to keep as much work of secondary importance as possible off his desk."[167]

The Cabinet comprised the Department Secretaries as well as special assistants and directors of key government agencies which the President intended for Cabinet rank.[168] In view of the many policy issues cutting across domestic and foreign affairs issues, Cabinet officials, the White House Chief of Staff, the Special Assistant for National Security and select NSC officials attended both the weekly Cabinet and NSC meetings.[169] Eisenhower averaged 34 cabinet meet-

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[165] Eisenhower's post-election meeting aboard the USS Helena focused on how he wanted to organize the Executive Office of the President, the importance of Cabinet officers sharing their findings on major trips, and the importance of ensuring cross-cutting issues from Cabinet meetings were coordinated and in harmony. He wanted to "make sure everybody was informed on the workings of the administration, so that no matter if you were before Congress, making a speech, or anywhere, we would not be working at opposite ends of the spectrum." He thought the Cabinet meetings were more relaxed than NSC meetings except when discussing the budget, which was always a contentious undertaking. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Dulles Oral History Interview: Princeton University, by Philip A. Crowl, 28 July, 1964 (OH-14), DDEL, 13-14.

[166] Adams official title was Special Assistant to the President, but in view of all the special assistants in the Eisenhower Administration, this study uses the term White House Chief of Staff as the position later became known. Eisenhower used Sherman Adams as a deputy, much as he used Bedell Smith as his chief of staff in World War II. Accordingly, various organizational devices kept staff aides (to include Adams) aligned with the President's policies. He intentionally left Adams' roles and responsibilities undefined, letting them evolve over time as he deemed fit. Like Bedell Smith, Sherman Adams performed the unpleasant tasks (e.g., limiting access to the President, firing people, reprimanding subordinates, keeping people in line, etc.), allowing the President to maintain his congenial, relaxed demeanor. *Greenstein, The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 138-139.

[167] Adams, *Firsthand Report*, 50; According to Sander, Adams' duties included "appointments, schedules, patronage, personnel, press, speechwriting, Cabinet liaison, and congressional relations. It was his task to make sure that the policy advice the President was sent from many sources was properly staffed out before it reached the Oval Office and that there were no end runs. Once Eisenhower made a decision, it was Adams's job to make sure that it was accurately communicated back down the line." Sander, 13-14.

[168] The notable members were the Attorney General, Secretary of the Treasury, Vice President, Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, Secretary of Commerce, Secretary of the Interior, Secretary of Agriculture, Secretary of Labor, Ambassador to the UN, Director of Defense Mobilization, Budget Director, Director of Mutual Security, Special Assistant for Cold War Psychology Planning, Postmaster General, and the White House Chief of Staff. Adams, *Firsthand Report*, 61-62.

[169] Special Assistant Gordon Gray recalled that he attended only those Cabinet meetings when there was an agenda issue which might be pertinent to the NSC. Gray Interview, DDEL, 16; Sander, 22; An interesting example

ings per year (ten within his first 80 days), signaling his intent to make the Cabinet a valuable forum for his principal advisors.[170] Of course, the Cabinet was not a substitute for the NSC. As Eisenhower later recalled, the work of the NSC was "more exact" than the Cabinet meetings: "We took up studies prepared by the Planning Board, item by item, and listened to them, discussed, argued, and fought, because they always had differences, you know, and it was very interesting, very interesting."[171]

Eisenhower was the first president to institute the White House Chief of Staff (Sherman Adams and later Jerry Persons) and the Cabinet Secretary (Maxwell Rabb), who headed the Cabinet Secretary Office.[172] According to Greenstein, "He [Eisenhower] evolved more systematic formal machinery than that used in any other presidency to shape cabinet agendas, to insure that the participants had advance briefings, and to record and implement the decisions he announced in the meetings."[173] Departments were responsible for preparing a Cabinet Paper (with a one-page Cabinet Brief coversheet), which the Cabinet Secretary Office reproduced and distributed along with the Cabinet Agenda at least two days prior to Cabinet meetings. Immediately follow-

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of the cross-cutting features of policy, Foster Dulles gave an exhaustive talk in the June 1953 Cabinet meeting to the President, the Secretaries, agency directors, and special assistants on "his conception of the basic facts of America's responsibilities as a world leader and the international predicament in general." He explained the basics of U.S. foreign policy, the basis for foreign military assistance and overseas basing, the necessity of NATO and Japan, and the need for access to strategic resources. At the conclusion, Eisenhower spoke: "The basic contention of the Communists is that man long ago proved himself incapable of ruling himself . . . so they establish dictatorships to make man do what he himself has failed to do. Well, we don't believe that. But, nevertheless, that is the real question confronting us. Can man govern himself? It's just that simple. Can man operate by co-operation? We have got to get our struggle understood by the whole world—what we are fighting for—for this is the struggle of man to rule himself." Cited in Adams, *Firsthand Report*, 102-104.

[170]Sander, 24-25.

[171] Eisenhower Interview (OH-14), DDEL, 14.

[172] Carter L. Burgess staffed the creation of the Cabinet Secretary Office and Cabinet Secretary in a number of memoranda from July to October 1953: Cabinet Secretariat, July 8, 1953, Cabinet Secretariat and White House Staff Work, July 6, 1953, The Cabinet, August 14, 1953, Cabinet Secretariat, August 25, 1953, Notes for the President Staff Secretary Operation White House Staff Meeting, and Cabinet Operations, September 22, 1953; staff correspondence and procedures were formalized in the booklet *Staff Work for the President and the Executive Branch*, August 20, 1954. Organization, White House Office, Office of the Staff Secretary: Records, 1952-61, White House Subseries, Box 4, Organization, (2) and (3), DDEL.

[173] Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 113.

ing a Cabinet meeting, the Department executive secretaries would meet to review the Cabinet discussions and address the implementation of proposals. Like the NSC Record of Action, the Cabinet Secretary prepared a Cabinet Action Summary reflecting the President's decisions and his rationale behind the decision. The Cabinet Secretary provided the necessary guidance for departmental action and provided brief departmental Progress Reports for the President.[174]

Eisenhower used the Cabinet as an advisory body and sounding board for his thoughts, as well as the "use of consultation as a means of exercising leadership."[175] The President also used the Cabinet to education its members on critical issues, such as the situation in Berlin.[176] Its value derived from the debate and discussions which fostered teamwork as well as stimulating the President's thought process. Though the President kept an open-mind regarding his decisions, the Cabinet meetings were mostly devoted to discussing ways to implement his decisions. Some meetings were devoted to broad issues, while "certain issues were too politically sensitive, or divisive, or in need of tactical day-by-day management to be suitable for cabinet discussion."[177]

To supplement the formal organizations, Eisenhower created a number of special assistants, as Sherman Adams recorded, "to help him keep in closest touch with the economic and military problems of foreign policy . . . to work directly under the White House and side by side with the State Department." Because of their ad hoc nature and minimal staffing, these special assistants were able to provide the President with information and recommendations from a fresh perspective quickly.[178]

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[174] *Staff Work for the President and the Executive Branch*, 16-19.
[175] Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 115.
[176] Henderson, 46-47.
[177] Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 114-115; See also Adams, *Firsthand Report*, 61-62; Sander, 24-25.
[178] The special assistants were as follows: C.D. Jackson for cold war psychology planning; Harold Stassen for mutual security, forging operations and disarmament; Clarence Randall and Joseph Dodge for foreign economic

White House Staff Secretariat

In response to long-standing organizational problems which had hindered efficient White House staff operations, the Eisenhower Administration created the Office of Staff Secretary, which political scientist Phillip Henderson described as "small, flexible, and low-profile . . . [serving] as a nerve center of information available to the President and his top aides."[179] Eisenhower selected Brigadier General Paul T. Carroll and then Colonel Andrew J. Goodpaster after Carroll's death in 1954 as the Staff Secretary, tasking him to review all correspondence of a top-secret nature and below flowing into the Oval Office.[180] By inference, the Staff Secretariat mandate was to optimize the activities of the various "associates and assistants" which comprised the Executive Office of the President, harmonizing their operations as a corporate body.[181]

An effective innovation featured in the pamphlet *Staff Work for the President and the Executive Branch* for managing the vast amounts of correspondence flowing to the President was the Covering Brief—a one-page, executive summary attached to correspondence. In coordination with all government agencies, the Covering Brief permitted the President to absorb essential information quickly with a standardized format providing: 1) "Authorized signature," 2) "Exactly

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policy; and Walter George and James Richards for foreign affairs. Since these appointments required Foster Dulles' imprimatur and continued support, the effectiveness of the special assistants was mixed. Whereas Jackson got along well with Dulles, his successor, Nelson Rockefeller did not, nor did Stassen. Adams wrote that Dulles jealously guarded his exclusive position on foreign affairs. Adams, *Firsthand Report*, 92-93.

[179] Henderson, 26; Eisenhower was already predisposed by the PACGO and the Hoover Commission's proposal of a staff secretariat, which was submitted to the President in January 1953. Sander, 20.

[180] Goodpaster recalled that on two occasions, the President called attention to staff activities working at cross purposes, remarking "I look to my staff to keep such things straightened out. I should not have to be my own sergeant major," meaning the Chief Executive should not be the one to closely supervise the housekeeping activities of the staff. This mandate became the raison d'être of the Staff Secretary, who "kept the papers in coordination and kept track of who was doing what, to see that they would stay in some harmony and be responsive and within the scope of policy decisions that he [the President] had made." In essence, the Staff Secretary managed all staff operations. Goodpaster Interview (OH—37), DDEL, 29-30.

[181] Sander, 21; Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 11; Goodpaster Interview (OH—37), DDEL, 28-29; John S. D. Eisenhower, *Strictly Personal* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, INC., 1974), 190-191.

what was is being asked," 3) "Relevant attachments referred to," 4) "Necessary background," 5) "Reasoning," 6) "What is being presented," 7) "What will be done next—who will follow up—and how," 8) "Specific recommendation," 9) "Lateral coordination," and 10) "Space for White House notations."[182] As a method for separating important from extraneous information, the Staff Secretariat requested paper submissions meet the test of necessity, responsiveness, actionability, timeliness, consistency, and implementation.[183]

In addition to his duties as Staff Secretary, Goodpaster served as the White House Military Operations and Policy officer, closely interacting with security elements in the Defense Department, State Department, the CIA, and other relevant organizations.[184] In this capacity, Goodpaster received daily intelligence reports and weekly intelligence analyses from the intelligence elements, primarily the CIA and State Department. Accordingly, he gave the President a daily intelligence briefing, which the Special Assistant for National Security and White House Chief of Staff among others invariably attended.[185] In regards to specific intelligence issues which might have an impact of broad policy issues, Goodpaster spoke with the Special Assistant for National Security, who in turn would confer with the President on possible proposals for NSC consideration.[186]

Goodpaster functioned as the President's personal liaison to the Pentagon, as well as to theater commanders to convey presidential messages and to garner their views on national secu-

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[182] The booklet also featured the Route Slip to speed up coordination, the Suspense List to track every major action tasked, and the Lateral Coordination directive to indicate minimum coordination required with other agencies. *Staff Work for the President and the Executive Branch*, 11-12; Henderson, 26; Sander wrote that the summary also included the probable effects of implemented recommendations. Sander 22-23.

[183] Sander 23.

[184] Goodpaster Interview (OH—37), DDEL, 24.

[185] Ibid, 51-52; John Eisenhower assumed this duty in late 1958. John Eisenhower, *Strictly Personal*, 205; James Lay noted that the daily briefing included updates on current foreign politico-military developments. *Organizational History of the National Security Council*, U.S. Congress, Senate, 1960, 26 n. 50; Sander, 22.

[186] Goodpaster Interview (OH—37), DDEL, 53-54.

rity challenges. Because Goodpaster served as a hybrid secretary and national security confidant, Eisenhower ensured that Goodpaster "was always in the Oval Office when decisions were being made and orders given so that there would be an official record of presidential actions."[187] Goodpaster's duties did not end there. For national security decisions resulting from the President's inner circle meetings, Goodpaster would personally verify that all elements of that decision "were done, expeditiously, and if new problems were to arise, I would stay current on that, bring them back to him. He might then have another meeting to resolve various points." He referred to this as "the follow-up system," which was similar to OCB operations.[188]

Sherman Adams recalled that the Staff Secretary became absolutely essential to the President: "The post is one of the most sensitive in government, requiring the ability to get along with busy executives working under high tension and the judgment to know when gently to apply the needle."[189] It is noteworthy that Eisenhower had his son, Major John Eisenhower, assigned as Goodpaster's deputy to serve in a similar capacity.[190] Greenstein noted that Goodpaster's duties paralleled the Special Assistant for National Security in that he served to ensure all views were presented to the President and that his decisions were implemented. In that sense, he was a microcosm of the Planning Board and the OCB.[191] Goodpaster recollected that both of his duties

> had some overlap, and in fact had to be thought of together. I never tried to sort them out completely in my own mind. As staff secretary, I was responsible to the President for the

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[187] Sander, 21- 22. John Eisenhower, *Strictly Personal*, 192.

[188] Goodpaster Interview (OH—37), DDEL, 35.

[189] Adams, *Firsthand Report*, 53.

[190] Evidently, it appeared that John Eisenhower intentionally served as someone for the President to vent his anger on and so was the chosen deliverer of bad news to his father. John Eisenhower, *Strictly Personal*, 207; Evan Thomas, *Ike's Bluff: President Eisenhower's Secret Battle to Save the World* (New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 2012), 304, 372-373.

[191] Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 134; Goodpaster "played the role of fixer, envoy, and confidant and managed to do so without inflaming potential rivalries with other members of the team." Rothkopf, 68.

> administration and management aspects of all White House activity. I didn't do that personally. There's an excellent permanent staff there, so that simply meant that I supervised them in such things as the operation of the telephone, the operation of the mail room, the messenger system, the handling of the funds, the budgeting for both the White House and the White House staff, seeing that enough inspection was carried out to be sure that no mis-use of funds or equipment or facilities was occurring, parking spaces, the allocation of space, who got what office, what distance from the president and so on. That was one whole area that I took over to supervise.[192]

The key distinction between the Special Assistant for National Security and the Staff Secretary was that whereas the former focused on long term or strategic issues, Goodpaster monitored more immediate security issues requiring Presidential attention.[193]

The Executive Branch Liaison Office and the Congressional Liaison Office

Two other complementary bodies, which contributed to the NSC advisory system, were the Executive Branch Liaison Office and the Congressional Liaison Office.[194] The purpose of the Executive Branch Liaison Office was to provide White House-approved messages to Eisenhower advocates for wider dissemination.[195] According to Phillip Henderson, the office

> coordinated all speeches by anyone considered to have a policy-making role in the administration. The liaison office disseminated one-page "fact sheets" twice a week to the President, members of the Cabinet, and the White House staff. The fact sheets contained succinct summaries of controversial issues and highlights of administration objectives

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[192] Goodpaster Interview (OH—37), DDEL, 37.

[193] Bromley K. Smith, 43; John Eisenhower, *Strictly Personal*, 204-205; Gray recalled that Goodpaster and he "shared National Security responsibilities in a very happy way." The difference in duties was that Gray was "concerned with longer range policy planning, foreign policy, [and] foreign military policy." Goodpaster on the other hand served as the President's "spot man," serving as a liaison of sorts with the military and intelligence agencies. Hence, they kept each other informed on overlapping responsibilities on a daily basis. Gray Interview, DDEL, 7-8.

[194] According to Walcott and Hult, its proper name was the Office of Congressional Relations (OCR). Its objectives included "sell[ing] the President's program [and] . . . keep[ing] the Congress from doing something different [to the] care and feeding of members, plus also the blunting, thwarting, discouraging harmful congressional activities—spiteful investigations, spiteful speeches, spiteful actions, excessive partisanship." Charles E. Walcott and Karen M. Hult, *Governing the White House: From Hoover through LBJ* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1995), 38.

[195] The office had the following tasks: "issuing weekly 'fact papers' to be used in speeches by agency and department officials, serving as liaison with the Republican National Committee (RNC), and coordinating executive branch speakers." Ibid, 66.

> and accomplishments. The liaison office also coordinated radio and television appearances for administration spokespersons and kept a cross-indexed file of all the President's public speeches and statements. One of the objectives of the liaison officer was to avoid inaccurate or conflicting statements by administration spokespersons.[196]

Press conferences were handled in the same attention to detail. On Wednesdays at 10:00 am, Eisenhower would "go over with a fine-tooth comb the subjects that were likely to come up in the press conference" with Press Secretary James C. Hagerty, Sherman Adams, and select staffers. Then at 10:30 am sharp, the President, accompanied by the Press Secretary and his assistant, would hold the press conference.[197] This exceedingly effective office helped Administration officials stay on message, increased transparency of the Presidency, and mitigated confusion with the public regarding U.S. policies.

Eisenhower created the Congressional Liaison Office with Major General Jerry Persons as its chief to serve as the conduit for his legislative programs and "to keep abreast of recent developments in Congress." With Persons and his staff as well as Sherman Adams in attendance, Eisenhower chaired the congressional leadership meetings every Tuesday in the White House for this purpose. Henderson noted that "the congressional liaison staff met at least once a day to discuss strategy. On all major legislation, members of the staff made personal contact with legislators to inform them of the President's position and provide information in support of the administration's stand." Normally reserved for key Republican congressional leaders, the weekly meetings did include Democratic representatives on occasion whenever the President wanted to

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[196] Henderson, 27.

[197] Adams, *Firsthand Report*, 74; Televised news conferences were an innovation of the Eisenhower Administration. Hagerty was a powerful figure in the White House with "direct access to the President, and spurred the modern development of the White House Press Secretary. He formalized the "process of briefing the president before press conferences. This routine, performed on average every two weeks, included a breakfast meeting with top White House aides and cabinet members, regular conferences between Hagerty and other top advisers, and a meeting among Hagerty, Eisenhower, and others at which the president was thoroughly prepared." Walcott and Hult, 57-58.

broaden support for important foreign or defense policy matters, particularly during crises. These meetings not only served as a means of garnering congressional support for presidential proposals, they also permitted legislators to interact constructively with the Executive Office of the President.[198]

From his years of working in Washington D.C., Eisenhower understood that congressional inertia inhibited swift execution of presidential initiatives and policies. Goodpaster recalled that he and his fellow staffers with military experience were surprised by how slow the government bureaucracy responded to "the pressure and direction from the President." From his experience as MacArthur's executive officer and as Army Chief of Staff, Eisenhower was familiar with congressional inertia. Accordingly, Eisenhower insisted that thorough staff preparation of policy initiatives and persistent pressure on legislators increased the chances of getting measures through Congress.[199] Eisenhower used his Cabinet Secretary Office, the Staff Secretariat, and the Congressional Liaison Office to prod Congress into action on multiple fronts. Accordingly Goodpaster and his staff would "follow up," "needling" the appropriate offices "in a gentle way. When decisions were made, we followed up to see that they were carried out. That didn't happen automatically. It took a little attention and friendly persuasion, to keep them moving along."[200]

A problem with which Eisenhower had to contend was the mentality of Republican

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[198] Henderson, 27-28; Persons had previously served as a Congressional liaison officer for the Army and "was probably personally acquainted with more congressional members than any other individual." Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 116, 194-195; Bowie and Immerman, 84; Andrew Goodpaster, "Foreword," Robert R. Bowie and Richard H. Immerman, *Waging Peace*, vii; In light of the "power of the southern Democrats and their general resistance to presidential objectives," in addition to "the concentration of power in committee chairs," and "senators' pretensions of being members of the 'upper house,'" the White House needed to include them in legislative outreach. Walcott and Hult, 28-30.

[199] Goodpaster Interview (OH—37), DDEL, 32-33

[200] Ibid, 32-34; Generally, the involved staffers "provided Eisenhower with political intelligence and tactical advice on when and how to deal with particular members of Congress and update him on the status of legislation." Walcott and Hult, 39.

(GOP) congressmen, who continued to oppose rather than support the Administration. In Eisenhower's view, years of being the minority party in government had established a mind-set of resistance to the Executive Branch regardless of party. Eisenhower set out to change that behavior. The weekly congressional meetings were designed to transact definitive business with GOP congressional leaders, so Congressional Liaison Office aides and Cabinet officials with legislative duties were always present to ensure the GOP leadership understood the President's intent and need for action. Eisenhower was keen to ensure actions were coordinated and consensus reached between the Administration and GOP congressmen.[201] According to Goodpaster, whenever the President made a policy decision requiring congressional consideration in the Cabinet or NSC, "General Persons or Bryce Harlow, or some of their assistants, would be there, and they would document what had been discussed and agreed. Then they would follow that up with the congressional leaders, to see that they move in that way." Cabinet Secretary Max Rabb also engaged them with Cabinet decisions, and the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs followed suit with NSC Records of Action.[202]

Eisenhower informally met with Democratic congressional leaders, Senator Lyndon Johnson and Representative Sam Rayburn, once a week over drinks in the evening as a means of garnering cooperation and understanding. Eisenhower biographer Jean Edward Smith wrote that these meetings were actually more productive than the formal GOP meetings because Johnson and Rayburn genuinely liked Eisenhower and respected his judgment.[203]

Eisenhower clearly understood that foreign policy and national security issues could not

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[201] Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 112; Jean Edward Smith, *Eisenhower in War and Peace* (New York: Random House, Inc., 2012), 647-649.

[202] Goodpaster Interview (OH—37), DDEL, 34.

[203] Adams, *Firsthand Report*, 287; Jean Edward Smith, 647-649.

be stove-piped from domestic policy issues. Hence, he paid particular attention to organizing the White House to ensure international concerns were not frustrated by friction on the domestic front.

The White House Staff underwent a final reorganization with the departure of Sherman Adams in 1958 so as to provide "immediate staff assistance to the President on day-to-day problems in the areas indicated: a) Legislative affairs—headed by the 'Deputy Assistant to the President for Legislative Affairs [Jerry Persons];' b) Executive Branch affairs (other than international—headed by the Deputy Assistant to the President for Interdepartmental Affairs [Robert Merriam]; [and] c) International activities—charged to the Defense Liaison Officer/Staff Secretary [Andrew Goodpaster]." The White House Chief of Staff retained overall staff supervision.[204]

In aggregate, these adjunct offices complemented the NSC Mechanism, demonstrating that foreign policy and domestic concerns interacted in fundamental ways. Eisenhower understood the nature of this interaction and organized the Executive Office of the President to harmonize foreign and domestic initiatives in a mutually supporting manner.

The Extent to which the Rationale for Change was Justified

Whatever the task, mission, or problem to solve, Eisenhower invariably organized for the effort. In fact, he was an enthusiastic and inveterate organizer, whether leading a platoon as a lieutenant, commanding coalition armies in World War II as Supreme Allied Commander, or governing the country as President. Of significance, Eisenhower did not view organization as a

[204] "Notes on Plan of Reorganization," October 15, 1958, White House Office, Office of the Staff Secretary: Records, 1952-61, White House Subseries, Box 7, White House Staff Organization, File 1, DDEL; Goodpaster later recalled Persons consolidated all legislative affairs under his office, but the President's Special Counsel ensured all legislative matters were vetted before he advised the President to sign or veto legislation. Marriam also covered down on issues involving state and local governments. Goodpaster Interview (OH—37), DDEL, 40.

panacea to complex problems, but as a starting point.

Professional Background

In regards to his exposure to military strategy, grand strategy, and high policy throughout his military career, Eisenhower's resume is not only extraordinary, but unique. As a junior officer, he became the principal assistant for commanders of provisional battalions and commanded an armor training brigade as the U.S. Army mobilized for World War I. Accordingly, he planned, organized, and supervised camp construction, command and staff structure, equipment requisition, supply procedures, and the training programs.[205] After the war, he and his friend George Patton became strong advocates for mechanized warfare, experimenting with and writing on armored operations, much to the anger of Army luddites, who sought to preserve the status quo of the cavalry and foot infantry.[206]

Eisenhower's development as a military intellectual began under the tutelage of Colonel Fox Conner while stationed in Panama (January 1922-September 1924). Eisenhower considered this period his graduate school for military history, theory, and strategy. In addition to inculcating the deliberate decision-making process in Eisenhower, Conner instructed him on the essentials of coalition warfare. Eisenhower regarded Conner as "the best read man—better acquainted with the military characters of all history than I think any soldier I have ever known and was always a remarkable fellow."[207] This experience formed the foundation of Eisenhower's growth as a strategic thinker, which later became apparent when he graduated at the top of his class from

[205] Dwight D. Eisenhower, *At Ease: Stories I Tell to Friends* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company INC., 1967, 119, 126, 137-148.
[206] Ibid, 169-174.
[207] Dwight D. Eisenhower, interview by Forrest Pogue, Gettysburg College, June 28, 1962, (OH-10), DDEL, 6

the Command and General Staff College.[208]

Eisenhower twice served (December 1926-August 1927 and August 1928-September 1929) as a staff officer for General John (Blackjack) Pershing's Battlefield Commission in France. Charged with writing the World War I history of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF), Eisenhower had the opportunity to study the Allied command structure, the battles, and the terrain. This gave Eisenhower a firm understanding of Allied strategy and operations, insights into the problems which plagued the Allied coalition, and the logistical requirements for waging modern warfare.[209]

Upon his return stateside, Eisenhower was assigned to Assistant Secretary of War Frederick H. Payne and General George Van Horn Moseley (an exemplary logistician on Pershing's staff during WWI), as the contingency planning officer for the conversion of private industry for wartime use. Eisenhower's War College research paper on mobilization requirements no doubt influenced this assignment. In addition to discussions with relevant industrialists, Eisenhower conferred with Bernard Baruch, who was the chairman of the War Industries Board during World War I (and became the special adviser for Office of War Mobilization during World War II). From this experience, Eisenhower acquired a deep understanding of the military-industrial-congressional complex.[210]

Eisenhower's superb staff work soon caught the attention of new Army Chief of Staff General Douglas MacArthur, who had him transferred to his office as his deputy in February 1932. Here, Eisenhower was introduced to the rarefied sphere of civil-military relations, espe-

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[208] Eisenhower, *At Ease*, 185-187, 195, 200-201.; Jean Edward Smith, 64-69, 72-73; Jim Newton, *Eisenhower: The White House Years* (New York: Doubleday, 2011), 31-32; Eric Larrabee, *Commander in Chief: Franklin Delano Roosevelt, His Lieutenants, and Their War* (New York: Simon and Schuster Inc., 1987), 414-415.

[209] Eisenhower, *At Ease*, 204-208; Jean Edward Smith, 76-87.

[210] Eisenhower, *At Ease*, 210-213; Jean Edward Smith, 81, 92-96.

cially the military's interactions with the White House and Congress. MacArthur brought Eisenhower with him to The Philippines (1935-1939) where the U.S. mission involved defense planning, organizing, and equipping the fledgling Filipino army. To this end, he became the de facto adviser to President Manuel Quezon where discussions involved force structure, finances, personnel requirements, the primacy of military morale, and political virtue.[211]

Upon returning to the United States in December 1939, Eisenhower held a progression of senior command and staff positions, culminating as an army chief of staff for the Louisiana Maneuvers, the largest peacetime exercise in U.S. history. In the wake of Pearl Harbor, Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall transferred Eisenhower to the War Plans Division as the Chief of Operations (i.e., strategic planning). Such was his trust in Eisenhower, that Marshall dispatched him to England in June 1942 to complete the planning for the cross-channel invasion of France.[212] Eisenhower's respect and admiration of Marshall were profound. Years earlier, Conner had advised Eisenhower to cultivate a professional relationship with Marshall: "In the new war we will have to fight beside allies and George Marshall knows more about the technique of arranging allied commands than any man I know. He is nothing short of genius."[213]

As the Supreme Allied Commander for the invasions of North Africa, Sicily, and Italy, Eisenhower created unified commands, which was unique in the annals of coalition warfare. For

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[211] Eisenhower conducted strategic planning for the Filipino government and personally requisitioned old war stocks of U.S. equipment, weapons, and munitions for its army. In December 1939, he rendered a report to Quezon on the defense of The Philippines in case of a Japanese invasion. Eisenhower, *At Ease*, 213, 221, 228-229, 246-247; Jean Edward Smith, 102-144.

[212] Eisenhower wrote the initial plan in April 1942 for the Cross-Chanel invasion of Europe. Marshall studied it and briefed Roosevelt. Approving the plan, Roosevelt directed Marshall to present the invasion plan to the British. Eisenhower Interview (OH-10), DDEL, 13; Eisenhower, *At Ease*, 242-245, 250-252; Jim Newton described the issues awaiting Eisenhower in England: "There, Eisenhower took charge of coordinating an invasion of two armies, thankfully of shared language but of different strategic traditions, intelligence capabilities, technological advancement, and even rank structures. The melding of such armies was of paramount necessity." Newton, 40; Jean Edward Smith, 159-173.

[213] Eisenhower, *At Ease*, 195; Dwight D. Eisenhower, interview by Forrest Pogue, Gettysburg College, June 28, 1962, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library (OH-10), DDEL, 1-3, 5.

the invasion of France and the subsequent campaign against Germany, he expanded the scope and authority of unified command, making him the most powerful commander in military history. Throughout his tenure as Supreme Commander, Eisenhower honed his strategic thinking as successive military operations became larger and more complex. Here, his integration of air, sea, and land power, attention to logistics, and exercise of sound political-military judgment hastened the defeat of Germany. The final victory should not ipso facto obscure the enormous pressures Eisenhower endured however, made all the more difficult by incessant allied and inter-service disagreements on strategy, command arrangements, strategic priorities, and military objectives. Fortunately for the coalition war effort, Eisenhower's unified command design, steadfast leadership, and superb negotiating skills maintained unity of effort.[214] As such, he spent considerable time managing senior leaders with enormous egos—men who were accustomed to winning debates and being idolized. As Michael Korda noted, "His skill lay precisely in getting stubborn, difficult, and bloody-minded people—Churchill, De Gaulle, Montgomery, and Patton among them—to do what he wanted despite their objections."[215] Some historians focus too much on the merits of Eisenhower's strategy and too little on his attention to the preservation of the coalition and to logistical requirements. Yet, no strategy would have flourished had he not maintained rapport and patiently fostered cooperation and consensus among allied political and military leaders. As he had learned from Fox Conner, Eisenhower put into practice the art of coalition warfare: maintaining harmony among allies and his chief lieutenants, using the consultative pro-

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[214] Eisenhower, *At Ease*, 253-277, 282; Jablonsky, chaps 3-9 passim; A large part of Supreme Command lay in instilling a sense of teamwork throughout the coalition, directing the major lines of effort, and projecting logistical requirements for the final invasion of Germany. It was due to Eisenhower's own iron will that the coalition maintained its focus on the invasion of France, the destruction of the German army, and the seizure of the Ruhr—Germany's main industrial region. Stephen E. Ambrose, *The Supreme Commander: The War Years of General Dwight D. Eisenhower* (New York: Doubleday & Company, INC., 1970); Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe* (New York: Doubleday & Company, INC., 1948), Chapters 13-16, passim.

[215] Michael Korda, *Ike: An American Hero* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2007), 665.

cess as a means of persuasion, and fostering a sense of teamwork and consensus in executing the strategy to its ultimate end.[216] Equally important, Eisenhower thought beyond the immediate military objectives of the war, as Andrew Goodpaster remarked: "He always had an interest, of course, in the political and the civil activities connected with surrender, connected with the prosecution of the war."[217] In Michael Korda's view, the allied victory was a result of Eisenhower's leadership:

> Ike somehow inspired people: civilians and ordinary soldiers of both nations, even cynical political figures and the always troublesome French. . . . His lack of pretension; his evident sincerity; and his willingness to accept unimaginably heavy responsibility made people like Ike. They were willing to be led by him. They were willing to have him command their sons and husbands in battle. They trusted him. They were willing to die for him.[218]

As Army Chief of Staff from 1946 to 1948, Eisenhower oversaw the rapid demobilization of the Army, a painful experience which influenced his thinking in the aftermath of the Korean War. He was also involved in the unification of the services debate which culminated with the National Security Act of 1947, creating the Department of Defense, CIA, and the NSC. During his tenure as President of Columbia University, he continued to advise President Truman and Secretary of Defense James Forrestal, informally acting as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.[219]

At President Truman's request, Eisenhower served as the first Supreme Allied Commander—Europe, from February 1951 to June 1952, establishing NATO's Integrated Military Structure, which became the first peacetime unified command in history. His success was due in

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[216] Fox Conner educated Captain Eisenhower on coalition warfare, specifically the art of persuasion so as to create unity among allies. Smith, 66; Eisenhower's Chief of Staff, Walter Bedell Smith remarked that although Eisenhower was attentive to the advice of others, he also understood consulted subordinates were more likely accept his decisions and staunchly loyal. Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 34.

[217] Goodpaster Interview (OH—37), DDEL, 3-4.

[218] Korda, 430.

[219] Eisenhower, *At Ease*, 316-322, 329-332, 352.

large part to his prestige and negotiating skills, persuading senior political leaders and military commanders to integrate their militaries under a unified command, to include alignment of logistics and the defense industries.[220]

As the aforementioned résumé illustrates, Eisenhower was the most professionally developed Chief Executive in U.S. history. According to NSC scholar David Rothkopf, "Perhaps unlike any other president of the twentieth century . . . Eisenhower came to the office with an extraordinary amount of organizational leadership experience and was thoroughly steeped in foreign policy and national security interests."[221] Similarly, political scientist Fred Greenstein wrote: "From his West Point graduation in 1915, through World War II to NATO, his assignments either required organizational management or gave him vantage points from which to view and reflect on the problems of guiding large-scale collective endeavors. With this preparation he proved superlative as wartime supreme commander, a role that demanded supervision of the largest invasion force ever assembled; alliance management; mediation among fractious personalities; and maintenance of the morale of fellow leaders, troops, and the civilians on the home front."[222]

Still, Richard Neustadt, one of Eisenhower's harshest critics, felt he was unqualified to be president because he was not a career politician:

> One never can be sure that when a man becomes the President of the United States, his sense of power and of purpose and his own source of self-confidence will show him how to help himself enhance his personal influence. But there is every reason to believe that he will be shown nothing of the sort if he has made the White House his first venture into politics. The Presidency is no place for amateurs.[223]

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[220] Eisenhower, *At Ease*, 364-377; Jablonsky, chaps 12-13 passim.
[221] Rothkopf, 65.
[222] Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 12-14, 101.
[223] Richard E. Neustadt, *Presidential Power: the Politics of Leadership From FDR to Carter*, 2d ed. (Reprint, New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1980), 132.

Michael Korda reached a different conclusion, asserting Eisenhower was no

> neophyte in Washington politics. As MacArthur's aide, as Marshall's protégé, as Supreme Commander of Allied Forces in Europe during the war and of NATO after it, and as a former Army Chief of Staff, Ike had worked closely with Congress and with two presidents for more than twenty years. . . . Ike knew how things got done.[224]

Political scientist Phillip Henderson considered Eisenhower an adept politician, who just happened to have made the military his career prior to becoming President. Whether as general or president, Eisenhower was a master of persuasion.[225] When considering the selection of the Supreme Allied Commander, President Franklin Roosevelt said, "Eisenhower is the best politician among the military men. He is a natural leader who can convince other men to follow him, and this is what we need in his position more than any other quality."[226] Indeed, Roosevelt was struck by Eisenhower's political acumen: "a general who could think politically, with cool realism, and then act with an amorality worthy of the Old Master himself. He [Roosevelt] was discovering a man who would one day reveal gifts for handling 'complex currents of feeling and prejudice to rival his own.'"[227]

As President, Eisenhower was careful to hide his political shrewdness, consciously adopting a congenial and sensible public image as a means of connecting with the average American. Presidential aide Robert Murphy observed that this "simple soldier" image was disarming, and Andrew Goodpaster remarked that Eisenhower used this image to increase his power of persuasion without the taint of politics.[228]

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[224] Korda, 665.
[225] Henderson, 20-21, 23.
[226] Cited in Henderson, 21; Larrabee, 438.
[227] Larrabee, 426.
[228] Henderson, 21-22; Robert D. Murphy, Oral History Interview with Robert D. Murphy by David C. Berliner, Columbia Oral History Interview, October 12 1972 (OH-224), DDEL, 19.

Nevertheless, Eisenhower approached the unique responsibilities of the Presidency with humility: "No individual can be completely or fully prepared for undertaking the responsibilities of the Presidency," He later wrote. "Possibly no one can even be fully aware of their weight and difficulty, except one who has borne them." Still, the depth of his experiences provided him with a perspicacity that enhanced his effectiveness as President: "But because of special experiences in my past life, I was more acutely aware than the average citizen of the complexities, anxieties, and burdens of the life led by a head of government."[229] Thus, Eisenhower sought business executives and organizational experts to serve in the Administration.

Ultimately, all these traits—a keen intellect, education, dedicated professional study, vast experience as a chief executive, and political acumen—set Eisenhower apart from most Presidents. While intellect is important, it is by no means the sole qualification—all Presidents have been intelligent—what Eisenhower brought to the Presidency was wisdom.

White House Organizational Reforms

Because the modern presidency governs in a complex environment, Eisenhower sought an organizational structure to assist in the development of grand strategy. "When Eisenhower came in to the White House," observed Goodpaster, "he found that there was no real orientation. He had a large group of associates and assistants, and no way to pull together their operations or keep track or keep them in phase, keep them in coordination."[230] His immediate task was to "organize the White House for efficiency."[231] Further, through the NSC mechanism and the White

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[229] Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 28-29.

[230] Andrew J. Goodpaster, Oral History Interview by Malcolm McDonald, April 10, 1982, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library (OH—477), 28-29.

[231] Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 114.

House Secretariat, Eisenhower sought not only to optimize staff work operations for knowledge management and coordination of activities in the vast bureaucratic government, but also to help him to understand the strategic environment.

Strategic theorist Harry Yarger instructs that "the strategic environment is the realm in which the [national] leadership interacts internally and with other states or actors to advance the well-being of the state."

> This environment consist of the internal and external context, conditions, relationships, trends, issues, threats, opportunities, and interactions, and effects that influence the success of the state in relation to the physical world, other states and actors, chance, and the possible futures. The strategic environment functions as a self-organizing complex system. It seeks to maintain its current relative equilibrium, or to find a new acceptable balance. In this environment some things are known (predictable), some are probable, some are possible, some are plausible, and some remain simply unknown. It is a dynamic environment that reacts to input but not necessarily in a direct cause-and-effect manner.[232]

In Yarger's view, the whole purpose of strategy is to "advance favorable outcomes and preclude unfavorable outcomes" in the strategic environment (i.e., the domestic and international realms), but to do so, "the strategist must comprehend the nature of the strategic environment and construct strategy that is consistent with it, neither denying its nature nor capitulating to other actors or to chance." The nature of the strategic environment is most often described as volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA).[233] Political interaction with the strategic environment requires organization. As strategic theorist Colin Gray underscores,

> Strategy is a process. . . . Strategic ideas need to be staffed and coordinated, priced, and critically reviewed at the grand strategic level of assay. . . . Just as strategy is "done" by tactical activity, also it is, or should be, "done" by a bureaucratic organization that staffs alternatives critically, coordinates rival inputs, and oversees execution and feedback on the effect of execution. This is neither exciting nor heroic, but it is absolutely essential for superior strategic performance.[234]

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[232] Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional*, 27.
[233] Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional*, 27-28.
[234] Colin S. Gray, *Modern Strategy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 33-34.

Individual talent is not enough as Gray explains, "No individual, regardless of the wattage of his genius, the efficiency of his labour, or the duration of his working life, reasonably could aspire to perform as a Renaissance, let alone Enlightenment, Person for the subject [of modern strategy]."[235]

Congressional creation of the National Security Council in 1947 was a recognition of this complexity, suggesting a tacit rejection of President Roosevelt's competitive advisory system. The Eisenhower NSC mechanism vastly improved the framework and the spirit of the National Security Act of 1947, with the intent of assisting the President exercise strategic thinking. For this to occur, the Administration needed to be well informed on the various aspects of high policy issues that rose to the White House's attention, and the President's principal advisors needed to discuss these issues in his presence as a way to stimulate his thought processes.

A significant feature of the Eisenhower NSC mechanism was its deference to the U.S. Constitution. Eisenhower conscientiously did not seek to test Constitutional checks and balances by expanding presidential powers, nor did he seek to marginalize the other two branches of government. Eisenhower sought organizational efficiencies within the Executive Office of the President without impinging on the American political system. However, critics felt his structural reforms undermined traditional American politics. According to Greenstein, critics claimed Eisenhower attempted to apply a military staff system to the Presidency, citing as evidence his creation of White House Chief of Staff, his hierarchical staff structure which fed him "staffed" information, and his broad delegation of authority to subordinates. Hence, they felt he had "overorganized and overformalized" the Presidency, which customarily operated in a more free-

[235] Ibid, 115.

wheeling manner.[236]

Eisenhower explained that while the Constitution intentionally encumbered intra-governmental efficiency, this did not extend to the branches themselves:

> Deliberately, we established a nation that requires, respects, and places its faith in *organization*, determined and fixed by laws. Organization was our answer to the threat of tyranny. Through highly organized Legislature, Executive, and Judicial machinery our people make and implement their decisions.[237]

Paradoxically, and indeed frustrating to some American political sectors, the Founding Fathers conscientiously elevated the protection of inalienable rights over federal structural efficiencies, since the pursuit of greater efficiencies militates towards authoritarianism.[238] The Founders did not suggest that the branches of government ignore internal organization though. Each branch was expected to seek efficiencies within.

The challenge for Eisenhower was to fulfill his campaign promise of improving "the efficiency and organization of the federal government" without undermining the Constitution.[239] To this end, Eisenhower designed the NSC mechanism and the White House Cabinet to foster greater policy integration and cooperation between the White House and the government bureaucracy as well as purging (as much as possible) the NSC of pernicious practices. According to Greenstein, because Eisenhower elevated cabinet and other executive branch meetings above Roosevelt and Truman's practice for conducting business, critics charged the Administration had created a "'government by committee', which in turn would surely smother creativity by fostering

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[236] Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 103.

[237] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 630.

[238] Joseph M. Bessette and Jeffrey K. Tulis, "On the Constitution, Politics, and the Presidency," in *The Constitutional Presidency*, eds. Joseph M. Bessette and Jeffrey K. Tulis (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 3.

[239] As a fervent adherent to the principals of the Constitution, Eisenhower sought to redress the economic, social, and political encroachments of FDR's New Deal government. Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 17-18, 33, 38, 51, 121-123, 127, 129, and 131; For analysis on FDR's practices, see Burton W. Folsom Jr., *New Deal or Raw Deal?* (November 4, 2006), Kindle e-book.

compromises that reduce policies to the lowest denominator acceptable to the committee members."[240] On the other hand, Roosevelt's loose management of Cabinet meetings militated against members broaching any issues of import. Instead, individual advisors would discuss these with the President confidentially. In this manner, Roosevelt generated competition among his advisors as they vied for influence. Truman placed greater significance on Cabinet meetings but felt department secretaries and agency chiefs used these meetings to promote or protect their parochial interests. Truman normally attended to serious matters outside of the Cabinet and informally relied on unofficial advisors. In view of these presidential practices, Eisenhower sought to restore people's faith and confidence in the Constitutional political system, which had been eroded by decades of encroaching federal government.

Eisenhower understood the power of organization, having spent decades of work, study, and experimentation in a variety of organizations and organizational innovations. Once in office, he intuited his organizational needs for efficient White House management and grand strategy formulation. That he was without peer as a national security expert is widely recognized, but his genius as a practitioner of strategic thinking receives scant attention. He recognized that the practice of strategic thinking required scrutinized information, not raw data or unstudied ideas. Policy issues needed to be integrated from the government bureaucracy, supplemented at times by outside consultants; a staff needed to hone these issues and prepare policy papers for Council consideration. To stimulate his thought process, Eisenhower needed ideas and proposals debated in his presence. By his design, the NSC mechanism served to help the President think strategically.

An interesting revelation about the most vociferous detractors of the Eisenhower NSC mechanism, as addressed in chapter three, is that none had direct knowledge of the internal pro-

[240] Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 104-105.

cesses of the Policy Board, the Council, or the Operations Coordinating Board. All lacked senior executive experience, and none was professionally skilled as a strategic thinker. Eisenhower later expressed his amazement that so many political writers and pundits were self-proclaimed experts on organization. From his perspective, mastery of organizational design resulted from years of study, reflection, and experience; so, even people blessed with natural talent could not escape this necessity if they wanted to be effective senior executives. Eisenhower questioned the qualifications of critics, who claimed to know more about organizational design than he.[241] Subsequently, he argued that organization, rather than stifling novel solutions to perplexing problems, actually created an environment to stimulate such thinking:

> To the adult mind "organization" seems to summon visions of rigidity and machine-like operation, with an inescapable deadly routine and stodginess in human affairs. Yet it is not the enemy of imagination or of any other attractive human characteristic. Its purpose is to simplify, clarify, expedite, and coordinate; it is the bulwark against chaos, confusion, delay, and failure.[242]

Similarly, Eisenhower dismissed allegations that he rubber-stamped decisions made by the Council. "Staff decisions," as he recalled the term, suggests that the executive makes decisions based on a majority vote. As a veteran senior executive, Eisenhower rejected this assertion of how he made decisions.[243] Regarding the practice of delegation of authority, Eisenhower, from long experience, pointed out that the senior leader, whether a general or a president, must delegate responsibilities to subordinates so the senior executive can focus his attention on the larger issues.[244] Ultimately, the senior leader bears sole responsibility for these decisions, so organization and delegation of authority are integral. Author and retired Major General Thomas A.

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[241] Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 114-115.
[242] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 630.
[243] Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 115.
[244] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 631, 633, 635-636; Goodpaster, "Foreword," in Bowie and Immerman, vi.

Lane explained this relationship:

> Great organizations are made with building blocks. The leader does not direct every detail of activity. He places in each block of the organization a lieutenant who can direct its work, inspire its personnel, inform and loyally support the leader. It is the function of the leader to provide all elements of the organization with timely guidance for action, approval of achievement, correction of error, and inspiration. If the leader tries to control each action, he paralyzes the organization. Lieutenants who have no responsibility but obedience will lack the initiative to manage their own offices.[245]

Richard Nixon noted that Eisenhower believed the Chief Executive should not involve himself in matters that subordinates could master. "He preferred all other decisions to be made by his subordinates and then presented to him for his approval. Moreover, an Eisenhower characteristic was never to take direct action requiring his personal participation where indirect methods could accomplish the same result."[246]

Eisenhower recognized that given the complexities of the strategic environment as well as the expansion of the government bureaucracy to interact with these environments, policy decisions required organization (i.e., structure, processes, and procedures). Without organization, the executive Branch would feel compelled to micromanage everything, exhaust itself in the process, and create confusion and chaos.

The Extent the NSC Mechanism Provided the Administration with Information

Ultimately, the NSC mechanism must provide a benefit to the President, and to a lesser extent, his principal advisors and the government bureaucracy, rather than an end in itself. Fundamentally, the NSC mechanism serves as the President's information management tool to provide relevant and sufficient information for the development of national security strategy, foreign

[245] Thomas A. Lane, *The Leadership of President Kennedy* (Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, LTD, 1964), 183.

[246] Nixon, 160-161.

policy, and crisis management. Eisenhower's organizational design for the NSC mechanism sought to infuse in the Administration the discipline of preparing issues for Council deliberation and decision. Assigning department and agency representatives to the Planning Board and the Operations Coordinating Board (OCB) optimized collaboration in the government bureaucracy. Likewise, Eisenhower wanted the Council itself to approach issues as a corporate body, and he sought to minimize policy confusions, misunderstandings, redundancies, and contradictions. Ironically, the Administration was so successful in formulating and articulating strategy, that detractors were able to craft the fiction of a languid, inarticulate, and detached President. In truth, Eisenhower was the foremost strategic thinking President in U.S. history. In his assessment, Alexander George wrote,

> Eisenhower recognized that conflict and politics are inevitable and adapted to them by defining his own role as that of someone who could stand 'above politics,' moderate conflict, and promote unity. . . . The conventional depiction of Eisenhower's NSC system as an unimaginative, bureaucratic body laden with the preparation and presentation of cautiously formulated positions, therefore, is not justified.[247]

Planning Board

As intended and designed, the Planning Board achieved an unparalleled level of solidarity, cooperation, and interaction between the NSC and the government bureaucracy. Political scientist Paul Hammond argued that due to continual contact with their respective Cabinet bosses, association with the President, and frequent meetings with the Special Assistant for National Security, Planning Board members more readily plumbed the government bureaucracy for information. Government bureaucrats were more responsive to requests for information, knowing their staff products were central to NSC policy deliberations. Further, routinization of the NSC

[247] Alexander L. George, *Presidential Decision Making in Foreign Policy: the Effective Use of Information and Advice*, 152-153.

process increased the effectiveness of Council deliberations, resulting in a greater convergence between abstract thought and practical application.[248] Thus, Policy Board members became the primary conduit between the NSC and the government bureaucracy. Thus, in view of the contributive nature of the work to national security policy and the attendant prestige, the Planning Board comprised quality personnel.

The potency of the Planning Board was not so much the drafting of papers as the vivification of the government bureaucracy to assist the President and his Council generate strategic thinking. The Policy Board acted as a catalyst to inquiry, examination, and articulation of key foreign policy and national security issues. The process of preparing draft policy papers increased interagency cooperation as well as interaction among government officials.

This process also normalized the vocabulary of the various agencies, creating a common lexicon from which to proceed. This difficult task is incredibly important because normalization, as scientist Donella H. Meadows assessed, keeps language "concrete, meaningful, and truthful as possible—part of the job of keeping information streams clear." Meadows deemed the vocabulary-normalization process as necessary because organizations develop their own unique lexicon of terminology and concepts; and according to economist Fred Kofman, "The language and information systems of an organization are not an objective means of describing an outside reality—they fundamentally structure the perceptions and actions of its members.[249] The Policy Board process framed complex issues comprehensively, impelling its members to consider the strategic environment, the drivers of conflict, and the interplay of strategic goals, strategies, and supporting capabilities. In this manner, the Planning Board provided the NSC with a multi-

[248] Hammond, 368.

[249] Kofman cited in Donella H. Meadows, *Thinking in Systems: A Primer* (White River Junction, Vermont: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2008), 174-175.

dimensional description of the issue, rather than a simple cause-effect assessment.

The work of the Planning Board was not a bureaucratic paper mill, generating papers for NSC rubberstamping; nor did it serve to insulate the President from urgent matters. Its purpose was to study the strategic environment (i.e., a strategic appraisal) so as to gain a greater appreciation of the challenges and pertinent issues, framing the problem-sets needed for gaining understanding of complex issues and the cultivation of strategic thinking. Cutler viewed the large number of policy splits as proof that "the Board served to sharpen disagreements and force debate, not to smother them," pursuant to Eisenhower's mandate "to make sure that differences be brought into the open and clearly stated."[250]

The crafting of draft policy papers was an all-inclusive activity throughout the Administration, a process which Alexander George characterized as multiple advocacy, in which issues were debated in the Planning Board and discussed between board members and their respective NSC advisers prior to formal NSC meetings. In this manner, the mechanism had formal and informal components,[251] reducing redundant thinking and bringing to light both majority and minority views.

While draft policy papers allowed NSC members to digest the salient issues quickly and were a starting point for discussion, Eisenhower at times felt that Cutler focused too much on the precision of the policy papers rather than setting the conditions for the free exchange of thinking on high policy issues.[252] Cutler admitted that a formalized system of continuous paper preparations and presentations had such drawbacks, but he believed finely honed and studied papers led

[250] Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 127.
[251] George, 152-153.
[252] Sander, 97.

to more useful discussions and more conclusive policies.[253] Further, Eisenhower privately thought Cutler's oral NSC presentations were unnecessary in light of the advanced papers and briefings they received. Oval Office Secretary Ann Whitman noted that Eisenhower wanted to proceed immediately into discussions rather than enduring Cutler's boring presentations:

> He himself complains that [in many cases] he knows every word of the presentations as they are made. . . [yet] he feels that to maintain the interest and attention of every member of the NSC, he must sit through each meeting—despite the fact that he knows the presentations so well.[254]

Other NSC participants also thought Cutler's verbal presentations were too long and formalistic, spending too much time on "unimportant language changes." When Cutler left government, the meetings became more relaxed and lively, especially when Gordon Gray became the Special Assistant for National Security.[255] Consequently, Eisenhower's second term NSC was devoted to more collegial discussions and long-term policy issues.

In fairness to Cutler, during the first two years of the Eisenhower Presidency, the Council spent an enormous amount of time reviewing and revising policies from the Truman Administration. This created a tremendous burden on the Council, working six to seven issues each meeting, which often extended the meeting schedule beyond the allotted two and a half hours. Fortunately, by 1955, with the review/revision process complete, Cutler was able to reduce the number of issues to two or three per meeting, which permitted more time for policy discussion and formulation, as well as optimizing the President's work schedule.[256]

One added benefit of the staff process was the mitigation of friction among Administra-

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[253]Sander, 98; Cutler, "The Development of the National Security Council," 445.

[254] Cited in Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 133.

[255] Eisenhower remarked that the NSC mechanism under Gordon Gray "was operating better now than at any time in his experience." Cited in Sander, 99-101.

[256] Ibid, 111.

tion officials. From his perspective, Vice President Nixon was convinced "the staff system did . . . keep to an absolute minimum the clashes of personalities, the bickering, and scramble for power which characterized the two previous Administrations—and appear to be taking hold in the present one [Kennedy]."[257]

Other Sources of Information

Planning Board papers, consultants, and Council discussion were not the only source of information for Eisenhower. He read two newspapers each morning (normally 7:00 am) in order to remain informed on current events, editorials, and media interpretations of his policy statements; he received the daily intelligence briefings from the Staff Secretary after breakfast, and spoke daily with the Secretary of State.[258] Contrary to the popular view that he only read westerns, Eisenhower was actually well read on the classics, military history, strategic theory, and historical fiction.[259] Rothkopf noted that "Eisenhower was an experienced consumer of intelligence," but regarded it with a degree of skepticism because he knew it was an imperfect discipline: "Eisenhower knew what bad intelligence good intelligence teams could produce."[260] Milton Eisenhower related that his brother constantly studied reports, often at night in bed, adding that Eisenhower had a near photographic memory.[261] Like most presidents, Eisenhower sought the views of confidants such as Brigadier General Andrew Goodpaster; General Alfred Gru-

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[257] Nixon, 140-141.

[258] According to Milton Eisenhower, his brother read around three papers in the morning and one to two at night. Milton S. Eisenhower, "Reminiscences of Dr. Milton S. Eisenhower," interview by Herbert S. Parmet, Columbia Oral History Interview, June 19, 1969, CCOHC, 43; *Greenstein, The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 134-135; Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 233-234, 266.

[259] Eisenhower wrote that the belief he read nothing but westerns emanated from a fictionalized story of him during World War II. From this story, came all subsequent stories, framing his public persona. Eisenhower, *At Ease: Stories I Tell to Friends*, 39-41, 185-187, 258; Newton, 31; Smith, 65-66.

[260] Rothkopf, 75.

[261] Milton S. Eisenhower, CCOHC, 43, 45.

enther; General Lucius D. Clay; his friends Swede Hazlett and Ellis Slater; his brother, Milton; and his son, John. An avid interlocutor, Eisenhower frequently telephoned or met with foreign leaders to confer with them on foreign policy issues. His preferred method of communication with foreign leaders, politicians, and businessmen was informal chats in order to elicit candid viewpoints.[262] His weekly meetings with Republican congressmen and frequent meetings with key Democratic congressmen served to acquaint him with congressional attitudes.[263] These disclosures stand in stark contrast to claims that Eisenhower was a prisoner of his system. He was in reality quite adept at acquiring additional information informally and behind the scenes.[264]

Cultivating Strategic Thinking Through Good Organization

All White House actions and interactions served Eisenhower's ultimate purpose, which was to cultivate strategic thinking in the Administration in general and to assist him exercise strategic intuition specifically. Harry Yarger argues that the development of strategy is an incredibly complex discipline and believes that senior policy makers delude themselves by thinking a good sound bite is the same as good policy and strategy. He stresses that the formulation of effective strategy requires professionals well-versed in strategic theory, strategic thinking, and strategic formulation.[265]

Yarger asserts the strategy formulation process begins with the strategic appraisal, which

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[262] To draw out the domestic and international views of leaders, Eisenhower used formal dinners and other occasions as "a means of gaining information and intelligent opinion as well as enjoying good company." He received 37 heads of state at the White House and participated in 210 meetings with national leaders during his Presidency. Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 237, 243-251, 265.

[263] Ambrose, *Eisenhower: The President*. Kindle e-book.

[264] Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 146-150, 246; Meena Bose, *Shaping and Signaling Presidential Policy: The National Security Decision Making of Eisenhower and Kennedy* (College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 1998). 100-102.

[265] Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional*, vii-viii, 2.

is a mixture of science and art. The strategist begins by analyzing the strategic environment through his own world view and then proceeds through the process: 1) respond to the stimulus or requirement (which is the realm of strategy by level and kind); 2) determine and articulate interests; 3) determine intensity of interests; 4) assess information; 5) determine strategic factors; 6) select key factors; and 7) formulate strategy.[266] Accordingly, the strategist methodically identifies key factors which have an impact on strategic objectives, applying them to the goals, strategy, and capabilities of strategy formulation. Further, he assesses the risks associated with the strategy to gage the possible consequences (intentional and unintended) on the strategic environment.[267]

As a professionally educated and experienced strategic thinker, Eisenhower designed the NSC mechanism to develop the strategic appraisal process and foster strategic thinking. In view of his demonstrated aptitude as a strategic leader, strategic theorist, and strategic practitioner before, during, and after World War II, Eisenhower self-actualized as a master of the strategic art, which Yarger describes as comprising three roles:

> The first [strategic leader] centers on the abilities to provide vision and focus, capitalize on command and peer leadership skills, and inspire others to think and act. The second [strategic theorist] centers on the abilities to study the history of warfare, derive relevant insights, formulate strategic concepts and theories, and integrate these with the elements of power and national strategies, and teach and mentor in regard to the strategic thought. The third [strategic practitioner] centers on the abilities to deeply comprehend the levels of war and their relationships with strategy; develop and execute strategic plans derived from interagency and joint guidance; employ force and other aspects of military power; and unify military and nonmilitary activities toward common objectives. . . . While the master is competent in all three, in practice different personalities, positions, and environments may make one of the roles dominant.[268]

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[266] For an explanation of the process, see Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional*, 115-134.

[267] Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional*, chaps. 8, 9, and 10, passim.

[268] Yarger, "How Do Students Learn Strategy? Thought on the U.S. Army War College Pedagogy of Strategy," in *Teaching Strategy: Challenge and Response*, ed. Gabriel Marcella (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, March 2010), 181-182.

Yarger explains that the process of strategic thinking comprises five competencies: critical thinking, systems thinking, creative thinking, thinking in time, and ethical thinking. First, critical thinking is the application of "reflective skepticism." As facts are gathered, it is essential to remain open-minded so as to increase understanding of the nature of an issue. It includes consideration of various viewpoints all the while remaining cognizant of personal biases. It requires examination of assumptions surrounding an issue and an evaluation of inferences to reveal relationships and potential multi-ordered effects. While the process leads to strategic goals, strategies, and capabilities, critical thinking remains dynamic, meaning it is "integrative and iterative." Second, systems thinking examines an issue or environment as a whole rather than the individual parts. It seeks interdependent relationships rather than direct cause-and-effect relationships. Once the system as a whole is framed and the behavior or properties defined, then the individual parts are studied to understand how they affect the system. At the national policy level, systems thinking aims "to recognize the nature of the strategic environment: a nature of interdependence, volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity." Third, creative thinking pursues novel ideas which explain and explore ways to solve problems. At the national policy level, creative thinking "increases understanding, broadens the possible explanations and alternative choices, and identifies potential opportunities." Fourth, thinking in time is the ability to identify historical continuities and currents of change as a means of shaping a desirable future. Like critical thinking, it assesses information in terms of known, unclear, and presumed to clarify issues and goals. It analyses historical analogues for similarities and differences relating to the current problem. It applies the "Goldberg rule" to determine the complete story, using a time-line identify key events. Finally, it applies journalists' questions of When, Where, What, Who, How and Why to identify

key trends in the time-line. At the national policy level, thinking in time "mitigates uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity." Lastly, ethical thinking considers the propriety of a policy or strategy in terms of national values. In Robert Jervis' view, ethical action is either "obligatory (what one may do), prohibited (what one must not do) or permissible (what one may do)." Carl von Clausewitz judged that although moral factors increased the complexity of strategy, it was nonetheless essential because moral forces have an impact on all belligerents and are as important as material forces. In this light, ethical thinking assesses what policies will be acceptable domestically as well as internationally.[269]

British strategic theorists couch strategic thinking in terms of "understanding:"

> the acquisition and development of knowledge to enable insight (knowing why something has happened or is happening) and foresight (being able to identify and anticipate what may happen). Analysis of this situational awareness provides greater comprehension (insight) of the problem. Judgments based on this comprehension provide understanding of the problem (foresight).[270]

The purpose of strategic thinking is to help the President articulate the strategic goal, an effective strategy, and supporting capabilities to attain the desired strategic effect. According to Ross Harrison, the application of goals, strategies, and capabilities is integral to the decision-making process:

> Goals give strategy purpose and direction. The purpose of strategies is to create a desired outcome, or in some cases prevent an undesired outcome, and a goal is a clear representation of what that outcome is. Without clearly articulated goals, there is no way to know if a strategy has succeeded or failed, and it will also be difficult to distinguish flurries of ac-

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[269] Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional*, 12-14; Richard E. Neustadt and Ernest R. May, *Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision Makers* (New York: The Free Press, 1986), 38-39, 41, 106-107, 235-238; For systems thinking see also Dietrich Doerner, *The Logic of Failure: Recognizing and Avoiding Error in Complex Situations* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1996).

[270] British strategic theorists frame strategic thinking in terms of understanding. The quotation is cited in Harry R. Yarger, *Building Partnership Capacity,* (MacDill Air Force Base, FL: Joint Special Operations University, February 2015), 36-37.

tivity from strategy.[271]

"Strategy is about creating and then exploiting leverage over an adversary . . . to achieve a goal."[272] The strategist can use direct leverage to overwhelm an adversary with force and/or indirect leverage, seeking to deprive the adversary of resources, partnerships, and international standing. To this end, strategists employ the state's instruments of power (i.e., diplomatic, informational, military, and economic) to bend adversaries to their will. Capabilities are raw or potential resources which are actuated to enable strategy. As Harrison notes, "resources have to be configured, combined, managed, and converted into a more muscular capability."[273]

Eisenhower placed strategic thinking into practice though what USIA Director Arthur Larson called the President's six principles of power for decision-making, stressing "principle not expediency" for practically every decision: 1) if force is imperative, employ sufficient military power swiftly to secure success; 2) conserve power through the selective use of force and due consideration of the other instruments of power (i.e., diplomatic, informational, and economic); 3) retain flexibility in the choice of weapons, as well as the manner and place of their use; 4) assess and marshal world opinion before initiating action; 5) remain cognizant of the nation's moral posture; and 6) respect the rule of law, ensuring action has a legal basis. In regards to the first principle, while Eisenhower preferred to use the rule of law (UN) to settle disputes, once he made a decision to use military power, he did so with celerity and over-whelming force, which is the antithesis of gradualism. The second principle is known in military parlance as economy of force, which recognizes one cannot be strong everywhere, so minimum forces are applied in

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[271] Ross Harrison, *Strategic Thinking in 3D: A Guide for National Security, Foreign Policy, and Business Professionals* (Washington D.C.: Potomac Books, 2013). Kindle e-book, 3, 21.

[272] Ibid, 52.

[273] Ibid, 35.

nonessential areas in order to mass forces in decisive areas. The third principle sought to deny the initiative to the Communists and formed the foundation of the New Look, in which the United States would choose the manner and place of response. The fourth principle recognized that "world opinion is a source of power," through the cultivation of friendship, cooperation, and trust with other nations. The fifth principle held that the strategic values of a nation must not be sacrificed for political expediency, so moral sanction through the UN legitimizes action. In accordance with the sixth principle, Eisenhower took care to base actions on the UN Charter and international law. In particular, intervention required the host nation's request through the UN first.[274] These were the principles which guided Eisenhower's decision-making process.

Eisenhower disciplined himself to exercise patience during NSC meetings, though he often went into the meetings with a firm understanding of the issues at hand and sometimes predisposed towards a certain decision. Nevertheless, he encouraged and expected fierce debate on issues in his presence because even a casual remark, small insight, or different perspective could trigger an idea in the President's mind. Clausewitz called this faculty, *coup d'oeil*, the ability to look at a complex problem, separate the vital from the unimportant, reach a solution—the epiphany—and then place the decision into action, engineering the instruments of power for strategic effect.[275] Like Clausewitz, Yarger concludes this thinking epitomizes the art of strategy, "the ability to see the strategic dots and connect them in a meaningful manner to service U.S. interests." Strategic intuition results from years of study and reflection, in which knowledge and theory become ingrained in the decision-maker's mind and hence seamlessly integrated in his

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[274] Arthur Larson, *Eisenhower: The President Nobody Knew* (New York: Popular Library, 1968), 11, 81, 87, 90-91, 92-93, 94-99.

[275] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. and ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 100-104.

thought process.[276]

According to Charles Murphy, Eisenhower stimulated his thought processes through verbal interaction: "Eisenhower *thinks*, much as Franklin Roosevelt used to do, by discussion rather than by reading, and his pleasure in batting around ideas with a cooperative visitor."[277] Milton Eisenhower observed that his brother enjoyed talking to people and approached a meeting as "a real study group." Eisenhower asked probing questions to get at the logic behind an argument and invariably caught the logic flaws if any existed.[278]

Goodpaster explained that Eisenhower used the Council for "deliberation in a discussion group, the use of his chief subordinates as advisors, to get their various views, particularly on national security questions, where State, Defense, CIA, and Budget and Treasury were all involved from the standpoint of their own interests." Further,

> President Eisenhower was always keenly interested in the question of trying to formulate our policy and establish a systematic way of trying to look into the future and draw our observations and conclusion into our policy, so that we could know where we were heading quite far down the line. That, incidentally, was his method in the National Security Council—to establish a goal and direction, and then leave it to the operating departments to work in that direction, using his staff to see that they did in fact do so, and that they were proceeding with a reasonable degree of vitality.[279]

Eisenhower remarked that he would have been suspicious of any harmonious consensus on an issue in the NSC if no debate had taken place, which would have been evidence of logrolling. Moreover, NSC deliberations acted as a curb to capricious decisions. In a 1967 interview, Eisenhower described the value of Council debates in his presence:

> I have been forced to make decisions, some of them of a critical character, for a good many years; and I know of only one way in which you can be sure that you've done your

[276] Yarger, "How Do Students Learn Strategy?, 186-190; Clausewitz, 585-586.
[277] Charles J.V. Murphy, "Eisenhower's White House," *Fortune*, July 1953, 176.
[278] Milton S. Eisenhower Interview, DDEL, 44-45.
[279] Goodpaster Interview (OH—37), DDEL, 32, 73-74.

> best to make a wise decision. That is to get all of the people who have a partial and definable responsibility in this particular field, whatever it may be. Get them with their different viewpoints in front of you, and listen to them debate. I do not believe in bringing them in one at a time, and therefore being more impressed by the most recent one you hear than the earlier ones. You must get courageous men, men of strong views, and let them debate and argue with each other. You listen, and you see if there's anything been brought up, any idea that changes your own view or enriches your view or adds to it. Then you start studying. Sometimes the case becomes so simple that you can make a decision right then. Or you may go back and wait two or three days, if time isn't of the essence. But you make it. In any event, you've got to do it, and you can't put the responsibility for it on an advisory body of any kind, no matter what its stature or what the stature of the men on it.[280]

Eisenhower had a knack for hearing all sides of an argument, evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of points made, and then formulating a synthesized solution in an articulate manner. Robert Bowie of the State Department Policy Board witnessed this intellectual process during NSC meetings:

> Often the discussion would be marked by impressive analysis by various individuals who, as intellectuals, struck you as sometimes more articulate than he. But at the end, I felt that he frequently came out with a commonsense appraisal . . . which was wiser than the input which he'd received from the separate advisors. Somehow, almost in an intuitive way, in a way which quite clearly wasn't a one, two, three lawyer's type of analysis, nevertheless he came out with a net judgment which often struck me as wiser or more sensible than the specific positions taken by any individual.[281]

Stephen Ambrose noted that "He had the ability to look at a situation or a problem and analyze it, see what alternatives were available, and choose from among them. He might miss some nuances, but he seldom overlooked major points. When his superiors gave him a problem they could count on his taking all relevant factors into consideration."[282] Greenstein concluded Eisenhower was "a man with extraordinary capacities for detached, orderly examination of prob-

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[280] Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Eisenhower Project," interview by Ed Edwin, Columbia Oral History Interview, July 20, 1967, CCOHC, 103-104.

[281] Cited in Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 33-34.

[282] Ambrose, *The Supreme* Commander, 320-321.

lems and personalities,"[283] and Nixon detected a deep intellect behind his unpretentious demeanor:

> He was a far more complex and devious man than most people realized, and in the best sense of those words. Not shackled to a one-track mind, he always applied two, three, or four lines of reasoning to a single problem and he usually preferred the indirect approach where it would serve him better than the direct attack on a problem.[284]

Milton Eisenhower remarked "He never made up his mind on anything until he was sure that he had heard all sides of the situation, and had all the facts before him."[285] Once he made his decision, though, Eisenhower always explained to his advisors the logic and various factors impacting on it. Thus, the advisor would understand Eisenhower's reasoning, even if his advice was not followed.

As part of his strategic appraisal process, Eisenhower liked to take time to meditate on a problem and encouraged his subordinates to do the same.[286] Julia Sloan described this process as critical reflection—"one of the best-kept strategic secrets:"

> Critical reflection is the central process for learning to think strategically and requires a high degree of both the affective and cognitive dimensions of learning. Critical reflection is what we use to challenge assumptions, test beliefs, broaden perspective, and imagine possibilities—the very things that allow us to make strategy is generative, innovative, adaptive, sustainable, and ultimately winning.[287]

The Separation of Planning from Operations

While a contentious issue at the time, the Eisenhower NSC separated policy formulation from operations.[288] Andrew Goodpaster explained that Eisenhower placed great worth in the

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[283] Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 53.
[284] Nixon, 161.
[285] Milton S. Eisenhower Interview, CCOHC, 16.
[286] Eisenhower, *At Ease*, 277; Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 135.
[287] Julia Sloan, *Learning to Think Strategically* (New York: Elsevier, 2006), 147.
[288] In his testimony to the Jackson subcommittee, Dean Rusk implied that the Eisenhower Administration had violated Parkinson's Law, which states "everyone who is affected by a decision must participate in making it." Dean

process and not producing detailed plans at the strategic level: "The plans are nothing, but the planning is everything," the President was fond of saying.[289] Cutler's successor, Dillon Anderson agreed, recalling that Eisenhower used the NSC mechanism "for the formulation for long term policy guidelines and identification of long term policy objectives."[290] From his extensive knowledge and experience as a senior commander, Eisenhower understood that higher level planning must not be so specific that it constrains supporting plans and actions. Failure to adhere to this precept places grand strategy at risk. Micromanaging from the top staunches initiative and responsibility for problem-solving at lower levels. Under a cloud of micromanagement, subordinate commands exercise little responsibility for seeking optimal solutions; rather they focus on implementing directives to the letter. More problematic, senior policymakers risk becoming so involved in subordinate activities, they lose sight of the larger picture.

Under Eisenhower's leadership, national security policy provided broad strategic guidance, placing responsibility on the government bureaucracy to seek suitable solutions according to local conditions. The charge that presidential policy statements were so broad that subordinate agencies could interpret them however they wished is really without foundation. The NSC did not develop policy as laissez faire edicts from above; rather, a key facet of the OCB was to clarify policy questions from the full spectrum of implementing agencies, even those in the field (i.e., embassies and theater commands). Moreover, through the OCB, implementing agencies provided feedback for Planning Board or NSC for policy adjustments. Goodpaster put Eisenhower's

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Rusk, "The Secretary of State," in *The National Security Council: Jackson Subcommittee Papers on Policy-Making at the Presidential Level*, ed. Senator Henry M. Jackson (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, 1965), 268. Cutler, "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," 120.

[289] As Goodpaster recalled, Eisenhower attributed this quotation to von Moltke the elder. Andrew Goodpaster, "Foreword," in Bowie and Immerman, vii; Greenstein cited a similar Eisenhower quote: "Rely on planning, but never trust plans." Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 133.

[290] Cited in Sander, 110.

approach to executive management this way:

> His method of operating is to take broad policy questions, make his decision, give a direction, and then not only let people work within that scope and in that direction, but see that they did so, that is, insist that they move strongly with their specific operations within the broad course of policy that he had laid out. . . . He would spend great amounts of time looking ahead, deliberating in quite specific detail, in great depth, on these policies. But once he had formed them, and had approved them and specified them, he then expected the government to adhere to them, and his secretaries, heads of departments, to operate in that way, unless they came back to him or unless he had a review of policy, which he did periodically, and re-oriented it, modified it in some way.[291]

Separating policy from operations went beyond delegation of responsibility. The logic of strategic thinking demands that policy, strategy, and planning remain distinct activities. Pointing out a common error of past Administrations, Yarger contends that "mixing the three without understanding the distinctions, policymakers, strategists, and national security professionals at all levels have produced neither good policy nor good strategy."[292] Yarger explains that the main difference between a policy and plans lies in the amount of detail. Policy deals with strategic concepts that protect or promote national interests, meaning they are sufficiently broad and flexible to guide lower strategy. Plans are more specific, identifying specific goals, supporting strategies, and necessary capabilities, aligned with the strategic concept and strategic objective. Yarger warns that national security policymakers, who succumb to the lure of crafting specific plans or allow the elevation of an operational objective to the strategic level, place flexibility and sustainment of a policy at risk.[293]

Eisenhower's emphasis on the policy planning process reflected a keen appreciation of

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[291] Drawing on his experiences as Allied Supreme Commander, Eisenhower brought forward those executive techniques he thought appropriate to the Presidency, expecting his chief of staff "to observe and watch and bring to him, bring to his attention, any problems that might be arising, or any need for him to invigorate any of his chief subordinates." Goodpaster Interview, (OH-37), DDEL, 30-31.

[292] Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional*, 3.

[293] Ibid, 8-11, 140-144.

Chief Executive policy and national security strategy formulation. The intent was not to create specific strategic plans but to develop broad guidance for the development of nested plans within the Departments of Defense and State. As Yarger notes, the distinction is essential to managing the strategic environment (VUCA). Accordingly, interagency expertise and integration of viewpoints are essential to frame complex policy issues into an intelligible problem set. Because causational relationships cannot be accurately predicted, policy actions can have multi-ordered effects and change the strategic environment in unintended and often undesirable ways. As the various echelons of government develop plans based on policy guidance, VUCA becomes more manageable and results more predictable.[294] Eisenhower's NSC mechanism mirrored this process by infusing the government bureaucracy with the President's vision, guidance, and priorities.

Eisenhower well understood that policy is a matter of setting priorities due to limited resources and funding. Established policy serves as a guidepost to limit the tendency towards ad hoc decisions that over time, following a series of immediate cause-and-effect remedies, can result in foreign policy distractions, unintended consequences, inconsistency in foreign affairs, and even self-imposed crises. Eisenhower's policies protected and nurtured America's strategic strengths—a powerful economy, free enterprise, and the spiritual strength of a free people. As long as these strengths remained unfettered, they formed an indomitable combination for enduring democracy.

In the Eisenhower NSC system, the relationship among policy, strategy, and planning became dynamic, undergoing iterative refinement as officials worked through issues at each level. The policy planning process brought greater order, discipline, and clarity to the government bureaucracy as well as clarifying the distinction between planning and plans. This distinction ex-

[294] Ibid, 39-45, 158-159.

plains why the Joint Chiefs of Staff representative on the Planning Board was not actively engaged in national security policy formulation, other than providing insights of JCS views on issues in the draft policy papers. The JCS reserved its remarks until relevant draft policy papers were published, providing the NSC with the military implications of policy. Of critical importance to the military was the NSC publication of unambiguous, consistent national policy and strategy from which the lower departmental echelons could develop subordinate strategies. It was under this system that the military thrived as a contributor to national security. As retired General Douglas Kinnard assessed, the NSC planning process

> promoted a healthy interaction among the agencies and departments concerned with strategic policy. It forced appropriate officials to confront major issues of national security and to evaluate the options. Whether the procedures were too elaborate or there was too much paper, as I frequently alleged, is not of much importance. Eisenhower had a use for the NSC, but it was not the use that his critics thought. The NSC they wanted was, in effect, already in action in the Oval Room.[295]

The Basic National Security Policy

The embodiment of Eisenhower's NSC policy formulation process was the Basic National Security Policy, which served as the foundational policy for all subordinate strategies.[296] Uncertain of the Soviet Union's designs after the death of Stalin in March 1953 and the policy disagreements arising from the Administration's initial National Security Policy (NSC 149/2, 29 April 1953),[297] Eisenhower met informally with key advisers Foster and Allen Dulles, George

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[295] Cited in Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 134.

[296] For a comprehensive rendering of the BNSP development, see Bowie and Immerman, *Waging Peace* and Meena Bose, *Shaping and Signaling Presidential Policy*, 19-41.

[297] Report to the Nationals Security Council by Executive Secretary (Lay), "NSC 149/2," 29 April 1953, accessed on the website of Department of State Office of the Historian (DOSOH), Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v02p1/pg_305, 12 February 2014; NSC 149/2 was basically a continuation of the Truman Administration's NSC 20/4, which reflected George Kennan's long-term Containment strategy. While Truman approved the conclusions and recommendations of NSC 68 in September 1950, it remained a contentious document. As chairman of the State Department's Policy Planning Board,

Humphrey, Bedell Smith, C.D. Jackson, and Cutler in the White House Solarium on 8 May 1953 to discuss East-West relations. In the course of the discussion, Eisenhower proposed the formation of an exercise to "analyze competing national strategies for dealing with the Soviet Union." According to Robert Bowie, Eisenhower proposed the subject areas of "continuation of containment; drawing the line, as it was described, in which you said to the Soviets, if you use any method of getting beyond your present area, you're going to have a fight. We'll resist it very strongly; and finally, rollback." Thus was born Project Solarium.[298]

Aside from the general desire to reexamine national security policy, Eisenhower had three ulterior objectives with the Solarium exercise. Foremost, he wanted to "provide a counter to his secretary of state's pessimism and more unilateralist proposals," in particular Dulles' public statements that America "regain the foreign policy initiative, seek a free, democratic, and unified Germany, and even 'roll back' communist control from Eastern Europe."[299] At the same time, Eisenhower wanted to dispense with the service chiefs' obsession with the "date of maximum danger" to which he never subscribed.[300] Second, he sought to "bring together some of the best thinkers and most experienced individuals to explore dispassionately and free from public

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Kennan felt NSC 68 was an over-reaction to the Soviet threat, practically recommending the United States assume an open-ended military-industrial mobilization. Stuart, 128-130, 236-241; *George F. Kennan and the Origins of Eisenhower's New Look: An Oral History of Project Solarium*, ed. William B. Pickett, Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies, Monograph Series 1, Princeton University, 2004, 3, 28.

[298] Earlier, Foster Dulles had expressed pessimism about the efficacy of NSC 149/2 containing the Soviet Union, which prompted Eisenhower to consider a study exercise. Robert R. Bowie, Foreign Affairs Oral History Project, Interview by *Interviewed by: Robert Gerald Livingston, Philipp Gassert, Richard Immerman, Paul Steege, Charles Stuart Kennedy*, February 18, 2008, The National Archives And Records Service Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, accessed on the website of The Association For Diplomatic Studies And Training at http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Bowie-Robert-R.2008.pdf, 11 October 2013, 15; Bose, 29; Bowie and Immerman, 123-125.

[299] Bowie believed that Eisenhower wanted "to bury the rollback idea," but the idea was bandied about during the presidential campaign, particularly by the press. "He wanted to make that clearly a thing of the past and finish it." *George F. Kennan and the Origins of Eisenhower's New Look: An Oral History of Project Solarium*, 2-3, 10, 24, 30; David Rothkopf noted the tremendous pressure on Eisenhower to adopt a policy of "liberation" (i.e., rollback) to demonstrate greater resolve against Soviet Communism. Rothkopf, 64.

[300] Rothkopf, 69.

scrutiny and comment the three most feasible approaches for the desired policy outcome." With access to the full array of intelligence, team members could debate among themselves and the other teams during the preparation phase and then argue their positions in front of the Council. In short, he wanted to educate the participants on the issues at stake.[301] Finally,

> the Solarium exercise served important administrative purposes—enabling Eisenhower to learn from and to brief his newly appointed national security officials and providing a common awareness of his purposes and expectations, a starting point for policy deliberations, and guidelines for action in the event of a crisis.[302]

Eisenhower directed the formation of an NSC working committee (Robert Cutler, Bedell Smith, and Allen Dulles) to select a panel of five experts, provide the President's guidance regarding the terms of reference, select the members of the three teams, and specify the parameters of each alternative for study.[303] Accordingly, each team would study its assigned alternative strategy

> with a real belief in it just the way a good advocate tackles a law case—and then when the teams are prepared, each should put on in some White House room, with maps, charts, all the basic supporting figures and estimates, just what each alternative would mean in terms of goal, risk, cost in money and men and world relations.[304]

Cutler articulated Eisenhower's guidance, including the general terms of reference for each alternative, in a memorandum for record, dated 9 May 1953, titled "Project Solarium." The general terms of reference specified for each team

> to seek out all the factors that would go into planning a major campaign: forces needed; costs in manpower, dollars, casualties, world relations; intelligence estimates; timetables; tactics in every other part of the world while actions were being taken in a specific area; relations with the UN and our Allies; disposition of an area after gaining a victory

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[301] *George F. Kennan and the Origins of Eisenhower's New Look: An Oral History of Project Solarium*, 11-12, 30.

[302] Ibid, 10.

[303] *Memorandum for the Record by the* Special Assistant *to the President for National Security Affairs (*Cutler*), "Project Solarium," 9 May 1953,* accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v02p1/d62, 18 April 2012.

[304] Cited in Bowie and Immerman, 125.

therein; influencing world opinion; [and] Congressional action required.[305]

The panel of five experts—the Doolittle Committee—(General James Doolittle—chairman, Robert Amory, Lieutenant General Lyman Lemnitzer, Dean Rusk, and Admiral Leslie C. Stevens) drafted the "precise and detailed terms of reference for each alternative:"[306]

> (1) To maintain over a sustained period armed forces to provide for the security of the United States and to assist in the defense of vital areas of the free world; (2) To continue to assist in the building up the economic and military strength and cohesion of the free world; and (3) Without materially increasing the risk of general war, to continue to exploit the vulnerabilities of the Soviets and their satellites by political, economic and psychological means.[307]

Eisenhower took particular interest in the selection process. In a memorandum to Foster Dulles, Eisenhower outlined the expertise he sought for each team's membership:

> The exploration and presentation of Alternative "A" requires intimate understanding of the past policies and actions of the United States, the rest of the free world, and of the U.S.S.R., and broad gauge political, military, economic and psychological planning for the future. . . .The exploration of Alternative "B" requires an intimate knowledge of Communist reactions and methods; sound political and military judgement both regarding the Communist orbit and the free world; knowledge of United States military capabilities to wage general war, including the use of unconventional weapons; ability to evaluate the economic capability of the United States and the rest of the free world to support the alternative. . . . The Task Force working on Alternative "C" should include imaginative military, political, psychological and subversive planning experience; profound experience on Soviet-Communist actions and reactions; knowledge of the military situation in Korea and Soviet Satellite areas; and ability to evaluate the economic resources required to follow such a course.[308]

The President personally enlisted the services of the National War College for its facilities, staff and administrative support, and temporary assignment of additional senior officers in support of

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[305] *Memorandum for the Record by the* Special Assistant *to the President for National Security Affairs (Cutler), "Project Solarium."*

[306] Cited in Bowie and Immerman, 125-126; Bose, 30.

[307] *Memorandum for the Record by the Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs (Cutler), "Solarium," 15 May 1953,* accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v02p1/d64, 12 February, 2014.

[308] *Memorandum by the* President *to the* Secretary of State, "Project Solarium," May 20, 1953, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v02p1/d66, 12 February, 2014.

Solarium. Naturally, strict secrecy complete with a cover story was mandated to give the teams time for study and *reflection*.[309] Completing its task on 1 June 1953, the Doolittle Committee provided the teams with National Intelligence Estimate No. 65 (along with supplemental intelligence and studies) and the terms of reference memorandum, which included 15 framework questions, assumptions, and each team's policy alternatives for study.[310]

Before the exercise commenced, Eisenhower shaped public opinion on national security policy with a national radio and television address on 19 May 1953. Similar to the themes expressed in his Inaugural Address and State of the Union message (among other speeches), Eisenhower stressed that national security policy must reflect a patient, steadfast commitment to a long-term strategy rather than reacting impulsively to every perceived threat. He warned that attempts to create complete national security would require substantial mobilization, the effects of which would create a garrison state mentality. In his judgment, a balanced military with sufficient force ceilings and alliances would provide the necessary security for an enduring defense. He concluded that his Administration would remain dedicated to deterring war rather than warfighting—a theme which has always resonated with Americans.[311]

From early June to mid-July, the three study teams developed their alternative strategies making their presentations to the NSC on 16 July 1953.[312] Team A, led by George Kennan, used NSC 153/1 (Restatement of National Security Policy, 10 June 1953) as the base document for

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[309] Ibid.

[310] National Intelligence Estimate, "NIE-65: Soviet Bloc Capabilities Through 1957," June 16, 1953, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v08/d599, 23 February 2014; Paper Prepared by the Directing Panel of Project Solarium, "Project Solarium," 1 June 1953, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v02p1/d68, 19 April 2012.

[311] Jean Edward Smith, 641.

[312] Bowie and Immerman, 127.

analysis, which was a revision of the containment strategy.[313] Vice Admiral Richard Conolly's Team B studied the line-in-the-sand strategy, identifying the countries around the Soviet Union, to which the United States would respond to Soviet aggression.[314] Finally, Team C under Major General James McCormack looked at the more assertive rollback strategy,[315] forcing the Soviet Union onto the defensive and providing a sense of success against Communism in the free world.[316] Eisenhower was impressed by the staff work and team presentations stating they were the best and most persuasive arguments he had ever experienced. According to Bowie, "No president before or after Eisenhower . . . ever received such a systematic and focused briefing on the threats facing the nation's security and the possible strategies for coping with them."[317]

At the end of the meeting, Eisenhower provided his strategic guidance for the preparation of

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[313] Referencing NSC 20/4, NSC 68, NSC 135/3, and NSC 149/2, the NSC Planning Board drafted NSC 153/1, which synthesized and superseded the previous policies. *Memorandum by the Director of the Policy Planning Staff (*Bowie*) to the* Secretary of State, June 8, 1953, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v02p1/d70; *Memorandum of Discussion at the 149th Meeting of the National Security Council, Tuesday, June 9, 1953, June 9, 1953*, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v02p1/d72*; Report to the* National Security Council *by the Executive Secretary (*Lay*),* "NSC 153/1: Restatement of Basic National Security Policy," June 10, 1953, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v02p1/d73. Accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS, 12 February 2014.

[314] The terms of reference for Team B: "(1) To complete the line now drawn in the NATO area and the Western Pacific so as to form a continuous line around the Soviet bloc beyond which the U.S. will not permit Soviet or satellite military forces to advance without general war; (2) To make clear to the Soviet rulers in an appropriate and unmistakable way that the U.S. has established and determined to carry out this policy; and (3) To reserve freedom of action, in the event of indigenous Communist seizure of power in countries on our side of the line, to take all measures necessary to re-establish a situation compatible with the security interests of the U.S. and its allies." Cited in Bowie and Immerman, 126; Bose, 30.

[315] The rollback idea dated back to the Truman Administration's NSC-68. Rollback advocated the "retraction of Soviet power, particularly in the Soviet Empire in Eastern Europe." NSC-68 never articulated how to accomplish this, only prescribing "predominance across the board and military power." In view of the Soviet nuclear arsenal, Eisenhower was not convinced that rollback would result in liberation of Eastern Europe, assessing containment coupled with avowed support for Eastern European desires for freedom would create the conditions for "discontent and the . . . dissolution with the Soviet System" peacefully. Interview with Bowie, Episode 7: After Stalin.

[316] The terms of reference for Team C: "(1) To increase efforts to disturb and weaken the Soviet bloc and to accelerate the consolidation and strengthening of the free world" and "(2) To create the maximum disruption and popular resistance throughout the Soviet Bloc." The Doolittle Committee revealed this course of action carried a high risk of igniting a general war. It declined to craft a fourth alternative, which was a preventive war strategy. Soviet advancements with nuclear weapons made this alternative problematic. Cited in Bowie and Immerman, 126; Bose, 30-31; According to Bowie, Eisenhower put Goodpaster on the rollback panel because "he wanted to be sure that somebody had good sense." Bowie Interview, February 18, 2008, ADST, 15.

[317] Cited in Bowie and Immerman, 127; Bose, 33.

the Basic National Security Policy: foremost, "He thought that the only thing worse than losing a global war was winning one; that there would be no individual freedom after the next global war." He felt that attempting to maintain a mobilization strategy for general war (as proposed by NSC-68) would require increasing amounts of government control and "the more you do this, the more you lose the individual liberty which you are trying to save and become a garrison state (American model)." He reminded the Council that in the aftermath of a war, Americans are traditionally disinclined to maintain an enduring occupation: "What would we do with Russia, if we should win in a global war?" He emphasized that U.S. grand strategy required the backing of allies, particularly since they provided the forward bases in their territories. Lastly, Eisenhower related that "if we are to obtain more money in taxes, there must be a vigorous campaign to educate the people—and to educate the people of our allies."[318] Of significance, two issues were finally dispensed with as a result of Solarium—rollback and the year of maximum danger—and Eisenhower achieved these ends through the deliberative process rather than resorting to a policy edict.[319]

After listening to Eisenhower speak extemporaneously for 45 minutes on the essential points of the Solarium presentations, George Kennan noted that he

> spoke, I must say, with a mastery of the subject matter and a thoughtfulness and a penetration that were quite remarkable. I came away with the conviction (which I have carried to this day) that President Eisenhower was a much more intelligent man than he was given credit for being. . . . [He] showed in doing [the summation] his intellectual ascendancy over every man in the room on these issues.[320]

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[318] *Minutes of the 155th Meeting of the National Security Council, Thursday, July 16, 1953,* accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v02p1/d78, 12 February 2014.

[319] Rothkopf, 72.

[320] Cited in Bose, 32-33; See also Bowie and Immerman, 137; Interview with Robert Bowie, Episode 7: After Stalin, accessed on the website of The National Security Archive: Cold War, The George Washington University at http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/coldwar/interviews/episode-7/bowie21.html, 3 July 2009.

Rothkopf concluded that "the Solarium Project therefore was not just the work of a good executive or a master bureaucrat or even a canny politician; it was a magisterial illustration of an effective president in action, perhaps one of the signal events of the past sixty years of the American presidency."[321]

At the end of the meeting, Eisenhower instructed Cutler to have the NSC special staff and the Planning Board integrate the primary parts of all three reports into a draft policy paper as a starting point for NSC discussion. Eisenhower made it clear to the assembled NSC advisers and staffers that the Solarium exercise was not an end in itself but "only as input to making strategy."[322] The concept paper titled "Proposed New Basic Concept," rendered the three presentations into five key components for NSC study:

> (1) "capability for a strong retaliatory offensive, a base for mobilization, and continental defense;" (2) creating strong, friendly groupings "centered on Western Europe (including [West] Germany) and on Japan in the Far East;" (3) restricting U.S. foreign aid to such groupings and designated other free nations; (4) defining where Soviet bloc aggression would trigger general war; and (5) taking "selected aggressive actions of a limited scope, involving moderately increased risks of general war, to eliminate Soviet-dominated areas within the free world and to reduce Soviet power in the Satellite periphery." After receiving initial comments on this paper, Cutler returned to the Planning Board, presenting a paper titled "Points for Consideration in Drafting New Policy."[323]

"The overall aim of the policy, Cutler made explicit, was to create a 'climate of victory . . . while forcing the Soviet bloc on the defensive.'"[324] Thus, began the policy planning process in earnest.

The development of the Basic National Security Policy spanned from 30 July to 30 October 1953 with the adoption of NSC 162/2. Resolving policy splits involving defense spending,

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[321] Rothkopf, 71-72.

[322] Bowie Interview, February 18, 2008, ADST, 15.

[323] Bowie and Immerman, 139; For the consolidated report see *Memorandum to the National Security Council by the Executive Secretary (Lay), "Project Solarium," July 22, 1953,* accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v02p1/d79, 12 February 2014.

[324] Bowie and Immerman, 140.

threats to the economy, reducing the Soviet threat, redeploying U.S. forces abroad, and reducing foreign assistance were the central issues for NSC discussions. Political scientist Mena Bose noted that NSC 162/2 was an amalgam of the best features of the three study teams: it confirmed Team A's framework of containment to resist Soviet aggression and domination of countries outside of its sphere, but it would not interfere with Soviet internal political and economic structures; while it rejected Team B's circumscribed line as a statement of U.S. policy, it did advocate the use of military force to include nuclear weapons against Soviet military aggression in Europe; and it adopted Team C's use of propaganda and covert actions to "exploit Soviet problems and complicate governance in Soviet-dominated countries."[325]

Even with the completion of NSC 162/2, policy splits continued to arise in discussions, signifying that though NSC 162/2 was accepted policy, the NSC continued to seek improvements through subsequent security policies and reviews. Mena Bose also noted that the intense debates exemplified Alexander George's multiple advocacy for policy formulation and that Cutler clearly acted as a "'custodian-manager' . . . clarifying points when needed, redirecting debate when it diverged, and ensuring that the council considered each area of disagreement." Bose noted that the point of the Solarium exercise and subsequent debate was to sharpen Eisenhower's thinking on the new strategy as well as garnering acceptance of it within the Administration.[326]

It bears noting that development of the Basic National Security Policy occurred as the United States began demobilization following the Korean War armistice on 27 July 1953. From his experiences as Chief of Staff of the Army during the precipitous post-World War II demobi-

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[325] Bose, 39; Bowie said that Eisenhower placed great worth in covert action and propaganda against Soviet Eastern European satellites and in countries where the Soviets were trying to extend their influence. Covert action was not used against the Soviet Union directly. Interview with Bowie, Episode 7: After Stalin.

[326] Bose, 34-41; Bowie and Immerman, 144-146; Newton, 128-129; Huntington, 65; Ambrose, *Eisenhower: The President*. Kindle e-book.

lization, Eisenhower wanted a gradual, measured, and balanced restructuring of the military forces to address actual Cold War threats rather than fear-based assessments. While acknowledging the Soviet military threat, Eisenhower assessed the economic impact of maintaining a large military as more significant. Paraphrasing Eisenhower, Samuel Huntington noted,

> The Soviet leaders hoped . . . that their military threat would force upon the United States "an unbearable security burden leading to economic disaster.". . . American security rested "not upon the military establishment alone but rather on two pillars—military strength in being and economic strength based on a flourishing economy."[327]

Hence, the size and composition of the U.S. armed forces would be based on a rationally derived Basic National Security Policy, and not political parochialism or fear. Accordingly, during the Eisenhower Presidency, the military gradually dropped from 3.4 million to 2.6 million personnel: the Army dropped to 860,000 (14 divisions and18 regimental combat teams); the Marine Corps fell to 190,000 (three divisions and air wings); the Navy dropped to 645,000 (1,030 ships); and the Air Force fell to 850,000 (120 air wings). To add depth to the total force, the Ready Reserve forces increased to 2.9 million by 1960.[328]

Known popularly as the "New Look," the new policy was a "horizontal analysis," aligning national security requirements with necessary military capabilities, without regard to service parochialism. The analysis included nuclear retaliatory forces, deployed forces overseas, forces to keep the sea lanes open, forces to protect the United States from air attack, and reserve forces. Eisenhower explained that this reallocation of resources rationalized national defense.[329]

According to Huntington, the New Look comprised five pillars: continental defense, con-

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[327] Huntington, 66.

[328] Richard M. Leighton, *History of the Office of the Secretary of Defense*, vol. 3, *Strategy, Money, and the New Look 1953-1956*, ed. Alfred Goldberg (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 172, 182-183, 331; Watson, 142; Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 452; Smith, *Eisenhower in War and Peace*, 643; Huntington, 71, 75-76, 79, 81; Russell F. Weigley, History of the United States Army (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1967), 569.

[329] Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 449-451.

ventional land forces, nuclear weapons, reserve forces and strategic airpower. Continental defense served as "the principal counter-balance to the future strength of the Soviet strategic air force," so air defense received particular attention. Regarding the reduction in ground forces, the Administration sought to avoid entanglements in limited wars, like Korea, and refused to compete with the Soviet supremacy in ground forces. Instead it would exploit U.S. advantages in sea- and airpower, particularly strategic bombers, while encouraging its allies to focus on ground forces. "Tactical nuclear weapons, ready reserve forces, [and] nuclear airpower" would provide strategic depth. Since nuclear weapons were integral to the Basic National Security Policy, Eisenhower made it clear he expected their inclusion in plans at all levels, and budgets would be based on their existence. Ground force reductions were balanced by a larger Ready Reserve bolstered by Universal Military Training and mobilization. The Administration reduced Truman's mobilization base, since general war with nuclear weapons would be relatively short, and mobilization would not become a factor. Hence, the military would fight with existing equipment.[330]

The evolution of the Soviet nuclear arsenal and foreign policy required the NSC to review and revise the Basic National Security Policy annually.[331] As a consequence of these reviews along with the Killian, von Neumann, and Gaither Committees reports, the NSC revised NSC 162/2 with NSC 5810/1 (5 May 1958), and finally with NSC 5906/1 (3 December 1959), each showing the evolution of strategy as the strategic environment changed.[332] Each Basic Na-

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[330] Huntington, 78-84, 97-98.

[331] NSC Special Staffer George Weber recorded nine editions of the BNSP during the Eisenhower Administration: 149/2, 153/1, 162/2, 5422/2, 5501, 5602/1, 5707/8, 5810/1, and 5906/1. Memorandum for Mr. Bundy and Mr. Rostow, "The Output of the NSC in the Eight Years of the Eisenhower Administration, January 27, 1961, Papers of the President, National Security Files, Departments & Agencies, Box 283, National Security Council, General 1/61-2/61, JFKL.

[332] A Report of the National Security Council: Basic National Security Policy, *"NSC 162/2," October 30, 1953,* accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v02p1/d100, 23 September 2011; A Report of the National Security Council: Basic National Security Policy, "NSC 5810/1," May

tional Security Policy affirmed the Soviet and Chinese communist threats, which were devoting significant military and economic power towards a goal of expansion. Each policy acknowledged the growth of the Soviet nuclear arsenal, but underscored the U.S. unequivocal commitment to deterrence as an appropriate response. Policy threat assessments concluded that the Soviets did not seek to start a general war and were intent on continuing political division and subversion of the free world. NSC 162/2 judged that deterring Soviet designs would profit the United States in the long run as the Soviet regime experienced "the slackening of revolutionary zeal, the growth of vested managerial and bureaucratic interests, and popular pressures for consumption goods . . . [as well as] the growing strength of the free world and the failure to break its cohesion and possible aggravation of weaknesses within the Soviet bloc." The expectation was that successful containment would ameliorate Soviet behavior or it would collapse from its inherent contradictions. While NSC 5810/1 acknowledged nuclear parity was inevitable, it specifically rejected preventive war as a means of forestalling such parity, implying it contradicted Western strategic values. Instead, it regarded non-military initiatives, such as arms control, as more pragmatic. NSC 5906/1 noted that future conflicts were more likely in underdeveloped countries, so the United States needed appropriate means to prevent or keep them from escalating. Here, economic and military assistance received greater attention.[333]

Bowie later recalled that the Administration did not "anticipate the disintegration of the Soviet Union but never the less we concluded that the various internal pressures within the Soviet Union would cause the ultimate decay of the Empire and of their ideological thrust for expan-

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5 1958, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v03/d24, 23 September 2011; National Security Council Report, "NSC 5906/1," December 3, 1959, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v03/d70, 30 November 2012.

[333] NSC 162/2, 2, 4; NSC 5810/1, 2, 4, 8; NSC 5906/1, 7-9.

sion." The Administration

> assumed there would be a loss of the ideological fervour [*sic*] that there would be much more of a growth of managerial interests and that the consumer pressures for goods and services would not be able to be met and that containment itself which would prevent their carrying forward their expansion, would have a certain effect with inside. But the basic idea was that the system itself was not long term viable and that the ideology itself was somewhat self defeating because the citizens or people while they didn't have that much influence on the regime, would nevertheless [experience] the loss of their support and their dissolution would ultimately have effects.[334]

Each policy formally recognized that maintaining the trinity of a vibrant economy, free institutions, and the spiritual strength of the American people was a national security imperative (NSC 5810/1 sought to extend this trinity to other free world states).[335] While controversy erupted over the Massive Retaliation aspects of the New Look, the policy was actually intellectually agile.[336] NSC 162/2 stated that the defense of the free world would depend on maintaining a

> strong military posture, with emphasis on the capability of inflicting massive retaliatory damage by offensive striking power . . . U.S. and allied forces in readiness to move rapidly initially to counter aggression by Soviet bloc forces and to hold vital areas and lines of communication . . . and a mobilization base, and its protection against crippling damage, adequate to insure victory in the event of general war.[337]

Thus, defense did not rely exclusively on nuclear weapons; rather it would be a joint venture. Incidentally, Eisenhower originally intended that Massive Retaliation apply only to Europe so as to bolster deterrence there—not everywhere. Nevertheless, he later found it convenient to create

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[334] Interview with Robert Bowie, Episode 7: After Stalin, 1.

[335] NSC 162/2, 6, 14-16, 17; NSC 5810/1, 3, 9-12.

[336] Critics often pointed to Dulles' highlighting massive retaliation in his speeches and articles against Communist aggression as proof he was driving policy. In reality, while Eisenhower placed great trust and sweeping responsibilities on Dulles, he alone ultimately determined policy and strategy, as reflected in the BNSP and during crises. Sometimes Eisenhower had to rein in Dulles over his pugnacious rhetoric. Adams, *Firsthand Report*, 88-89; Ambrose, *Eisenhower: The President*. Kindle e-book.

[337] NSC 162/2, 5.

ambiguity regarding the use of nuclear weapons elsewhere.[338]

Eisenhower recognized the limitations of the nuclear arsenal, especially once the Soviet Union reached nuclear parity. Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Arleigh Burke recalled the President addressing the issue once with the Joint Chiefs of Staff with an allusion to flexible response: "We've got to have a military force that can handle any situation. And that means, in a small situation we've got to have the proper equipment and proper plans to it, and it doesn't mean that we will have to launch for everything."[339]

Accordingly, NSC 5810/1 addressed the need "to place main, but not sole, reliance on nuclear weapons; to integrate nuclear weapons with other weapons in the arsenal . . . to consider them as conventional weapons from a military point of view . . . to provide flexible and selective capabilities for general or limited war, as may be required to achieve national objectives." Of significance, even Foster Dulles, while discussing the revision of NSC 162/2, noted that changes in the strategic environment required less emphasis on nuclear deterrence and more on the capability to counter aggression at the lowest levels.[340] Signaling a shift from massive retaliation, NSC 5810/1 underscored the need for a *flexible response*, in which U.S. military readiness would

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[338] In regards to the famous Dulles speech on Massive Retaliation, Bowie said it was Eisenhower who had written the sentence, not Dulles. He had not intended it to mean Massive Retaliation would be used everywhere. Interview with Robert Bowie, Episode 7: After Stalin.

[339] Under this larger issue was Eisenhower's argument with the Air Force to modify bombers to carry both nuclear and conventional bombs for added flexibility. The Air Force resisted the idea since it wanted to retain the mission as a strategic force. Arleigh A. Burke, Oral History Interview with Arleigh A. Burke: 2 of 4, Interview by John T. Mason Jr., Columbia Oral History Interview, November 14 1972 (OH-284), DDEL, 71-72.

[340] NSC 5810/1, 4; Memorandum for the Record, "Meeting in the Office of the Secretary of Defense," 7 April 1958, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v03/d18, 30 November 2012; See also Study on "graduated deterrence" Letter From the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Cutler) to Secretary of State Dulles, April 7, 1958, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v03/d19, 30 November 2012 and Paper by the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Cutler), "Major Factors Influencing Review Of Basic Policy," May 1, 1958, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v03/d22, 30 November 2012.

serve to deter local threats. If deterrence failed, "highly mobile and suitably deployed" U.S. expeditionary forces in conjunction with indigenous and allied forces would defeat local aggression. Thus, military planning must provide "a flexible and selective capability . . . required to oppose local aggression . . . in a manner and on a scale best calculated to avoid hostilities from broadening into general war."[341]

The final Basic National Security Policy, NSC 5906/1 refined and clarified the use of flexible response to "oppose local aggression." Military planning would identify U.S., interested allied, and indigenous "ready forces" to deter or defeat locale aggression quickly. Noteworthy, local aggression would not apply to Europe since incidents of "incursions, infiltrations and hostile local actions, involving the United States and the USSR, are covered by the NATO political directive and strategic concept."[342]

The Solarium Exercise and the evolution of the Basic National Security Policy reflected Eisenhower's practice of strategic thinking. Using critical thinking, he questioned the utility of Truman's mobilization strategy for a long ideological struggle, and Foster Dulles' rollback strategy to push the Soviet Union out of Eastern Europe. Solarium demonstrated his desire to keep an open mind, and the analysis of the three study teams helped him examine the strengths and weaknesses of the competing strategies, to include the multi-ordered effects of each. Accordingly, Eisenhower used the exercise to articulate the strategic goal, an effective strategy, and supporting capabilities, and he used the formulation of the Basic National Security Policy to debate

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[341] NSC 5810/1, 5; While not the only critic of the New Look, General Maxwell Taylor deserves stricture on his book which extolled Flexible Response. Intentional or not, he mischaracterized the BNSP since the Administration could not refute his version without revealing classified information. Maxwell D. Taylor, *The Uncertain Trumpet* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1960).

[342] National Security Council Report, "NSC 5906/1," August 5, 1959, accessed on the website of the U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v03/d70, 30 November 2012.

(and persuade others of) the merits of U.S. defense posture. Further, the planning process remained dynamic as illustrated by the iterative revisions of the policy. He integrated systems thinking into the policy by emphasizing the interdependence of the strategic environment (VUCA) and underscoring the strength of the free world through alliances, free trade, and mutual cooperation against communist challenges. In pursuing creative thinking, Eisenhower sought to reduce the probability of a general war with the Soviet Union through nuclear deterrence, arms control talks, and an adequate, unprovocative defense posture. Subsequent policies included the need for flexible response to counter local aggression swiftly as well as economic and security cooperation with third world countries in order to frustrate Soviet incursions. Thinking in time, Eisenhower noted that the world wars were a result of miscalculation, either out of fear or perceptions of enemy resolve. His strategy sought to ensure the Soviets did not miscalculate by publicly committing the United States to collective defense and nuclear deterrence. At the same time, the strategy sought to avoid alarming the Soviets, hence the rejection of the rollback strategy. Time was on the U.S. side, so avoiding a major war was imperative. He infused the Basic National Security Policy with ethical thinking, upholding international rule of law through the UN, U.S. security obligations to allies and friends, and rejecting preventive war with the Soviet Union before it reached nuclear parity. As an embodiment of Eisenhower's strategic thinking, the Basic National Security Policy served to avoid extreme measures in the heat of the moment.

The U.S. grand strategic goal was to prevail over the Soviet Union, avoiding a general war in a long-term struggle. For his strategy, Eisenhower chose containment, encircling the Soviet Union with allies to resist Soviet aggression along the periphery. In support of his strategy, Eisenhower selected nuclear deterrence, supplemented by acceptable, balanced conventional

forces and alliances. Further, he authorized the use of propaganda to hamper Soviet control of its satellites as well as covert operations outside of the Soviet sphere to counter communist intrusions in vulnerable states. As the Soviet threat evolved, the Administration devoted more capabilities to vulnerable states with security cooperation and flexible response. Ultimately, Eisenhower's grand strategy protected and nurtured U.S. centers of gravity: free enterprise, democratic institutions, and the spiritual strength of the American people.

Controversies

Despite the logic of the Basic National Security Policy, Eisenhower was forced to defend it throughout his two terms. The service chiefs deplored the conventional force reductions in pursuit of nuclear deterrence, charging that massive retaliation limited U.S. national security options. Enlisting the support of a few congressmen and journalists, the service chiefs waged a campaign for both large conventional and nuclear forces. Some scientists urged greater production of nuclear weapons, ballistic missiles, and testing. Eisenhower persistently argued that such large forces in being would be exorbitantly expensive over time, result in an arms race, and foster a garrison state mentality. He reasoned that the size of U.S. ground forces was sufficient to fight and win small wars and warned against "seeing danger behind every tree or bush," with an unwarranted fear of threats driving strategy. He refused to turn America into an armed camp in a myopic quest of absolute security.[343]

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[343] Ambrose, *Eisenhower: The President*. Kindle e-book; Matthew B. Ridgeway and Harold H. Martin, *Soldier: The Memoirs of Matthew B. Ridgeway* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956), 272-273, 288, 290-294, 319; Maxwell D. Taylor, *The Uncertain Trumpet* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1960), 29-30, 37, Chapter IV, passim; A. J. Bacevich, and Lawrence F. Kaplan, *Generals versus the President: Eisenhower and the Army, 1953-`955, A Case in Civil Military Relations*, National Security Studies (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University and Johns Hopkins University, 1997); Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 451-454; Watson, 137-138, 306.

Illustrative of the defense community's constant clamor for increased weaponry, the 24 April 1958 NSC revealed Eisenhower's skepticism with the Defense Department's nuclear missile programs. He questioned the utility of fielding more intercontinental and medium range nuclear ballistic missiles before tests had perfected the systems. Further, advances in technology would likely make them (and bombers) obsolete within a few years and "warned that we could not let our defense programs pyramid simply because we had once established these programs." He objected to the Defense Department's proclivity for more weapons without regard to the economy:

> We are now beginning to think of aircraft as becoming obsolescent, and so it is also with first-generation ballistic missiles. Despite this, we are going ahead full steam on the production both of aircraft and first-generation ballistic missiles. . . . Accordingly, it would seem that we must anticipate some very hard thinking if in four or five years' time we are to avoid presenting a bill to the public for these military programs which will create unheard-of inflation in the United States.[344]

On this point, Foster Dulles commented that "the United States should not attempt to be the greatest military power in the world . . . that we should have the most and the best of everything." He judged that the Administration must settle on a "ceiling" for military capabilities, "necessary for a respectable military posture," else "the time would come when all our national production would be centered on our military establishment. . . . The President agreed, and stated that of course too much, as well as too little, could destroy our national defense. Too much could reduce the United States to being a garrison state or ruin the free economy of the nation."[345]

While Eisenhower's critics floated a variety of U.S. weaknesses vis-à-vis the Soviet Union (i.e., bomber, economic, and industrial gaps) for both political and parochial purposes, the

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[344] Memorandum of Discussion at the 363d Meeting of the National Security Council, April 24, 1958, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v03/d21, 2 September 2015.

[345] Ibid.

nuclear "missile gap" gained the greatest traction. This too was political theater. Eisenhower had directed the development of ballistic missile development in late 1953, which resulted in the nuclear Triad (i.e., ICBM, SLBM, and B-52 platforms), the satellite program, and groundwork for the space program. And it did this without fanfare or expensive crash programs. Despite the hysteria over the Soviet launching of Sputnik in October 1957, the U.S. nuclear and ballistic missile arsenals dwarfed those of the Soviet Union. And, thanks to the U-2 program, Eisenhower was fully aware of the Soviet weakness.[346]

Crisis Management

Crises entailed a different dynamic in decision-making which overshadowed the normal activities of the NSC. Here, different qualities assume greater import—*presidential leadership, judgment, intuition, and persuasion*. From his study of war and experiences as Supreme Allied Commander, Eisenhower was keenly aware of the role uncertainty played in war by his study of Clausewitz, who wrote, "War is the realm of chance. No other human activity gives it greater scope: no other has such incessant and varied dealings with this intruder. Chance makes everything uncertain and interferes with the whole course of events." A major contributor to uncertainty, "friction" describes the innumerable difficulties that hinder success in military operations and is what "distinguish[es] real war from war on paper." In Clausewitz's view, the decision-maker

[346] Dwight D. Eisenhower, Dulles Oral History Interview: Princeton University, by Philip A. Crowl, 28 July, 1964 (OH-14), DDEL, 49-50; "Redstone," accessed on the website of the *Redstone Arsenal of the Command Historian* at http://www.redstone.army.mil/history/systems/redstone/welcome.html, 13 January 2011; "A Brief History of NASA," accessed on the website of the *National Aeronautics and Space Administration* at http://history.nasa.gov/factsheet.htm, 08 March 2012; Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 348-351, 352-353; Watson, 306-307, 314-315; Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 2d Edition (New York: Longman, Inc., January 29, 1999), Kindle e-book; Evan Thomas, *Ike's Bluff: President Eisenhower's Secret Battle to Save the World* (New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 2012), 370-371, 378-379, 386; Watson, 308; Ambrose, *Eisenhower: The President*. Kindle e-book.

must recognize the effects of friction on military activities so he can discern what is possible and what is not. In short, "Friction . . . is the force that makes the apparently easy so difficult." The decision-maker must remain wary of incoming information because it is often distorted, contradictory, and exaggerated: "all action takes place, so to speak, in a kind of twilight, which, like fog or moonlight, often tends to make things seem grotesque and larger than they really are."[347]

As Eisenhower had long understood, bearing the burden of millions of lives on one's shoulders is an awesome responsibility, requiring great moral courage and the self-confidence in one's judgement. But, as biographer Jean Edward Smith observed, "Eisenhower was comfortable wrestling with uncertainty."[348] He was also accustomed to constant stress over extended periods, as World War II attests. Thus, Eisenhower recognized the need for a staff system like the NSC mechanism to help him make sound decisions.

To reduce the detrimental effects of uncertainty, chance, and friction, Eisenhower relied on the Planning Board, NSC meetings, and the OCB to conduct continual strategic appraisals, weeks or months before a crisis became acute.[349] Cutler observed that the habitual staffing of papers in the Planning Board, the weekly discussions of policies in the Council, and the close working relationships of the OCB created teamwork, which paid dividends during a crisis.[350] As situations began to unfold, Eisenhower invariably contacted his counterparts to exchange views and coordinate appropriate responses. In his memoirs, Eisenhower demonstrated a discerning understanding of crisis situations as well as the root causes which led to their development.[351]

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[347] Clausewitz, 100-112, 119-121, 140.
[348] Jean Edward Smith, 661.
[349] Rothkopf, 78.
[350] Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 297.
[351] Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, (Suez Crisis of 1953) 150-159, (Iran) 159-166, (Indochina) 166-170, (Korea) 171-191; See also the case studies on Suez (1956) and Lebanon (1958).

Experience also taught Eisenhower that crises and dilemmas often overlap, so the continual provision of information and the exercise of teamwork served the President and his advisors when a crisis broke. As Eisenhower recalled, "The Presidency seldom affords the luxury of dealing with one problem at a time."[352]

While Eisenhower held NSC meetings for general discussion and issuing guidance as crises became acute, he reserved discussions on classified or politically sensitive information to inner circle meetings. Within the sanctity of Eisenhower's office, the inner circle could speak more frankly, avoiding departmental parochialism and potential media leaks which often accompanied formal NSC meetings.[353] It was in inner circle meetings that Eisenhower made critical decisions for the resolution of crises.

The Extent the NSC Mechanism Optimized Time and Workload Management for the Administration

In his last published article before his death, Eisenhower reflected that

> Executive ability, whose cornerstone is a talent for good organization and skill in selecting and using subordinates, certainly is a vital attribute of the Presidency. Any Chief Executive who tries to do everything himself, as some Presidents have, is in trouble. He will work himself into a state of exhaustion and frustration, and drive everyone around him half crazy.[354]

His observation reflected not only his experiences as a Chief Executive, but also the realization that U.S. global responsibilities necessitated a government mechanism to develop effective grand strategy. In a 1960 letter to Henry Luce of *Life* magazine, Eisenhower wrote,

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[352] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 58.

[353] Eisenhower Interview (OH-14), DDEL, 14; Sander, 112; Inner circle meetings included the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Director of the CIA, and the Staff Secretary. Goodpaster Interview (OH-37), DDEL, 35; Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 17; Rothkopf, 78.

[354] Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Some Thoughts on the Presidency," *The Reader's Digest* (November 1968), 54.

> The government of the United States has become too big, too complex, and too pervasive in its influence on all our lives for one individual to pretend to direct the details of its important and critical programming. Competent assistants are mandatory: without them the executive branch would bog down.[355]

Eisenhower optimized time and management of the workload by routinizing the Administration's work schedule and creating internal efficiencies. The weekly scheduled meetings with congressional Republican leaders, the NSC, the Cabinet, and the media focused the activities of the various staffs, Administration officials, principal advisors and the President in preparation for these meetings. As Eisenhower promised early in his Administration, NSC meetings, lasting two-to-three hours, would be forums for the conduct of real business, without waste anyone's time.[356] He organized the Executive Office of the President to manage diverse issues vying for his attention on a daily basis, allotting sufficient time and attention to issues in a disciplined manner. Accordingly, his NSC mechanism mobilized the government bureaucracy to function in an orderly fashion, to furnish the NSC principals with information in manageable pieces, and to allow him to practice strategic thinking.

Because the policy process was iterative, with periodic strategic appraisals, the Administration was able to dispense with a plethora of issues without exhausting the President and his key advisors in the process. On the other hand, the NSC mechanism placed tremendous stress on the NSC staff, Policy Board members, OCB members, and especially the Special Assistant, all of whom worked long hours without respite. This was not a shortcoming however. Staffers could be replaced when they reached burnout; the President and his chief advisers were expected to endure one to two terms. The strain on subordinates is illustrated by Eisenhower going through four Special Advisors (i.e., Cutler twice, Anderson, Jackson, and Gray) during his tenure. Neverthe-

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[355] Cited in Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 81.
[356] Ibid, 105-106.

less, as Cutler proudly observed, this standardized system permitted "the Council to transact, week in and week out, an enormously heavy load of work."[357]

The President's daily routine permitted him to devote time to important matters without distraction. Starting at 7:30 am, the President's day was structured with his reading of newspapers; his working breakfasts and lunches with advisors, congressmen, businessmen and the like; his review and approval of documents; his meetings with visitors; and his informal meetings at night with friends or Democratic congressional leaders.[358]

For Eisenhower the value of the Planning Board and the OCB had a broader context. Both boards prompted the government bureaucracy to resolve a plethora of problems at lower levels, permitting the President and his principal advisors to focus on high policies and grand strategy. As Eisenhower observed,

> When these problems of coordination assume sufficient importance to deserve the attention of the President, arrangements are made for necessary conferences with the heads of the agencies affected. But in countless cases, the appropriate staffs, operating on behalf of their respective chiefs, can settle differences efficiently. This is called "coordination at the staff level" and is most useful in civil government—as it is in the military services—particularly in saving the time of busy department heads and in prompt resolution of administrative details and difficulties.[359]

The work of the Planning Board optimized time management—integration of government bureaucracy papers, the airing of different views, normalizing departmental terminologies, clarification of terms, creating a common language of reference for policy papers, the resolution of

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[357] Cutler, "The Development of the National Security Council," 446.

[358] Greenstein notes that Eisenhower officially worked from 8:00 am to 5:30 pm during the workweek, but he often worked on weekends as well as after-hours reading official reports, editing speeches, and preparatory work. He often shared a working breakfast with associates like his brother Milton and General Lucius Clay. Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 41-42; Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 108, 266, 270; Sherman Adams recalled that Eisenhower strove to maximize the workday, inviting congressmen to lunch with Adams and relevant staffer concerned to help resolve the congressional issues. Likewise, he held working lunches with Cabinet and agency chiefs, inviting other staff members as needed, to resolve some lingering problem. Adams, *Firsthand Report*, 80.

[359] Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 88.

minor but time-consuming disagreements, and scrutinizing different viewpoints for factual or logic errors—staff work, which permitted the NSC principals to devote time for serious reflection and informed policy discussions.

Eisenhower's NSC mechanism reflected his no-nonsense work ethic. Contrary to his public image as a relaxed, easygoing President, Eisenhower was an inveterate workaholic, which led at times to mental and physical exhaustion as well as health issues. Stephen Ambrose wrote that as Supreme Allied Commander, Eisenhower proved to be "a man of extraordinary energy. He went to bed late, got up early, worked seven days a week, and has to be forced to relax. For four years, he averaged five hours' sleep a night, but it never seemed to reduce his efficiency."[360] As President, Eisenhower wrote that his vacations away from Washington were intended for "relaxation and recreation" but they "could not materially reduce the need for incessant study and conferences." While his vacations at remote locations did relieve him of constant visitations, he still maintained a heavy workload.[361] Greenstein noted that Eisenhower was a driven leader who had intense work habits. He drove himself so relentlessly that his health began to deteriorate by the late 1940s. His doctors prescribed periods of rest, so Eisenhower learned to relax by painting, cooking, golfing, and reading.[362]

The benefits of the NSC mechanism for the President and his key advisors were immense, though publicly unrecognized at the time. Routine NSC meetings gave the President a highly valued commodity—time—which Eisenhower optimized for intellectual focus, study of complex policy issues, and deep meditation. Eisenhower masterfully avoided the temptation to

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[360] In March 1945, Eisenhower's chief of staff, Brigadier General Bedell Smith persistently urged Eisenhower to get some rest "or face a nervous breakdown." He did so on 19 March, going to a villa in Cannes for five days, but he brought along General Omar Bradley for private discussions. Ambrose, *The Supreme Commander*, 320, 625.

[361] Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 267.

[362] Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 38-40.

become overly involved in the business of subordinates (a major pitfall for most presidents), disciplining himself and the NSC to focus holistically on policy and strategy. It is important to point out that time devoted to strategic thinking is not a sign of non-productivity, and conversely, frenetic activity is not a sign of productivity.

The one area in which the NSC mechanism fell short involved the military establishment. Eisenhower lamented that that the Joint Chiefs of Staff were unwilling to break free of service parochialisms so as to think as a corporate body. In a letter to his old friend Everett Hazlett, Eisenhower complained,

> What I have tried to tell the Chiefs of Staff is that their most important function is their corporate work as a body of advisers to the Secretary of Defense and to me. We now have four-star men acting as their deputies, and those men are either capable of running the day-to-day work in the Services or they should not be wearing that kind of insignia. Yet I have made little or no progress in developing real corporate thinking.[363]

Consequently, the President spent an inordinate amount of time trying to convince the service chiefs to view national security comprehensively rather than through individual service prisms. Political scientist Amy Zegart attributed JCS parochialism as an intentional design flaw dating back to the 1947 National Security Act. The military services wanted a weak JCS organization to ensure autonomous budget authority and unanimous decision-making so as to protect service interests. While Eisenhower attempted to reform this flaw with the 1953 and 1958 Defense Reorganization Acts, the JCS successfully thwarted full implementation.[364] Regardless, Eisenhower and the NSC mechanism did permit the military services to present their professional expertise and argue their cases, which generally kept them in line.

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[363] Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 606.

[364] Amy B. Zegart, *Flawed by Design: The Evolution of the CIA, JCS, and NSC* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), Kindle e-book; Jablonsky, 224-234, 295-305.

The Extent the NSC Mechanism Enhanced the President's Leadership and Management Style

Richard Neustadt astutely recognized that political success rests on the ability of the President to wield power. As Neustadt pointed out, in order for a President to advance his political agenda, he must enhance his political power through persuasion, choices, and prestige, all the while maintaining his political freedom of maneuver. The flaw in Neustadt's premise is the assumption that a President's policy decisions invariably advance or protect American interests. History is replete with charismatic leaders successfully leading their nations into disaster. While Eisenhower agreed that persuasion, choices, and prestige were valued commodities for a President to advance his policies, he did feel strongly that an interagency process for policy formulation was an essential prerequisite.

Nevertheless, it should be clear that the NSC mechanism was no substitute for Presidential leadership. As exemplified by Eisenhower's convalescences following his heart attack in September 1955 and his ileitis operation in June 1956, the Council acted more as a committee, focusing on routine issues and delaying important policy decisions until the President recovered.[365] The President's absences in 1955 and 1956 demonstrate the void created when the Chief Executive is not present at meetings. Without Eisenhower's leadership and guiding hand during deliberations, foreign policy either drifted or remained in stasis. According to historian David Nichols,

> Without Ike to moderate his secretary of state's impulsive tendencies, John Foster Dulles floundered over what to do about the Soviet arms deal with Egypt [announced on 27 September 1955], as did the National Security Council. Ironically, Eisenhower's dominance in policymaking contributed to the disorder. Ike always made the decisions—not the

[365] Cutler, "The Development of the National Security Council," 445; Adams, *Firsthand Report*, 183, 185.

> NSC, not Dulles.[366]

Some critics contended that it was Foster Dulles who set foreign policy, implying Eisenhower was not really engaged. But Robert Bowie replied there was no doubt that Eisenhower was

> completely in charge. Dulles was a trusted advisor, he was frequently, he was always listened to, he was frequently agreed with, but Eisenhower made his own decisions without any question, everybody in [the] administration knew this, Dulles made a point of the people understanding this, he would never take a decision, he would never make a major speech, without clearing [it] with Ike, and Ike didn't just clear it by saying, whatever you say Foster, he would go over and he would write on the document, for example as far the text of the speech, he would write his comments and he'd say, I suggest that you would do this or you do that.[367]

While it is clear that Eisenhower was irrefutably in charge of the NSC, the paramount point is the necessity for the President to preside over meetings with his principal advisors. He must listen to their arguments, read their body language, and interact with them. Reciprocally, his principal lieutenants must personally witness the President's decisions and understand his intent and guidance as he explains his underlying reasoning. Goodpaster noted that after hearing everyone's views in a meeting, Eisenhower "would step in and . . . take over the meeting and discuss the issue, play devil's advocate where he had to challenge ideas, drill down to the bedrock questions underlying the issue." He would thus summarize the main arguments, identify the core problem, and the solution, which formed his decision. Eisenhower insisted that once an issue was thoroughly aired, everyone accepted responsibility for his decision; there would be "no nonconcurrence through silence."[368] To maximize its impact on decisions and execution, leadership is a personal interaction.

A close examination of Eisenhower reveals a President who adroitly combined the formal

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[366] David A. Nichols, *Eisenhower 1956: The President's Year of Crisis, Suez and the Brink of War* (New York: Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, 2011), 282.

[367] Interview with Robert Bowie, Episode 7: After Stalin.

[368] Rothkopf, 74.

NSC mechanism and presidential power to optimize his leadership and management styles. Greenstein points out that Eisenhower used both formal and informal means to run the Oval Office. Although he used formal organization to insure "routine or repetitive tasks were carried out reliably, consistently, and systematically," he placed as much "emphasis on informal aspects of organizational leadership."[369] Eisenhower did this artlessly and subtly, which often obscured his leadership and management stratagems: persuasion, delegation of authority, strategic communications, policy coordination and coherency, and political freedom of maneuver.

Persuasion

President Eisenhower was hardly a novice to the art of persuasion. Under the tutelage of Fox Conner, Eisenhower understood the need for persuasion in coalition warfare for the sake of unity of effort.[370] Conner also instilled in Eisenhower the discipline of studying other leaders (personal equations), ascertain which options they were considering, and deduce their most likely decisions. If the analysis was conducted on enemy leaders, he factored this into his strategy; if it concerned the argument of an associate, he used it as a counterpoint.[371]

As Supreme Allied Commander during World War II, Eisenhower put his skills of persuasion to the ultimate test, keeping both political and military leaders committed to the 1944 campaign in France as the most decisive way to defeat Germany, the inviolability of unified command, the imperatives of logistics in support of the military strategy, and maintaining cooperation among assertive and sometimes imperious military and political leaders. Milton Eisen-

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[369] Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 100-101.
[370] Smith, 66.
[371] It is understandable that Eisenhower would be drawn to poker and bridge since they permitted him to practice this skill as a leisure activity. Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 26-27.

hower thought his brother's ability to foster cooperation among others came quite naturally to him, which explains the harmony he created as Supreme Allied Commander. He did not think any other style of leadership would have brought the success that Eisenhower accomplished, and it was this style of leadership that comported so well in politics.[372]

Fred Greenstein noted that Eisenhower used the consultative aspects of the NSC as a means of persuasion. "Eisenhower knew that advice seeking was an effective tool for winning the willing support of those he consulted, even though he might not take their advice."[373] This assessment fits Milton Eisenhower's earlier observation: "Everyone knew here the decisions were made, and greatly respected it—since they had participated, and always understood why the President decided the way he did, there was a minimum of discord in the leadership of government."[374] According to Rothkopf, "In meetings, he would systematically go through the group seeking their views, ensuring that they felt they had his respect and were being consulted."[375] Greenstein discerned that this approach fostered teamwork, increasing the individual's perceived value as a contributor to policy formulation and not simply as a department representative. Officials understood that although the President considered their recommendations, other overriding factors would influence his final decision. This generated such loyalty that "his Administration suffered remarkably few cabinet-level leaks, feuds, or reports initiated by member indicating they were at variance with Eisenhower's policies." Greenstein also noted that Eisenhower used meetings to share his thinking with everyone in the room, his rationale behind a decision and

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[372] Milton S. Eisenhower Interview, CCOHC, 48.

[373] General Walter Bedell Smith remarked that while Eisenhower was attentive to advice as a matter of course, he also understood that consulted subordinates were more likely to accept his decisions and remain staunchly loyal to his leadership. Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 34, 115.

[374] Milton S. Eisenhower Interview, CCOHC, 46.

[375] Rothkopf, 74.

how it conformed to his strategic vision and values. This personal interaction had greater impact on Council dynamics than the staff process and policy discussions would suggest.[376]

Eisenhower's weekly meetings with principal Republican congressmen were intended to be more than the coordination of policy. The President sought to establish interpersonal relationships as a means of persuasion. According to Sherman Adams, "Eisenhower always had firm confidence in his own powers of persuasion to bring an understanding to the leaders of his party of the undodgeable and irrefutable facts of the world situation."[377] Greenstein noted that Eisenhower always took under consideration the political agenda of other actors when considering issues. He adamantly focused on garnering congressional support for policy issues, so the decision had to serve the long term public interests and enjoy public support.[378] Milton Eisenhower averred that his brother employed a two-pronged approach with congressmen: "He had to bring them in and persuade them that it was so in the interest of the United States to take given actions, that they would, I guess, even think it was to their partisan advantage to do it that way."[379]

Eisenhower also sought to extend this cultivation of congressional relationships to his subordinates as well. As he later recalled, "I urged each Cabinet member to become acquainted and develop friendly contacts with the member of every [congressional] committee with which he had special dealings . . . I encouraged department heads to meet committee members collectively and individually, both officially and socially."[380] As illustration, Eisenhower wrote a detailed letter of instruction in 1957 to Secretary of the Treasury Robert Anderson outlining how he (and all his department secretaries) should

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[376] Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 115-116.
[377] Adams, *Firsthand Report*, 27.
[378] Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 25.
[379] Milton S. Eisenhower Interview, CCOHC, 47.
[380] Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 193-194.

> establish personal friendships with the congressional chairmen whose committees supervised agency operations and also ingratiate themselves with the chairman's wives; that they grant all favors requested by friendly congressmen immediately if possible, and if not possible, explain why, stressing their desire to be helpful wherever feasible; and that they pay verbal deference to congressional authority when testifying on Capitol Hill but frame their approach to Congress on the premise that congressmen would prefer to be led than to lead.[381]

Moreover, the President drew on Anderson's personal relationship with Senate Majority Leader Lyndon Johnson as a back channel for the Administration and to keep him apprised of the congressional climate as a matter of routine.[382]

Eisenhower believed this effort went a long way in establishing greater understanding and trust between the executive and legislative branches. In his memoirs, he wrote, "Of all the mechanisms for developing coordination between the White House and the Congress—particularly with the Republican members—by far the most effective was the weekly meeting I held with the legislative leaders."[383] In retrospect, the effort was much more difficult than he had initially anticipated: "It took sustained hard work in early 1953 to build effective cooperation between the legislative and executive branches, partly because of the traditional jealousy between them, dating from Washington's time (some senators were seemingly proud of this), and partly, too, because of genuine philosophic differences."[384]

Ironically, Eisenhower experienced more recalcitrance from Republican and more cooperation from Democratic leaders. Historian Jean Edward Smith wrote that the meetings with Speaker of the House Sam Rayburn and Senate Majority Leader Lyndon Johnson were more productive for personal, professional, and political purposes. "Rayburn had known Eisenhower

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[381] Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 60-61.
[382] Ibid, 60.
[383] Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 194.
[384] Ibid, 195.

for years and liked him." He appreciated Eisenhower's judgment on national security issues and his candor whenever he testified before Congress as a senior military leader. Eisenhower also had a warm relationship with Johnson, visiting him during his recuperation in the hospital following a heart attack. Both Johnson and Rayburn understood that Eisenhower was an incredibly popular President, believed his vision of American foreign policy was pragmatic, and wanted to be associated with his popularity. Paradoxically, when Rayburn and Johnson assumed control of Congress, Eisenhower enjoyed even greater cooperation.[385] Rayburn revealed the degree of cooperation Eisenhower enjoyed from the Democrats:

> I told President Eisenhower . . . that he should know more about what it took to defend this country than practically anyone and that if he would send up a budget for the amount he thought was necessary to put the country in a position to defend ourselves against attack, I would promise to deliver 95 percent of the Democratic votes in the House.[386]

In contrast, the weekly GOP meetings were a trial for the President. Eisenhower believed the main cause of friction was due to the GOP's long hiatus from power, so that Republican congressmen continued to act like the minority party committed to opposing the executive Branch regardless of party. In fact, the White House got as much support for programs from congressional Democrats as it did from Republicans. Even after losing control of the Senate and the House, the attitude of the Republican minority remain unchanged. Adams charged that Republicans "opposed his vitally important foreign programs because they were afraid that such spending might hurt the Republicans in the next Congressional elections." Eisenhower suffered no illusions that his "personal liberal beliefs would come into sharp conflict with the ultraconservatives of the Republican right wing." As he later wrote, "I was determined to do my best to unite, strengthen, and invigorate the Republican party." He believed that a strong Republican party was

[385] Jean Edward Smith, 648-649.
[386] Cited in Smith, 649.

healthy for a two-party political system, but he would not strengthen it at the expense of the Democratic Party. His refusal to engage in partisan politics stemmed partly from a belief that it would besmirch the office of the Presidency and partly from the reality that he had to work with a Democrat-controlled Congress for the remaining six years of his Presidency; so divisive politics would only undermine his presidential power.[387]

Eisenhower employed a number of devices to gain consensus on issues. He used informal gatherings to glean information and resolve differences.[388] He instructed Congressional Liaison Officer Jerry Persons to invite groups of congressmen to breakfasts and luncheons on a regular basis, explaining "I want them to get a better understanding of what I'm driving at."[389] Adams observed that

> Eisenhower made a valiant effort to get along with the legislators of both political parties. Unsparingly he used meals, meetings, messages and personal conferences to win their support for the programs he sent to Congress. Before he announced any new policy decision he was careful to go over it in detail with the appropriate legislative leaders; with the republicans on domestic issues, with the bipartisan leadership on foreign affairs.[390]

To this end, Eisenhower regularly dedicated 5:00 pm to 6:00 pm to chat informally with

> members of his Cabinet and staff, or with influential members of Congress such as William Knowland, Lyndon Johnson, Everett Dirksen, Sam Rayburn, Walter George or J.W. Fulbright, or with defense chiefs, or with close friends who had some advice to give. Over a drink and a canapé, at this time of the evening, Eisenhower smoothed the road for many of his goals and legislative purposes.[391]

The purpose of these engagements was to enhance Eisenhower's persuasive powers, as

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[387] Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 230-231; After listening to Eisenhower complain that the Republican leaders seemed to argue amongst themselves on everything, Congressman Joe Martin quipped, "Maybe that's the result of these last twenty years that we spent out in the wilderness." It is revealing that ultra-conservative Republicans accused Eisenhower of weak leadership because he refused to engage in partisan politics. Adams, *Firsthand Report*, 9, 19-20, 26, 28, 30, 93, 166; See also Ambrose, *Eisenhower: The President*. Kindle e-book.

[388] Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 42.

[389] Adams, *Firsthand Report*, 10.

[390] Ibid, 10-11.

[391] Ibid, 86.

Greenstein noted: "His ability to win friends and influence people—both face to face and in the mass—seemed to result simply from the magnetism of his sunny personality. But he worked at his apparent artlessness, consciously choosing strategies that made people want to support him."[392] These interactions had the intended effect. Milton Eisenhower recalled that Eisenhower only had two vetoes overridden by Congress. "This is because most policies and problems were worked out in direct confrontations and discussions. And—oh, you know, he'd have them for breakfast, he'd have them for lunch, he'd have them all day, he'd have them for dinner, cocktails, anything. And he was a very persuasive fellow you know."[393]

As a team, Eisenhower and Dulles approached foreign policy issues on a bipartisan basis, declining to discuss these issues with Republican leaders beforehand. Rather, they presented their intended policy actions only in meetings with both parties.[394] Most of the problems the President experienced with Republican congressmen were personality driven. Eisenhower enjoyed close relations with Senator Robert Taft Jr. though they disagreed on federal tax policy and foreign policy. In contrast, the President had a frosty relationship with Senate Majority Leader William Knowland (Taft's successor) and House Speaker Joe Martin. Eisenhower detested Joseph McCarthy and the other political opportunists and ideologues associated with him; Adams pointed out that Eisenhower extended his above politics philosophy to his own party as well, refusing to discipline rogue Republicans: "But he rarely carried an argument to the point of really getting tough and using a reprisal to bring the dissidents into line." Eisenhower attributed perseverance as the reason for increased Republican support, but Adams wrote Republican relations with the White House improved substantially only after Senator Everett Dirksen and Representa-

[392] Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 53.
[393] Milton S. Eisenhower, 47.
[394] Adams, *Firsthand Report*, 9.

tive Charles Halleck assumed the principal leadership roles for the GOP. After their assumption, Eisenhower related, "the meetings have become something I actually look forward to."[395]

In regards to his relations with Congress, Eisenhower took great efforts to avoid public displays of political partisanship so as to maintain his image of political neutrality, especially with Congress. He preferred "nonconfrontation, lubricated by informal negotiations on the Hill" as a means to gaining consensus. His preference for informal gatherings and an above-politics stance was exceedingly effective, permitting the President to enjoy "the personal confidence and support of the bulk of Congress, who like other leaders he met face to face, found him admirable and compellingly attractive."[396]

Delegation of Authority

By the time he became President, Eisenhower had already possessed deeply held "beliefs and policy positions," which framed his leadership style. So his formal decision-making structure served as the means to "set priorities, communicate a public stance, and delegate specifics to associates by giving them clear guidelines for making detailed decisions."[397] According to Jean Smith, both Marshall and Eisenhower were masters of delegation:

> When they assigned a task, they stepped aside. Subordinates were free to follow whatever course they wished to get the job done. It was the old Army at its best. General Grant would tell a division commander what he wanted done. He would not tell him how to do it. Both Marshall and Eisenhower demanded team players, rejected exhibitionists, and preferred people who could solve problems rather than create them. They expected subordinates to take responsibility, and then backed them to the hilt when they did.[398]

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[395] Cited in Adams, *Firsthand Report*, 26-27; Eisenhower, Mandate for Change, 218.

[396] Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 30.

[397] Ibid, 46-47.

[398] Jean Edward Smith, 180; Jim Newton wrote that Eisenhower really learned how to delegate properly from Marshall who was adept at placing great responsibility on proven subordinates. Newton discerned how both men

Greenstein assessed that the military was an excellent school for Eisenhower in developing executive skills since every commander must delegate authority to avoid becoming mired in details. The degree of delegation was based on the subordinate's proven abilities. Eisenhower embraced General Marshall's practice of placing promising subordinates in positions of authority to test whether they could make independent decisions with good judgement, thereby increasing their responsibilities.[399] Lucius D. Clay described both Marshall and Eisenhower as taskmasters. "General Eisenhower was not the easiest person in the world to work for. . . . He would give you a job, and when you completed it he would give you another. The more you did, the more he asked. And if you did not measure up, you were gone. He had no tolerance for failure."[400]

Eisenhower later recalled his continual struggle to have his subordinates follow his lead regarding the delegation of authority:

> Again and again I emphasized the need for efficient decentralization within each agency of the government. My principal assistants, I insisted, in the interest of sanity and efficiency, should save for themselves *time for thinking and study* [my emphasis]. The only way they could get such time was to delegate as much as possible to their subordinates. "The marks of a good executive," I wrote to the heads of the agencies on September 29 1953, "are courage in delegating work to subordinates and his own skill in coordinating and directing their effort." I should have added, as I so often did in wartime, to take personal responsibility for mistakes and give subordinates credit for success.[401]

Milton Eisenhower observed that his brother's use of delegation enhanced the bond of loyalty between the President and successful subordinates, rewarding them with praise of their accomplishments, greater responsibilities, and public recognition: "Eisenhower always not only wanted to get the best out of everyone, but felt that everybody had a great contribution to make,

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viewed the relationship between superior and subordinate: "Men who worked for Marshall were expected to devote their lives to the task, and Eisenhower did." Newton, 39, 56.

[399] Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 80-81.

[400] Smith, 180.

[401] Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 135.

and he wanted to share the credit. This was just as natural to him as eating and sleeping."[402]

Eisenhower did not grant blanket delegation to just anyone without regard to performance or competence. He placed a great deal of stock on the selection of subordinates. As such, he sought personalities which worked well with others and could bear the burden of heavy responsibility.[403] The President set the parameters of delegation. The subordinate's past performance with the execution of tasks determined how much leeway he was given in the future, as his confidence in Foster Dulles attests.[404] Greenstein believed that the manner in which Eisenhower delegated authority was personality dependent: some subordinates served to extend the President's specific desires (delegates), some were given wider berth (deputies), some were given little independent authority (expediters), and some were give substantial power (emissaries).[405]

> He employed this knowledge in many ways, not least in the management of his presidency, which was marked by acts of delegation that accorded great latitude to some aides, kept others in close rein, and made some of them lightning rods to deflect blame that otherwise might have gone to their chief.[406]

As a means of empowerment, Eisenhower encouraged his aides and special assistants to "develop comfortable, compatible working relationships" with other agency officials so as to increase cooperation informally. Typically, Eisenhower chose people who had developed professional relationships during previous assignments and hence had an established camaraderie, bolstering White House teamwork.[407]

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[402] Milton S. Eisenhower Interview, CCOHC, 22, 46.

[403] Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 117; Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The Eisenhower Diaries*, ed. Robert H. Ferrell (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1981), 267-268.

[404] Robert Murphy observed that Eisenhower delegated more to Foster Dulles as his confidence in him grew, especially after the Suez Crisis in 1956. Murphy Interview (OH-224), DDEL, 14-15.

[405] Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 82-83, 87.

[406] Ibid, xi.

[407] Ibid, 108-109.

Inspiring Public Confidence and Strategic Communications

As he had done as Supreme Allied Commander, Eisenhower used speeches, news conferences, and the media to convey a sense of optimism and trust in his leadership. He also sought to inform the public of policy initiatives, the reasoning behind them, and the expected outcome. While he worked extensively on perfecting speech drafts, Eisenhower never regarded his speeches as an end in themselves. Reminiscing years later, he said,

> I have come to realize that a fervent speech, or a painstakingly written document, may be worth no more than the good will and patient co-operation of those who say they subscribe to it. . . . . I fear that we too often lay more stress on words than on the stark necessity of deeds to back them up.[408]

Like other Presidents, Eisenhower devoted his speeches, messages, and addresses to inspire and inform both domestic and foreign audiences, but they were based on a process of staffed initiatives, discussion, and practical feedback. Strategy and policy formulation is often tedious, unexciting work, and while the substance is vitally important, it is unlikely to excite the public imagination. Thus, while inspiring the public was not unwelcome, the more important goal was to garner public trust and support for his policy initiatives.[409]

Eisenhower developed a keen appreciation of public image and the integral part it played in strategic communications. From his early associations with President Roosevelt, Eisenhower observed how he always

> exuded an infectious optimism. Even during the dark days of our early reverses in the Pacific, he was somehow able to convey his own exuberant confidence to the American people. As a result, despite often justified political opposition on domestic issues, F.D.R. had the nation almost solidly behind him in his conduct of the war.[410]

As Supreme Allied Commander, Eisenhower adopted this same demeanor of cheerful optimism,

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[408] Eisenhower, *At Ease*, 99.
[409] Bose, 78.
[410] Eisenhower, "Some Thoughts on the Presidency," 53-54.

so as to maintain public confidence and support for the war effort, and he carried this with him to the White House. Eisenhower understood that "optimism and pessimism are infectious and they spread more rapidly from the head downward than in any other direction."[411]

"As president," wrote Greenstein, Eisenhower cultivated a "folksy, common-sense replica of the man on the street," so as to garner trust. "He conveyed a warm, reassuring presence and presided over a peaceful and reasonably prosperous decade while seeming not to work at it. In fact, he pushed and disciplined himself relentlessly." While Eisenhower often worked at night and weekends, he kept this activity secret so as to maintain the image of an accomplished Chief Executive who did not have to work around the clock to run the government.[412]

An appreciation of Eisenhower's skills as a great communicator is much more difficult to plumb. His written work provides a better sense of this keen intellect. Having studied Eisenhower's correspondence, Greenstein considered his communication skills as

> clean, hard writing, and by extension, thinking, . . . dispassionate, closely reasoned assessments of contemporary issues and personalities that belie the amiable, informal, and often vague usages of his press conference discourse. . . . Many of his confidential writings display geometric precision in stating the basic conditions shaping a problem, deducing their implications, and weighing the costs and benefits of alternative possible responses.[413]

Similarly, Eisenhower meticulously worked on draft speeches, always searching for that perfect word or phrase to resonate with the public.[414] Speechwriter Arthur Larson noted that Eisenhower was fastidious about brevity, precision, and accuracy in his speeches. He also insisted that each speech have a unifying idea, that the words not distract from the message, and that it upheld the

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[411] Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, xi n. 5, 36, 37.
[412] Ibid, 42, 53.
[413] Ibid, 20.
[414] Adams recalled that preparing draft speeches for the President was an ordeal. Adams invariably reviewed the draft with the staff writers "for a thorough study and discussion of the draft before it went to the President. This was part of my routine staff work." Finished drafts were submitted to the President at least two weeks prior to the scheduled speech so he could mull over it and make changes, which he always did. Adams, *Firsthand Report*, 80-83.

dignity of the Presidency.[415] Incidentally, Jean Edward Smith considered Eisenhower's *Crusade in Europe* as second only to *Grant's Memoirs*, "one of the greatest wordsmiths in the English language."[416] Probably more than any other indicator, the real substance of mental acuity lies in one's writing.

Eisenhower adopted plain, artless statements and mannerisms privately as an effective way to disarm people and influence decisions, and publicly as a means of touching the sensibilities of average Americans. "You just can't preach abstraction to a man who has to turn for his daily living in some other direction," he once observed.[417] The depth of the President's devotion to using mass appeal is illustrated by his enlisting the help of actor Robert Montgomery to coach him on public speaking and effective ways to reach audiences.[418] His public appeal had a purpose though, as Greenstein noted, "He was fully aware that his popularity was essential to his ability to exercise influence over other leaders."[419] However, according to Milton Eisenhower, the President never sacrificed substance for inspirational effect:

> And the Principle was always foremost in his mind—what is best for the country as a whole? Further, he felt deeply that the responsibility of leadership was to try to induce the American people to support the right thing, even if it were contrary to their temporary interest.[420]

Greenstein warned that one should not prejudge Eisenhower's mass appeal solely on the verbatim transcripts of his speeches. Of greater significance are the recordings of Eisenhower's press conferences, which offer a greater insight of a speaker who persuaded through the forcefulness of his convictions. Television footage attests to Eisenhower's ability to reach the public,

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[415] Larson, 135-138.
[416] Jean Edward Smith, 78, 80, 94n, 469, 762.
[417] Adams, *Firsthand Report*, 68.
[418] Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 66-67, 96; Walcott and Hult, 58.
[419] Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 99.
[420] Milton Eisenhower Interview, 36.

as American publisher Henry Luce described:

> His mobile, expressive face and dignified but comfortable comportment, emerge as the expression of a manifestly warm human being who speaks earnestly of his and the nation's ideals. He comes across as solid and full of common sense—a reassuring figure who lived up to his own premise that, as the visible symbol of the nation, the president should exhibit a "respectable image of American life before the world.[421]

Ironically, Eisenhower wanted verbatim transcripts of his weekly press conferences as well as radio and television recordings of his statements and responses. While his spoken transcripts were replete with grammatical and syntax errors, Eisenhower's focus was on "ideas rather than phrasing," which accounted for people thinking he possessed poor grammar skills.[422] Nixon had a different view, believing that "his mind was quick and facile. His thoughts far outraced his speech and this gave rise to his frequent 'scrambled syntax' which more perceptive critics should have recognized as the mark of a far-ranging and versatile mind rather than an indication of poor training in grammar."[423]

Policy Coordination and Coherency

Eisenhower was the prime mover of policy coordination and coherency. His organization of the NSC mechanism, White House Cabinet, Staff Secretariat, Executive Branch Liaison Office and Congressional Liaison Office reflected his intent to drive the government bureaucracy. Greenstein noted that Eisenhower elevated the position of staff aide to a level of sufficient stature, comparable to department secretaries, so as to expedite matters with due urgency. Men, like Sherman Adams, Robert Cutler, Wilton Persons, and Andrew Goodpaster, were placed in pivotal White House staff positions. A key function of these aides was in the coordination of activities,

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[421] From an 8 August 1960 interview of Luce, cited in Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 19.
[422] Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 108, 232.
[423] Nixon, 161.

especially since important policy issues cut across various government agencies. The various special assistants managed information, staffed the production of papers, and crafted options for NSC consideration.[424]

The Planning Board initiated the coordination process, reviewing all policies of former Administrations. In this manner, continuity of foreign policy and national security strategy was not disrupted and received due consideration during the revision process. Accordingly, coherency of policy was optimized under Eisenhower.

The OCB performed the heavy lifting of policy coordination and coherency. The various OCB working groups explored courses of action for implementation, which included debate, bargaining, and compromise. Further, the informal luncheons fostered camaraderie and cooperation. Invaluable feedback from the field (i.e., embassies, theater commands, and other diplomatic posts) helped to clarify policy guidance, resolve interdepartmental disputes, and make pertinent revisions to policies with the President's approval. As such, ensuring that proposed policies did not conflict with or were redundant to existing policies became a natural function of the OCB.

Within the NSC mechanism, the routine exchange of information and unity of action reached its peak under the Eisenhower Administration: between the government bureaucracy and the Planning Board; between the Planning Board members and their departmental or agency bosses; within the Council; between the Council and OCB; between the OCB and the field; and between the OCB and the Planning Board. Clearly, in terms of efficiency and effectiveness, the Eisenhower White House was without peer.

Political Freedom of Maneuver

[424] Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 106-108, 107n.

NSC procedures and processes provided the President with the freedom of maneuver to consider the facts and implications of an issue fully. The work and products of the Planning Board resulted in the presentation of all viewpoints to the Council, so the President was not impelled to make a policy decision with un-vetted information. Under this system, it was nigh impossible for any department to suppress the viewpoints of other government agencies or to log-roll with political allies without being challenged at some point in the process.

Eisenhower's use of the NSC as the central forum for foreign policy and national security issues forestalled attempts to influence him outside of the Council, effectively forestalling end-around maneuvers. The use of time limits during debates on issues in the NSC compelled advisors to make their arguments concisely, diminishing the tactic of dominating discussions or dragging an issue into endless debate. The NSC mechanism helped to corral dominate personalities, those who are accustomed to winning arguments through the power of their personality, charisma, or forceful delivery. Such figures are adept at the art of the persuasive argument and are frequently right—but not always, and that was the objective of the NSC, to hear both the major and minor arguments surrounding an issue.

During press conferences in which reporters asked probing questions, Eisenhower remained keenly concerned about divulging sensitive information, "causing the nation a serious setback." Accordingly, he sometimes answered ambiguously so as to ensure classified information was not inadvertently compromised. "It is far better to stumble or speak guardedly than to move ahead smoothly and risk imperiling the country."[425]

The use of delegation protected the President from unpopular or contentious policies—the lightning-rod effect as Greenstein called it. Charged with announcing new initiatives or poli-

[425] Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 232-233; Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 67.

cies, subordinates bore the brunt of criticism, protecting the President personally and minimizing distractions to the White House. Of course, if the ideas were well received, Eisenhower gave his subordinates the credit.[426] Greenstein found this tactic indispensible for the Presidency: "In this era when presidents are so vulnerable to losing public support, future presidents have much to gain from allowing associates to promulgate and take responsibility for some of the less popular administration decisions."[427] In terms of shielding the Presidency from political attacks and maneuvering, Eisenhower was a master practitioner.

Conclusion

Eisenhower's reorganization of the NSC fundamentally improved the policy formulation process and cultivated strategic thinking within the Administration. The Planning Board focused on the integration and study of policy ideas from the government bureaucracy, the NSC Special Staff, and outside consultants, producing thoroughly staffed policy papers in a disciplined and comprehensive manner. Accordingly, the Planning Board served to educate and prepare the senior policy makers for NSC meetings. Feedback from the Council and the OCB further honed staff work as a result of NCS deliberations and implementation issues respectively. Finally, periodic reviews ensured policy remained dynamic as the strategic environment changed.

Eisenhower was a consumer of diverse sources of information and intelligence. In addition to the policy papers, studies and intelligence estimates, he frequently telephoned world leaders, spoke with businessmen and politicians at informal gatherings, conferred with old friends, associates, and family members, read a couple of newspapers each morning, and studied reports

[426] Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 80-81, 90-91; Bose, 93.
[427] Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, xi, 238.

at night. He often amazed associates by the depth and breadth of his knowledge.

Eisenhower used the Council to build teamwork and exercise his leadership. As the central forum for foreign policy, NSC forums were kept intentionally small so as to foster camaraderie and candid discussion. He wanted his principal advisors to argue their cases in his presence so he could hear all sides of an issue. He used the NSC venue to make his decisions, explain his reasoning behind these decisions, and provide guidance for policy implementation. This corporate environment enhanced everyone's participation in the planning process and a feeling of ownership of approved policy.

The planning process and NSC deliberations cultivated strategic thinking as Eisenhower and his principal advisors wrestled with complex issues. Draft policy papers included aspects of critical thinking, systems thinking, creative thinking, thinking in time, and ethical thinking, which helped NSC participants focus on the essential features of a policy problem set. The Basic National Security Policy was a product of strategic thinking, illustrating contemplative and purposeful thought in terms of strategic goals, supporting strategies, and essential capabilities to support these strategies.

As Fred Greenstein noted, Eisenhower was a master practitioner of presidential power, often behind the scenes. He used the NSC and other weekly meetings to ply his powers of persuasion and charisma in order to win over others to his views. He cultivated relationships with congressmen, regardless of party, and encouraged his subordinates to follow his lead. He optimized time and work management through delegation of authority, weekly NSC meetings, and routinization of the policy process. His down-to-earth manner of public speaking resonated with average Americans, which made him widely popular—everyone liked Ike. Eisenhower astutely

used his popularity as a means of political persuasion as well.

Eisenhower's national security perspective was not without controversy and dissension though. His "Great Equation" for national security—"Spiritual force, multiplied by economic force, multiplied by military force, is roughly equal to security"[428]—clashed with entrenched interests. Each factor mutually supported or detracted from national security. A vibrant U.S. economy based on the private sector would ultimately prevail over the Soviet Union. An adequate military posture would contain the Soviet Union until domestic pressures compelled it to moderate its foreign policy or cause the system to collapse. American spiritual strength was grounded on strategic values (i.e., liberal democracy and the pursuit of happiness), a positive outlook on the future, and faith in the American political system. To Eisenhower, an overemphasis on military power would undermine the market economy, leading to a garrison state mentality and bankruptcy. Accordingly, he argued strenuously against demands for a mobilization strategy with large standing conventional forces because it was both unnecessary and inflationary. He sought to forestall a nuclear arms race through peaceful uses of atomic energy and disarmament talks. While he ultimately failed to achieve a breakthrough, due to Soviet intransigence, subsequent administrations achieved notable successes in arms reductions, but only after spending extravagantly on nuclear weapons.[429]

Eisenhower presided over an era of domestic peace, prosperity, and assured security, an achievement no successive presidency has matched. As Eisenhower reflected, "We kept the peace. People asked how it happened—by God, it didn't just happen, I'll tell you that."[430]

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[428] Bowie and Immerman, 44; Adams, Eisenhower's Fine Group of Fellows: 2-3.
[429] Ambrose, *Eisenhower: The President*. Kindle e-book.
[430] Cited in Ambrose, *Eisenhower: The President*. Kindle e-book.

Chapter 3

Kennedy Advisory System

In marked contrast to the Dwight D. Eisenhower Administration, President John F. Kennedy perceived national security issues with greater urgency rather than as a long term struggle. As a presidential candidate, Kennedy charged that Eisenhower had failed to inspire confidence in his leadership, creating uncertainty among Americans. Moreover, the Eisenhower Administration, in his view, had allowed a missile gap and a nuclear arms race to develop, had failed to counter the appeal of Soviet socialism in underdeveloped countries, had stood by while Fidel Castro seized power in Cuba, had presided over a deep recession, and had not addressed racial injustices. As President, these were his problems now.[1] In his view, the main culprit of this deplorable state of affairs was government bureaucracy, which was too cumbersome and lethargic to respond effectively to the myriad of dire threats. In essence, Kennedy wanted to get the country moving again, diplomatically, psychologically, militarily, and economically.

Kennedy unabashedly embraced the presidential management and leadership style of President Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR), and adopted many aspects of the Paul Nitze's proposed NSC 68 circa 1950, which recommended expanding nuclear and conventional forces, orienting the economy to meet Cold War requirements, creating a robust civil defense system, and extending the U.S. safeguard to the free world as well as augmenting conventional and nuclear forces in Europe. In short, it was a return to the Truman's mobilization strategy.[2] Abandoning Eisenhower's

[1] Robert Dallek, *An Unfinished Life: John F. Kennedy, 1917 – 1963* (May 1, 2003), Kindle e-book, 299.

[2] Lawrence Freedman, *Kennedy's Wars: Berlin, Cuba, Laos, and Vietnam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 16-17; Specific references to national strategy recommendations can be found in *A Report to the National Security Council*, "NSC 68" (Washington D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1950), accessed at the website of the *Truman Library* at http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/coldwar/documents/pdf/10-1.pdf, 08

measured, long-term Basic National Security Policy (BNSP), Kennedy considered monolithic communism (i.e., the Soviet Union and China) as an imminent threat, requiring exigent counter-measures if a "nuclear Pearl Harbor" was to be avoided.[3]

Rejecting Eisenhower's bureaucratic NSC mechanism, Kennedy sought to "return the center of decision to the Oval Office, rather than let it remain in the hands of the subordinates who were supposedly running Eisenhower's government."[4] He wanted to cleave through bureaucratic inertia in order to energize U.S. foreign policy and national security strategy. Accordingly, Kennedy established an advisory system, which fed him information directly rather than through the Planning Board. As designed, it would provide the President with leverage to bend government to his will, serve as a platform for his vision, and cultivate an image of urbanity, vitality, informality, and intellectualism. The Kennedy Administration extolled the power of the individual rather than organizational structure and process, appealing to the average American's admiration of personal accountability and distaste for faceless bureaucrats. Kennedy was predisposed to make decisions based on informal, ad hoc, episodic meetings, either with intimate groups or personally with trusted individuals. In essence, the Kennedy advisory system sought to create irresistible momentum for presidential foreign policy and national security policy initiatives.

The first section of this chapter examines Kennedy's rationale behind his NSC reforms and scrutinizes the NSC mechanism so as to understand the constituent parts, their interactions, and how the system served the President. The second section assesses the Kennedy advisory system by answering the following questions: 1) To what extent was the rationale for change jus-

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March 2012, 6, 10, 11,12; Dean Acheson, *Power and Diplomacy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), 17, 23, 29, 40, 45, 46, 51, 53, 54, 57, 71, 88, 90, 96, 101.

[3] Freedman, 25.

[4] Dallek, *An Unfinished Life*, 300.

tified? 2) To what extent did the mechanism provide each President and his principal advisors with relevant and sufficient information for national security strategy, foreign policy, and crisis management? 3) To what extent did the mechanism optimize time and workload management for Administration officials, especially the President and other NSC members? 4) To what extent did the mechanism foster the President's leadership and management style (e.g., persuasion, delegation of authority, strategic communications, policy coordination and coherency, and political freedom of maneuver)?

Kennedy's Rationale for Change and Intent with his National Security Council Mechanism

The mounting criticism of the NSC mechanism during Eisenhower's second term undoubtedly had an impact on Kennedy's conceptualization of an advisory system. Kennedy was already predisposed to mistrust bureaucracy, so the characterizations of Eisenhower's NSC as the epitome of bureaucracy likely condemned the NSC system in Kennedy's eyes.

The Democratic Advisory Council (DAC) had already initiated a concerted campaign to discredit the Eisenhower's foreign policy and national security strategy upon Eisenhower's election.[5] However, it was not until the brouhaha surrounding the Gaither Committee and its subsequent report in late 1957, coinciding with the Soviet launch of Sputnik (4 October 1957), that an intense debate on the U.S. national security posture ensued, seeming to substantiate DAC allegations.[6] The issues of greatest concern to the Gaither Committee experts were the Soviet Union's

[5] The DAC was established to provide the Democratic Party with a foreign and national security policy platform. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965), 9, 299-300.

[6] The Eisenhower Administration commissioned the Gaither Committee in the summer of 1957 to assess the feasibility of civil defense shelters on the economy. Robert Cutler, *No Time for Rest* (Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press Book, 1965), 354.

alleged faster economic growth rates and greater defense spending, the vulnerability of the American strategic forces to a Soviet first-strike (the missile gap), and the inability of the United States to fight limited wars with conventional forces.[7] Failing to gain Eisenhower's concurrence with immediate, substantial defense spending, some committee members tried to make the Gaither Report public through press leaks and congressional investigations. While Eisenhower was justified in withholding the public release of the final report in order to protect the sanctity of Executive-Consultant privacy, nondisclosure did little to allay American concerns.[8] The confluence of Sputnik, the economic recession, the Gaither Report press leaks, the President's health concerns, and the subsequent congressional testimonies of Gaither Committee members created the popular impression that the Soviet Union was eclipsing the United States militarily and that the President and his NSC system were too bureaucratic and unresponsive to the growing Soviet threat. At the end of the controversy, Eisenhower did not increase military expenditures. Instead, he focused on greater organizational reforms and efficiencies in the military in order to shift funding for missile research.[9]

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[7] The Gaither Committee received approval by the Administration to expand its inquiry to include the U.S. defense posture. However, the committee practically ignored civil defense and focused on perceived shortfalls with the U.S. national security posture. Morton H. Halperin, "The Gaither Committee," *World Politics*, vol. XIII, no., 3 (April 1961), 365, 366, 367.

[8] When separate meetings with the President and the NSC failed to create a due sense of urgency, several committee members attempted to circumvent the President's authority by proselytizing with the Secretaries of Defense and State, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and State Department personnel. Halperin, 369, 371-374; The findings and conclusions of the Gaither Committee were debated in the Senate (Congressional Record, 85th Congress, 2nd Session, Washington, D.C., 1958, pp. 858-859), including testimony from Gaither Committee members for the Jackson Hearings. Halperin, 361, 365, 374-376, 379; Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 355-356.

[9] According to Halperin, committee members testified that "it became clear to them that the top echelons of the government did not fully appreciate the extent of the Soviet Threat as it was described by the Pentagon and the CIA." Halperin, 364, 366; Richard E. Neustadt, *Presidential Power: the Politics of Leadership From FDR to Carter* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1980), 57-59; While Kennedy's National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy later recalled that hysteria over a "missile gap" did not warrant drastic or swift action, and in fact, the Eisenhower Administration took the correct measures, "an appearance of complacency led to an appearance of weakness, with considerable costs abroad. These costs would surely have been greater had it not been for the remarkable personal standing of President Eisenhower." McGeorge Bundy, "The Presidency and the Peace," in *J. F. Kennedy and Presidential Power*, ed. Earl Latham (Lexington, Massachusetts: D. C. Heath and Company, 1972), 140.

Senator Henry ("Scoop") M. Jackson championed these themes to underscore the peril to the United States. Jackson's U.S. Army War College speech on 16 April 1957 and subsequent article, "To Forge a Strategy for Survival," outlined his concerns and remedies concerning the Eisenhower NSC mechanism. Jackson argued that the United States was losing the struggle against the Soviet Union because the Eisenhower NSC mechanism lacked the dynamism and decisiveness to meet the Cold War challenges: "Our own power as against that of the Communist bloc is in decline. We are losing ground in one field after another—military power, economic strength, scientific capability, political influence, and psychological impact."[10]

National columnist Walter Lippmann echoed these concerns, implying the Administration was lacked the dynamism to compete in the modern era:

> The military power of the United States is falling behind that of the Soviet Union: we are on the wrong end of a missile gap. The American economy is stagnating: we are falling behind the Soviet Union and behind the leading industrial nations of Western Europe in our rate of growth. The United States is failing to modernize itself: the public services, education, health, rebuilding of the cities, transportation, and the like, are not keeping up with a rapidly growing urbanized population.[11]

The intense debate which arose focused on the shortfalls of organization in general and the Eisenhower NSC mechanism in particular.

Critics alleged that Eisenhower had hamstrung the Presidency with bureaucracy, in the mistaken belief that organization was a panacea for policy and strategy formulation. Senator Jackson contended that the Eisenhower "government processes do not produce clearly-defined and purposeful strategy for the cold war. Rather they typically result in endless debate."[12] Political scientist I.M. Destler argued that the NSC mechanism encumbered the institution of the Pres-

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[10] Henry M. Jackson, "To Forge a Strategy for Survival," *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Summer, 1959), 157.

[11] Cited in Richard Reeves, *President Kennedy: Profile of Power* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993), 17.

[12] Jackson, "To Forge a Strategy for Survival," 161.

idency, preventing future presidents from exercising their political acuity to the fullest: "No single organizational scheme, whatever its built-in flexibility, can fully accommodate the differing personalities and priorities of different Presidents and Administrations."[13] Destler also contended that attempting to organize for purposive and coherent foreign policy is largely futile because bureaucratic struggles divert attention from the main effort:

> The system as it seems to operate directs men's attention more to intra-governmental matters than to the overseas situations policy must influence; clings to old policies because of the difficulty of changing them; and resists efforts to control it from the top. . . . And if bureaucratic politics turns men's energies inward from the substantive policy problem to the bureaucratic political one, organizational subcultures can narrow attention still further, encouraging a flight from inter-agency bureaucratic politics to an emphasis on intra-agency relationships.[14]

Senator Jackson alleged that the Eisenhower NSC was not properly organized to meet the challenges of the Cold War.[15] Similarly, political scientist Roger Hilsman observed that it was an illusion to think of policy-making as

> a tidy sequence of specialized actions in a logical division of labor—the groundwork laid by staff, approval by the President, and appraisal and implementing legislation by the Congress . . . with each of the participants having well-defined roles and powers and performing a standardized function in the consideration of each issue that arises.[16]

Destler contended that in political practice, the government bureaucracy gives priority to parochial interests, striving to keep critical issues out of the NSC. He noted that within the government, personal relationships and organizational behavior place interests and ambitions above the decision-making ideal:[17]

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[13] I.M. Destler, *Presidents, Bureaucrats, and Foreign Policy: The Politics of Organizational Reform* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1972), 10.

[14] Ibid, 80.

[15] Jackson, "To Forge a Strategy for Survival," 158.

[16] Roger Hilsman, "The Foreign Policy Consensus: An Interim Research Report," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (December 1959), 362; See also Marian D. Irish, "The Organization Man in the Presidency," *The Journal of Politics* 20 (1958): 259-277.

[17] Destler, 39-40.

> By the late fifties and early sixties, men like Samuel Huntington and Roger Hilsman were concluding that strategic and foreign policy decisions were also "the result of controversy, negotiation, and bargaining among officials and groups with different interests and perspectives," and that "policy-making is politics," even in foreign affairs.[18]

While political scientist Paul Hammond did not directly impugn the abilities of Eisenhower, he felt an organizational mechanism would prove insufficient for the tasks at hand:

> While the mind of one man may be the most effective instrument for devising diplomatic moves and strategic maneuvers, and of infusing staff work with creative purpose, its product is bound to be insufficient to meet the needs of the vast organizational structures and the military, economic, and diplomatic programs which are the instruments of foreign policy. The most sensitive and subtle mechanism is ineffective when overloaded. . . . Coming to terms with the requirements of the bureaucracy is as much a necessity as its flexibility and speed in foreign policy-making.[19]

In his popular book *Presidential Power*, political scientist Richard Neustadt argued that by its nature, the American political system necessitates the use of presidential persuasion to gain policy acceptance, rather than basing one's argument on the logic of a formulation process. As such, the task of the President is "to convince such men that what the White House wants of them is what they ought to do for their sake and on their authority." Naturally, the "status and authority inherent in his office reinforce his logic and his charm. Hence, bargaining best describes the relationship for getting anything done between the Presidency and other government organs, especially Congress."[20]

Neustadt considered it a monumental error that Eisenhower sought order and placed unwarranted faith in staff procedures. Eisenhower did not seek personal power or even wish to wield it. He failed to understand that his directives were not followed because he ordered them. He never grasped that power lay in leveraging others' self interests for his own interests. Hence,

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[18] Ibid, 41-42.

[19] Paul Y. Hammond, *Organizing for Defense: The American Military Establishment in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1961), 369.

[20] Neustadt, *Presidential Power*, 26-27, 29.

Eisenhower mistakenly downplayed the power of charisma in an attempt to be "above politics."[21]

Kennedy's Special Counsel, Theodore Sorensen, suggested that the Eisenhower NSC mechanism was an end in itself to decision-making, rather than a means to that end:

> Procedures . . . especially affect which issues reach the top and which options are presented, and this may, in the last analysis, matter more than the final act of decision itself. But procedures and machinery do not—or at least they should not—dictate decisions, particularly in our highest political office.[22]

Pundits also assailed the thought that the logic of a policy would create a consensus for action. Hammond asserted that policy is more than communicating a thought. It requires "capability and determination to achieve one's objectives." The President cannot achieve consensus and commitment by arguing a policy was well vetted within the NSC. He must convince Congress and the public of the policy's value.[23] Neustadt wrote that policy derived from reasoned debate is not enough:

> The best of reasoning and of intent cannot compose them all. For in the first place, what the President wants will rarely seem a trifle to the men he wants it from. And in the second place, they will be bound to judge it by the standard of their own responsibilities, not his. However logical his argument according to his lights, their judgment may not bring them to his view.[24]

Along those lines, Neustadt considered the idea of an NSC corporate body creating a coherent policy as impractical:

> There is no reason to suppose that in such circumstances men of large but differing responsibilities will see all things through the same glasses. On the contrary, it is to be expected that their views of what ought to be done and what they then should do will vary with the differing perspectives their particular responsibilities evoke. Since their duties are not vested in a "team" or a "collegium" but in themselves, as individuals, one must

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[21] Neustadt lamented that Eisenhower did not share Roosevelt's joy of party politics, because he regarded it as unseemly and nothing more than self-aggrandizement. Ibid, 119-122.

[22] Theodore C. Sorensen, *Decision-Making in the White House: the Olive Branch or the Arrows* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), 3-4.

[23] Hammond, 363-364.

[24] Neustadt, *Presidential Power*, 33.

> expect that they will see things *for* themselves. Moreover, when they are responsible to many masters and when an event or policy turns loyalty against loyalty—a day by day occurrence in the nature of the case—one must assume that those who have the duties to perform will choose the terms of reconciliation. This is the essence of their personal responsibility. When their own duties pull in opposite directions, who else but they can choose what they will do?[25]

Neustadt assessed that part of the paralysis in the White House was Eisenhower's unrealistic appraisal of his executive authority. Because Eisenhower did not understand the currency of presidential power, he attempted to manage the Presidency like a military command, which resulted in policy frustration and ineffectiveness. To underscore his point, Neustadt cited Truman's prediction of President-elect Eisenhower: "He'll sit here, and he'll say, 'Do this! Do that!' *And nothing will happen*. Poor Ike—it won't be a bit like the Army. He'll find it very frustrating."[26]

Neustadt contended that Eisenhower's "superficial symmetry and order" through his decision-making system insured he was the least informed and the last one to have an issue brought to his attention. Neustadt surmised that Eisenhower's staff and interagency committees became his predominate source of information. Rather than creating competition among the agencies, Eisenhower valued teamwork, preferring "to let his subordinates proceed upon the lowest common denominators of agreement than to have their quarrels—issues and details—pushed to him."[27] In short, Eisenhower's political naiveté and inexperience resulted in an NSC mechanism ill-suited for the institutional Presidency:

> One never can be sure that when a man becomes the President of the United States, his sense of power and of purpose and his own source of self-confidence will show him how to help himself enhance his personal influence. But there is every reason to believe that he will be shown nothing of the sort if he has made the White House his first venture into politics. The Presidency is no place for amateurs.[28]

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[25] Ibid, 34.
[26] Cited in Neustadt, *Presidential Power*, 9.
[27] Ibid, 117-118.
[28] Ibid, 132.

Neustadt's principal argument was that the American political system fettered the President, relegating him to a clerkship beholden to various constituencies. The Founding Fathers had "created a government of separated institutions sharing power," creating checks and balances among the three branches of the federal government as well as between the federal government and the states. Further, the free press and the two-party system serve as Constitutional watchdogs to government encroachments. Hence, this mutual dependency on the other federal branches militated against decisive executive action.[29] Clerkship meant that constituents expect the President to resolve issues important to them, but without the obligation to reciprocate in kind, unless of course it serves their interests. Neustadt captured the dilemma of the Presidency, citing Truman: "I sit here all day trying to persuade people to do the things they ought to have sense enough to do without my persuading them. . . . That's all the powers of the President amount to." The President cannot achieve results by issuing orders . . . "nothing will happen."[30]

Criticism of Eisenhower's NSC mechanism was particularly fractious with Senator Jackson. Asserting that bureaucracy was the main culprit of inaction, Jackson argued for an invigorated NSC system to: cultivate new and creative ideas from the departments; stimulate greater interaction among the government bureaucracy; direct the departments to produce "purposeful, hard-driving, goal-directed strategy, which alone can give a cutting edge to day-to-day tactical operations;" enhance the responsibilities of the NSC staff to identify; clarify policy options for the President and his advisors; and be led by a "vigorous and creative" President.[31]

Chairing the Senate Subcommittee on National Policy Machinery, Jackson aspired to

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[29] Ibid, 26.
[30] Ibid, 7-9.
[31] Jackson, "To Forge a Strategy for Survival," 160-163.

highlight the imperfections of the NSC mechanism.[32] Accordingly, Jackson advanced five themes: First, the NSC tried to handle "too many, and too wide a variety of issues," and should instead narrow the policy process to a manageable number of critical issues. Second, while the NSC handled routine security issues well, it was "not well equipped to resolve problems of great urgency." Third, draft policy papers were "so compromised and general as not to furnish clear-cut guidance for action." Fourth, the NSC process and the budgetary process should be intertwined. Fifth, the NSC system needed institutional reforms—the Secretary of State should have primacy in formulating national security policy. Instead of the Policy Board, the government bureaucracy or *ad hoc* task forces should craft draft policy papers so as to encourage "debate on more sharply defined issues." The NSC and Planning Board should permit greater representation of the State and Defense Departments to give their views greater weight. The Council should make greater use of discussion papers to prompt "wide-ranging and penetrating exploration of critical policy issues." The size of the NSC Staff should be sufficiently increased to broaden "the base of scientific and military competence. And the Operations Coordination Board can improve its monitoring function "by concentrating its activities on a narrower front of key problems."[33]

Jackson and other Democrats asserted that most of the NSC mechanistic maladies emanated from the Policy Board. In their view, Policy Board members aspired only to advance the parochial interests of their parent organizations, resulting in the omission, dilution, or suppres-

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[32] According to John Prados, Jackson's speech at the War College on 16 April 1959 and his subsequent article "To Forge a Strategy for Survival" claimed the NSC mechanism was incapable of creating a "coherent and purposeful national program." Jackson presided over the Subcommittee on National Policy Machinery from December 1960 to August 1961. John Prados, *Keeper of the Keys: A History of the National Security Council from Truman to Bush* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1991), 92-95.

[33] Henry M. Jackson, "Introduction," in *The National Security Council: Jackson Subcommittee Papers on Policy-Making at the Presidential Level*, ed. Senator Henry M. Jackson (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, 1965), 7-8.

sion of key issues in draft policy papers.[34] Hammond surmised that because tension exists between the pursuit of precision and expediency, the chairman of the Planning Board (i.e., the Special Assistant for National Security) alone decided the areas of agreement and disagreement for NSC consideration. Hence, rather than producing "most sharply defined policy issues and choices," draft policy papers were nothing more than ambiguous compromises resulting in the "lowest common denominator."[35] Both Theodore Sorensen and Hans Morgenthau concluded the NSC system had been reduced to churning out useless paperwork and policies, effectively isolating the President from urgent issues.[36] Jackson contended that draft policy papers tended to suppress debate and believed the President needed to

> have full, frank, and frequent discussions with his department and agency chiefs. Fully to understand the meaning and consequences of alternative courses of action, he must expose himself directly to the clash of argument and counterargument among advocates of different policy courses. [Draft policy] papers, no matter how carefully staffed, can never convey the full meaning of the issues in question.[37]

Fundamentally, Jackson argued that the departments should be responsible for developing foreign policy and national security strategy, rather than between the Planning Board and NSC:

> The NSC is not and by its nature cannot be an effective planning agency . . . neither the President nor the NSC and its Planning Board can make the detailed plans necessary to give effect to basic strategic decisions. Planning of this sort requires knowledge and experience of the expert and also the resources and the environment of the department with

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[34] Jackson, "To Forge a Strategy for Survival," 160; Jackson, "The National Security Council," in *The National Security Council*, 33-35; Hammond, 357, 360-361; Hans J. Morgenthau, "Can We Entrust Defense to a Committee?" *New York Times Magazine* (June 7, 1959), 64 Robert S. McNamara, "The Secretary of Defense," in *The National Security Council: Jackson Subcommittee Papers on Policy-Making at the Presidential Level*, ed. Senator Henry M. Jackson (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, 1965), 225-242, 239; David E. Bell, "The Budget and the Policy Process," in *The National Security Council: Jackson Subcommittee Papers on Policy-Making at the Presidential Level*, ed. Senator Henry M. Jackson (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, 1965),, 219.

[35] Hammond, 357, 360-361.

[36] Sorensen cited in Garry Wills, *The Kennedy Imprisonment: A Meditation on Power* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1982), 166; Morgenthau, 64-65.

[37] Jackson, "Super-Cabinet Officers and Super-Staffs," in *The National Security Council*, 22.

> the main responsibility for the operations being planned. It is only in the department concerned that the necessary conditions for extended creative planning can be provided. And of course there must be cross-contacts and cross-stimuli between experts in the several departments at the level where planning is done.[38]

Jackson proposed instead that the NSC confine its activities to assessing departmental plans, which would engage the President's attention more effectively for prompt decisions.[39] In Hammond's view, the NSC mechanism's separation of planning and implementation was a grave error because "in politics ends and means must be tested against each other, and it is in the interaction of that testing that consensus becomes wide enough and commitments strong enough for policy to become a reality."[40]

Jackson, Morgenthau, and Hammond argued that the concept of the NSC thinking as a corporate body was utopian. More realistically, NSC members were likely driven by parochial interests and mixed loyalties. The government bureaucracy could undermine the policy process. Some members might suppress the tabling of policy issues they did not agree with. Departments could draw-out policy deliberations by flooding the NSC with trivial matters, or they could resolve policy disputes outside of the Council. The more influential members could bypass the Council and go straight to the President to influence his decisions. Hence, as Jackson concluded, urgent national security issues would never reach the Council for prompt decision.[41]

Candid discussions during NSC meetings were likewise problematic. Jackson thought NSC meetings were too large, with upwards of two dozen attending sessions, to permit candied, fruitful discussion. Morgenthau thought members would not speak their mind for fear of antago-

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[38] Jackson, "To Forge a Strategy for Survival," 159.
[39] Ibid, 159.
[40] Hammond, 367.
[41] Ibid, 357-358, 362; Jackson, "The National Security Council," in *The National Security Council*, 27, 33; Morgenthau, 64.

nizing others, and officials of minor agencies would not challenge major agency officials. Hammond conjectured that dominant personalities could suppress the views of others by telegraphing their viewpoints in advance and behind the scenes. Hence, quashed debate and policy compromises would result rather than bold, innovative decisions.[42]

It is unclear whether Jackson's Subcommittee on National Policy Machinery was the cause or the pretext for Kennedy's decision to dismantle Eisenhower's NSC mechanism, but it did provide political cover for the systemic changes Kennedy sought. Jackson evidently believed this as well, stating that the "Subcommittee's staff report on the National Security Council (December 12, 1960) served, in effect, as a task-force study for President-elect Kennedy."[43] A few weeks later, Kennedy publicly acknowledged that the report had inspired him to change the NSC system:

> I have been much impressed with the constructive criticism contained in the recent staff report by Senator Jackson's Subcommittee on National Policy Machinery. The Subcommittee's study provides a useful starting point for the work that Mr. Bundy will undertake in helping me to strengthen and to simplify the operations of the National Security Council.[44]

But what did Kennedy have in mind as a means to replace the mechanism? Here, the President-elect drew on the intellectual community. American progressive intellectuals displayed little reluctance in maligning Eisenhower, evidently because he failed to inspire them. The eminent intellectual Alfred Kazim recollected that the intellectual's disdain for Eisenhower came down to his manner of speaking, his love for western novels, and his affiliation with the Republi-

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[42] Jackson, "The National Security Council," in *The National Security Council*, 35-36; Morgenthau, 64-65; Hammond, 358-360.

[43] Jackson, "Major Issues," in *The National Security Council*, xiii.

[44] Kennedy's statement was made on 1 January 1961. Ibid.

can Party.[45] Norman Mailer decried Eisenhower's "government by committee":

> Committees are not creative. They stifle originality and impose conformity. Eisenhower had let problems go untended in order to preserve the country's (and his own) tranquility. An "existential" leadership would dare to go "outside channels," to confront the unexpected with a resourceful poise of improvisation.[46]

According to author Garry Wills, Neustadt considered Eisenhower a danger for the country because he was "just a dope . . . dopes not only have personal durability; under their prolonged sway the nation can lapse into narcolepsy, let all its problems breed in the darkness, storing up trouble."[47]

If Jackson's rhetoric resonated with President-elect Kennedy and his cabinet, Richard Neustadt's recently published book *Presidential Power* served as the Chief Executive's bible. Having read the book between April and June 1960, both Kennedy and Special Assistant for National Security Affairs McGeorge Bundy enthusiastically embraced Neustadt's approach to presidential leadership and management.[48] As an ardent devotee of Roosevelt, special consultant on Jackson's subcommittee, and consultant to Kennedy's presidential transition, Neustadt had the greatest influence on the framework of Kennedy's advisory system.[49] Correspondingly, as

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[45] Alfred Kazin, "The President and Other Intellectuals," in *J. F. Kennedy and Presidential Power*, ed. Earl Latham (Lexington, Massachusetts: D. C. Heath and Company, 1972), 250; Incidentally, Eisenhower claimed his purported love of westerns was a myth which emanated from a British article written during World War II. Dwight D. Eisenhower, *At Ease: Stories I Tell to Friends* (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1967), 258

[46] Cited in Wills, 163.

[47] Cited in Wills, 176.

[48] Douglass Cater, "The Do-It-Yourself Nature of Presidential Power," in *J. F. Kennedy and Presidential Power*, ed. Earl Latham (Lexington, Massachusetts: D. C. Heath and Company, 1972), 16; Neustadt was Kennedy's consultant during his transition to the Presidency and provided transition studies, which carried his book's themes. Wills, 164; Kai Bird, "McGeorge Bundy," in *Fateful Decisions: Inside the National Security Council*, Karl F. Inderfurth and Loch K. Johnson, eds. (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc, 2004), 183; Bromley K. Smith, *Organizational History of the National Security Council during the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations* (Reprint, Lexington, KY: University of Michigan Library, 25 June 2010), 9.

[49] David Rothkopf, *Running the World: The Inside Story of the National Security Council and the Architects of American Power* (New York: Public Affairs, 2006), 85; Martha Joynt Kumar, "Richard Elliott Neustadt, 1919-2003: A Tribute," *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, (2003). Internet: http://whitehousetransitionproject.org/docs/NeustadtFinal.htm; Prados, *Keeper of the Keys*, 94.

Sorensen averred, Kennedy sought to emulate Roosevelt's overlapping areas of authority in order to provoke debate among his advisers as a means of hearing alternative solutions.[50]

For temperaments like Kennedy and Bundy's, eager to mobilize America for the challenges of the "New Frontier," *Presidential Power* provided essential guideposts. More importantly, the book provided political haven for their intentional disorderly management style. Neustadt counseled that a little bit of managerial chaos was actually a virtue since "Roosevelt's disorderly style actually exposed him to more information from a wider range of sources and gave him the flexibility that was the genius of the administration."[51] Schlesinger wrote that while Kennedy

> considered President Roosevelt's policies, especially in foreign affairs, sometimes slapdash and sentimental . . . he admired Roosevelt's ability to articulate the latent idealism of America, and he greatly envied Roosevelt's capacity to dominate a sprawling government filled with strong men eager to go into business on their own.[52]

Most important however, Neustadt "gave Kennedy and Bundy the intellectual rationale to do what they were going to do anyway—run the White House as if it were Harvard, with Bundy as dean and Kennedy as president."[53] In this manner, understanding Neustadt's central themes provides greater insight into Kennedy's management and leadership styles.

In his book, Neustadt argued that the heart and soul of the Presidency was the acquisition and accumulation of Presidential Power, defined as the "influence of an effective sort on the behavior of men actually involved in making public policy and carrying it out." Specifically, the President's political power depends on "his personal capacity to influence the conduct of the men

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[50] Theodore C. Sorensen, *Decision-Making in the White House*, 15.
[51] Bird, 183.
[52] Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House*, 120.
[53] Bird, 183.

who make up government. His influence becomes the mark of leadership."[54]

> The essence of a President's persuasive task with congressmen and everybody else, *is to induce them to believe that what he wants of them is what their own appraisal of their own responsibilities requires them to do in their interest, not his*. Because men may differ in their views on public policy, because differences in outlook stem from differences in duty—duty to one's office, one's constitutents [*sic*], oneself—that task is bound to be more like collective bargaining than like a reasoned argument among philosopher kings.[55]

Presidential persuasion is a product of the choices he makes, his professional reputation, the ability to garner public prestige, and how he acquires information. For the President, effective influence is the product of three sources:

> First are the bargaining advantages inherent in his job with which to persuade other men that what he wants of them is what their own responsibilities require them to do. Second are the expectations of those other men regarding his ability and will to use the various advantages they think he has. Third are those men's estimates of how his public views him and of how their publics may view them if they do what he wants. In short, his power is the product of his vantage points in government, together with his reputation in the Washington community and his prestige outside.[56]

The cultivation of choice is the President's paramount instrument, protecting his power by "his choices of objectives, and of timing, and of instruments, and by his choice of choices to avoid." Through the accumulation of wise choices, the President increases his bargaining leverage, influence, and persuasive powers. Thus, he must master the art of building power through his choices, to include the people he selects for key government positions, the degree he cultivates their prestige, and his relations with Congress (i.e., challenging or supporting congressional initiatives, nominations submitted, and bills for his signature).[57]

The President must be skeptical of expert advice because experts, like everyone else, are fallible. Even though the President is the layman on most matters, he is an expert on his personal

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[54] Neustadt, *Presidential Power,* vi, 4, 131.
[55] Ibid, 35.
[56] Ibid, 131.
[57] Ibid, 42-43, 79.

power, so he should determine how expert advice affects his power.[58]

> He makes his personal impact by the things he says and does. Accordingly, his choices of what he should say and do, and how and when, are his means by which he dissipates his power. The outcome, case by case, will often turn on whether he perceives his risk in power terms and takes account of what he sees before he makes his choice. A President is so uniquely situated and his power so bound up with the uniqueness of his place, that he can count on no one else to be perceptive for him. Yet he can scarcely see and weigh his power stakes himself unless he is alerted by significant details and deals with his decisions in good time. Useful information, timely choices may not reach him; he must do the reaching.[59]

The President's second tool in his repertoire is professional reputation, which serves as political leverage when bargaining with others. The people the President seeks to persuade are also his keen observers, and their expectations regarding his ability and willpower influence his powers of persuasion. He must create an air of uncertainty with these people. They must either believe he will succeed or believe crossing him will incur great political risk. Because patterns of success or failure become deciding factors for persuasion, the President should begin his tenure with "vivid demonstrations of tenacity and skill in every sphere, thereby establishing a reputation sure to stand the shocks of daily disarray."[60]

Neustadt drew a strong connection between choices and reputation. The President's "reputation will be shaped by . . . the words and actions he has chosen, day by day. His choices are the means by which he does what he can do to build his reputation as he wants it. Decisions are his building-blocks. He has no other in his hands."[61]

The third instrument available to the President is public prestige, which requires an intui-

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[58] Ibid, 109-110.

[59] Ibid, 131; This counsel influenced Kennedy, who later wrote that the key to decision-making was finding the right man to do the job. John F. Kennedy, "Foreword" in Sorensen, *Decision-Making in the White House*, xii; Dallek, *An Unfinished Life*, 301.

[60] Neustadt, *Presidential Power*, 43-48.

[61] Ibid, 62-63.

tive feel for public opinion—knowing where the people fall on certain issues. The President's public standing, albeit difficult to gauge and often transitory, influences how other politicians judge White House initiatives.[62] The President should not assume the sentiments in Congress reflect the national public sentiment. congressional constituencies differ from presidential constituencies, so the President is not immediately affected by the "vagaries of shifting sentiment."[63] The office of the Presidency provides some institutional leeway. If personal concerns (e.g., cost of living, education, wages, etc.) are not negatively impacted, the public is likely to tolerate presidential misjudgments or conflicts with Congress. Further, the President's accumulated prestige (e.g., war hero, successful general, great orator, etc.) can provide some measure of protection from adverse public sentiment. While educating the nation on policy decisions is necessary, the President should recognize the public is often inattentive until personal matters are affected. Often, successfully weathering crises and the accumulation of wise choices have a greater impact on public sentiment than the bully pulpit.[64]

The Presidential final instrument is the acquisition of knowledge. However, the President should not depend primarily on the NSC for gleaning information: "The absence of a National Security Council did not harm Truman's handling of the Marshall Plan. Its presence did not help him in Korea."[65] The President should not depend solely on the NSC for information nor sit back passively expecting the government bureaucracy to send him information. He must reach

> out as widely as he can for every scrap of fact, opinion, gossip, bearing on his interests and relationships as President. He must become his own director of his own central intelligence . . . he never can assume that anyone or any system will supply the bits and pieces he needs most . . . he must assume that much of what he needs will not be volunteered by

[62] Ibid, 64-66.
[63] Ibid, 66.
[64] Ibid, 72-74, 76.
[65] Ibid, 113.

his official advisors.[66]

Accordingly, time is a valuable commodity because the President will never have enough time to get all the information he needs to make an informed decision. He must set the priorities required of him to perform: "Trying to stop fires is what Presidents do first. It takes most of his time."[67] He can garner the full array of facts for informed decisions through self-imposed deadlines, thereby becoming the most informed man in government. President Franklin Roosevelt mastered the art of information acquisition by causing competition among the various government agencies, employing limited authority, ambiguous jurisdictions, and shared mandates. Within this competitive system, subordinates would argue their case, providing the President with the essential elements of an issue for presidential decision.[68]

At Kennedy's behest during the presidential transition period, Neustadt penned eleven memoranda, addressing presidential initiatives for the first one hundred days. Neustadt stressed that "nothing would help the new administration more than such a first impression of energy, direction, action, and accomplishment. Creating that impression and sustaining it should become the primary objectives for the months following Inauguration Day."[69]

Aside from Cabinet selections, the initial message to Congress, and other essential tasks, Neustadt counseled Kennedy to make a clean break from the Eisenhower Administration's formal practices: 1) discard the "elaborate paperwork and preparatory consultations," as well as supporting staffs for Cabinet and NSC meetings; 2) confine Cabinet and NSC meetings to de-

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[66] Ibid, 113.
[67] Ibid, 114-115.
[68] Ibid, 115-116.
[69] These memos began on 15 September 1960 through 26 January 1961. Richard E. Neustadt, *Preparing to be President: The Memos of Richard E. Neustadt*, ed. Charles O. Jones (Washington D.C.: The AEI Press, 2000), 21; Dallek, *An Unfinished Life*, 306.

partment heads of cabinet rank or statutory members, and take control of the agenda; 3) eliminate the White House Chief of Staff and personally assume this position, assigning chief assistants assignments and jobs which overlap, creating competition; 4) combine the positions of Special Assistance for National Security Affairs and the Executive Secretary of the NSC, and transfer to him the "functions of all Eisenhower's White House assistants and consultants in this sphere;" 5) combine the staffs of the Council on Economic Foreign Policy, the Operations Coordination Board (OCB), and the NSC secretariat into a small, tight NSC Staff under the executive secretary; 6) include the Special Assistant for National Security into the President's inner circle of advisers and use him for ad hoc staff assistance "to take his turn at trouble-shooting, fire-fighting, without undue concern about the confines of his 'specialty;'" 7) convene the NSC only when advice is needed on some particular issue and only with relevant members; 8) keep participation in NSC meetings to a bare minimum and expect participants to be fully informed on the issue under discussion; 9) "NSC meetings should be devoted to airing divergent views and not a lowest common denominator census; and 10) replace the Planning Board and OCB with ad hoc working groups chaired by a member of the NSC Staff.[70]

Neustadt impressed upon Kennedy to "conserve your freedom of action and to guard your reputation. Your effectiveness in office will be influenced considerably by what the great departments can do for you or do to you. In turn the kinds of service—or disservices—they render will be influenced by the proclivities and competencies of their heads, your appointees."[71]

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[70] Neustadt asserted, "But if the burdens are heavy [to personally manage a collegial staff system], the rewards are great. No one has yet improved on Roosevelt's relative success at getting information in his mind and key decisions in his hands reliably enough and soon enough to give him room for maneuver. That, after all, is (or ought to be) the aim of presidential staff work." Neustadt, *Preparing to be President*, 36-37, 40-41, 77-80; Bromley K. Smith, *Organizational History of the National Security Council*, 9.

[71] Neustadt, *Preparing to be President*, 63; Despite Neustadt's counsel to eliminate the Office of Congressional Relations (OCR), the President retained the office appointing Lawrence O'Brien as its director. The OCR performed

In view of the amount of criticism leveled against the Eisenhower NSC, coupled with Neustadt's influential *Presidential Power*, it is quite understandable why the Kennedy Administration resolved to create an entirely new advisory system rather than trying to reform the existing one. Further, given the perceived imminent threat of Communism, the Administration did not have the luxury of time.

Kennedy's National Security Council Mechanism: Collegiality and Action

Kennedy's Politics of Style

Kennedy's immediate and most important task was to create an advisory system which optimized his leadership and management style. *Presidential Power* provided guidance on the accumulation of personal power as a vehicle for presidential persuasion. Kennedy sought to create irresistible national momentum through dazzling successes (i.e., wise choices), which in turn would enhance his professional reputation and public prestige. To do so, he could not be encumbered by a plodding NSC system for routinized information and long-term policy formulation. His advisory system would reflect the possibilities of the New Frontier.

Creating an image of energy and success in the White House was imperative. In *The Best and the Brightest*, David Halberstam remarked that Kennedy "paid great attention to style; style for him and for those around him came perilously close to substance. He did not like people who

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much the same functions as under Eisenhower. One advantage for the Kennedy Administration was the Democrat-controlled Congress. Theodore Sorensen, the Special Counsel, was particularly involved in monitoring legislative progress to which his office was responsible and worked on bill passage or blocking bills the White House opposed. Charles E. Walcott and Karen M. Hult, *Governing the White House: From Hoover through LBJ* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1995), 43-45.

were messy and caused problems, nor did he like issues that were messy and caused problems."[72] According to columnist Thomas Lane, Kennedy abhorred the image of his White House struggling with complex problems and discord among his advisors because it undercut public confidence and stiffened bureaucratic resistance. He was keen to portray himself as "a dynamic, aggressive leader acting continuously in the public interest."[73] His leadership style was to exude sublime confidence, a calm demeanor, and a figure of decisiveness when confronted with knotty issues. The quality Kennedy most admired and sought to portray was "grace under pressure . . . to undergo great hardship and stress and never flinch, never show emotion."[74] To Kennedy, decisions were not nearly as important as how he brought them off.

Author Jonah Goldberg likewise wrote that Kennedy cultivated an image of virility, warrior-hero, boldness, and determined willpower to fix the country's maladies without becoming mired in bureaucratic inertia.[75] Accordingly, Kennedy turned the construct of a "mythical narrative" into an art form. His image was that of a war hero, an intellectual (as the author of *Profiles in Courage*), a suave, attractive personage, but also a pragmatic leader, unswayable by the American intelligentsia. Goldberg wrote that Kennedy epitomized the ideals of "'renewal and rebirth,'" drawing similarities between Kennedy and "Mussolini's cult of personality: youth, action, expertise, vigor, glamour, military service," as well as an icon of the new generation, who through force of will, intellect, and expertise, represented a third course in politics.[76]

Sorensen noted that shaping public opinion was crucial to maintaining public and hence,

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[72] David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest* (New York: The Modern Library, 2001), 95-96.

[73] Thomas A. Lane, "The Bay of Pigs," in *J. F. Kennedy and Presidential Power*, ed. Earl Latham (Lexington, Massachusetts: D. C. Heath and Company, 1972), 182.

[74] Halberstam, 96.

[75] Jonah Goldberg, *Liberal Fascism: The Secret History of the American Left from Mussolini to the Politics of Meaning* (New York: Doubleday, 2007), 206.

[76] Ibid, 205.

congressional support for policy initiatives: "He has a responsibility to lead public opinion as well as respect it—to shape it, to inform it, to woo it, and win it. It can be his sword as well as his compass. . . . In short, presidential appeals for public support must be at the right time and with the right frequency, if they are to be effective."[77]

Gary Wills noted that Kennedy based his authority loosely on charisma, summarizing Max Weber's basis of authority:

> Traditional, relying on the inertia of sacred custom; legal, based on contractual ties; and charismatic, based on the special gifts of a single ruler. Charismatic leadership is transitory—the "grace" is attached to one person, who must constantly revalidate it in action…. It serves, amid the collapse of order or old ways, to bind together a new effort—the embodiment of a cause in George Washington or Mao Zedong. The founders of states, or of religious orders . . . have to exert *personal* authority, since they have no preexisting majesty of office or sanction of law to draw upon.[78]

Kennedy's "personalized leadership" sought to break from Eisenhower's faceless bureaucracy and the legal constraints imposed by excessive government regulations. Schlesinger underscored that "power came from Kennedy's person . . . which had to be displayed, deployed, [and] brought to bear. His 'cool' was his program, style and vigor his credentials." Kennedy sought to shake loose from the complacency of post-FDR governance, "without benefit of depression or war, to assume emergency powers and assert a ruling charisma." Accordingly, crises afforded the Kennedy Administration emergency powers, giving it a freer hand to implement the President's agenda. As Wills noted, "Sorensen's account of the administration is gleefully crisis-oriented. He admiringly counts sixteen of them in Kennedy's first eight months as President."[79]

Historian Henry Pachter observed that the Kennedy Administration painstakingly crafted the image of a government run by "Rhodes Scholars rolling up their sleeves to prod the sprawl-

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[77] Sorensen, *Decision-Making in the White House* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), 46-47.
[78] Wills, 170.
[79] Schlesinger and Sorensen paraphrased in Wills, 170-171.

ing departments into action, forcing them to rethink all their assumptions and to respond quickly to the manifold initiatives coming from the rejuvenated White House."[80]

David Halberstam considered Kennedy's team as "crisis-mentality men, men who delighted in the great international crisis because it centered the action right there in the White House—the meetings, the decisions, the tensions, the power, they were movers and activists, and this was what they had come to Washington for, to meet these challenges."[81]

While the Administration aggressively sought to counter Soviet strategy, it did not seek an open conflict with the Kremlin. According to Halberstam and White House journalist Hugh Sidey, Kennedy believed the challenge for the United States regarding its struggle with the Soviet Union was one of greater communication and not conflict. He believed the Soviets were as committed to a rational foreign policy as he. Thus, wrote Sidey, Kennedy "set his course by his sense of history, a kind of inner road map warning him of human misjudgment and prejudice."[82] While Kennedy might have exploited crises to further his personal power, his challenge was to ensure they did not escalate out of control.

Kennedy's foreign policy embodied the activism of the modern age—the New Frontier. As foreign policy expert Seyom Brown wrote in 1968, the essence of Kennedy's policies was

> the power of *movement* itself. The key to leadership on the international scene was a creative exploitation of the currents of change. The surge by the new nations for a place in the sun, the social and economic egalitarianism of the newly enfranchised masses across the globe, and the unconquerable assertion of men that the object of government is to protect and extend the exercise of free choice—this was the very stuff of the new international politics.[83]

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[80] Henry Pachter, "JFK as an Equestrian Statue: On Myth and Mythmakers," in *J. F. Kennedy and Presidential Power*, ed. Earl Latham (Lexington, Massachusetts: D. C. Heath and Company, 1972), 39-40.

[81] Halberstam, 303.

[82] Hugh Sidey, "The Presidency: The Classic Use of the Great Office," in *J. F. Kennedy and Presidential Power*, ed. Earl Latham (Lexington, Massachusetts: D. C. Heath and Company, 1972), 188; Halberstam, 96.

[83] Seyom Brown, "Perceived Deficiencies in the Nation's Power," in *J. F. Kennedy and Presidential Power*, ed. Earl Latham (Lexington, Massachusetts: D. C. Heath and Company, 1972), 159.

On the other hand, Kennedy was no ideologue. Pachter considered Kennedy "a pragmatic opportunistic politician . . . not very seriously committed to any idea." As such, he "preferred doers to the visionaries, those who carried legislation through Congress to those who had agitated for new conceptions." His "disdain for ideologies," his idealism without illusions, and his fear of passion, bespoke this pragmatism. "He was above all a political operator."[84] Halberstam considered him "the new American breed, not ideological and wary of those who were; . . . he did not like doctrinaire liberals of the Americans for Democratic Action, he did not feel comfortable with them. . . . Kennedy was committed to rationality and brains, nothing more."[85] In Schlesinger's view, Kennedy was a pragmatic liberal, trying to change the system from within.[86]

The Justification for Dismantling Eisenhower's NSC Mechanism

While Eisenhower critics sounded a clarion call for NSC reforms, Neustadt served as the intellectual justification for the complete dismantlement of the Eisenhower NSC mechanism. Indeed, the Kennedy Administration cited several negative appraisals to justify its transformation of the existing NSC system. For instance, according to Arthur Schlesinger and Theodore Sorensen, Kennedy rejected the NSC mechanism because he felt the procedures and mechanism insulated Eisenhower from urgent issues. "Kennedy wanted to be exposed, not shielded—out on the battlements, scanning all horizons, not seated in his chamber sifting documents." Sharing Schlesinger and Neustadt's regard, Kennedy viewed the Roosevelt Presidency as the paradigm.[87]

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[84] Pachter, 37-38.
[85] Halberstam, 96.
[86] Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. "The Politics of Modernity," in *J. F. Kennedy and Presidential Power*, ed. Earl Latham (Lexington, Massachusetts: D. C. Heath and Company, 1972), 232.
[87] Wills, 163.

Kennedy envisioned his advisory system resembling "a wheel whose hub was the President and whose spokes connected him with individual aides."[88] Hugh Sidey explained that Kennedy "wanted all lines to lead to the White House, he wanted to be the single nerve center."[89] Rejecting the NSC as the central forum for foreign policy formulation, Kennedy wanted it "to be his own arm reaching out—through, over, or around the government—to get things done."[90] Interestingly, McGeorge Bundy did initially grasp Kennedy's intent for his advisory system. His 24 January 1961 NSC study originally envisioned the Council as the formal forum for the principal advisors to debate issues for the President's decision and guidance. The size of the NSC would be reduced and the forum would meet every ten days rather than weekly. Kennedy disabused Bundy of this concept because he was not interested in reforming the old system.[91] Kennedy biographer Richard Reeves wrote that Kennedy preferred some chaos in his advisory system (as Neustadt had advised) as a means of liberating his administration from bureaucratic procedures, keeping his people off balance, and compelling them to work harder. Again, he was the locus of power—"the vital center"—with "all lines of power . . . coming from him, and going to him."[92]

Sorensen unequivocally acknowledged that Kennedy dissolved anything which smacked of bureaucracy:

He abandoned the practice of the Cabinet's and the National Security Council's making

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[88] Louis W. Koenig, "Kennedy's Personal Management," in *J. F. Kennedy and Presidential Power*, ed. Earl Latham (Lexington, Massachusetts: D. C. Heath and Company, 1972), 7; According to Bromley Smith, Kennedy described his staff organization as "a wheel and a series of spokes. I try to keep in contact with all these men individually. All matters of international security go through McGeorge Bundy." Bromley Smith, 17.

[89] Cited in Wills, 173.

[90] Ibid, 156.

[91] Memorandum for the President, "The Use of the National Security Council," January 24, 1961, Papers of the President, National Security Files, Departments & Agencies, Box 283, National Security Council, Organization and Administration 1/1/61-1/25/61, 1964, JFKL; Prados, *Keeper of the Keys*, 100-101.

[92] Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 19, 52.

> group decisions like corporate boards of directors. He abolished the practice of White House staff meetings and weekly Cabinet meetings. He abolished the pyramid structure of the White House staff, the Assistant President-Sherman Adams-type job, the Staff Secretary, the NSC Planning Board and the Operations Coordinating Board, which imposed in his view, needless paperwork and machinery between the President and his responsible officers. He abolished several dozen interdepartmental committees which specialized in group recommendations on outmoded problems. He paid little attention to organization charts and chains of command which diluted and distributed his authority. He was not interested in unanimous committee recommendations which stifled alternatives to find the lowest common denominator of compromise.[93]

Hence, one of Kennedy's first acts was the dissolution of the OCB, which he regarded as a bureaucratic layer between the President and the agencies charged with implementation:

> We mean to center responsibility for much of the Board's work in the appropriate arms of the Department of State. The Department in turn will consult closely with other departments and agencies. . . . Insofar as the OCB . . . was concerned with the impact on foreign opinion of our polices, we expect its work to be done in number of ways; in my own office, in the State Department, under Mr. Murrow USIA, and by all who are concerned with the spirit and meaning of our actions in foreign policy. . . . We plan to continue its work by maintaining direct communication with the responsible agencies, so that everyone will know what I have decided, while I in turn keep fully informed of the actions taken to carry out decisions.[94]

Similarly, Kennedy eliminated the White House Chief of Staff, opting to manage both the White House staff and NSC staff himself, with Sorensen acting as a quasi chief of staff.[95] As such, Kennedy "saw no need for staff meetings, preferring the directness and increased confidentiality of one-on-one sessions, including meeting directly with my [Sorensen's] deputies, and expecting us to coordinate among ourselves." In turn, Sorensen, Bundy, and David Bell met weekly to keep each other apprised of their activities and to conduct policy coordination.[96] Kennedy

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[93] Theodore C. Sorensen, *Kennedy* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1965), 281.

[94] "Statement by the President Upon Signing Order Abolishing the Operations Coordinating Board," February 19, 1961, Papers of the President, National Security Files, Departments & Agencies, Box 284, Operations Coordinating Board, General I, 1/27/61-7/27/61, JFKL

[95] Prados, *Keeper of the Keys*, 113

[96] Sorensen also coordinated regularly with Larry O'Brien on legislative programs, Walter Heller on economic issues, Jerome Wiesner on "space, weaponry and health" issues, Pierre Salinger on "press releases and media appearances," Kenny O'Donnell on politics, presidential speeches and travel, and speechwriting assistance from Ar-

wanted to issue orders directly to the responsible officials rather than through subordinates in order to forestall jealousies resulting from perceptions he valued his special assistants above others.[97]

Gary Wills believed that Kennedy's leadership style had as much to do with this decision as his distaste for bureaucracy:

> Charismatic leadership works through "a loose organization." . . . When authority flows from a *person*, that authority cannot be delegated. The magic touch must be bestowed by the ruler himself. He must go out among the people, lead the action. Everything must be referred to him, decided by him, must bear his mark, embody his style. He must be in constant touch with everything that goes on. . . . And when he cannot act personally, he must do so through a personal emissary created ad hoc, not through official, impersonal machinery.[98]

Echoing the earlier criticism of Eisenhower Administration, Kennedy officials provided the public justification for dismantling Eisenhower's NSC Mechanism. During his August 1961testimony before the Jackson subcommittee, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara suggested that the Planning Board placed too much value on unanimity, presenting the President with "an agreed-upon position," representing "the lowest common denominator." In contrast, the Kennedy Administration tasked specific individuals with development and implementation of plans, presenting the President "with more choices and a better understanding of the differences of view than did the previous system."[99]

During his testimony, Secretary of State Dean Rusk implicitly impeached the Eisenhower NSC mechanism as an attempt to resolve "problems of the most incredible complexity" with "an organizational gimmick." In his view, the correct approach lay in continual work on creating

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thur Schlesinger. Theodore C. Sorensen, *Counselor: A Life at the Edge of History* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, May 2008), Kindle e-book, 203, 210-211.

[97] Dallek, *An Unfinished Life*, 307.

[98] Wills, 173.

[99] McNamara, 238-240.

global conditions for workable solutions and developing people to increase their insight on finding the optimal or appropriate solution to problems.[100]

Rusk asserted that the Eisenhower Planning Board produced draft policy papers without the participation of the departments and agencies, leaving the departments with the onus of implementation without any planning input. He was not entirely dismissive of the Planning Board, acknowledging that it performed an important policy function by keeping the principal NSC members informed: "the education of those who…make policy decisions and for the background, alternatives, and general orientation of policy." Yet, in the next breath, Rusk thought that draft policy papers overly focused on long-term planning rather than on unfolding international events: "The most effective planning, however, is focused rather particularly on a situation or on a developing crisis or any idea on foreign policy." Presumably, State's Policy Planning Council would focus on current events, eschewing reviews of past policies as well as long-term planning. Hence, Rusk not only advocated the abolition of the Planning Board under the proposition that the primacy for planning would once again emanate from the departments (i.e., the Policy Planning Council)—he also wanted to assume the responsibilities of the defunct OCB for policy implementation.[101] Rusk concluded that the Kennedy Administration had liberated the NSC system from an "overdependence on committees, with their attendant dulling of issues and reduction of decisions to a least common denominator."[102]

In his September 1961 letter to the Jackson subcommittee, McGeorge Bundy attached lit-

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[100] Dean Rusk, "The Secretary of State," in *The National Security Council: Jackson Subcommittee Papers on Policy-Making at the Presidential Level*, ed. Senator Henry M. Jackson (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, 1965), 272-273.

[101] Ibid, 268-269; Karl F. Inderfurth and Loch K. Johnson, "Transformation," in *Fateful Decisions: Inside the National Security Council*, Karl F. Inderfurth and Loch K. Johnson, eds. (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc, 2004), 64.

[102] Rusk, "The Secretary of State," 255-257.

tle importance to the NSC in dealing with issues of national security. He recalled that Truman had not used the Council for major foreign policy decisions, such as the Korean and Berlin crises, or major budgetary issues impacting policy and strategy. He made note of three specific changes to the NSC. First, the NSC met less frequently (16 meetings in the first six months). Most of the routine business was shifted to other meetings, through letters and memoranda from the President, and at echelons below the NSC. The President preferred to call meetings for specific issues requiring decision. Reflecting Kennedy's stance, Bundy wrote that "the National Security Council has never been and should never become the only instrument of counsel and decision available to the President in dealing with the problems of our national security." The NSC was only "one instrument among many; it must never be made an end in itself." Bundy stressed that Kennedy used the NSC for urgent national security issues and long-term policy, meeting frequently with the Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, and other relevant officials for national security problems either at the NSC or at smaller meetings. Regardless of the forum, decisions were meticulously recorded, either by the department responsible for implementation or by the NSC process for issues beyond a single department. Second, the elimination of the OCB reflected the change in the President's management style but not a degeneration of policy implementation. Kennedy felt the OCB was insufficient for the coordination and implementation of policy decisions, and it created a layer between him and the Secretary of State, creating ambiguity within the bureaucracy of presidential authority and the Secretary of State's responsibility. Third, the Administration did not believe planning and operations should be separate responsibilities as characterized by the Eisenhower NSC system. Bundy emphasized that the NSC Staff would be involved in both planning and the monitoring of implementation. Even though the

State Department was fully responsible for operations, coordination, and diplomatic relations, the NSC Staff, like the White House staff, served to "extend the range and enlarge the direct effectiveness" of the President.[103]

At the heart of the new Administration's criticism of the Eisenhower NSC system was its apotheosis of government bureaucracy. Destler contended that bureaucratic politics is pervasive and essentially about leverage. The U.S. policy-making system implies that bureaucrats reach decisions through compromise, colored by organizational parochialism.

> Issues tend to be resolved piecemeal, with policy evolving in incremental fashion; that officials are dangerously diverted from focusing on the international environment by the attention they must pay to intra-governmental politics; that our overall system is biased against change, resistant to central control and coordination, and often clumsy in responding to unique situations.[104]

Kennedy wanted to slice through this bureaucratic gridlock in the American political system to invigorate the nation to action. Journalist T. George Harris commented that Kennedy was convinced big government created paralysis, a sense of hopelessness, and fear of change. "The real cure, he felt, was for men to seize the jobs ahead, not just in Government, but through the broad range of U.S. institutions. A people confidently driving toward new destiny cannot be trapped by bureaucracy or despair."[105] Thus, the threat to U.S. national security, as Schlesinger reflected, was not foreign enemies, but bureaucracy itself.[106]

Destler recognized the plight of Kennedy, the reformer**.**

> The reformer faces a world, to borrow two of Neustadt's characterizations, of "intractable substantive problems and immovable bureaucratic structures," of "emergencies in policy

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[103] Bundy Letter to Senator Jackson, September 4, 1961, Papers of the President, National Security Files, Departments & Agencies, Box 283A, National Security Council, Organization and Administration, 9/10/61-12/26/61, JFKL.

[104] Destler, 81-82.

[105] T. George Harris, "The Competent American," in *J. F. Kennedy and Presidential Power*, ed. Earl Latham (Lexington, Massachusetts: D. C. Heath and Company, 1972), 118.

[106] Wills, 166.

> with politics as usual." And he must extend to the entire government Neustadt's depiction of a President who feels the urgent need for wise policy but recognizes that our arrival at such policy is anything but automatic.[107]

From Kennedy's perspective, these measures were indispensible to shake the country out of the lassitude of the Eisenhower years. The national emergency evidenced by Soviet's aggressive foreign policy required a strong President, rising to the occasion to save the nation.

Interdepartmental Planning, Coordination, and Implementation of Foreign Policy Issues

Deputy Special Assistant for National Security Walt Rostow explained the rationale for dissolving the Planning Board was to eliminate the middleman and have the departments directly engage the NSC:

> We were going to keep out of interdepartmental coordination. We were going to force the town to do its business. We were going to press the State Department to work with the other departments, take the responsibility for sending us staff papers, and we didn't want any papers coming over that didn't have the stamp of the Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, and Secretary of Treasury—and that our job was to follow the issues through the town, be knowledgeable about them, and make sure that they came over in an orderly way from State or the other departments, coordinated so that agreements and disagreements were clear; that every member of the staff was to have a clear view of what the battle had been about and what the options open to the President had been, so that the President didn't have to rely wholly on a statement of conclusions of the departments; that what we wanted, in other words, were recommendations of the responsible cabinet officers, coordinated; an analysis of how the issue had unfolded in the town, a statement of the options, and then a recommendation if the President wanted our net recommendation, but that wasn't so important.[108]

In place of the Planning Board and the OCB, Kennedy informally assigned responsibility for planning, coordination, and implementation of policy issues to ad hoc teams, interdepart-

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[107] Destler, 81.

[108] Walter Rostow, Foreign Affairs Oral History Project Interview by Paige E. Mulhollan, March 21, 1969, The National Archives And Records Service Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, accessed on the website of The Association For Diplomatic Studies And Training at http://www.adst.org/OH%20TOCs/Rostow,%20Walt.toc.pdf, 25 February 2013, 18-19.

mental task forces, the Special Assistant for National Security, the NSC Staff, or entrusted individuals.[109] Conceptually, they would form an amorphous hive of brilliant minds operating at the prerogative of the President.[110] Charged with establishing the ad hoc task force system, Bundy envisioned the formation of task forces for problems like Laos, Cuba, and the Congo before they became full-fledged crises. The Secretary of State would supervise each task force administratively, with membership emanating from pertinent departments and agencies. The task force leader's authority would come directly from the President, though his "seniority, his personal responsibility and his right to act as the President's agent." As such, the leader was

> responsible for continuously maintaining an approved plan of action, for pressing upon all concerned where the means available to him are inadequate, for reporting continuously to the secretary of state and the President, and for directing the whole effort of Washington with relation to American agencies in the field.

In order to speed the prompt formation of ad hoc task forces, the State Department would maintain a pool of executive agents for leadership assignments.[111]

According to Richard Reeves, these ad hoc task forces were focused on urgent matters: "their number rising and falling with the President's perception of crises. Ideally the task forces would be unofficial, never permanent, never functioning long enough to generate their own bureaucracies or get around the direct control of the man at the center in the Oval Office."[112] They were the President's instruments to command, without mixed loyalties or bureaucratic parochial-

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[109] Koenig, 9; Karl F. Inderfurth and Loch K. Johnson, "Transformation," 64.

[110] Kennedy assembled an impressive circle of advisors. According to journalist and Kennedy speechwriter Joseph Kraft, seventeen out of thirty-five Cabinet appointments were filled by university academics. Joseph Kraft, "Kennedy and the Intellectuals," in *J. F. Kennedy and Presidential Power*, ed. Earl Latham (Lexington, Massachusetts: D. C. Heath and Company, 1972), 274.

[111] Memorandum for discussion at lunch, Monday January 30, 1961 with Livingston Merchant and Paul Nitze, January 30, 1961, Papers of the President, National Security Files, McGeorge Bundy Correspondence, Box 405, Memos to the President, 1/61-2/61, JFKL; Bromley Smith, 21-22.

[112] Richard Reeves, "The Lines of Control Have Been Cut," *American Heritage Magazine*, Volume 44, Issue 5 (September 1993), accessed on the website of the American Heritage Magazine at http:www.americanheritage.com/articles/magazine/ah/1993/, 15 April 2011.

ism. As journalist T. George Harris noted, their sole purpose was to gather knowledge for Presidential decisions, not to render advice.[113] Ideally, task forces suited Kennedy's thirst for information and new ideas. "An inveterate brain-picker," as Ted Lewis described him.[114]

In anticipation of Kennedy's desire to give primacy of foreign policy to the State Department, Rusk expanded the State Department's Policy Planning Council (traditionally responsible for long-range thinking on foreign policy issues),[115] directing the operating bureaus to assume the responsibilities of the former Planning Board. Specialized planners in the operating bureaus, including assistant secretaries, were thus responsible for planning. The purpose of an ad hoc task force was to seek solutions to specific problems with responsibility devolving to the appropriate regional bureau assistant secretary. The task force leader thereby enlisted members from the appropriate departments, agencies, and the NSC Staff. "Since the authority for the task force stems directly from the President or other high officials, there usually results added urgency and a more thorough consideration of the problem than would otherwise be possible." Rusk stressed however, that task forces were not appropriate for "ordinary operating problems" because they were so time-consuming and manpower intensive.[116]

Office of Management and Budget Director David Bell testified that the President would occasionally have an NSC special task force, usually with an assistant secretary of state as the chairman, prepare regional policy reviews or functional plans. The responsible officer integrated the views of the concerned departments, conducted his own analysis, conclusions, and recom-

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[113] Harris, 121.

[114] Ted Lewis, "Kennedy: Profile of a Technician," in *J. F. Kennedy and Presidential Power*, ed. Earl Latham (Lexington, Massachusetts: D. C. Heath and Company, 1972), 33.

[115] Halberstam, 102.

[116] Rusk, "The Secretary of State," 255-257, 270.

mendations and then submitted the report to the President.[117]

McNamara explained that the President preferred to assign projects directly to the Cabinet Secretaries. The secretaries in turn would call a small group meeting, exchange views and write the policy papers. If an issue was complex or a crisis was developing, the secretaries would assign the project to one or more people forming an ad hoc team or interdepartmental task force, which would present the policy paper to the appropriate secretary for review. When opposing views (policy splits) arose between Rusk and McNamara, they were not incorporated into the position paper but were brought up during the debate.[118] Bell added that Kennedy expected debate on the issues in his presence and often participated vigorously in the discussions.[119]

Once the President made a policy decision, Bundy disseminated a National Security Action Memoranda (NSAM), which served the dual purpose of delineating policy contents and as a document for monitoring implementation. Any lingering questions or issues regarding the NSAM were brought to Bundy for presidential clarification, adjustments, or resolution.[120] Once alerted, the ad hoc task forces were charged with ensuring the government bureaucracy implemented approved policy, with the White House or NSC Staff monitoring and prodding progress.[121] Hence, the task forces with assistance from the NSC Staff assumed not only the duties of the Planning Board, but those of the OCB as well.[122]

In his testimony to the Jackson Subcommittee, Rusk justified the merging of planning with operations by citing Parkinson's Law: "'everyone who is affected by a decision must partic-

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[117] Bell, 216, 218-219.
[118] McNamara, 236; Inderfurth and Johnson, "Transformation," 64.
[119] Bell, 216.
[120] Rusk, "The Secretary of State," 272.
[121] McNamara, 237.
[122] Bromley Smith, 13; Bell, 217-218; Rusk emphasized that monitoring implementation was the responsibility of the tasked department. Rusk testimony to the Jackson Subcommittee, 273.

ipate in making it.'" Rusk believed interdepartmental task force most effectively integrated policy planning and operations because it placed implementation responsibility on those individuals with the greatest expertise on the relevant issues—who would know the best way to execute the President's decisions. Most important to the President, the task force leader could cut through bureaucratic red tape quickly to coordinate and implement decisions with the appropriate departments and agencies, permitting the President and the Secretaries to resolve national security issues quickly and without bureaucratic interference.[123]

Ironically, irrespective of the rhetoric and testimonies, Kennedy and Bundy became disenchanted with ad hoc task forces as the central policy formulation and implementation mechanism. This disenchantment stemmed principally from the inability of task forces to perform as envisioned. Bundy laid out the problem in his 4 April 1961 memorandum to the President titled, "Crisis Commanders in Washington":

> Over and over since January 20th we have talked of getting "task forces with individual responsible leaders" here in Washington for crisis situations. At the beginning, we thought we had task forces for Laos, the Congo and Cuba. We did get working groups with nobody in particular in charge, but we did not get clearly focused responsibility. The reason was that the Department of State was not quite ready, in each case, and this in turn was because of two factors: first, the senior State Department man was usually an Assistant Secretary with twelve other things on his mind, and second, these Assistant Secretaries, although men of good will, were not really prepared to take charge of the "military" and "intelligence" aspects—the Government was in the habit of "coordination" and out of the habit of the acceptance of individual executive leadership. Thus it has repeatedly been necessary to bring even small problems to you and still smaller ones to the White House staff, while more than once, the ball has been dropped because no one person felt a continuing clear responsibility.[124]

Bundy counseled that assigning "effective leadership" was imperative to these task forces, and that those leaders "should be sufficiently senior to take charge of the government as a whole, and

[123] Rusk, "The Secretary of State," 267-269.

[124] Memorandum for the President, "Crisis Commanders in Washington," April 4, 1961, Papers of the President, National Security Files, McGeorge Bundy Correspondence, Box 405, Memos to the President, 3/1/61-4/4/61, JFKL.

to feel confident in acting directly for you and the Secretary [of State]. And they will have to be on these jobs full time."[125]

Cabinet Secretaries acknowledged in testimony to the Jackson subcommittee that the ad hoc task forces were not providing the President with quality staffed products. In his testimony, McNamara professed ad hoc task forces proved ineffective when it became apparent task force leaders were not up to the task, but he attributed the failure to "human frailty rather than weakness of the organizational structure." His remedy was to replace incompetent leaders or institute leader training.[126] Rusk admitted that difficulties arose due to resistance from the lower levels of the government bureaucracy in terms of cooperation and information sharing. He felt this was a result of jealousy, but concluded these problems could be worked out. David Bell concluded that the planning mechanism did not work as expected but could only speculate on the reasons: "Perhaps the fellow who was the task-force chairman did not quite know what was expected of him. He may have come up with a lowest-common-denominator type of report, or that timetable may have been very short and the people concerned may not really have had a chance to get all the issues staffed out."[127]

Policy implementation was particularly problematic for ad hoc task forces as David Bell concluded.[128] In this instance, Kennedy did seem to grasp the full purpose of the OCB, believing that the assistance, coordination, and monitoring process for long-term policy implementation could apply for task forces. In view of their temporary nature and the expectation of immediate solutions, task forces were ineffective instruments for policy implementation, which is inherently

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[125] Ibid.
[126] McNamara, 236-238.
[127] Rusk, "The Secretary of State," 270; Bell, 219.
[128] Bell, 217.

a long-term activity. Implementation extended the length of time each task force member would be away from the office, so members likely sought to dispense with the assignment as quickly as possible, irrespective of proper implementation. Hence, a task force would have little incentive to seek clarifications if necessary, advise the White House of possible policy revisions, or anything that might extend the mandate of the task force. Further, due to their relatively low seniority, task forces leaders possessed virtually no authority to prod the government bureaucracy. Without the OCB, task forces were on their own and ineffective. Observing these problems, NSC Executive Secretary Bromley Smith felt he should have fought harder to retain the OCB.[129]

As Bundy's 4 April 1961 memorandum to the President made clear, the use of ad hoc task forces, the centerpiece of the Kennedy advisory system, was an abject failure. With the dissolution of the Eisenhower NSC mechanism, no alternative was readily available, and Kennedy would not countenance its revival. Kennedy had two choices at this point. He could hand the problem to the State Department to fix, or he could shift the planning and implementation functions to Bundy and his NSC staff. He chose the latter for reasons that corresponded with his cultivated image and pursuit of presidential power.

Kennedy had lost faith in the State Department almost from the beginning. Sorensen believed Kennedy's disenchantment stemmed from State's bureaucratic torpor. Kennedy

> felt it too often seemed to have a built-in inertia which deadened initiative and that its tendency toward excessive delay obscured determination. It spoke with too many voices and too little vigor. It was never clear to the President (and this continued to be true, even after the personnel changes at State) who was in charge, who was clearly delegated to do what, and why his own policy line seemed consistently to be altered or evaded.[130]

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[129] After the Bay of Pigs fiasco, Kennedy asked Karl Harr, former assistant for the OCB if the OCB could have picked up on the flaws of the operation. Harr replied that the OCB was responsible for long term policy issues rather than immediate operations. Prados, *Keeper of the Keys*,104.

[130] Cited in Inderfurth and Johnson, "Transformation," 65.

On a deeper level, Kennedy's visceral antipathy with the State Department likely stemmed from his father, Joseph Kennedy, who had instilled in his son a profound disdain for career diplomats in favor of "inspired amateurs, in the gentlemen saviors of the country."[131] Further, Kennedy thought he could independently manage foreign policy more effectively. Halberstam reasoned that someone of Kennedy's restless disposition would naturally want to be his own Secretary of State,

> because in the universities, in the journals and in the intellectual circles it was generally held that the real action was in determining the role America played in the world, rather than redefining America domestically. It was where the excitement was, this competition with the Soviet Union, a competition of politics and of economics and ideas. Kennedy believed in it, and so did other men of power and ambition in that era.[132]

The reserved relationship between Kennedy and Rusk likely contributed to the diminished influence of the State Department in the White House. Halberstam noted that both men operated on different wavelengths, lacking the intimacy that Kennedy shared with his other advisors.[133] As a product of the Foreign Service establishment, "Rusk, who always did things through channels and by the book, was never able to adjust to the freewheeling, deliberately disorganized Kennedy system, and was more formal in his view of the world than Kennedy."[134]

Bundy biographer Andrew Preston wrote that Rusk was compliant to Kennedy's designs because he believed the Secretary's primary job was to implement the President's decisions, not

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[131] Kennedy regarded the State Department as a "bowl of jelly." Schlesinger recalled that "the Kennedys had a romantic view of the possibilities of diplomacy. They wanted to replace protocol-minded, striped pants officials by reform-minded missionaries of democracy who mixed with the people, spoke the native dialects, ate the food, and involved themselves in local struggles against ignorance and want. This view had its most genial expression in the Peace Corps, its most corrupt in the mystique of counterinsurgency. The gospel of activism became the New Frontier's challenge to the cautious, painstaking, spectatorial methods of the old diplomacy." Wills, 169; Joseph Kennedy thought the State Department was "filled with sissies in striped pants and worse." Halberstam, 4-5.

[132] Earlier as a congressman, Kennedy had confided in Sorensen that the Cabinet posts he had most desired were Defense or State because "that was where the power was. The real power and resources and energies, financial and intellectual, of the United States were committed to the cause of the new American empire, in bringing proof that our system was better than theirs." Ibid, 25, 29, 100.

[133] Ibid, 36.

[134] Ibid, 36.

articulate State's positions. Rusk rarely voiced an opinion or even the collective views of the State Department to the President in meetings. In short, no one in government, including the President, could divine what Rusk thought or sought.[135] While Rusk's inscrutability was often frustrating to Kennedy, "Rusk had, after all, not been chosen because Kennedy wanted a strong man," observed Halberstam, "but because he would be a low-profile Secretary of State."[136]

Halberstam surmised that these same qualities made Rusk highly desirable in Kennedy's eyes, over more strong-willed, experienced candidates like Dean Acheson, Adlai Stevenson, Chester Bowles, J. William Fulbright, and Averell Harriman. "He did not want a Secretary who already had a constituency worthy of a President."[137] What Kennedy sought and got from Rusk was a quiet, loyal, reliable secretary who would keep the State Department in line.[138] To this end, "Kennedy wanted to ensure that the State Department would be under his control."[139]

So with the State Department sufficiently marginalized, Kennedy shifted foreign policy to an inner circle of advisors.[140] Accordingly, Kennedy increased the responsibilities and authority of the Special Assistant for National Security to a de facto Cabinet rank. Hence, Bundy would draw exclusively from his "own staff of experts who became policy-makers in their own right

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[135] Andrew Preston, *The War Council: McGeorge Bundy, the NSC, and Vietnam* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2006), 44-45.

[136] Halberstam, 68; Dallek noted that Kennedy's intent to be his own Secretary of State profoundly weighed on his selection of Rusk. Dallek, *An Unfinished Life*, 315.

[137] Kennedy had wanted former Secretary of Defense, Robert Lovett, in the new Administration, offering him any position—Treasury, Defense, or State—because he was not an ideologue, unlike "Chester Bowles and Adlai Stevenson and all the other Democratic eggheads pushing their favorite causes." Halberstam, 6-9, 16, 26-30, 29.

[138] Dallek, *An Unfinished Life*, 315; On the other hand, Undersecretary of State, Chester Bowles, a traditional liberal, who did not share Kennedy's anti-communist worldview among other things, proved to be an outspoken irritant of Kennedy's foreign policy initiatives, serving only to exacerbate disaffection between the White House and the State Department. After months of trying, Kennedy and Rusk succeeded in shuffling Bowles away from the inner circle of advisors, first with his firing (the Thanksgiving Day Massacre) and finally with his posting as ambassador to India, his second tour. Halberstam, 14-17, 35.

[139] Dallek, *An Unfinished Life*, 314.

[140] Preston, 7, 44.

and inclusion in the administration's highest foreign policy decision-making councils."[141]

Special Assistant for National Security McGeorge Bundy

The amalgamation of planning and operations into the Special Assistant for National Security and the NSC Staff meshed perfectly with the President's action-oriented White House. In Bundy, the President found a champion for responsive and decisive action. Bundy was a natural choice as Kennedy's Special Assistant for National Security because he espoused the positions of Kennedy—flexible response, nation-building, and anticommunism. "Bundy was intellectually and temperamentally the ideal Kennedy man—tough, pragmatic but with liberal instincts, and highly intelligent."[142] Like Kennedy, Bundy's world view was governed by three premises. First, military power was integral to foreign policy, although its application must be used prudently. Since the Soviet threat to Europe was one of intimidation and not military aggression, NATO served as a sufficient deterrent. Nevertheless, he, together with other leading liberals, strongly believed Eisenhower's reliance on Massive Retaliation was ill-suited for limited aggression, such as the Soviet wars of national liberation in peripheral theaters. The foreign policy shift to Flexible Response was seen as the most effective counter to this new challenge. But, Bundy believed that political and economic power, as advocates of "modernization theory" premised, were essential to military strategy. Accordingly, Western free-market capitalism in the form of nation building would be more attractive than Communism for former colonies in Asia and Africa. Second, World War II had discredited appeasement and isolationism as viable foreign policies. In their place, a "vigorously interventionist foreign policy" was the best means to demon-

[141] Ibid, 7, 36-37.
[142] Ibid, 37.

strate commitment and resolve to the Soviets in order to prevent a war through miscalculation. Third, anticommunism was to serve as the raison d'être for American foreign policy decisions. By its nature, Communism remained an existential threat to American liberty.[143]

Of all Bundy's qualities though, Kennedy especially admired his intellect, "You can't beat brains," he once quipped.[144] He epitomized "the belief that sheer intelligence and rationality could answer and solve anything."[145] Being like-minded, they enjoyed a close rapport, with Bundy's ability to whisk through paperwork, protect the President from bureaucracy, and cut through the red tape, allowing Kennedy to focus on his ambitious agenda.[146] Characteristically, Kennedy had little tolerance for palaverous views and appreciated Bundy for his incisive mind and concise speech.[147] Sidney Hyman once described Bundy as Kennedy's "alter-ego . . . another Harry Hopkins with hand grenades."[148] Now, given the fact Bundy had few academic credentials or experience in foreign policy, it seems odd Kennedy expanded his role as an adviser on foreign policy and national security.[149] It was not. Kennedy was distrustful of specialized experts who saw the world through antiquated foreign policy eyes. With Bundy and his staff, Kennedy got advisors with fresh perspectives, infused with new ideas, and driven to attain the objectives of the New Frontier. It was because of these traits that Bundy became the first National Se-

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[143] Ibid, 26-32.
[144] Ibid, 38.
[145] Halberstam, 44.
[146] Ibid, 61.
[147] Chester Bowles' habit of providing lengthy explanations to questions alienated Kennedy.
[148] Cited in Bird, 185-186.
[149] Bundy had served as an analyst and later as an aide to Rear Admiral Alan G. Kirk during World War II. After the war, he served as a junior fellow on Harvard University's Society of Fellows as well as dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. Bundy biographer, Andrew Preston averred that Bundy owed his Harvard appointments more to familial and political connections than to any academic and administrative record. Bundy's close relationships with Secretary of War Henry Stimson and Secretary of State Dean Acheson among others were important factors in the attainment of these prestigious positions. For example, Bundy was given tenure in Harvard's Department of Government despite having no undergraduate and graduate courses in government. Tenure for Bundy was controversial though. When asked to endorse the appointment, Harvard President James Bryant Conant said, "All I can say is that it couldn't have happened in Chemistry [Department]." Preston, 21, 22, 24; Halberstam, 56-57.

curity Adviser.

While the centralization of foreign policy into the White House naturally caused friction with the State Department, the recommendations of the Jackson Subcommittee provided Kennedy with the political justification:

> The President should at all times have the help and protection of a small personal staff whose members work 'outside the system' . . . who are sensitive to the President's own information needs, and who can assist him . . . in making suggestions for policy initiatives . . . and in spotting gaps in policy execution.[150]

Bundy underscored these points to Kennedy, stating the modern Presidency needed advice quickly in light of the dynamic strategic environment. Accordingly, the NSC Staff was best positioned to handle presidential tasks.[151]

From the beginning, Bundy and Rostow became the principal architects of Kennedy's advisory system. With the demise of the Eisenhower NSC, Bundy absorbed the duties of five former NSC officials, assumed all the duties of the OCB, eliminated supporting committees wholesale, and concentrated the remnants into the NSC Staff.[152] Schlesinger recalled that "Bundy promptly slaughtered committees right and left and collapsed what was left of the inherited apparatus into a compact and flexible National Security Council staff."[153] Rostow's role was also substantial:

> In fact, I had a substantial hand in setting it up because I had done the analysis and made the recommendation to Kennedy that we break up the OCB. I watched it over this whole period since 1961. I also had been a consultant in the Eisenhower Administration and knew a good deal about the relationship in his time.[154]

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[150] Cited in Inderfurth and Johnson, "Transformation," 65.
[151] Preston, 40.
[152] Bromley Smith, 9, 12.
[153] Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 210; Preston, 40; Bird, 183;
[154] Walter Rostow, Foreign Affairs Oral History Project Interview by Paige E. Mulhollan, March 21, 1969, The National Archives And Records Service Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, accessed on the website of The Association For Diplomatic Studies And Training at http://www.adst.org/OH%20TOCs/Rostow,%20Walt.toc.pdf, 25 February 2013, 18.

Bundy retained the traditional management of NSC activities and served on interagency meetings. He also managed the President's daily national security agenda and served as the President's national security confident, a role which General Andrew Goodpaster had performed as Eisenhower's Staff Secretary.

Along with their other duties, Bundy and Rostow single-handedly perused the Eisenhower Administration policies for familiarization, retention, rejection, or revision.[155] Hence, a process which involved months of work and staffing under Eisenhower was quickly disposed of by the Special Assistant for National Security and his deputy.

Bundy immediately placed his imprint on Kennedy's new advisory system, reducing the NSC Staff from 74 to 49.[156] He directly supervised the NSC Staff (a former responsibility of the NSC Executive Secretary), took notes at Council meetings, managed cable and memoranda traffic, and ran the White House secretariat.[157] He served as the Administration's main generator of ideas on foreign policy, identifying long-term problems, and developing plans before problems became acute.[158] Moreover, Bundy set a precedent as a policy advocate, giving speeches and appearing on radio and television interview shows.[159]

According to John Prados, Bundy personified the NSC system:

> [A] self-styled traffic cop steering useful papers and people into the Oval Office, keeping others away. Bundy felt that "an appalling percentage" of the material that came to the President from State, Defense, the CIA, and the Atomic Energy Commission was "raw

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[155] Prados, *Keeper of the Keys,* 101.

[156] Rothkopf, 84; Prados, *Keeper of the Keys,* 101-102; Bird, 183.

[157] Although Bundy wanted to eliminate the position of Deputy Special Assistant, he soon discovered its criticality. Rostow proved to be an able administrator, setting up the White House Situation Room, and worked on improving national security organization. His duty areas included policies for foreign economic assistance, underdeveloped countries, and counterinsurgency. He also scanned cable traffic for the French-Algerian war, Latin America, Southeast Asia, and Berlin. Rostow went to State in December 1961. Prados, *Keeper of the Keys,* 106, 111-113.

[158] Wills, 165; Bell, 219.

[159] Prados, *Keeper of the Keys,* 104; Inderfurth and Johnson, "Transformation," 65.

> and unsatisfactory paperwork." The stuff flowed into his small West Wing office and piled up.[160]

Bundy presided over the tri-weekly 9:00 am NSC Staff meeting, where he would grill the staff for information. Afterwards, he would brief the President on the most recent intelligence from around the world.[161] In terms of influence, Bundy became one of the most powerful men in Washington because he "controlled the flow of information to and from the president" and "everyone would be working off Bundy's memos, and thus his memos guided the action, guided what the President would see."[162]

The Bay of Pigs fiasco in April 1961 created the opportunity for even greater centralization of authority in Bundy and the NSC Staff. Although he took responsibility for the failure publicly, Kennedy personally blamed the CIA for incompetent planning and execution, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) for poor advice and for misleading him.[163] Shortly thereafter, Bundy and the NSC Staff moved from the Old Executive Building to the White House basement, gaining even greater influence and authority—with direct access to the President daily—a privilege not shared by the Cabinet secretaries and agency chiefs.[164] Henceforth, Bundy and his NSC Staff began to marginalize CIA and JSC influence in the White House by scrutinizing their studies, estimates, and the like before discussing them with the President.[165] Further, Kennedy brought in retired General Maxwell Taylor as his military advisor, someone who shared Kennedy's national security agenda, was loyal, and remained unfettered by the parochial interests of the military ser-

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[160] Prados, *Keeper of the Keys*, 110; Bundy characterized his job as a "traffic cop—to see what gets forwarded to the President." Bundy cited in Bird, 185.

[161] Bird, 185; Prados, *Keeper of the Keys*, 117.

[162] Preston, 8; Halberstam, 62.

[163] Prados, *Keeper of the Keys*, 103.

[164] Rothkopf, 91; Although referred to as the "basement," the offices and Situation Room were located on the ground floor of the White House. Ibid, 105; Kai Bird explained Rusk's lack of commensurate access diminished his influence, but this applied to the other government bureaucracy chiefs too. Bird, 185.

[165] Preston, 45-46.

vices. Bundy and the NSC Staff began a close collaboration with McNamara and Taylor, which shifted "much of the balance of power in the military bureaucracy from the Pentagon to the White House."[166]

Of significance was the creation of the Situation Room, located next to Bundy's office. Inspired by Bundy and under Rostow's supervision, the Situation Room served as a clearing-house for all military, diplomatic, and intelligence traffic from the departments and agencies. The Situation Room proved invaluable to Kennedy and his inner circle because they no longer had to depend on the government bureaucracy for information. According to John Prados, under Eisenhower, NSC officials only needed to be familiar with draft policy papers; now, NSC staffers "needed to master the intelligence, cable traffic, what the newspapers were saying, and the gossip of the bureaucracy." Kennedy would query staffers on the latest intelligence, news, and rumors. If they failed to keep current, they would suffer the President's wrath.[167]

In 1963, Kennedy increased efficiency by ordering the installation of pneumatic tubes from the State Department to speed up cable traffic for the NSC Staff.[168]

The Situation Room contained a table to seat twelve NSC staffers and twenty seats along the wall for assistants. Additionally, the Situation Room served as an operations center, equipped with encrypted phones to key allied leaders, teletypes, and maps dedicated to military deployments.[169] Running the Situation Room, Bundy and the NSC Staff became even more indispensible to the President, serving "as the President's foreign policy filter." They crafted diplomatic

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[166] Ibid, 46.

[167] Kennedy avidly read newspapers each morning and was keenly interested in the rumors which circulated in Washington D.C. Prados, *Keeper of the Keys,* 105.

[168] Bromley Smith, 37-38; Prados, *Keeper of the Keys,* 105-106; Preston, 46; Inderfurth and Johnson, "Transformation," 64; Koenig, 8.

[169] Richard Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 114.

cable traffic from the White House to American embassies and consulates, and it was not unusual for NSC staffers to draft White House communications to foreign leaders as well as Defense and State Department telegrams sent abroad.[170]

The NSC Staff—the Bundy Group

Within the NSC Staff, Bundy formed a small special staff of foreign and defense policy analysts, informally called the Bundy Group, which served as the President's dedicated agents of action. While Bundy and Rostow divided administrative and national security issues, the Bundy Group focusing on near- and far-term policy, distributing the workload among 41 geographic areas and 11 functional areas.[171]

In a 22 June 1961 Memorandum to the President, Bundy outlined the organizational and aspirational mandate of the Bundy Group—*perhaps the most important document framing how the staff was to operate under Bundy's stewardship*. Bundy explained that the special staff would serve as "an extension" of the President—"as his eyes and ears and his source of nondepartmental comment. The President's staff is his own instrument." The Bundy Group would ensure that strategic issues were "adequately controlled and coordinated," and would immediately alert the President of any acute problems for resolution. It would serve as the "center of initiative and energy in the planning process," anticipating looming crises, assigning planning papers to the

[170] Preston, 42.

[171] Bundy assigned planning problems to the Bundy Group with a suspense date of two-to-three months. "Master List of Planning Problems," June 9, 1961, Papers of the President, National Security Files, McGeorge Bundy Correspondence, Box 405, Memos to the President, 6/61; Referencing this memorandum, Bundy issued a separate memorandum underscoring the urgent planning tasks as follows: Korea—R. Johnson; Berlin—B. Owen; Post-Marshall MAP Review—R. Komer; Contingency Planning for Off-shores Crisis—R. Komer; West Iran—R. Johnson; De Gaulle Follow-Through—B. Owens; Reappraisal of Relations with Nasser—R. Komer; Portuguese Africa—R. Belk; Basic Military Policy—R. Kaysen; Counter-Subversion and Deterrence of Guerrilla Warfare—R. Komer; Indonesia—R. Johnson; and Germany—B. Owen. "Urgent Planning Problems," June 9, 1961, Papers of the President, National Security Files, McGeorge Bundy Correspondence, Box 405, Memos to the President, 6/61.

appropriate agency and reviewing these papers. In this regard, the Bundy Group would ensure the intelligence process was synchronized with anticipated planning problems.[172]

While acknowledging that the President assigned "specific foreign problems" informally to trusted special assistants, Bundy empowered his special staff to bring order to the Kennedy-centric system, ensuring the President's ideas were channeled to the correct agencies and actions properly coordinated. Bundy however emphasized that the Secretaries of State and Defense "must never be undermined." The Bundy Group was to monitor closely all traffic passing through the Situation Room so as to keep tabs on potential international problems. Accordingly, Bundy would continue his morning select-staff meetings with an emphasis on the President's current concerns, the daily agenda, and problems or opportunities warranting the creation of a special task force.[173]

Referencing the assignments of planning problems to the NSC Staff, Bundy made clear that *planning and operations were to be combined activities*, as opposed to the Eisenhower Administration's practice. Finally, Bundy stressed that the Bundy Group was to prod the State Department quietly towards energetic action without treading on its jurisdiction.[174]

Irrespective of Bundy's caveat not to undermine the department secretaries, the Bundy Group, for all practical purposes, supplanted the State Department's role in foreign policy formulation. As Bundy professed, "We're just going to know better than the guys in the [State] Department . . . what's on the President's mind, what kind of stuff he will like and what he doesn't

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[172] Memorandum for the President, "Current Organization of the White House and NSC for dealing with International Matters," June 22, 1961, Papers of the President, National Security Files, McGeorge Bundy Correspondence, Box 405, Memos to the President, 6/61, JFKL.

[173] The regular participants were Bundy, Rostow, Dungan, Schlesinger, Clifton, Smith, Kaysen, Komer, C. Johnson, R. Johnson, Belk, Hanson, and Shepard. Ibid.

[174] Ibid.

like. That is what we do for a living, and they [the departments] do a lot of other things for a living."[175] Most notably, as opposed to Rusk and other State Department officials, Bundy and the NSC Staff had direct access to the President.[176] Indeed, it was a power-grab, but one the President sanctioned. As Halberstam noted, the Bundy Group acted as

> a mini State Department of very special experts who could protect the President and give alternative answers. They could move papers quickly, something State could never do, and through an informal network at Defense and CIA, they could exploit sympathetic friends and thus create an informal inner network in the government. State, after all, was given to missing deadlines with papers and then answering with last year's myths. Bundy created an extraordinary staff, bright young men summoned from all areas of the government and academe. . . . He worked well with them, and exhibited the rare quality in Washington, in Thomson's words, "of being able to evoke whatever excellent existed in a person. Every encounter was like a mini Ph.D. exam."[177]

As the memorandum intended, Bundy molded the Bundy Group into a close-knit think factory, characterized as collegial and intimate, mixing informal with the formal. Because of its proximity and daily access to the President, the Bundy Group had the authority to push through foreign policy decisions quickly and without the interference of the State Department bureaucracy.[178] With their mandate as "geographic specialties . . . to create and shape new policy," the Bundy Group became "area experts who traveled abroad to deliberate with allies, visit crisis zones, and write policy memoranda."[179] Louis Koenig observed that with the assistance of his special staff, Bundy, "kept watch for weaknesses and trouble in defense and foreign policy ad-

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[175] Bundy cited in Preston, 41-42.

[176] Bromley Smith, 18; Preston, 43.

[177] Halberstam, 62; The phrase "Little State Department" is attributed to Pierre Salinger. Preston, 7.

[178] Besides Bundy and Rostow, the most prominent names comprising the Bundy Group included Robert Komer and Chester Cooper from CIA, Carl Kaysen from Harvard, Jim Thomson from [Chester] Bowle's staff, Michael Forrestal, and Francis Bator, Michael Forrestal, Marcus Raskin, Bromley K. Smith, Dave Klein, and occasionally Henry Kissinger. Preston, 47; Bird, 185; Halberstam, 62.

[179] Preston wrote that the three NSC staffers responsible for Vietnam policy (Rostow, Komer, and Forrestal) exploited their nimble size, proximity to the President, and approval from Bundy to "outflank the dovish policy emanating from the State Department and steer decision making toward military escalation." Preston, 8, 41; Preston overstated his case slightly though. Roger Hilsman and Maxwell Taylor were equally influential, but their views did coincide with the NSC Staffers in the case of Vietnam.

ministration and saw to remedies and repairs. In the President's behalf he occupied a central place in the stream of intelligence."[180] Consequently, Koenig noted, "The White House staff reaped a steady harvest of influence from Kennedy's habit of entrusting important responsibilities to individuals in whom he had confidence. Staff members, therefore, oftentimes performed functions traditionally handled by departments and diplomatic representatives."[181] In sum, Bundy, Rostow and the Bundy Group became the center of foreign policy formulation, public dissemination, and when directed by the President—implementation.[182]

Louis Koenig characterized the aggregation of presidential advisors and the special staff as a fire brigade, staunching the numerous problems that arose daily in the government:

> Kennedy deployed his White House staff as critics of departmental performance and as emergency repair crews when departmental undertakings went awry. He restored direct work-flows between departments and himself and made his staff responsible for "monitoring," but not "obstructing," departmental access to him personally. A key function of the White House staff was to spot political and policy weaknesses in departmental proposals.[183]

Gary Wills viewed the special staff as the vanguard against the government bureaucracy, tasked with prodding departments and agencies to action. "In order to get the country 'moving,' make it clean and tough enough to confront the Russians, crisis teams would have to save the bureaucracy from itself, take over its duties, force it to join the successful operation of the outsiders. Henry Fairlie rightly called this a vision of 'guerrilla government.'"[184]

Perhaps as a reflection of his keen interest in counterinsurgency, Kennedy likened his

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[180] Koenig, 8.

[181] Ibid, 8.

[182] Bromley Smith, 43-44; Preston noted Bundy transformed the position and the NSC Staff into "a small, cohesive group of area and policy experts who would analyze, devise, and propose policy options of their own. Sometimes they would do so through Bundy, but several NSC staffers had direct access to the president and would often discuss their views and proposals directly with Kennedy." Preston, 7.

[183] Koenig, 9.

[184] Wills believed that Kennedy's obsession with the Soviet threat was the primary reason for this drastic measure. Wills, 165, 170.

special staff to political guerrillas as Gary Wills characterized them, "a small band of likeminded men in conferences that were 'flexible, secret, and hard-hitting,' [which] might save the sluggish democracy despite itself." Wills carried the analogy further, claiming Kennedy had a romanticized view of his war on bureaucracy.

> He viewed his own administration as a raid of mobile "outsiders" on the settled government of America. He had assembled a hit-and-run team to cut through enemy resistance, go outside channels, forgo meetings, subvert committees, [and] dismantle structures. Democracies need such strong (and often secret) leadership by an enlightened few pitted against the many dullards of the bureaucracy.[185]

Kennedy's sources of information and diplomatic initiatives were not confined solely to the Bundy Group though. According to Schlesinger, Kennedy preferred generalists to specialists, and he frequently assigned tasks to people who happened to be near him when an issue arose.[186] He often relied on other individuals in whom he had confidence to fulfill tasks that were normally the purview of the departments and diplomatic corps.[187] McNamara and Rusk normally served as policy advisors in direct support of the President rather than representing the views of their departments. Further, it was not unusual for the President to call journalists, academics, and desk officers at the State Department directly seeking information.[188]

He relied substantially on his brother Robert to tell him "the unvarnished truth, no matter what."[189] In Special Counsel Theodore Sorensen, the President had an alter ego who shared his world view, articulating his ideas in powerful and memorable policy speeches. Sorensen often

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[185] Wills, 168-169.

[186] Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 687.

[187] Men like Vice President Johnson, White House Historian Arthur Schlesinger, Press Secretary Pierre Salinger, Military Advisor General Maxwell Taylor, former Secretary of State Dean Acheson, Ambassador Averell Harriman, White House Aide Ralph Dungan, Chief of the State Department's Intelligence Bureau Roger Hilsman, White House Speech Writer Richard Goodwin, Special Counsel Ted Sorensen, and Attorney General Robert Kennedy, among others.

[188] Reeves, *President Kennedy: Profile of Power*, 52.

[189] Robert Kennedy cited in Dallek, *An Unfinished Life*, 318.

sat in on policy meetings and wrote the minutes for Kennedy's edification. Like Robert, Sorensen served as a skeptic on proffered ideas, rendering his candid opinions. According to Bundy, Sorensen's duties also included legislative programs, coordination of political planning, and participation in foreign crises. In Robert Kennedy's view, "Ted Sorensen was a very important figure . . . . Whenever it became a difficult manner, whether it was domestic or . . . foreign policy, if it was difficult, Ted Sorensen was brought in."[190]

Meetings

A significant hallmark of the Kennedy Administration was the rejection of the formal meetings that characterized the Eisenhower Administration. According to Schlesinger, "Kennedy disliked meetings, especially large ones, and insisted that they be honed to the edge of action." The President thought Cabinet meetings were "simply useless" and directed cabinet members to submit weekly reports on their "activities and proposals" instead.[191] When asked during an April 1961 televised interview why he had not convened any National Security Meetings, Kennedy replied, "These general meetings are a waste of time. Formal meetings of the NSC are not as effective, and it is much more difficult to decide matters involving high national security if there is a wider group present."[192] Gary Wills noted that "It was a point of pride in the White House not to hold meetings. . . . The few meetings the President had to call were shams."[193] As Sorensen attested, "Not one staff meeting was ever held, with or without the President. Nor was one ever desirable. Each of us was busy with our separate responsibilities, and each of us met when neces-

[190] Sorensen, *Counselor*, 131-132, 172, 207, 213-214.
[191] Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 688.
[192] Cited in Bromley Smith, 17; Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 52-53.
[193] Wills, 166.

sary with whatever staff members had jurisdictions touching our own."[194] In lieu of meetings,

> Kennedy called huddles, but only when necessary and only with those necessary, those whose official views he required or whose unofficial judgment he desired, regardless of protocol or precedent. . . . He never altered his view that any meeting larger than necessary was less flexible, less secret and less hard-hitting…. No decisions of importance were made at Kennedy's Cabinet meetings and few subjects of importance, particularly in foreign affairs, were ever seriously discussed. The Cabinet as a body was convened largely as a symbol, to be informed, not consulted.[195]

According to Bundy biographer Kai Bird, the shift to small, informal exchanges with advisers free of bureaucratic parochialism focused debate to the merits of policy: "Intellectuals, not bureaucrats, would make foreign policy."[196] Richard Reeves wrote that Kennedy preferred short, impromptu meetings with individuals or small groups. He normally conversed with his principal advisors and other personnel at subcommittee meetings, being briefed on the way to an event, or chance meetings in his secretary's office: "short conversations and long hours substituted for organization."[197] Schlesinger explained that smaller groups promoted "candid discussion among the technicians and professionals who could give him the facts on which a decision was based. Policy people were less essential because he could supply policy himself."[198] Kennedy was always available to his special assistants, which included the Bundy Group and confidents. He was most accessible by phone, and his office was open twice a day for staffers to meet with him.[199]

Sorensen recalled that Kennedy only on occasion "made minor decisions in full NSC meetings or *pretended* to make major ones actually settled earlier. . . . He strongly preferred to make all major decision with far fewer people present, often only the officer to whom he was

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[194] Sorensen, *Kennedy*, 262.
[195] Ibid, 282-283.
[196] Bird, 183.
[197] Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 53.
[198] Schlesinger, *A Thousand Day*, 688-689.
[199] Ibid, 687.

communicating the decision." Large NSC meetings increased the probability of leaks and decreased the likelihood of "meaningful consensus or a frank, hard-hitting debate." Kennedy invited only enough individuals he valued for their judgment and made his decisions either with a smaller circle of advisers or alone.[200] Accordingly, the President normally met with McNamara, Rusk, Bundy, Dulles, and Lyndon Johnson two to three times a week in lieu of the NSC because larger meetings were not as effective and high policy decisions were more difficult to conclude.[201] Adapting to Kennedy's management style, Bundy, McNamara, Rusk, Dulles, and Lyndon Johnson met three to four times a week to discuss issues and reach agreement before meeting with the President.[202]

Hugh Sidey surmised that informal meetings improved the quality of information brought to him:

> The presence of the President [in formal meetings] alters other men's chemistry. Some wait to hear what he says, then agree. Others are intimidated and don't say what is on their minds. Kennedy stayed away from meetings where there were knowledgeable people who reacted in these ways to his presence. He orchestrated other sessions to get the correct mix of personalities.[203]

The closest the Kennedy Administration came to holding formal NSC meetings was during the Cuban Missile Crisis when it stood up the Executive Committee (EXCOM). It started as an ad hoc, highly classified meeting on 16 October 1962, meeting on average two to three times a day during the crisis. The EXCOM met at least thirty-seven times between 23 October (when the NSC began keeping formal records) and 17 December, formalizing it with NSAM 196 on 22

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[200] Like Cutler, Sorensen noted that keeping NSC meetings small was difficult because so many in Washington want to attend them and feel insulted when not invited. Sorensen, *Decision-Making in the White House*, 63; David Bell observed that classified NSC meetings would average just under a dozen participants. Bell, 221.

[201] Sorensen, *Kennedy*, 284.

[202] McNamara and Rusk seemed to regard the use of formal boards and paperwork as a barrier between the departments. McNamara, 227, 234, 241; Rusk, "The Secretary of State," 258, 262-263; Inderfurth and Johnson, 63.

[203] Bundy coined this as the "shadow of the President." Sidey, 189.

October 1962. Typically, Kennedy did not attend all the EXCOM meetings during the crisis; rather Robert Kennedy frequently chaired them in his absence. Also typical was the President's refusal to commit himself to a decision early, so his advisors were forced to discuss options based on assumptions.[204]

Contrary to claims that the EXCOM reflected Kennedy's desire for an intimate circle of advisors, the number of participants designated to attend the meetings, set by NSAM-196 was seventy-one. Kennedy never intended to chair these as formal meetings; instead, he used the EXCOM as a "sort of floating discussion group, with members drifting in and out as their schedules permitted. The EXCOM list demonstrated Kennedy's penchant for going to anyone who could help for advice, gathering around himself a constellation of brilliant, or experienced, or dedicated advisers, a group David Halberstam aptly called 'the best and the brightest.'"[205]

National Security Action Memoranda

Eliminating the Eisenhower system for managing correspondence, Kennedy and Bundy replaced Eisenhower's prolific draft policy papers and Record of Actions with the concise and prompt National Security Action Memoranda (NSAM). The NSAM not only emphasized decisive action over methodical planning, it also served as a vehicle for facile, approved national security policy.[206] From Bundy's perspective, the NSAM was the most effective way to prod the government bureaucracy to action because "departments and agencies will always be acting just

[204] No records were kept of the deliberations during the first week of the crisis but tapes of the meetings do exist (only two tapes have been transcribed and released though, 16 and 28 October). Prados, *Keeper of the Keys*, 106-107.

[205] Ibid, 110.

[206] With the former administering of NSC policy papers abolished, the numbering system for policy papers, the "Mill" paper proposals for NSC studies, and the "P"-series of draft Policy Papers were also unceremoniously discarded. The Kennedy Administration produced 272 NSAMs. Prados, *Keeper of the Keys*, 102-103; Bird, 183.

as fast as they can to respond to the President's directives."[207]

According to Bromley Smith, the NSAM served multiple purposes:

> NSAMs covered almost every aspect of national security business. Some were specific instructions to department and agency heads and in one case, to Bundy himself. Others requested that specific studies be undertaken. Some were presidential questions which required answers from the bureaucracy. Other created task forces or interdepartmental committees. Some asked for recommendations on revised or new programs and still others were presidential statements of national security policy.[208]

McNamara and Bell testified that many of the NSAMs originated from project officers, tasked to prepare position papers with their recommendations. They distributed the draft to appropriate officials for review and comments, and divergent views were presented directly to the President for consideration. As a matter of course, the department Secretaries and agency chiefs would provide their opinions to President during these meetings.[209] Bell added that the President expected position papers to include specific recommendations so as to induce discussion and prompt a decision.[210]

Another departure from the Eisenhower NSC, the financial appendix was no longer part of a position paper. David Bell assumed that expenditure considerations were probably included in the staff work and in the presentation to the President because the Budget Bureau continued to perform general staff support as it did for President Truman. Bell concluded that although the President and his advisors were aware of cost considerations, the budget alone was not the final

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[207] Cited in Preston, 41.

[208] Bundy wrote and signed the majority of NSAMs in the President's name. Bromley Smith, 23.

[209] McNamara said that policy paper disputes were resolved among the individuals involved or discussed at meetings with the President or at a subcommittee. The views of other NSC participants not involved in the preparation of a policy paper voiced their views during these meetings as well. McNamara advocated having a group of outside experts to review policy papers (3-6 people) to make them more integrated products, but the White House apparently did not heed this advice. McNamara, 239-240; Bell, 219.

[210] Bell, 222.

determinant in a policy decision.[211]

In this manner, the JFK Administration could claim that it had broken free from the millstone of paperwork which weighed down the Eisenhower Administration, thereby creating a dynamic national security mechanism for the challenges of the Cold War.

The Extent the Rationale for Change was Justified

While Kennedy's advisory system tended to weaken the intent and spirit of the 1947 National Security Act and its 1949 amendment, returning to the loose, informal, and overlapping advisory system of the Roosevelt era, the new Administration assessed the NSC system had become too bureaucratic, militating against swift, decisive decision-making. Although the original reasoning behind the 1947 National Security Act was to redress deficiencies of Roosevelt's advisory system, the Kennedy White House believed it had gone too far, hamstringing future administrations from taking necessary action to get the country moving again.

Experience

Objectively, neither Kennedy nor his principal advisors had any executive-level experience prior to assuming office. While Kennedy was a World War II hero, his duties did not expose him to strategic or operational issues. As a congressman and senator, he did make fact-finding trips abroad, but his interactions with heads of state, ministers, and senior military leaders were limited. He never served in a corporation or government agency, never had to contend with strong-willed personalities engaged in a major enterprise, and never endured the weight of responsibility of a major agency. Serving in Congress, with its reliance on committees, provided

[211] Ibid, 220-221.

few opportunities to exercise executive skills. Columnist Thomas Lane noted that Kennedy

> approached the most demanding executive office in the world with no practical preparation for it. If he had governed a state, if he had struggled in business, if he had exercised military command, if he had been a Cabinet officer, he might have acquired some comprehension of the organization and processes of action organizations.[212]

Of course, limited executive experience is not a disqualifier for Presidential office; Americans expect presidents to grow into the job, and many presidents have governed effectively regardless of their limited executive experience—Abraham Lincoln and Woodrow Wilson figure prominently. And quite a few presidents with extensive executive experience, such as Ulysses S. Grant and Jimmy Carter, are not regarded as exemplary presidencies. Still, in view of his executive inexperience and an under-appreciation of Eisenhower's organizational innovations, Kennedy had a steep learning curve as he contended with the complex, ambiguous, violent, and uncertain international environment. Perhaps most important, in terms of organizational requirements for effective foreign policy and national security strategy formulation, Kennedy and his advisers had little idea what worked or didn't work.

Army Chief of Staff General Earle Wheeler assessed that Kennedy knew very little about the military when he became President, especially as it existed in 1961. His ideas on military policy and strategy derived from reading and consulting with generals like Maxwell Taylor and James Gavin. Wheeler felt that Kennedy was correct to increase U.S. conventional forces and readiness so as to increase flexibility rather than relying dogmatically on the Basic National Security Policy (BNSP), which Wheeler felt was "inadequate." He concluded that as Kennedy became accustomed to the Presidency, his understanding and ability to deal with military affairs

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[212] Thomas A. Lane, *The Leadership of President Kennedy* (Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, LTD, 1964), 17.

increased.[213]

Paradoxically, due to his background as a consummate organizer, Eisenhower filled his Administration with successful businessmen, bankers, and generals in order to put their organizational talents to work. Kennedy could have benefited from such a selection of officials to help him understand organizational needs and efficiencies. None of his special assistants or confidents—Robert Kennedy, Theodore Sorensen, McGeorge Bundy, Walt Rostow, Arthur Schlesinger, Richard Neustadt—had this type of experience. Robert McNamara was a target analyst in the Pacific during World War II. He had very little experience with large organizations, having been president of Ford Motor Company for about a month before becoming the Secretary of Defense. Secretary of State Dean Rusk was a career foreign service officer who served as an analyst for the Far East during World War II. It is revealing that seventeen out of thirty-five Cabinet appointments were filled by university academics, underscoring Kennedy's inclination for energetic people with creative ideas rather than those with executive or government experience.[214] Senator Sam Rayburn was not as impressed with the Kennedy Cabinet: "They may be every bit as intelligent as you [Lyndon Johnson] say, but I'd feel a whole lot better about them if just one of them had run for sheriff once."[215]

Without an empirical framework to differentiate effective from ineffective organizational structures, to foster procedures which drew on the full expertise of specialists, and to appreciate a process which provided policymakers with thorough analysis, Kennedy immediately experienced frustration with the advice he received from the State and Defense department, CIA, and service

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[213] Earle G. Wheeler Oral History Interview - JFK #1 by Chester Clifton, 1964 (JFKOH-ERGW-01), JFKL, 67-68.

[214] Kraft, 274.

[215] Cited in Halberstam, 41.

chiefs. Consequently, the Administration would have to learn hard lessons while meeting the challenges of the Cold War.

Organization

The rationale for organizational change implies that the reformers have studied the previous system and have instituted changes to correct perceived shortfalls. No such serious inquiries of the Eisenhower system took place for this purpose. Not surprising, political partisanship was a significant factor behind the attacks on Eisenhower's national security policies. Because public opinion was solidly behind Eisenhower, Democrats attacked the President indirectly, focusing on the evils of bureaucracy while portraying Eisenhower as old, lethargic, and complacent.[216] Of course, partisan politics have always been a common feature of the American political landscape, so the attacks on Eisenhower during the 1958 and 1960 election years were no exception. According to Professor Morton Halperin, "The Democrats had been trying to paint a picture of an inactive President failing to respond to the challenges of the time." Hence, the Gaither Committee report and the Jackson subcommittee testimonies not only promoted the goal of greater defense expenditures under the guise of national survival but also heightened electoral prospects.[217] As a presidential candidate, Kennedy used the missile gap controversy as proof the United States was falling behind the Soviet Union economically, militarily, and prestigiously,

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[216] Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower: The President* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984; reprint, 2014), Kindle e-book; Arthur Krock, *Memoirs: Sixty Years on the Firing Line* (1968), 281.

[217]Halperin, 377; According to historian Jean Edward Smith, Democrats sought to exploit the surprise Soviet launch of the Sputnik satellite in October 1957. "American reaction varied between measured anxiety to total hysteria. The Joint Chiefs clamored for massive increases in the defense budget, civil defense officials mounted an urgent drive to construct bomb shelters nationwide, the academic community pressed for more funds for scientific research, and the Democrats—believing they had found a chink in Ike's armor—ballyhooed the missile gap and America's unpreparedness." But as Smith notes, "Eisenhower refused to panic. . . . He responded calmly and deliberately, and kept the issue in perspective." Jean Edward Smith, *Eisenhower in War and Peace* (New York: Random House, Inc., 2012), 731-732.

even though he had no evidence, other than what he had read in the newspapers.[218] Thus, as author Seyom Brown contended, "Democrats-in-exile" (e.g., those officials from the Roosevelt and Truman Administrations) propagated the myth that "the nation's power under Eisenhower had been sadly neglected."[219]

Political scientist Fred Greenstein noted that liberal academic writing exacerbated the political fervor of the times. Deliberately mischaracterizing the Eisenhower NSC mechanism, these writings attempted to describe Eisenhower as a "faceless, conformist bureaucrat," who refused to engage his advisors and aides in discussions, wanted problems resolved from below so he did not have to deal with them, eschewed paperwork and in-depth issue papers, and disliked complexity. The President they portrayed simply wanted to rubberstamp everything rather than lead.[220]

None of Eisenhower's detractors had any personal knowledge of the NSC mechanism, nor did they have any experience running large organizations. There is no indication from their writings that they had read Robert Cutler, Dillon Anderson, or James Lay's public descriptions of the NSC mechanism. Hence, their articles were at best speculations and not a reliable guide for the Kennedy Administration to consider. Senator Jackson's motivations are equally suspect. Political scientist Phillip Henderson concluded that Jackson was less interested in the NSC mechanism as he was in having the Eisenhower Administration adopt his own national security viewpoints. As Special Assistant for National Security Gordon Gray observed at the time, "I suspect that the unhappiness of any knowledgeable person with respect to the NSC and its procedures really derives, not from a concern about how the machinery works, but [from] what it pro-

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[218] Victor Lasky, *J.F. K.: The Man and the Myth* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1963), 363-364, 469-470.

[219] Brown, 151.

[220] Fred I. Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency: Eisenhower as Leader* (Baltimore: Basic books, Inc., 1982; Johns Hopkins Paperbacks, 1992), 139

duces."[221]

Special Assistant for National Security Robert Cutler felt that public and political misperceptions on the NSC mechanism and Eisenhower's involvement in the process stemmed from media speculation since journalists were excluded from NSC meetings for national security reasons.[222] Accordingly, the press made unsubstantiated claims that Cutler omitted differences of opinion in draft policy papers, that a secret cabal excluded the President and made all the decisions, and that Cutler and White House Chief of Staff, Sherman Adams shielded Eisenhower from national security issues.[223] Staff Secretary Andrew Goodpaster once raised his concerns with Eisenhower over spurious articles on the NSC system. Characteristically, Eisenhower shrugged it off: "Andy, let's not worry about how decisions are made; let's just be sure they are right."[224]

Publicly, Eisenhower took the attacks on his NSC mechanism in stride, but behind the scenes he took Jackson's accusations seriously. Responding to Jackson's 1959 War College speech characterizing the NSC mechanism as incapable of creating a "coherent and purposeful national program," Eisenhower instructed White House Chief of Staff Wilton B. Persons to write a point-by-point refutation of Jackson's accusations. Speaking afterwards with Persons, Cutler postulated that Jackson did not understand the organizational reasoning behind or even the func-

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[221] Cited in Phillip G. Henderson, *Managing the Presidency: The Eisenhower Legacy—From Kennedy to Reagan* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988), 124.

[222] Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 319-320, 351-352, 354-356.

[223] Robert Cutler, "The National Security Council under President Eisenhower," in *The National Security Council: Jackson Subcommittee Papers on Policy-Making at the Presidential Level*, ed. Senator Henry M. Jackson (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, 1965), 117, 120; Early in 1953, Cutler had rebuffed old friend and journalist Joseph Alsop, who wanted special access to the White House in exchange for favorable articles. Cutler explained the President's prohibition on talking to the press. Incensed, Alsop wrote articles critical of Cutler. Robert Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 317-319.

[224] Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Waging Peace* (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1965), 632; Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Eisenhower Project," interview by Ed Edwin (July 20, 1967), CCOHC, 104.

tioning of the NSC, and appeared confused by the intent of the 1947 National Security Act regarding the NSC. Cutler implied that Jackson disagreed with Eisenhower's national security policies vis-à-vis the Soviet threat and thereby concluded it was due to the NSC mechanism.[225]

Later, when Jackson's subcommittee investigation began to touch on classified issues, Eisenhower directed former Special Assistants for National Security Robert Cutler and Dillon Anderson, Secretary of State Christian Herter, Secretary of Defense Thomas Gates, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Arthur Radford to testify. Eisenhower's intent was to steer the testimony away from the classified realm as well as balancing out the testimonies of former Gaither Committee members and other critics of the Eisenhower NSC. To supplement the testimony, Special Assistant Gordon Gray directed Executive Secretary Jimmy Lay and Bob Johnson of the Special Staff to submit a "single-spaced sixty-three-page account of the National Security Act, the NSC, its components, and predecessors" to the Jackson subcommittee.[226]

Even though Senator Jackson was the most vociferous critic of the Eisenhower NSC, the Kennedy Administration practically ignored his recommendations. For example, Jackson never recommended disbanding the Planning Board or OCB. Of greater importance was Jackson's acknowledgement of the central importance of the Council to the President. The senator viewed the NSC mechanism as an essential instrument for the integration and coordination of policy views of the government bureaucracy. He recognized that the Council gave the President the occasion to meet with his principal advisors in one sitting, permitting the exchange of views and knowledge. Moreover, he noted the general opinion of officials that the written policy papers and

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[225] Prados, *Keeper of the Keys*, 92; Henderson, 125.

[226] The report is the most comprehensive description of the Truman and Eisenhower NSC mechanisms. Congress, Senate, Committee on Government Operations, Subcommittee on National Policy Machinery, *Organizational History of the National Security Council*, report prepared by James S. Lay Jr. and Robert H. Johnson, 86th Congress, 2d sess., 1960; Prados, *Keeper of the Keys*, 93-95.

records of action were essential.[227] Jackson appeared surprised when Kennedy did dismantle the NSC mechanism and asked the Administration for an explanation, hence the testimonies of Kennedy officials in late summer and fall 1961.

Kennedy biographer Robert Dallek noted that at the 6 December 1960 presidential transition meeting between Eisenhower and Kennedy,

> Eisenhower was more impressed with Kennedy. He saw greater substance to the man than he had formerly. Kennedy convinced him that he was "a serious, earnest seeker for information and the implication was that he will give full consideration to the facts and suggestions we presented."[228]

Kennedy biographer Richard Reeves believed this was Eisenhower's public stance, but privately he "found Kennedy surprisingly well informed about many things, but being President was not one of them."[229] Eisenhower gathered that Kennedy believed

> his structure was too bureaucratic and slow—with too many debates and decisions outside the President's reach and control. Eisenhower thought Kennedy was naïve, but he was not about to say that, and so he began a long explanation of how and why he had built up what amounted to a military staff apparatus to collect and feed information methodically to the Commander-in-Chief and then coordinate and implement his decisions. "No easy matters will ever come to you as President. If they are easy, they will be settled at a lower level."[230]

In Eisenhower's view, Kennedy appeared disinclined to take that advice and worse, seemed to underestimate the task of policy formulation, believing that decision-making simply amounted to assigning the right people to the appropriate job.[231] Stephen Ambrose recorded that "Eisenhower had the impression that Kennedy 'looked upon the Presidency as not only a very personal thing, but as an institution that one man could handle with an assistant here and another there. He had

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[227] Jackson, "To Forge a Strategy for Survival," 163; Evidently, Jackson's staff did recommend the elimination of the OCB in December 1960 though. Bromley K. Smith, *Organizational History of the National Security Council*, 6; Jackson, *The National Security Council*, 7-8.

[228] Eisenhower cited in Dallek, *An Unfinished Life*, 303.

[229] Richard Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 23.

[230] Cited in Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 22-23.

[231] Ibid, 23.

no idea of the complexity of the job.'"[232] As Eisenhower confided to his friends, "I don't believe that young man knows what he is up against."[233] Even journalist Joseph Alsop, an ardent admirer of Kennedy, felt that he greatly underestimated the "burden he would have to bear and the difficulties he would have to overcome." Alsop was amazed Kennedy knew so little about "the working of American government." His detailed knowledge of American government only extended to the Eisenhower Administration.[234]

Eisenhower urged Kennedy to evaluate the NSC mechanism before making changes so as to become acquainted with the policymaking process. Eisenhower's advice was based on vast experience concerning the disruptive effects of changing established organizations: "Long before, I had learned the lesson that whenever any program involving competition is developed under conditions favorable to exhaustive examination, cool calculation, and accurate planning, it is a bad mistake to abandon or to change it materially during the stresses and strains of the ensuing struggle."[235]

Eisenhower explained the NSC system to Kennedy, emphasizing two points: 1) the Council was the foreign policy centerpiece of his Administration and even though it followed an agenda, anyone could speak frankly on any subject even if it was not on the agenda; 2) unlike congressional committee meetings, no voting took place, and advisors presented the President

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[232] Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier and President* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 553; According to the editor of the Wall Street Journal, who met the President-elect in December, Kennedy looked like "a man who has suffered a shock in realizing the job he fought for isn't as easy as he thought it would be and who (momentarily at least) is harassed by uncertainties and doubts." Cited in Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 666 n. 25.

[233] Cited in Lasky, 499.

[234] Joseph Alsop, "The Legacy of John F. Kennedy: Memories of an Uncommon Man," in *J. F. Kennedy and Presidential Power*, ed. Earl Latham (Lexington, Massachusetts: D. C. Heath and Company, 1972), 268; Joseph W. Alsop Oral History Interview – JFK #1, Interview by Elspeth Rostow, June 18 1964 (JFKOH-JWA-01-TR), JFKL, 16-17.

[235] Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change: 1953-1956* (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1963), 53.

with the facts and their recommendations for the issues under discussion. He also told him how differences of opinion (splits) in draft policy papers were handled. He did add that improvements certainly were warranted, especially in the Pentagon and the command relationships of the military establishment, but his advisory system was a product of "patient study and long and drawn out negotiations with the Congress and the Armed Services."[236]

Eisenhower assured Kennedy that he and his former Cabinet were earnest in assisting the new Administration understand the NSC system. Accordingly, Special Assistant for National Security Gordon Gray provided McGeorge Bundy with extensive memoranda on the NSC mechanism, the reasoning behind each body, and reform recommendations from Administration staffers. Together, these documents supplied the incoming Administration with a plethora of experience and advice. Perhaps sensing the intentions of the new Administration, Gray urged Bundy to give the system a chance and retain the OCB.[237] Kennedy disregarded the advice because he be-

[236] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 712-713.

[237] Prados, *Keeper of the Keys*, 99; Summary of the NSC, (James Lay), 1 June 1960, and "Organizational Structure of the National Security Council," Papers of the President, National Security Files, Departments & Agencies, Box 283, National Security Council, Organization and Administration, 1960, JFKL; "Betterment of the NSC Organization" (A. Sidney Buford III), November 21, 1960, Papers of the President, National Security Files, Departments & Agencies, Box 283, National Security Council, Organization and Administration, 1960, JFKL; Memorandum for Mr. Bundy, "The NSC and the Budget," (Robert H. Johnson), January 25, 1961, Papers of the President, National Security Files, Departments & Agencies, Box 283, National Security Council, Organization and Administration 1/1/61-1/25/61, 1964, JFKL; "Summary of suggestions for improving the organization of the NSC/OCB," (James Lay), Memorandum for Mr. Bundy, January 26, 1961, Papers of the President, National Security Files, Departments & Agencies, Box 283, National Security Council, Organization and Administration, 1/26/61-1/29/61, JFKL; "Summary of the Activities of the NSC Planning Board and the National Security Council During the First Six Months of the Eisenhower Administration (January 29, 1953 – July 23, 1953)," (George Weber), January 27, 1961, Papers of the President, National Security Files, Departments & Agencies, Box 283, National Security Council, General 1/61-2/61, JFKL; Memorandum for Mr. Bundy and Mr. Rostow, "The Output of the NSC in the Eight Years of the Eisenhower Administration, January 27, 1961, Papers of the President, National Security Files, Departments & Agencies, Box 283, National Security Council, General 1/61-2/61, JFKL; Memorandum to the Director of the Budget Bureau, "Differing concepts of the role of the NSC and their impact on organization and procedures," (Robert M. Macy), January 30, 1961, Papers of the President, National Security Files, Departments & Agencies, Box 283A, National Security Council, Organization and Administration, 1/30/61-1/31/61, JFKL; Memorandum for Mr. Rostow, (James Lay), February 8, 1961, Papers of the President, National Security Files, Departments & Agencies, Box 283, National Security Council, General 1/61-2/61, JFKL; Memorandum for the President, "Suggestions Regarding the National Security Council and the National Security Resources Board," August 8, 1947, Papers of the President,

lieved the spurious assertions and because he was enamored with Richard Neustadt's *Presidential Power*. He was not interested in understanding the present NSC mechanism or even reforming it; instead he wanted to dismantle it completely and create a new system. As he related in a 20 August 1956 letter to his friend Swede Hazlett, the handover confirmed Eisenhower's deepest apprehensions of having an inexperienced President making policy without the benefit of a well-honed and functioning decision-making apparatus:

> Some day there is going to be a man sitting in my present chair who has not been raised in the military services and who will have little understanding of where slashes in their [budgetary] estimates can be made with little or no damage. If that should happen while we still have the state of tension that now exists in the world, I shudder to think of what could happen in this country.[238]

Eisenhower deplored the parochialism of his military service chiefs and feared that a future President, who did not have the benefit of a career military background, would not understand the aversion to risk which drove the Pentagon's decision-making and budget process.[239]

In his 27 January 1961 memorandum recommending the elimination of the OCB, Walt Rostow reasoned the oversight of NSC policy implementation should devolve to the departments. He ignored however the OCB's other function of providing assistance and coordination. While acknowledging that the OCB had fostered close interagency relations among its members, Rostow said the NSC Staff could foster these relations just as easily.[240] This turned out wildly

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National Security Files, Departments & Agencies, Box 283A, National Security Council, Organization and Administration, 1/30/61-1/31/61, JFKL.

[238] Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 455 n. 11.

[239] Ibid.

[240] Memorandum to Mr. Bundy, "OCB Functions," January 27, 1961, Papers of the President, National Security Files, Departments & Agencies, Box 284, Operations Coordinating Board, General I, 1/27/61-7/27/61 JFKL; One important function of an OCB working group pertained to issues for the weekly presidential press conferences. Additionally this working group coordinated "the manner and timing of official U.S. Government statements which can significantly affect the image of the United States abroad. Memorandum for Mr. Bundy, "Appropriate Coordination of Information Without Extensive Formal Machinery," February 23, 1961. Papers of the President, National Security Files, Departments & Agencies, Box 284, Operations Coordinating Board, General I, 1/27/61-7/27/61 JFKL.

optimistic given the failure of the ad hoc task forces and the animosity which later emerged between the Bundy Group and the government bureaucracy. While Bundy conscientiously meted out the OCB working group functions to the various departments and agencies, it is highly doubtful these functions received the same amount of attention afforded by the OCB because they simply added to the bureaucrats' workloads.[241] Army Chief of Staff General George Decker contended that the absence of the OCB resulted in no follow-through of decisions made. He recalled the JCS and State Department would collaborate on a problem and reach a consensus solution, but when the State Department issued instructions to the concerned departments, the substance of the solution had changed considerably. With the OCB, such miscommunications would not have occurred.[242]

None of Kennedy's key advisors had prior knowledge of the Eisenhower NSC system either, so they really could not speak with any authority that a complete organizational change was in order. Testifying before the Jackson subcommittee in August 1961, it was clear they knew little of and had not bothered to study the Eisenhower NSC mechanism. When asked to explain how the Administration's planning mechanism differed from the Planning Board, David Bell

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[241] George McGhee of the State Department informed Bundy that the State Department would absorb OCB Working Groups of specific geographic regions and countries. Twelve Working Group functions had yet to be assigned but recommended that the State Department could assume responsibility for five of them since a State Department representative led them. That left seven for Bundy to make a decision. Memorandum for the Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, "Future Responsibility for Activities Handled Formerly by OCB Functional Working Groups," March 28, 1961, Papers of the President, National Security Files, Departments & Agencies, Box 284, Operations Coordinating Board, General I, 1/27/61-7/27/61 JFKL; Referencing a 23 February meeting with presumably OCB officials and NSAM 32, dated 21 March 1961, Bundy readily disposed of six of the functions. However, concerning the Nuclear Energy Projects Working Group, Bundy conceded no one department or agency could take over its functions due to interdepartmental interests. Throwing up his hands, Bundy wrote he expected that the appropriate agency would "take the initiative on matters within their jurisdiction." Memorandum for the Honorable George McGhee, March 30, 1961, Papers of the President, National Security Files, Departments & Agencies, Box 284, Operations Coordinating Board, General I, 1/27/61-7/27/61 JFKL; Bromley K. Smith, *Organizational History of the National Security Council*, 13-14.

[242] George H. Decker, Oral History Interview by Larry J. Hackman, September 19, 1968, accessed at the website of the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum at http://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/Archives/JFKOH-GHD-01.aspx, 16 September 2013, JFKL, 15-16.

admitted he did not "know much about the old Planning Board." He believed it comprised "a group of people," who monitored planning in the beginning but subsequently began making plans and writing papers for the NSC.[243] McNamara testified that he could not specify how the Kennedy advisory system differed with the Eisenhower NSC mechanism: "I really am not very familiar with past practice, other than what I have read of them." McNamara was unaware that the Eisenhower NSC met weekly and described his knowledge of the Planning Board procedures as "hearsay."[244] Without divulging the scope of his knowledge on the Eisenhower NSC mechanism, Rusk adroitly charged that the Eisenhower Administration "created the impression" within the government bureaucracy that the Planning Board produced draft policy papers in a vacuum while the departments and agencies focused only on implementation.[245] In his September 1961 letter to the Jackson subcommittee, McGeorge Bundy wrote that his knowledge of the Truman and Eisenhower NSC systems was scant but downplayed it, stating they were insufficient instruments for national security issues, thereby implying they were not worthy of study.[246]

While Neustadt's *Presidential Power* exercised significant influence on Kennedy's decision to create a new advisory system, there were flaws in Neustadt's premise which bear mentioning. His central thesis that the presidency had been reduced to the role of a clerkship, understated the president's actual executive powers. Constitutional scholars, Joseph Bessette and Jeffrey Tulis contended that "Neustadt misunderstood the significance of the president's structural place in the constitutional order."[247] Bessette and Tulis defended this imputation by analyzing the

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[243] Bell, 218.
[244] McNamara, 238-240.
[245] Rusk, "The Secretary of State," 268.
[246] Bundy Letter to Senator Jackson, September 4, 1961.
[247] Joseph M. Bessette and Jeffrey K. Tulis, "On the Constitution, Politics, and the Presidency," in *The Constitutional Presidency*, eds. Joseph M. Bessette and Jeffrey K. Tulis (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 6.

president's vested powers in the Constitution. The Founding Fathers intentionally vested executive power into an individual in order to "enable the chief executive to act with speed and decisiveness when the need arises." As Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces and as the Chief Magistrate, the President has the power to take immediate action as he deems necessary for national security and the execution of laws.[248]

Other unshared powers include the presidential pardon, the appointment and termination of officials within the executive branch, the nomination of department chiefs (and the implicit power to fire them), the legislative veto, and the recommendation of measures to Congress. Moreover, during an emergency, the President is not obligated to convene Congress, thus providing the government the necessary latitude and celerity to act decisively. Although Congress and the courts have the power to review presidential actions in order to guard against overreach, the President has substantial powers, supported by historical precedence to execute his duties in the protection of the Constitution.[249] Despite the Constitutional strictures of shared powers, the executive branch is institutionally independent enough to resist encroachments by the other branches (and vise versa).

> The historical record demonstrates that even so-called weak presidents, presidents who were unwilling or unable to compete with Congress for the direction of national policy, have vigorously defended the prerogatives of the executive office when these were thought to be threatened by congressional action.[250]

But, the Constitution also molds behavior in subtle ways. More meaningful and enduring to the political system, the constitutional "rules of the game" influence the behavior of presidents and congressmen, compelling them "to give serious thought to the constitutional propriety of antici-

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[248] Ibid, 15.
[249] Ibid, 9-10, 15-16;
[250] Ibid, 11.

pated actions, even if they have no personal constitutional scruples per se." Further, Bessette and Gary Schmitt explored how the Constitution couches Article II powers in terms of duty, thereby giving the President tremendous authority to act decisively. By implication, failure to defend or subverting the Constitution can be grounds for impeachment.[251]

A major aspect of executive power, which is supported by precedence, is the ability of a president to take resolute action without prior congressional approval, placing the onus on Congress to reverse the decision. The president has the chief advantage of summoning departmental and agency resources to support his position. Congress, normally a body of dissension rather than consensus, has an immediate disadvantage, but in the long term, together with the Judiciary branch and U.S. states, it can overturn decisions if the president has overreached. Bessette and Tulis make the point that regardless of the intellectual opinions held regarding the relevance of the Constitution in contemporary politics, "there is such widespread consensus among the American people that their flagrant violation [Constitutional rules] is not readily tolerated (at least outside of national emergency situations)."[252]

While Neustadt may have fervently believed that Constitutional checks and balances were flawed, which in his opinion left the executive branch without the necessary powers to take decisive action, his remedy was both unnecessary and constitutionally unsettling.

As chapter two revealed, the initial calls for changing the Eisenhower NSC mechanism rested on glaring falsehoods and unfounded fears regarding the eclipse of the United States by the Soviet Union. Bomber, missile, and nuclear gaps certainly existed, but they greatly favored

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[251] Ibid, 9-11; Joseph M. Bessette and Gary J. Schmitt, "The Powers and Duties of the President: Recovering the Logic and Meaning of Article II," in *The Constitutional Presidency*, eds. Joseph M. Bessette and Jeffrey K. Tulis (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 28-31, 45-46, 50-53.

[252] Bessette and Tulis, 8.

the United States. Further, the Kennedy Administration not only dismantled Eisenhower's system, but also swept aside the Truman NSC system, the 1949 Hoover Commission reforms, the President's Advisory Committee on Government Organization (PACGO) and the spirit of the 1947 National Security Act.

Kennedy's adoption of ad hoc task forces, as the centerpiece of his policymaking system, was arbitrary and not the result of careful study. Two factors contributed to their adoption. First as Arthur Schlesinger later noted, Kennedy used task forces during the transition period to provide him with information on domestic and foreign affairs issues. He concluded thereafter that task forces were the best way to give him the information he needed for decision making. By his inauguration, Kennedy had 29 task forces at work, and "He clearly considered the task force effort as above all a service for himself."[253] Second, ad hoc task forces bypassed much of the bureaucratic hierarchy and increased Kennedy's presidential power, an attainment for which Richard Neustadt had been counseling. As Reeves averred, ad hoc task forces were the locomotion of Kennedy's centralized power system, allowing the President to exert centrifugal power by controlling and directing ad hoc task forces, and exercise centripetal power by choosing the sources of information.[254]

However, ad hoc task forces had drawbacks which militated against their use as a central advisory mechanism. Under Truman and Eisenhower, ad hoc committees were used to study specific issues; they were comprised of experts from the government bureaucracy or elsewhere (i.e., academia, business, think tanks, etc.); and they were used to gain a fresh perspective and greater understanding of issues, with which the NSC was generally familiar. So, their role re-

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[253] Schlesinger, Jr., *A Thousand Days*, 155, 157, 160.
[254] Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 52, 68.

mained limited due to inherent problems, which Truman's former Executive Officer, James Lay, recounted:

> *Ad hoc* committees were sometimes a useful and occasionally a notably successful device, but regular referral of problems to such committees often also delayed work unduly. Such delays were the results of such factors as (a) the heavy departmental responsibilities of many of the members of such committees; (b) the difficulties such committees have in arranging meetings and meeting deadlines (contrasted with staff groups that have regular, fixed meeting times and work programs); (c) the unfamiliarity of many of the members of such groups with Council requirements as to substance, format and procedure; and (d) finally, and most important, the frequent inability of such committees to relate their work on a particular policy problem to other pertinent approved national security policies. *Ad hoc* committee members also tended to approach problems primarily as representatives of their respective agencies.[255]

Clearly, Kennedy acquired momentous personalized power by this political gambit, but he demolished NSC organization in the process, an organization which had evolved since 1947 through profound reflection and practice. The Kennedy departure of formal organization threatened: established processes and procedures between the Administration and the government bureaucracy; the systematic scrutiny and integration of policy issues by the government bureaucracy through the Planning Board before submission to the NSC; the education of Administration officials on key policy issues; the opportunity for the President to hear competing viewpoints in a full forum of debate; internal checks and balances in the NSC system to curb impulsive decisions made in the heat of the moment or preconceived biases which could lead to rubberstamped policy decisions; and an interagency methodology to bridge the gap between policy and implementation.

While Maxwell Taylor considered the Planning Board and OCB ponderous, bureaucratic, and languid, he felt their abolishment wrought long-term chaos

[255] Lay, *Organizational History of the National Security Council*, 15.

> because certainly someone needs to prepare good papers for any large advisory body such as the NSC, and certainly such bodies need someone to follow-up and verify that the decisions are implemented. The mere fact that these two organizations did not function well did not mean, to me at least, that the function didn't exist. . . . I think that ever since the abolition of these two committees we've been fumbling somewhat to find some way to do the job which they were supposed to perform.[256]

The greatest deficiency with Kennedy's informal system lay in the policy planning process, in particular gaining a sufficient understanding of the complexities of the international environment. Deprived of a structure which would have supplied thoroughly scrubbed policy and strategy issues, the President experienced difficulties discerning the strengths and flaws of expert opinions, which naturally included extreme solutions, contradictions, and heated disagreements. After the flawed planning process for the Bay of Pigs operation, Kennedy gained a healthy skepticism of expert opinions, but without the NSC mechanism, he had no recourse but to listen to various viewpoints individually, without the benefit of integrated staff work or the scrutiny of ideas, and rely on his own judgment (and Robert Kennedy's advice) before making a decision.

Fundamentally though, much of Kennedy's general thinking corresponded with Eisenhower's. He viewed nuclear warfare with the Soviet Union as mutual suicide and remained acutely on guard to avoid altercations which could escalate into general war. He was wary of involving the United States in conventional conflicts like the Korean War, which could become a quagmire. Like Eisenhower, he preferred to rely on covert operations to rollback Communism in the Third World. He was devoted to nuclear arms control and sought an easing of tensions with the Soviet Union if not an end to the Cold War. He rejected any suggestion of a nuclear first strike against the Soviet Union or nuclear strikes against smaller powers such as Cuba and North Vietnam because such policies contradicted American strategic values and traditions. He even

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[256] Maxwell D. Taylor Oral History Interview - JFK #2 by Elspeth Rostow, Fort Meyer, VA, 26 April 1964, (JFKOH-MDT-02), JFKL, 2-3.

rejected a surprise attack against Soviet missile sites and other targets during the Cuban Missile Crisis for the same reasons (Pearl Harbor in reverse). He believed that an effective counter to Soviet encroachments into Third World countries lay in military and economic assistance with the Alliance for Progress and the Peace Corps as the vanguards of such efforts (though his enthusiasm to counterinsurgency as the answer to Soviet Wars of Liberation was overly optimistic). And he sought the middle road between extreme alternatives with every major decision. Kennedy might not have digested the Basic National Security Policy, but his words and actions were in accord with it.

The problem was finding a way or structural device to put these ideas into action. Kennedy strove for consensus regarding his policy decisions, but gaining it was a different matter altogether. His informal advisory system was hardly collegial. NSC and other meetings revealed frequent deep divisions among advisors, who often operated at cross-purposes. Novel ideas and imaginative solutions did not spring forth from the State Department, the Pentagon, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, or the CIA as he had anticipated with his informal system. He wanted to liberate their thinking, but they were products of their own parochialisms and bureaucracies. Personnel shake-ups failed to change the mindset of organizational cultures. Consequently, Kennedy became frustrated, often dismissive of his advisers' views (with the exception of his brother and McNamara), and grew mistrustful of the advice he received. Kennedy had a plethora of talented people, but they lacked the structure, procedures, and processes to integrate their good ideas in an organized, routine manner. As Kennedy grew into the job, he learned the art of statecraft is the fusion of the elements of national power: the use of diplomacy and cultivation of foreign relations (State); the threat or use of force (Defense); the acquisition of information (CIA and department intelligence

offices); and the use of economic resources (Treasury and Budget Bureau). Thus, Kennedy would have been better served as President had his advisers insisted on retaining the Eisenhower White House and NSC organization until the Administration settled in.

Due to the personalized nature of the Kennedy advisory system, subsequent presidencies had no structural foundation for reference, forcing each new Administration to create a new NSC system from scratch.[257] The basis for eliminating the Planning Board and OCB rested on false claims and misperceptions, leading Administrations to dismiss them out of hand in pursuit of an ideal formal-informal system. Every NSC system has informal features, including Eisenhower's, but without an established foundation, formulating effective foreign policy and national security strategy becomes all the more difficult.

The Extent the NSC Mechanism Provided the Administration with Information

The dismantlement of the NSC mechanism disrupted the established flow of information and vetting of policy initiatives. For example, Army Chief of Staff General Earle Wheeler was shocked when he discovered in late February or early March 1961 that he had missed 16 out of the last 17 National Security Action Memorandums. Wheeler recalled that during the initial months of the Kennedy Administration, "There was confusion within the government. The lines of control had been cut, but no other lines had been established." The new lines of control were established along different structures in accord with Kennedy's management style. The immediate impact on the JCS was a cessation of clear strategic guidance from the White House for the

[257] Wills contended that Kennedy "did not so much elevate the office as cripple those who held it after him. His legend has haunted them; his light has cast them in shadow." Wills, 182.

purpose of producing subordinate strategies.[258]

From the very beginning, the diversity and quality of information Kennedy received was distinctly abridged. For one, Bundy combined the roles of Special Assistant for National Security, Executive Secretary, Chairman of the Operations Coordination Board, and Chief of the analysis staff of the Planning Board.[259] These key conduits of information coursed through Bundy, who had to analyze, integrate, and filter information for the President's consideration. The workload was overwhelming, making it virtually impossible to cover all his new duties comprehensively for effective coordination of the NSC system.

The Disruptive Effects of the Informal System

The sudden adoption of ad hoc task forces as the central NSC mechanism discombobulated the government departments and agencies. David Bell observed that the dissolution of the Planning Board created disarray in the government bureaucracy. "Everyone had tied his procedures to this previous machinery; it was suddenly abandoned and nobody knew where to look next."[260] Meena Bose described the initial task force assignments as "characteristic of [Kennedy's] disjointed, incremental approach to decision making." His hub-and-spoke approach was "far looser and more decentralized" with task forces operating in isolation and submitting reports directly to the President. While Kennedy's rationale for assigning overlapping tasks was to create competition, preclude exclusive advice, and provide him with a variety of views, it also created

[258] Wheeler Interview (JFKOH-ERGW-01), JFKL, 3, 13-14.

[259] In his role as the Executive Secretary, Bundy became the President's national security confidant, similar to the role Goodpaster played with Eisenhower. Prados, *Keeper of the Keys*, 99, 104.

[260] Bell, 220.

tremendous turmoil within the Administration.[261]

In contrast to the formal responsibilities and authorities of permanent Policy Board and OCB membership, ad hoc task force membership was temporary, irregular, and untrained for the immediate tasks at hand. As opposed to assigning one senior official each to the Planning Board and the OCB, departments and agencies were now forced to give up dozens of lesser officials at any one time.

Task force members must have suffered from divided attention between their regular duties and the newly assigned task force duty. In all probability, their normal work-load did not cease during their temporary assignment, so a task force assignment would be a distraction. Since task force members were unaccustomed to working in an interagency activity, they lacked the requisite skills, seniority, and experience to produce an integrated policy paper for presidential consideration. In terms of organizational culture, it is highly unlikely government bureaucrats responded with alacrity to task force requests for information, especially when multiple task forces continually pestered them for similar input.

Kennedy expected quick results, so task forces did not have the luxury of time to normalize terminology, to integrate all viewpoints fully, and to reduce the number of disagreements (splits). The Secretaries of State and Defense were therefore saddled with resolving disagreements and presenting irreconcilable differences to the President for resolution—a distraction of his valuable time. Ultimately, the use of task forces did not provide the President with the necessary information to assist in decision-making as Bundy noted within weeks of the new Administration.

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[261] Meena Bose, *Shaping and Signaling Presidential Policy: The National Security Decision Making of Eisenhower and Kennedy* (College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 1998), 52; See also Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 155.

The drastic reduction of paperwork meant no one in the government could study policy issues or follow the paper trail of policymaking. As foreign policy expert Lawrence Freedman noted, the informal system resulted in "inadequate record keeping and poor circulation of information with nobody quite clear on whether the president knew all he needed to know or exactly what he had decided."[262] Douglas Dillon observed that

> JFK thought he could organize the presidency better and abolish the National Security structure, and I think that led to the breakdown connecting and coordinating between the departments and the President. There was no one to prepare agendas for ad hoc meetings and there was no one to organize and coordinate actions after them. I was in overall charge of Cuba planning at the State Department under Eisenhower and the Bay of Pigs was just a plan to be evaluated. If Kennedy hadn't dismantled the security council apparatus, it never would have happened.[263]

It was not as though the new Administration was unaware of the possible risks associated with the changes. Brigadier General Andrew Goodpaster, retained by Kennedy for a few months, objected strenuously to the changes. Goodpaster stressed that Planning Board papers formed the Administration's institutional memory for policy. He warned the abolition of the Planning Board and the Executive Secretary staff would result in the NSC Staff becoming involved in both planning and operations. Lastly, Goodpaster believed it was inappropriate for the Special Assistant for National Security giving the daily intelligence briefing to the President.[264]

On paper, Kennedy convened the NSC only twenty-one times during the first year of his Administration and far less in the succeeding years.[265] They were not the conventional NSC meetings as originally conceived but a series of small, casual meetings which the President dom-

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[262] Freedman, 40-41.
[263] Cited in Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 671, n.52.
[264] Prados, *Keeper of the Keys*, 102-103.
[265] In the second year, the NSC met nine times the first six months or 1962 and only once between July and October. During the Cuban Missile Crisis, the NSC met three times between 20 and 22 October, though the Executive Committee (EXCOM) met almost continually for the duration of the crisis. Ibid, 106.

inated. Clearly, Kennedy considered formal NSC meetings as "a waste of time," and they were, under his informal system.[266] Without the integrated staff work of the Planning Board and the feedback from the OCB, formal NSC meetings could not provide the NSC principals with the grist for informed discussion. While Kennedy believed that decision-making simply amounted to getting the right person for the job, this approach proved of little value in regards to the policy formulation process.[267] Yet, that suited Kennedy because he was less interested in grand strategy formulation and more interested in definitive solutions to immediate problems.

Kennedy wanted to be at the center of action—the driver of action. "At the far end-points of American policy, his policy, there would be young men like his own staff, hard-thinking patriots in chinos and work shirts, or Army berets or even native dress, ready to turn a crowd of demonstrating students or neutralize a Communist plot."[268] Hence, in his quest for creative ideas to tackle difficult problems, Kennedy "preferred hallway meetings and telephone calls to desk officers in the State Department or to startled professors and reporters."[269] "Short conversations and long hours substituted for organization. Kennedy was not interested in being told what he already knew . . . preferring to be briefed as he was walking or riding to the next event. And boredom was the worse sin."[270] Unlike Eisenhower, who used NSC meetings to persuade, issue guidance, and foster consensus, Kennedy had little patience for such an approach. Whenever he did attend a formal meeting, Kennedy mostly listened, neither engaging his advisors in discussion nor making a definitive decision at the end. The downside of this approach was that most

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[266] Cited in Bromley Smith, 17.

[267] "Lines of power, he said, were supposed to be like the spokes of a wheel, all coming from him, all going to him." Cited in Reeves, "The Lines of Control Have Been Cut."

[268] Ibid.

[269] Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 52.

[270] Ibid, 53.

came away with the feeling that the President had accepted their individual viewpoints.[271]

Defending Kennedy, Sorensen recalled that Truman declined to preside over the NSC, fearing his presence or disclosing his opinions beforehand would inhibit candid debate, so Kennedy desired to revive that practice.[272] Sorensen (and Neustadt for that matter) was only partially correct in his recall of Truman's attitude of the NSC. Although Truman avoided NSC meetings initially, he began presiding over them on a regular basis once the Korean War began, recognizing the value of a formal NSC mechanism in helping him discuss policy issues.[273]

The Bay of Pigs fiasco prompted Kennedy, unfortunately, to adopt measures that further insulated him from diversified advice. The experience poisoned Kennedy's relationship with the CIA and JCS and created a preoccupation with press leaks, which reinforced his disenchantment with formal NSC meetings.[274] Accordingly, Kennedy reserved substantive discussions on policy to an inner circle of advisors—Robert Kennedy, Ted Sorensen, Robert McNamara, McGeorge Bundy, Maxwell Taylor, and a few trusted campaign associates.[275] Notably, the exemption of the Secretary of State, the Director of the CIA, and Chairman of the JCS underscored the degree of Kennedy's mistrust. To provide the President with competing intelligence, McNamara established the Defense Intelligence Agency in August 1961.[276] As Kennedy's new special military representative retired General Maxwell D. Taylor managed all correspondence between the JCS

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[271] Ibid, 220, 221.

[272] Sorensen, *Decision-Making in the White House*, 60.

[273] Lay, *Organizational History of the National Security Council*, 16, 16, n.29.

[274] Walter Rostow, Foreign Affairs Oral History Project Interview by Paige E. Mulhollan, March 21, 1969, The National Archives And Records Service Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, accessed on the website of The Association For Diplomatic Studies And Training at http://www.adst.org/OH%20TOCs/Rostow,%20Walt.toc.pdf, 25 February 2013, 18, 22-23; Wheeler Interview - JFK #1, 1964, 18-19, 24-26.

[275] Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 114; Sorensen, *Counselor*. Kindle e-book.

[276] Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 410; In the press release, Deputy Secretary of Defense Roswell Gilpatric stated the DIA was to streamline, create greater unity of effort, and reduce redundancies among the military services. *Department of Defense Announces New Defense Intelligence Agency* (Washington DC: DOD Public Affairs Office, 02 August 1961), accessed on the Defense Intelligence Agency website at http://www.dia.mil/public-affairs/news/2011-08-02.html, 14 September 2011.

and the White House. Taylor also established his own special staff to study military issues.[277] Further, Kennedy charged McNamara, Bundy and Taylor with "one of his fundamental goals: gaining civilian control over the military."[278] General Wheeler felt that the impact of Taylor's appointment was overblown, recalling that while there was a perception Taylor served as a substitute for the JCS, in reality he consulted with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Lyman Lemnitzer and the JCS frequently. In effect, Taylor served as a second and equal source between the JCS and the President.[279] Taylor recalled that he took care to ensure his advice to Kennedy complemented Lemnitzer and McNamara's views, and that the military perspective was aired during deliberations.[280]

The inner circle arrangement, supplemented by the Bundy Group, proved beneficial for the President. He had a ready source of information, advice, and loyalty; it conformed to his predilection for informal meetings; and it practically eliminated the possibility of leaks. But the new lines of control could not help but diminish White House interaction with the government bureaucracy, heightening the prospects of an ivory tower mentality and groupthink infecting decision-making. Notably, as Lawrence Freedman contended, "As Kennedy came to rely more upon his immediate advisers, the role of the National Security Council staff shifted from coordinators of policy to advocates."[281] David Rothkopf believed Kennedy's overreliance on the Bundy Group undercut policy formulation: "Kennedy's brilliant young technocrats were especially vulnerable to the persuasive power of their own elegant logic. It made it hard to admit the possibil-

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[277] Dale R. Herspring, *The Pentagon and the Presidency: Civil-Military Relations from FDR to George W. Bush* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas, 2005), 134.

[278] Reeves contended that Kennedy retained a junior officer's disdain for higher ranking officers, especially flag officers. Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 306.

[279] The end effect of this arrangement, however, was that the JCS no longer served in its traditional and legal role as service chief advisers to the President. Wheeler Interview - JFK #1, JFKL, 24-26.

[280] Taylor Interview - JFK #2, 26 April 1964, JFKL, 12.

[281] Freedman, 65.

ity, let alone the desirability, of alternatives. Instead their youthful arrogance reinforced itself."[282]

Paradoxically, the establishment of the White House Situation Room, with direct access to diplomatic, military, and intelligence traffic, severely impacted executive management. It flooded the White House with raw data, by-passing departmental and agency analysts, not to mention the relevant department Secretaries and agency directors.[283] Managing the Situation Room represented yet another duty for McGeorge Bundy, who already had an over-extended workload. In a memorandum to Special Assistant Kenneth O'Donnell, Bundy complained about the need for more workspace in the White House due to the added workload of the Situation Room. He mentioned that the President stopped by his office, remarking that it was "a pig-pen, and my pride is hurt." Specifically, Bundy explained, "We are not currently serving those who need cable and message traffic as promptly or as effectively as we should. We need a communications receiving room with space for rapid sorting and distribution of White House traffic." He requested two more assistants

> to handle my own immediate power-work for the President. An appalling percentage of what comes over for him from State, Defence [*sic*], CIA, AEC is raw and unsatisfactory paper-work, and we are not doing a tight job of turning it into "complete staff work." I have the people for this work, but no place near myself where they can do it.

As an afterthought, Bundy signed off with "It all comes from having a President who has taken charge of foreign affairs."[284]

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[282] Rothkopf, 97.

[283] According to Reeves, Kennedy wanted access to all information personally. When he entered office, he ordered Dulles to supply Bundy and Rostow with raw intelligence every morning. Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 46; Dissatisfied with the initial flow of military cable traffic to the Situation Room, Kennedy ordered the Pentagon to comply immediately. Consequently, the Pentagon installed six teletype machines which not only flooded the room with information but also overwhelmed the room with sound. Bundy had all but one machine removed. Prados, *Keeper of the Keys*, 105.

[284] Memorandum for Mr. Kenneth O'Donnell, January 5, 1962, Papers of the President, National Security Files, Departments & Agencies, Box 283A, National Security Council, Organization and Administration 12/27/61-11/22/63, JFKL; In an effort to sort through the plethora of traffic more effectively, Bundy divided traffic from geographic

Thus, Bundy and select staffers were impelled to read, sift, filter, and collate cable traffic for the President to read. Even then, such raw data was of little use to the President. To have value—to help Kennedy connect the strategic dots—specialized analysts must write critical assessments to give the information relevance. Further, as Richard Reeves noted, full access to cable traffic gave White House officials the illusion that they knew what was going on in the world.[285] Worse, the Situation Room interposed the White House into department and agency responsibilities by allowing it to send cables directly to embassies and consulates, by-passing normal diplomatic channels.

Irrespective of Kennedy's motivations, his remedies did not address the root causes of the Cuban failure, which the 13 June 1961 Taylor Committee Report attributed ultimately to defects in White House organization and management:

> The Executive branch of the government was not organizationally prepared to cope with this kind of paramilitary operation. There was no single authority short of the President capable of coordinating the actions of the CIA, State, Defense, and USIA. Top level direction was given through ad hoc meetings of senior officials without consideration of operational plans in writing and with no arrangement for recording conclusions and decisions reached.[286]

But, on a fundamental level, Kennedy's approach to decision-making was quixotic. He expected advisers to present him with a set of clearly defined options, with no gray areas or risks:

> The choices were packaged in little option memos to make one seem like another, an ordinary context in which to do extraordinary things. Just check the box. The very familiarity and plausibility of rambling meetings, intelligence reports, briefing papers, talk-

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areas to four NSC staffers—Commander Bagley, Robert Komer, Harold Saunders, and Carl Kaysen. Memorandum for Dr. Debevoise, January 6, 1962. Papers of the President, National Security Files, Departments & Agencies, Box 283A, National Security Council, Organization and Administration 12/27/61-11/22/63, JFKL; Reeves noted that Bundy was responsible for collating the raw intelligence coming from the Situation Room each morning. The President was able to access CIA field reports without them being filtered through the Director of the CIA. Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 114.

[285] Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 115.

[286] Para-Military Study Group Taylor Report, Part I, Memorandum 2, 13 June 1961 Papers of the President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box 61 A, JFKL, 4.

> ing points, memos and polls and hallway conversations could make almost anything seem normal by making it routine. Kennedy's personal style was to make it all seem like a movable feast, a floating bull session. But when the talk stopped, the President was the one who had to choose.[287]

In the final months of his Presidency, Kennedy appeared to understand his predicament, reflecting that the President is "assailed by divergent advice and clamorous counsel . . . [which] are essential to the process of decision; for they give the President not only needed information and ideas but a sense of the possibilities and the limitations of action."[288] Bundy recognized this dilemma as well and attempted throughout to convince Kennedy that organizational reforms were essential.

McGeorge Bundy's Organizational Reform Initiatives

Despite his initial disregard of Eisenhower's NSC mechanism, Bundy became a quiet advocate, albeit couched as reforms. His 24 January 1961 memorandum to Kennedy on the use of the NSC was essentially conventional, recommending only a reorganization of the Planning Board, OCB, and NSC Staff because they were "too big, too formal, and too paperbound." Likewise, he suggested paring down the Council and thought regular, fortnightly meetings sufficient. But in no case did he advocate the dismantling of the NSC apparatus.[289] A subsequent 31 January memorandum to the President sought to allay the President's misgivings on the NSC, explaining, "The Council is advisory; it does not decide. . . . You will decide—sometimes at the meeting, and sometimes in private after hearing the discussion." Bundy added that the President

[287] Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 495.
[288] John F. Kennedy, "Foreword," in Sorensen, *Decision-Making in the White House*, xii-xiii.
[289] Bundy added for Kennedy's edification that Special Assistant Ken O'Donnell recommended meetings every Wednesday at 1000. Memorandum for the President, "The Use of the National Security Council," January 24, 1961, Papers of the President, National Security Files, Departments & Agencies, Box 283, National Security Council, Organization and Administration 1/1/61-1/25/61, JFKL.

needed to hear from all of his advisers on particular issues even if they pertained mainly to one department or agency. He emphasized that the "formal meetings of the Council are only part of its business; you will be meeting with all its members in other ways, and not all decision or actions will go through this one agency." Lastly, Bundy explained that NSC organization must reflect Kennedy's management style, that it is a vehicle for presenting policy issues for consideration and allows him to keep tabs on operations in which he is personally interested.[290] Although Kennedy rebuffed these overtures, Bundy continued confidentially to urge the President to adopt greater organizational efficiencies.

In a late April 1961 draft memorandum to Robert Kennedy, Bundy apparently wished to enlist his help in convincing the President to adopt some organizational reforms. Bundy sought presidential authorization to coordinate the host of daily in-coming and out-going correspondence and information—a task the Staff Secretary (Goodpaster) used to do. Bundy wanted the President to devote thirty minutes each morning with him as well as a staff meeting with his special assistants to receive intelligence briefings, State staff summaries, on-going staff business and progress reports, and information the Secretaries and the Director of the CIA could pass to him quickly. The President could use this time to issue guidance or request information. In Bundy's view, "A meeting of this kind will save half-a-dozen others, stir the energies and enliven the days of all who help carry in and out the word, and set the President free, by delegation, from things he does not want to do." Bundy recommended the creation of a permanent task force dedicated to foreign affairs issues under a leader, acting as a sort of Planning Board for task force papers. Lastly, he suggested the creation of a group in the State Department to help in the coordination

[290] Memorandum for the President, January 31, 1961, Papers of the President, National Security Files, Departments & Agencies, Box 283A, National Security Council, Organization and Administration, 1/30/61-1/31/61, JFKL.

of interdepartmental issues under a senior official, resembling the functions of the OCB.[291] Since none of these initiatives occurred, it is likely Robert Kennedy did not broach the subject with the President, but these ideas continued to percolate in Bundy's mind.

Bundy's 16 May 1961 memorandum to Kennedy titled "White House Organization," illustrated this point, half-chiding and half-cajoling the President to create some structure to his management style and practice greater self-discipline. Downplaying the long-term effects of the Bay of Pigs on the Kennedy Presidency, Bundy admonished, "But we have a problem of management: centrally it is a problem of your use of time and your use of staff." Bundy beseeched the President to "set aside a real and regular time each day for national security discussion and action." Because he felt unqualified, Bundy urged the President to have a professional intelligence officer give the daily intelligence briefings, a practice which Goodpaster had also recommended.[292] Further, Bundy suggested Kennedy's short attention span during these briefings wasted time. Warming to the main point, Bundy explained: "The National Security Council, for example, really cannot work for you unless you authorize work schedules that do not get upset from day to day. Calling three meetings in five days is foolish—and putting them off for six weeks at a time is just as bad."[293] Bundy might have recommended that Kennedy begin his work day earlier, since he never arrived at the Oval Office before 9:00 am, and meetings were often delayed because he was rarely punctual.[294] What he wanted was for the President to practice self-discipline:

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[291] Draft Memorandum to the Attorney General, undated, Papers of the President, National Security Files, McGeorge Bundy Correspondence, Box 405, Memos to the President, 4/5/61-5/5/61, JFKL.

[292] Rothkopf, 90.

[293] Memorandum to the President, "White House Organization," May 16, 1961, Papers of the President, National Security Files, McGeorge Bundy Correspondence, Box 405, Memos to the President, 5/6/61-5/28/61, JFKL.

[294] Lasky, 502-503.

> Truman and Eisenhower did their daily dozen in foreign affairs the first thing in the morning, and a couple of weeks ago you asked me to begin to meet you on this basis. I have succeeded in catching you on three mornings, for a total of about 8 minutes, and I conclude that this is not really how you like to begin the day. Moreover, 6 of the 8 minutes were given not to what I had for you but what you had for me from Marguerite Higgins, David Lawrence, Scotty Reston, and others. The newspapers are important, but not as an exercise in who leaked and why: against your powers and responsibilities, who the hell cares who told Maggie? But of course you must not stop reading the papers, and maybe another time of day would be better for daily business. After lunch? Tea? You name it. But you have to mean it, and it really has to be every day, with an equal alternate time when your schedule requires it.[295]

Bundy implored the President to convene meetings on a regular basis at a fixed time in order for the staff to support him properly and for relevant officials to have easy access.

> Right now it is so hard to get to you with anything not urgent and immediate that about half of the papers and reports you personally ask for are never shown to you because by the time you are available you clearly have lost interest in them. If we put a little staff work on these and keep in close touch, we can be sure that <u>all</u> your questions are answered and that when you ask a big one the expert himself is brought in to recite.[296]

Maxwell Taylor became frustrated with Kennedy's work habits as well. He tried to prepare the President with point papers before meetings, but Kennedy "just wouldn't take the time even to look at these papers until at the last minute when he would grab them and rush off into a major conference, in my judgment thoroughly unprepared to discuss the matter." Robert Kennedy explained to Taylor that the President felt more comfortable going into a meeting with general knowledge of the subject and developed his understanding from discussions. "He was not the kind of man who liked to make up his mind until he had had the impact of advice."[297] The inference was that the President did not go into meetings prepared to discuss the topics at hand and hence simply listened. Perhaps the most well-known example of the President's inattention occurred during Prime Minister Harold Macmillan's Washington visit in April 1961. Kennedy was

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[295] "White House Organization," May 16, 1961, JFKL.
[296] Ibid.
[297] Taylor Interview - JFK #2, 26 April 1964, JFKL, 9.

unable to discuss Macmillan's power-sharing proposal for European security because he had not read the papers and in fact had lost them. They were later located in his daughter's bedroom.[298]

As the Bundy 16 May memo alluded, Kennedy's inveterate reading of newspapers and magazines tended to distract from White House business. Taylor recalled that Kennedy was an avid consumer of newspapers and would bombard everyone around him with the latest news articles when he arrived in the White House at 10:00 am.[299] Kennedy's insistence that NSC staffers remain conversant on current government gossip and the latest news proved a distraction to their normal duties.[300]

Aside from attempts to improve the flow and quality of information, Bundy continually prodded the President to more effective organizational reforms, strongly suggesting that he grew to recognize the strengths of the former NSC mechanism. Bundy's thinking was reinforced by a number of memoranda in the same vein. A 29 April memorandum from NSC Staffer Richard Hirsch recommended the establishment of an NSC Executive Secretariat, serving as a quasi Planning Board and OCB to advise "the Presidential staff of gaps, inadequacies, inconsistencies or questionable timing in developing policy considerations or in implementing of Presidential decision . . . serving as the eyes and ears . . . on the working level."[301] In May 1961, Under Secretary of the Treasury Henry H. Fowler frankly recommended "the restoration to some degree of the procedures and system that came to enjoy a general acceptance by two Presidents [Truman and Eisenhower] and the confidence of two generations of Americans that the delicate business

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[298] Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 85.

[299] Taylor Interview - JFK #2, 26 April 1964, JFKL, 4.

[300] Peter Collier and David Horowitz, *The Kennedys* (New York: Summit Books, 1984), 280-281; Prados, *Keeper of the Keys*, 105.

[301] Memorandum for Mr. Bundy, "Some Notes Effecting the Presidential Will," April 28, 1961, Papers of the President, National Security Files, Departments & Agencies, Box 283, National Security Council, General 3/61-4/61, JFKL.

of determining national security policy was being carefully directed."[302] In a 26 June 1961 memo, NSC Executive Secretary Bromley Smith outlined several recommendations, which he felt would not impinge on "the President's present methods of carrying out his work in the international field." These included semiweekly NSC meetings, the creation of an NSC Deputies committee, as a quasi-Planning Board, chaired by the National Security Adviser. Bromley also recommended the creation of a Special Projects Group of the Deputies, a Planning Group, and Standing Groups (to replace ad hoc task forces).[303]

Recognizing however that Kennedy would reject any reappearance of the Eisenhower NSC, Bundy sought subtle, incremental changes. Bundy never acknowledged this intent, but his activities revealed he was consumed with organizational reforms. In a 1972 interview, Bundy said the disarray of the early months was mitigated later by better communication and organization with the President. For example, he arranged for CIA Director John McCone to provide frequent intelligence briefings to the President. He arranged for presidential military aid General Chester V. Clifton to provide the morning intelligence briefings. And McNamara kept Bundy informed of conversations on military matters with the President.[304] Of course, Bundy's establishment of the Bundy Group was a desire to create greater order to the staff process. Task force papers were largely replaced by departmental papers and individual staff papers, such as from Walt Rostow, Roger Hilsman, Maxwell Taylor, and Michael Forrestal. Unfortunately, none of these papers was an integrated staff product from the government bureaucracy.

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[302] Draft Memorandum to Secretary Dillon, "Comments and Suggestions on National Security Council organization and procedures," 5 May 1961, Papers of the President, National Security Files, Departments & Agencies, Box 283, National Security Council, General 5/61-12/61, JFKL.

[303] Memorandum for Mr. Bundy, "Adapting the National Security Council Organization to Existing Needs," June 26, 1961, The National Security Council, June 1, 1960, Papers of the President, National Security Files, Departments & Agencies, Box 283, National Security Council, Organization and Administration, 1960, JFKL.

[304] McGeorge Bundy, Oral History Interview JFK # 4 by William Moss, New York, New York, March 13, 1972 (JFKOH-MGB-04), JFKL, 2-4, 6.

Bundy's 22 June 1961 Memorandum to the President endeavored to bring order to the informal system. The memorandum made clear that not only was the Bundy Group the President's eyes and ears, it also served as the White House engine for decisive action. While not articulating it in so many words, Bundy likely intended the Bundy Group to serve as a quasi Planning Board and OCB in one body.[305]

While the Bundy Group vastly improved the response time of analytical reports from ad hoc task forces, gaining the cooperation of the government bureaucracy remained problematic, if not downright hostile. Ambassador John Galbraith postulated that the inability of Bundy's staffers to bend the departments to their will was a result of institutionalized bureaucracy; that the age of the brilliant individual in government was past:

> As compared with twenty-five years ago, the federal government now lays a much stronger restraining hand on the individual who has a clear view of what he would like to accomplish and a strong desire to do it. The abrasive controversy which characterized the Roosevelt bureaucracy has all but gone. So has the art of broken-field running by the man who knew precisely where he wanted to go and who was skilled at finding holes in the formidable phalanx composed of those whose mission in life is to resist action and, where possible, also thought. Instead we have much greater emphasis on order, discipline, and conformity.[306]

Even more problematic was a conflict of institutional cultures—the Best and the Brightest versus the permanent bureaucrats. Kennedy's dedicated lieutenants raised the hackles of the State Department as they attempted to cut through the red tape. As historian Henry Pachter observed,

> The wails of State Department officials who spent their nights reviewing and rethinking every position paper they had written in the previous Administrations, or straightening out the effects of "White House interloping." No love was lost between the Young Turks on Pennsylvania Avenue and the mossheads of Foggy Bottom.[307]

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[305] "Current Organization of the White House and NSC for dealing with International Matters."
[306] Cited in Kraft, 277.
[307] Pachter, 41.

One exception was Carl Kaysen, Bundy's deputy after the departure of Rostow in December 1961.[308] Although one of the President's men, Kaysen was foremost a product of the government bureaucracy. He preferred to work quietly and methodically, shunning publicity. In Neustadt's view, his effectiveness proved invaluable because "You can get a lot more done in Washington, if you're not a celebrity."[309]

By any objective measure, neither the Bundy Group nor the inner circle could replace the staff work and interagency cooperation of the Planning Board and OCB. They could not plumb the depths of government to conduct critical analysis of complex problems and present the President with options to ponder. No longer constrained by the procedures and processes of the Eisenhower NSC mechanism, Kennedy aides and NSC staffers devised a way to have the President pick their favored option in memoranda, by presenting three options with the two extreme options sandwiching the middle course: "Those who served Kennedy knew that was what he would do. The cunning of aides was in writing the options, maximizing the chances their staff option would become the presidential order."[310]

Even had the Bundy Group the full cooperation of the State Department, its written products still lacked the necessary integration of government views and time to give the President comprehensive information. From his 9 June 1961 memorandum assigning problem areas to his special staff, Bundy expected his eight staffers to produce papers on 52 topics within three months. Curiously, the twelve urgent issues of this list had the same suspense date, so it appears everything on the list was a priority. Some of these problems, such as Robert Komer's assign-

[308] Prados, *Keeper of the Keys*, 111.
[309] Cited in Kraft, 277.
[310] Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 529.

ment to revise the Basic Military Policy, were beyond the capabilities of any individual staffer, whereas many of the other problem areas had no apparent definitive solution. Thus, in terms of the tremendous workload needed to manage the White House, the Bundy Group could never substitute for the work of the Planning Board and OCB.[311] Bundy found himself in a dilemma—the President would not accept a restoration of the Planning Board and OCB, and the Bundy Group could not compensate for their previous workload.

Bundy was therefore overjoyed when Kennedy casually mentioned in October 1961 his desire to have regular NSC meetings. Bundy readily agreed, recommending semi-weekly NSC meetings on Thursdays, adding

> There are lots of kinds of business which ought to be transacted relatively formally, and which we can dispose of more efficiently if meetings are regularly scheduled and their times well set in advance. Calling such meetings on short notice, in the past, has produced incomplete staff work and given unreasonable difficulty to members of the Council and their staffs.[312]

Kennedy never committed however, presiding over no more than twelve such meetings until his death two years later. Meena Bose wrote that Kennedy would not go back to the Eisenhower NSC system, and his back problems prohibited long meetings. Thus, there was no getting away from short, informal meetings.[313]

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[311] "Master List of Planning Problems," June 9, 1961, Papers of the President, National Security Files, McGeorge Bundy Correspondence, Box 405, Memos to the President, 6/61, JFKL; From this memorandum, Bundy separate memorandum underscoring the urgent planning tasks as follows: Korea—R. Johnson; Berlin—B. Owen; Post-Marshall MAP Review—R. Komer; Contingency Planning for Off-shores Crisis—R. Komer; West Iran—R. Johnson; De Gaulle Follow-Through—B. Owens; Reappraisal of Relations with Nasser—R. Komer; Portuguese Africa—R. Belk; Basic Military Policy—R. Kaysen; Counter-Subversion and Deterrence of Guerrilla Warfare—R. Komer; Indonesia—R. Johnson; and Germany—B. Owen. "Urgent Planning Problems," June 9, 1961, Papers of the President, National Security Files, McGeorge Bundy Correspondence, Box 405, Memos to the President, 6/61, JFKL.

[312] Bundy added that Fred Dutton wanted to implement the same arrangement for Cabinet Meetings, holding them on off-Thursdays. Memorandum for the President, October 10, 1961, Papers of the President, National Security Files, Departments & Agencies, Box 283A, National Security Council, Organization and Administration, 9/10/61-12/26/61, JFKL

[313] Bose, 105.

Undeterred, Bundy attempted another organizational improvement with The Standing Committee of the NSC. After the successful use of the Executive Committee (EXCOM) during the Cuban Missile Crisis, he sought to replicate its key features. In response to recent criticism by Eisenhower of the Kennedy NSC system,[314] Bundy reassured Kennedy in a memorandum that his NSC system was sound, stating that the dismantling of the Planning Board and OCB was widely supported since they "had both become rather rigid and paper-ridden organizations." Having allayed Kennedy's anxiety, Bundy turned his attention to convincing him that urgent changes were needed: "We did not promptly develop fully adequate new procedures of our own." Playing on Kennedy's biases, Bundy blamed the State Department for not assuming the requisite responsibilities in place of the Planning Board and OCB, specifically pointing to the weak leadership of the Secretary and Under Secretary. Citing examples of administrative improvements in Kennedy's NSC mechanism, Bundy got to the point—adopting regular NSC meetings under the framework of the EXCOM. Cajoling the President at the conclusion of the memorandum, Bundy intimated that the White House had made great strides and should continue this trend without sacrificing the informal system.[315]

Over the subsequent months, Bundy drew up his concept of a permanent Council system based on the EXCOM, submitting a 2 April 1963 memorandum to the President for approval.[316]

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[314] The criticism was summarized in a memorandum from John McCone, who had briefed Eisenhower in the aftermath of the Cuban Missile Crisis. Eisenhower believed that NSC meetings needed to occur regularly where the President could hear the "differing points of view" in a forum; the need to have intelligence briefings in these meetings; and the need for "properly organized planning staffs (i.e., the Planning Board and OCB) to prepare NSC meetings and assist in the implementation of policy decisions. Bromley Smith, 49.

[315] Bundy specifically noted that Eisenhower's criticism reflected the early months of the Kennedy Administration and hence no longer applied. In selling the EXCOM idea, Bundy reiterated that Eisenhower's NSC mechanism was unsuited for Kennedy's management and leadership style. Memorandum for the President, "The National Security Council and Supporting Staff Organization," November 16, 1962, Papers of the President, National Security Files, McGeorge Bundy Correspondence, Box 405, Memos to the President, 11/62, JFKL.

[316] Bromley Smith, 51-53.

Reminding Kennedy again of the success of the EXCOM, Bundy recommended the establishment of a Standing Committee of the NSC, which would focus on "interdepartmental planning and coordination on major national security issues." By implication, the committee would essentially be a hybrid of the former Planning Board and OCB. Operating one level down from the NSC, the committee would meet weekly, chaired by the Special Assistant for National Security, and limited to The Secretary of the Treasury (Douglas Dillon), Attorney General (Robert Kennedy), Director USIA (Edward Murrow), Director of the CIA (John McCone), Chairman of the JCS (Maxwell Taylor), Director of the Budget Bureau (David Bell), senior representatives from the State Department (i.e., Averell Harriman or George Ball) and the Defense Department (i.e., Paul Nitze), Special Counsel Theodore Sorensen, and Ambassador Llewellyn Thompson. NSC Executive Secretary Bromley Smith would provide the staff support.[317] Hence, the Standing Committee would conduct the preliminary work, hash out the details, and present recommendations to the President for consideration.

In the end however, the Standing Committee never amounted to much. Bundy could not interest the President in providing guidance on long-range problems. The formation of the committee was never formally announced so as to avoid "chatter" and speculation within Washington circles of some new organization.[318] The Standing Committee devoted the majority of its 14

[317] Bundy made it clear that the committee would not handle issues better suited for other agencies. He thought longer term problems would be appropriate for deliberation, though reviewing existing interagency problems would be beneficial. Lastly, Bundy envisioned the committee members would explore imaginative solutions for vexing problems as well as oversight of intelligence estimates. Memorandum for the President, "A Plans and Operations Committee of the National Security Council," April 2, 1963. Papers of the President, National Security Files, McGeorge Bundy Correspondence, Box 405, Memos to the President, 3/63-4/63, JFKL.

[318] The Standing Group was not a continuation of the EXCOM in practice. For researchers some confusion may arise since The Standing Group files are contained in the same box as the EXCOM files (Box 315). Memorandum for the President, April 12, 1963. April 2 1963, Papers of the President, National Security Files, Meetings and Memoranda, Box 315, Standing Group Meetings, General, 4/63-5/63, JFKL.

meetings to subverting the Cuban regime and was discontinued with the death of Kennedy.[319] Curiously, South Vietnam never made the Standing Group agenda even as the security and political situation began spiraling out of control in the summer of 1963.

Crisis Management

As noted previously, crisis management involves a unique dynamic as opposed to the planning process for national security and foreign policy development. While the planning process can help shape the strategic environment leading up to a crisis, the National Security Council under the leadership of the President must respond to fast-changing developments during a crisis and effect policy decisions for crisis resolution. It should be noted that "policy solutions" are rarely definitive, enduring, or optimal. At best, policy solutions apply to the crisis at hand, in a manner sufficient to permit the development or continuance of longer-term policies, with the aim of obviating the same crisis in the future.

Kennedy excelled at crisis management as exemplified by the Berlin and Cuban Missile crises, 1961-1962 (Chapter 7). After the abortive Bay of Pigs invasion, Kennedy gained a healthy skepticism of expert opinions, particularly from the CIA and the JCS. These crises illustrate Kennedy's ability to practice strategic thinking whenever he was immersed in the strategic appraisal process, particularly in the case of the EXCOM. However, while the EXCOM proved effective during the crisis, it could not be extended to routine policy formulation because it ex-

[319] Only five meetings deviated from the subject of Cuba: 17 May meeting, U.S. strategy toward Iran; 9 July, U.S. basing in Spain; July 30, Limited Test Ban Treaty; 7 September, East-West Trade Policy; 1 October, Brazil; National Security Council Standing Group Meetings: April 16 1963, April 23, 1963, April 30, 1963, May 7, 1963, May 14, 1963, May 17, 1963, May 22, 1963, May 28, 1963, June 18, 1963, July 9, 1963, July 16, 1963, July 30, 1963, September 7, 1963, and October 1, 1963. Papers of the President, National Security Files, Meetings and Memoranda, Box 315, Standing Group Meeting, General Meeting 1, 4/16/63-10/1/63, JFKL.

hausted the participants in the process. As such, the Planning Board would have provided the essential information for the NSC to consider before the missile crisis had become acute.

The Integration of Planning and Operations

The dissolution of the Planning Board proved problematic for the planning process, a shortfall which plagued the Administration throughout Kennedy's Presidency. The Administration's decision to combine planning and implementation in ad hoc task forces or the Bundy Group led to poor policy recommendations. Impugning the decision, former Deputy National Security Adviser Lieutenant General William Odom judged,

> Blurring the distinction between policy and operations played a big role in the problems that resulted. Policy and operations are best kept separate for the same reason that the military advises on policy but does not make it. They are too invested in their own success or failure, as they must be.[320]

Eisenhower's favorite axiom that plans are nothing but planning is everything is instructive. The idea was to engage the Administration in the process so as to educate everyone on every facet of a policy issue, generate new ideas, and foster teamwork. Of significance, Kennedy was predisposed towards certain policy agendas and had little patience for deliberative planning processes. For example, he wanted to increase both conventional and nuclear forces so as to increase national confidence and to give Flexible Response more depth. He wished to avoid drawn-out discussions on this issue, which accounts for his rejection of the Basic National Security Policy. Similarly, he fervently believed that counterinsurgency was the most effective counter to Khrushchev's Wars of National Liberation.[321] He did not wish to argue the issue with the JCS, so he directed the Pentagon to adopt a counterinsurgency strategy and increase U.S. Special Forces

[320] Cited in Rothkopf, 85-86.
[321] Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 303; Freedman, 305.

to that end. Consequently, the planning process became a victim of presidential decisive action.

The planning process did not apply only to national strategy and foreign policy formulation. It also served to spur the interagency to prepare the Council for emerging crises. Because the planning process provided a venue for competing views and dialogue, groupthink, ill-informed assessments, and ex parte viewpoints would not have found purchase so easily. The process contributed to the shaping of a crisis for action by providing comprehensive papers on demand for NSC consideration. The Bay of Pigs was a result of a breakdown in the integrated planning process. Soured by his experience with the Cuban invasion, Kennedy took away the wrong lessons, mistrusting department analyses, task force papers, and expert viewpoints because they could not provide clear policy options or imaginative solutions. They could not because they had not undergone an integrated and deliberative planning process as formerly performed by the Planning Board. This proved problematic for formulating long-term policies for Laos and South Vietnam. While Kennedy handled the Berlin and Cuban Missile crises successfully, demonstrating aspects of strategic thinking, he might have avoided them altogether had he retained the Planning Board and OCB.

The End of Formal U.S. Grand Strategy

A definitive if not paradoxical feature of the Kennedy Administration was the refusal to revise the Basic National Security Policy or even review it for that matter. A commonly held but false belief is that Flexible Response was the official successor of Eisenhower's New Look strategy. Neither Kennedy nor his associates believed a formal grand strategy was necessary. In their view, other venues, such as speeches, public statements, and news conferences, would suffice to

educate and provide strategic guidance on Flexible Response.[322] When pressed on the issue, Kennedy replied that he fully understood the substance of Flexible Response, so there was no need for the NSC to formalize it as policy. At one level, a formal review of the Basic National Security Policy might have undermined Kennedy's a priori decision to increase military capabilities. On another level, the President feared the government bureaucracy would use a formal strategy policy to fetter his ability to act—Kennedy always wanted to keep his options open. To help him cultivate further his understanding of Flexible Response, Kennedy relied on a series of defense studies and informal meetings. However, none of these studies rose above the operational level.[323]

The decision not to review the Eisenhower Administration's policies within the NSC mechanism reflected a different philosophy regarding policy and strategy formulation. During their December 1961 meeting, Bundy informed Gordon Gray that he had no intention of reviewing existing policies of the Eisenhower Administration, though he did not foresee "significant policy shifts."[324] He believed the NSC would focus on urgent issues with policies responding to immediate events. Gray urged Bundy at least to review the Basic National Security Policy.[325] In essence, as national security scholars Karl Inderfurth and Loch Johnson noted, the change of Administrations represented a sea change in American national security: "The past administra-

[322] While the Administration did seek to clarify the U.S. position on Flexible Response through a series of speeches, particularly NSC staffer Roswell Gilpatric's major policy speech in the fall of 1961, the new national strategy was not a product of strategy formulation by the Council. Bose, 87-89, 93-97.

[323] Kennedy used informal sessions, without an agenda, to discuss defense issues that interested him. During a discussion on U.S.-Soviet relations for instance, Kennedy "made no effort to examine the points raised during this meeting in any systematic way. While the meeting provided Kennedy with useful information about Khrushchev and the Soviet Union, it did not contain the rigorous analysis of competing positions that took place in Project Solarium." Ibid, 53-54, 57-58, 59.

[324] Regardless, Gray provided Bundy with a copy of the Basic National Security Policy, NSC 5906/1 and the Statement of U.S. Policy in the Event of War, NSC 5904/1. Papers of the President, National Security Files, Departments & Agencies, Box 283, National Security Council, General Papers on Military Policy, Boggs, 3//14/61, JFKL.

[325] Bromley Smith, 27; Bose, 54-55.

tion's emphasis on planning and long-term policy guidance received short shrift from the new, more activist Kennedy officials in Washington, and was replaced by a greater attentiveness to day-to-day operations and crisis management."[326] For instance, National Security Staffer Edward P. Lilly complained to Bundy that

> four months have passed and there is no evidence that a basic strategy (of policy) is in the works, although the NSC appears to be continuing the ad hoc solutions as crises increase. I hope that when [the] NSC does develop such a basic paper that, in addition to the normal emphasis on political, military, economic, informational, financial and scientific factors, you will insure and insist on adequate emphasis on significant intangibles which previous [the] NSC dealt with only in glittering platitudes.[327]

Whereas Maxwell Taylor disagreed with Eisenhower on Army force ceilings and expenditures, he still thought the Basic National Security Policy was essential, serving

> as a battleground between the departments of the government and within the Department of Defense between the Joint Chiefs of Staff. It should have been a very important and useful document serving as it was intended to be—the real backbone and the outline of our national foreign policy and security policy. It had not served this function, hence, like the two boards I mentioned, it was swept away and nothing replaced it. . . . But I again am convinced that we need such a document if, indeed, we are capable of producing a good one.[328]

The Kennedy Administration's approach to national security strategy created more problems and confusion than it proposed to resolve. By spurning a formal NSC review of the Basic National Security Policy, the new Administration could not judge the strengths and weaknesses of the Eisenhower strategic policy for the purpose of crafting the new Flexible Response strategy. Ideally, a national security strategy is sufficiently broad to give the President flexibility when dealing with unfolding events or crises. At the same time, it provides strategic guidance for the government bureaucracy to develop supporting strategies, budgets, and force ceilings.

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[326] Inderfurth and Johnson, "Transformation," 64.

[327] Memorandum for Mr. Bundy, May 11, 1961, Papers of the President, National Security Files, Departments & Agencies, Box 283, National Security Council, General 5/61-12/61, JFKL.

[328] Taylor Interview - JFK #2, 26 April 1964, JFKL, 3.

Presidential speeches and other forms of communication are no substitute for a thorough study of a proposed strategic policy, Council meetings to debate the merits of the new policy, and distribution of the policy to the government bureaucracy for clarification, coordination, and feedback. Since the Administration presented Flexible Response as a fait accompli in public remarks, it was left to the government bureaucracy, U.S. allies, and U.S. adversaries to interpret what it meant or portended. Historian Henry Pachter wrote that Kennedy no doubt had inspiring rhetoric and an infectious sense of urgency for the nation, "but literacy itself is no sign of greatness, nor does brilliant rhetoric guarantee the substance of what is being said, and a dynamism toward unidentified goals is no proof that the goals have been well defined in the head of the leader."[329] A 30 September 1961 editorial on a Kennedy speech at the UN framed the difference between speech and policy well: "That your UN speech in its literary quality is worthy of Churchill, nobody can doubt; but what does it mean?"[330] Without written policy, substance would remain problematic.

An unwritten policy did have advantages for Kennedy's military expansion though. In the absence of formal strategic guidance, which includes constraints and restraints, Kennedy could avoid having to justify extravagant defense expenditures. Eisenhower was privately distressed with the Kennedy Administration's lavish expenditures and indifference towards a balanced budget. In particular, he worried about the "build up of the military, the space scientists and armament industries." Eisenhower worried that this powerful military, technological, and industrial combination would tempt the Administration to use the military without due consideration of

[329] Pachter, 56.

[330] "Column 'Open Letter to President Kennedy, Le Figaro, 30 September 1961,'" Papers of the President, National Security Files, McGeorge Bundy Correspondence, Box 405, Memos to the President, 8/22/61-9/30/61, JFKL.

other options.[331] This was no unfounded concern. Kennedy's policy guidance to McNamara gave the Pentagon a blank check: "Under no circumstances should we allow a predetermined arbitrary financial limit to establish either strategy or force levels."[332] On the surface, this guidance made sense if the nation was preparing for general war—but it wasn't—the Cold War was a long ideological struggle, not an actual or imminent conflict. Under Eisenhower, financial limits were aligned with the Basic National Security Policy. With the elimination of this alignment, no bounds existed for defense spending, except where the Department of Defense decided to limit itself under the Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System (PPBS). While PPBS sought efficiencies within the Defense Department, it was not tied to an overarching strategy.

Moreover, the break from the Basic National Security Policy and the former planning process created dissension with the Pentagon. According to author H.R. McMaster, McNamara was dissatisfied with the Pentagon's "ambiguous, watered-down proposals," the Joint Chief's "unresponsiveness and squabbling," and "parochialism and administrative inefficiency." Kennedy gave McNamara "carte blanche," with the Department of Defense, so the Defense Secretary "increased centralization in the OSD," by forcing

> new management techniques on a reluctant department. He brought in an army of bright young analysts ["Whiz Kids"] to assist him, and used the wide latitude given the secretary of defense in the Defense Reorganization Act of 1958 to create a staff structure that mirrored military staff functions. Freed from dependence on the JCS for analysis, McNamara exerted civilian control over what had before been almost exclusively mili-

[331] Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier and President*, 551.

[332] Cited in Theodore C. Sorensen, *Kennedy*, 603; Wheeler recalled that McNamara said the President gave him only one directive that never changed when he became Defense Secretary: "to determine the forces that were needed for the defense of the United States and American security interests, to create those forces, and to manage them without regard to what it might cost." Kennedy added though that he wanted McNamara to keep operational costs as economical as possible. Wheeler Interview - JFK #1, 1964, JFKL, 68; Taylor recollected that Kennedy made it clear to McNamara that the defense of the United States was the top priority, regardless of cost. "The idea of having an annual budget ceiling was simply not acceptable." Taylor Interview - JFK #2 (JFKOH-MDT-02), JFKL, 5-6.

tary prerogatives.[333]

As could be expected, Civil-Military relations became strained. "McNamara's autocratic style and the condescending attitude of his young civilian assistants deeply disturbed the Joint Chiefs and other military officers in the Pentagon." According to McMaster, Air Force Chief of Staff General Curtis LeMay thought

> McNamara's Whiz Kids were the most egotistical people that I ever saw in my life. They had no faith in the military; they had no respect for the military at all. They felt that the Harvard Business School method of solving problems would solve any problem in the world. . . . They were better than all the rest of us; otherwise they wouldn't have gotten their superior education, as they saw it.[334]

Indeed, Theodore Sorensen noted Kennedy's peacetime call to arms, while at the same time blaming the military for excessive spending:

> The Kennedy Administration initiated the largest and fastest military build-up in the nation's peacetime history—not only counterinsurgency forces but also nuclear forces and conventional ground and naval forces. In hindsight, much of that build-up appears now to have been unnecessary; and the questions asked by JFK of his Pentagon budget-makers in the fall of 1963 indicated his growing awareness of this fact.[335]

The behavior of the military under a rapid expansion was entirely predictable. Vying for a larger slice of the budget, each service naturally magnified threats or extrapolated communist activities so as to build a case that it was best suited to protect American national security interests. Thus, calls for greater modernization, more weaponry, and higher strength ceilings resulted.

At first blush, the Flexible Response strategy had a ring of logic, which held certain attractions for an activist President, because it claimed to fill a void in Eisenhower's New Look strategy. Coined by Maxwell Taylor in his book *The Uncertain Trumpet*, Flexible Response pro-

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[333] H.R. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty: Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, The Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Lies that Led to Vietnam*. (New York: Harper Perennial, 1998), 18-20.

[334] Ibid, 18-20.

[335] Theodore C. Sorensen, *The Kennedy Legacy* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1969), 186.

vided the President with military capabilities to address threats with the appropriate level of response—ranging from small unit unconventional forces to nuclear strikes, and from the security of major regions like Western Europe to the remote areas of the Third World. However, Flexible Response recommended a solution to a problem that did not exist. As revealed in chapter two, flexible response was embedded Eisenhower's Basic National Security Policies NSC 5810/1 (May 5, 1958) and NSC 5906/1 (December 3, 1959), and his nuclear doctrine did not inhibit response to lesser threats.

In practice, Eisenhower responded effectively and appropriately to threats and crises with strategies and capabilities below the threshold of the nuclear option. The crises of the Taiwan Straits in 1954-1955 and 1958, Suez 1956, Berlin 1958, and the Lebanon Intervention in 1958 demonstrated that Eisenhower was not hostage to a one-dimensional nuclear response, and that he had applied the full array of the instruments of power—diplomacy, naval intervention, and armament support in regards to the Taiwan Straits; diplomatic dialogue and demarche during the Suez crisis; and a naval task force and aerial logistics in support of the deployment of troops into Lebanon in conjunction with British paratroopers in Jordan. He did not hesitate to resort to covert operations and military assistance programs as part of the Containment strategy.[336] In comparison, Eisenhower proved much more decisive and flexible than Kennedy and proved adept at using the proper mix of the U.S. instruments of power to achieve the strategic effects he sought.

A more insidious consequence of Flexible Response was that it took a presidential prerogative—ways and means—and tried to elevate it to an overarching strategy. At the national level, ways and means are categorized as the instruments of national power. Power, as strategic

[336] Some prime examples include support to the insurgencies in Guatemala, 1954 and Indonesia, 1958, as well as the coup in Iran, 1953.

theorist Harry Yarger defines it, is "the ability to influence the behavior of other actors in support of your interests. It can be applied in various forms: brute force, coercion, inducement, persuasion, and attraction. Power is the means to get the outcomes the state desires." The instruments of power provide the strategist with an array of options—military, economic, political, and socio-psychological. It is the task of the strategist to determine and articulate which of these instruments or combination of them, most effectively protects or promotes national interests.[337] Where strategic clarity was needed, Flexible Response created confusion and ambiguous rationales within the Kennedy Administration and the rest of the U.S. government, with many officials confusing strategy and supporting capabilities with the strategic objectives. Military capabilities threatened to drive national strategy, whereas the policy objective—containing the Communist bloc under a system of alliances—subtlety became an afterthought. The strategic parameters blurred with the United States seeking to increase its military posture to confront communist challenges wherever they might emerge.

This elevation of military capabilities created policy tensions within the Administration. As Eisenhower had warned, once U.S. military power exceeded sufficiency, the Pentagon clamored for its use: *when a hammer drives strategy, every problem looks like a nail*. This situation proved politically awkward for Kennedy, who often resisted JCS pressure for military solutions but looked weak and hesitant in the process. The lack of a formal national strategy and planning process unleashed the Pentagon and created a tactical mindset in the White House. As Mena Bose noted, "without any sort of planning structure, it is easy for presidents to become so in-

[337] Harry R. Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional: Strategic Thinking and the Strategy Formulation in the 21st Century* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2008), 68-77.

volved in day-to-day problems, that they lose sight of their larger goals."[338] The national security objective should never have been the creation of an ultramodern, robust military; rather the focus should have been on military sufficiency—a level of readiness needed to support the Containment Strategy. As Colin Gray warns, "Wonderfully joint, even truly interdependent, military forces may well be unleashed to wage the wrong war in the wrong way."[339] Consequently, the United States fell into a nuclear arms race and increased tensions with the Soviet Union, none of which enhanced U.S. national security appreciably.

Kennedy failed to appreciate the benefits of a formal strategic policy, and his rejection of a strategic review can only be considered a monumental national security blunder. The iterative process of review, appraisal, and discussion of the Basic National Security Policy would have served to educate the Administration and the government bureaucracy on the proposed new policy. Further, the process would have identified continuities and potential gaps with the existing Basic National Security Policy as a result of changes in the strategic environment so as to align supporting strategies and capabilities with the strategic goal. A formal policy would have served to rein in military spending, resulting in a realistic alignment of threats and sufficient defense capabilities. In this manner, the Administration would have been able to harness the tyranny of spending among the U.S. Congress, the military, and the defense industries. A formal strategic policy would have impelled the Administration to focus properly on a consistent, coherent, long-term strategy rather than a reactionary course. Without the foundation of a Basic National Security Policy, new ideas, notions, and initiatives could not be tested and nested into an overarching strategy, thereby leading to a potential divergence of resources and efforts, ineffective courses,

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[338] Bose, 108.
[339] Colin S. Gray, *Modern Strategy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 205.

and foreign adventurism. Harry Yarger underscored this point:

> Strategists, particularly when over-focused on immediate demands of decision makers, often fail to look to the future with sufficient depth of analysis and act too late to create positive strategic effects at relatively low costs. Relying on expediency and planning methodologies in lieu of proper strategic thinking ignores the advantages that accrue from intended cumulative effects and increases the costs for and risks to the state's security.[340]

Above all and contrary to Kennedy's fears, a formal policy would have provided the President with political flexibility regarding his foreign policy agenda and crisis management. The President, his principal advisors, and the government bureaucracy would have been in a better position, after going through the process, to explain the President's position and the rationale behind it. Left practically in the dark, it is little wonder NATO allies rejected Flexible Response and snubbed U.S. demands for substantial increases in conventional forces and defense expenditures.

Kennedy's preference to concentrate on immediate policy concerns and events over strategic policy suggested an advisory system where caprice trumped calculation, leading Mena Bose to conclude that "Kennedy had little interest in strategic planning, preferring instead to concentrate on actual policy concerns."[341] Even Bundy admitted that the President "thought of things discretely, piece by piece, message by message, problem by problem."[342] Accordingly, the analytical justification for an increase in defense posture was largely absent because of the ad hoc approach to policy making. "By doing away with Eisenhower's national security decision-making apparatus," contended Bose,

> Kennedy removed the institutional structures that would have prompted such a review. Instead of replacing them with more informal procedures better suited to his leadership

[340] Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional*, 41.
[341] Bose, 15, 53.
[342] Cited in Bose, 54.

> style, Kennedy adopted an ad hoc approach to decision making during his first year in office, basing important defense decisions on analyses that failed to evaluate systematically the overarching concepts behind policy proposals. As a result of this disjointed, incremental policy review process, the Kennedy administration examined only aspects of Flexible Response, without ever analyzing the strategy as a whole.[343]

As observers of the Presidency recognize, the President sets the agenda and tone of the Administration. Once the Kennedy Administration assumed a tactical mindset to policy formulation, the government bureaucracy followed suit and was mired in a reactive cycle. Nevertheless, several Kennedy officials did attempt a formal revision of the Basic National Security Policy vis-à-vis Flexible Response.

Despite his initial attitude towards the Basic National Security Policy, Bundy came to recognize the importance of a formal revision process. In a 30 January 1961 memorandum to the President, Bundy pressed for an "urgent" review of the Basic National Security Policy as a matter "of literally life-and-death importance," spanning "the whole spectrum from thermonuclear weapons systems to guerrilla action and political infiltration." He recommended that the NSC Staff conduct a review in consultation with selected consultants but acknowledged McNamara would want to do a purely military review within the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD). Bundy's basic argument was that Kennedy needed the full gamut of advice on national security policy before deciding on a grand strategy.[344] The next day, Bundy emphasized that

> the basic policy paper (5906/1) is the one that needs to be replaced most urgently, and we need to say why, to the whole group, quite briefly. The essence of it is that this paper, with others which grow out of it, sets the basic policy on which military planning builds. This should be re-examined by any new administration, and there are particularly urgent reasons for doing it now.[345]

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[343] Bose, 60.

[344] Memorandum to the President, "Policies previously approved in NSC which need review, January 30, 1961, Papers of the President, National Security Files, Departments & Agencies, Box 283, National Security Council, General 1/61-2/61, JFKL.

[345] Memorandum for the President, January 31, 1961, Papers of the President, National Security Files, Departments & Agencies, Box 283A, National Security Council, Organization and Administration, 1/30/61-1/31/61, JFKL.

On 9 February 1961, Kennedy relented somewhat, allowing Bundy to conduct a personal review of the Basic National Security Policy in consultation with appropriate departments and agencies.[346] In June 1961, Bundy dropped the revision effort since he believed the only useful parts of the Basic National Security Policy were the military paragraphs (to the exclusion of the other instruments of power), and McNamara declined to participate since he had more pressing issues.[347] As Assistant Secretary of Defense Paul Nitze later observed, "We tended to be in a perpetual state of reaction to one crisis after another rather than working toward long-term goals. Events, in other words, were shaping our policy, rather than we shaping events."[348]

Chairing the Defense Department's international security affairs division, Nitze also attempted to conduct a review of the Basic National Security Policy but gave up after meeting resistance from the JCS. From the Joint Chiefs' perspective, despite its merits, attempting to transform the concept of Flexible Response into a policy strategy was to confuse a supporting strategy with the strategic objective. Nitze's draft was more appropriate for a lower echelon military planning document rather than national security policy.[349] JCS resistance suggests that had the NSC studied Flexible Response, its shortcomings would have manifested. Moreover, without a Policy Board to integrate all views and craft the draft policy, the government bureaucracy and

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[346]Acting Executive Secretary Marion Boggs provided to Bundy a comprehensive memorandum outline of BNSP NSC 5906/1 along with NSC papers and directives on military planning. While informative, the memorandum could not possibly serve as a guide for revising the BNSP. Memorandum for Mr. Bundy, March 14, 1961, Papers of the President, National Security Files, Departments & Agencies, Box 283, National Security Council, General Papers on Military Policy, Boggs, 3/14/61, 1964, JFKL.

[347] Bromley Smith, 28-29.

[348] Paul Nitze, *From Hiroshima to Glasnost: at the Center of Decision* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1989), 252; According to Bose, NSC staffer Robert Komer suggested a delay in the review process because the Administration was too busy with other issues to devote sufficient resources to the effort. In the meantime, the Administration was molding national security policy though public affairs. Bose notes that this approach represented "a complete inversion of the policy planning process." Bose, 55-56.

[349] As the author of NSC 68, Nitze believed a formal Basic National Security Policy was critical because it "provided a measure of guidance to the Departments of State and Defense and the military Services . . . [as well as lending] general coherence to U.S. policy." Cited in Bose, 56.

the White House were not fully educated on the substance and implications of Flexible Response.

After he assumed the chairmanship of the State Department's Policy Planning Council in December 1961, Walt Rostow began to work independently on a national security framework, which he continued revising up to Kennedy's death in November 1963. Sending Kennedy a 284-page draft of national security issues in March 1962, Kennedy refused to consider it, confiding to Carl Kaysen, "It's a lot of words, isn't it? Walt writes a lot of words." Kaysen concluded that Kennedy simply was not interested in going through the national security strategy formulation process.[350] Thereafter, Kennedy rejected all subsequent national security policy drafts from Rostow in 1962 and 1963 respectively before formally rescinding the Basic National Security Policy in January 1963.[351] Hence, the Administration exchanged a practical grand strategy document for an ambiguous strategic notion.

The End of Strategic Thinking for Grand Strategy Formulation

As designed and practiced, Kennedy's advisory system did not cultivate strategic thinking. As Colin Gray affirms, strategic thinking does not issue forth from the mind spontaneous without the proper development of ideas:

> Just as strategy is "done" by tactical activity, also it is, or should be, "done" by a bureaucratic organization that staffs alternatives critically, coordinates rival inputs, and oversees execution and feedback on the effect of execution. This is neither exciting nor heroic, but it is absolutely essential for superior strategic performance.[352]

In the Kennedy Administration, "the staff work was just not done properly," explained former

[350] Cited in Bose, 56-57; Freedman, 400; Bromley Smith, 29.
[351] Bromley Smith, 29; Bose, 57.
[352] Gray, *Modern Strategy*, 34.

Eisenhower Special Counsel Bernard Shanley, "so when these issues came before the National Security Council, they were not properly staffed or prepared for decision."[353] When he began working for the Administration, General Maxwell Taylor was also shocked by the lack of basic staffing of issues:

> As an old military type, I was accustomed to the support of a highly professional staff trained to prepare careful analyses of issues in advance of decisions and the meticulous care of classified information. I was shocked at the disorderly and careless ways of the new White House staff. . . . When important new problems arose, they were usually assigned to ad hoc task forces with members drawn from the White House staff and other departments. These task forces did their work, filed their reports, and then dissolved into bureaucratic limbo without leaving a trace or contributing to the permanent base of governmental experience.[354]

Nothing in Kennedy's background or his conduct as President indicates a firm grasp of national security strategy or military strategy for that matter. Accordingly, there was little to account for a demonstrable understanding of an organization which would provide him with the requisite staff work to practice strategic thinking. His informal structures reflected this fundamental flaw, casting U.S. national security policy adrift and undermining U.S. national interests. Even if Kennedy were blessed with strategic genius, as his advocates suggested, his advisory system did not cultivate strategic thinking. As Colin Gray stresses, there are no shortcuts to strategic thinking, regardless of the natural talents of the decision-maker:

> Strategy is a process. If the process that makes, executes, and monitors the consequences of the execution of strategy is best described as the intuition of the warlord, then national security is hostage to that warlord's genius, sanity, sobriety, energy, industry, and judgement [*sic*]. Both historical experience and common sense suggest strongly that such a personal process of strategy–making is unwise; even genius needs assistance. Strategic ideas need to be staffed and coordinated, priced, and critically reviewed at the grand strategic level of assay.[355]

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[353] Cited in Henderson, 131.
[354] Cited in Henderson, 131.
[355] Gray, *Modern Strategy*, 33.

In the realm of national policy development, organizational structures, processes, and procedures are essential. As Yarger instructs,

> The *art of strategy* allows the strategist to see the nature of the strategic environment and a path or multiple paths to his desired end-states; and the *scientific aspect of strategy* provides a disciplined methodology to describe the path in a rational expression of ends [strategic goals], ways [strategy], and means [capabilities] that shape the strategic environment in favorable terms.[356]

Kennedy's advisory system clearly did not provide a disciplined process or methodology for assessing information, and it was hardly conducive to fostering the art of strategy. Accordingly, the President did not acquire sufficient comprehension of issues and an understanding of the potential multi-ordered effects to assist in the cultivation of strategic thinking. He was overly focused on immediate operations and making decisions as opposed to long-term planning, the policy formulation process, and strategic thinking. As a result, the strategic effects he sought in foreign policy became muddled and disconnected from policy execution. In effect, U.S. grand strategy meandered, shaped by events and the capriciousness of the President.

In *Decision-Making in the White House*, Theodore Sorensen suggested presidential decision-making was confined to discreet meetings dedicated to selecting the best policy option, rather than an iterative process of study and discussion before crafting policy. Sorensen identified a host of factors that hinder presidential decision-makings, the vast majority of which the Eisenhower Administration had already addressed as it organized and refined their NSC mechanisms). According to Sorensen, Kennedy viewed decision-making as a solitary rather than an interactive exercise. Here, there was no need for organization, process, or procedures because the great leader drives the system. Nevertheless, Sorensen described the tremendous difficulties facing presidential decision-making. To wit, policy decisions are never easy or mechanical, and each

[356] Yarger *Strategy and the National Security Professional*, 33.

policy issue has a relative value:

> For the ideal case is the exception. Each step cannot be taken in order. The facts may be in doubt or dispute. Several policies, all good, may conflict. Several means, all bad, may be all that are open. Value judgments may differ. Stated goals may be imprecise. There may be many interpretations of what is right, what is possible, and what is in the national interest. A President's decision may vary according to how the question is formulated and even by who presents it. All his available choices may be difficult mixtures of both good and evil.[357]

Sorensen thought most issues brought before the President are infused with disagreements among departments, advisers, and among groups, not to mention between the Administration and Congress and the United States and other nations. The timing of a presidential decision is often an art, requiring patience: waiting for a situation to develop, waiting for competing ideas to reach resolution, and waiting for a gauging of public opinion. Although postponing a decision is itself a decision, the President must choose between getting enough facts to reduce uncertainty and risking the exacerbation of a smaller problem into a larger one. The key is not the amount of information available to the President, but the amount of relevant information. The search for relevant information can inundate a President if he tries to sift through it all daily. The President must seek enough sources for an informed decision but not so much that he becomes "submerged in detail." Normally, the dearth of reliable information is the issue. But, regardless, the burden of making a decision rests on the President even in the absence of all the relevant facts. The unique characteristic of the Presidency though is that no matter how many share in advising the President, he alone bears the responsibility for the decision. "There can be only one lonely man—the President of the United States."[358] However, Sorensen ignored the fact that Kennedy eradicated a proven NSC mechanism and replaced it with an advisory system similar to Roose-

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[357] Sorensen, *Decision-Making in the White House*, 19-20.
[358] Ibid, 14-15, 18-20, 29-30, 36-42.

velt's competitive advisory system. Sorensen correctly identified the hazards of presidential decision-making, but he could not reconcile the inherent contradictions of the Kennedy management system, which eschewed formal structure, process, and procedure.

The tragedy was two-fold: first, retention of the Eisenhower NSC mechanism would have ameliorated the problems afflicting Kennedy's decision-making process; second, the principal reason for establishing the NSC under the National Security Act of 1947 was to assist the president with national security issues emanating from the complex international environment (and prevent a re-emergence of Roosevelt's chaotic management style). Kennedy's system created turmoil in the government bureaucracy and obstructed the availability of relevant information to the President. Presented with conflicting, dire or optimistic, and often ambiguous perspectives on issues, Kennedy most often hesitated to make a policy decision.[359] For example, Kennedy reserved final approval for the Bay of Pigs operation until a couple of days before the invasion, which left many key officials uncertain of the President's commitment. Similarly, he delayed addressing the Soviet importation of missiles into Cuba with the NSC until it became a crisis in October 1962. Lastly, he consistently placed the insurgency in South Vietnam on the back burner until the summer of 1963. Sorensen later lamented that Kennedy "should have made more time available for meditation and long-range planning but would not have particularly enjoyed it."[360] This misses the point. No amount of critical reflection would have helped Kennedy sort out effective policy because he eschewed a process that would have studied policy issues for NSC dis-

[359] Joseph Alsop conceded that Kennedy occasionally was slow in making a decision, but once it was made he proved resolute. Alsop wrote that Kennedy's deep faith in reason often perplexed him when he made a well-reasoned decision yet was unable to persuade others, which accounted for slowing down decisions. Alsop, "The Legacy of John F. Kennedy," 263. Alsop's account does not square with the centralized system Kennedy developed for decision-making. As the center of action, Kennedy had little patience with long debates and did not seem particularly interested in persuading others of his position.

[360] Sorensen, *The Kennedy Legacy*, 168.

cussion. At any rate, Kennedy had little patience and discipline to engage in meaningful strategic thinking. This is not to mean that every decision the President made was disastrous, only that strategic thinking was rarely part of the planning process.

The Extent the NSC Mechanism Optimized Time and Workload Management for the Administration

Kennedy's informal advisory system overwhelmed the President's capacity to deal with complex international issues and the flood of attendant details. Thomas Lane placed the blame on Kennedy himself, who viewed the Oval Office "as a center of action to control operations rather than a center of policy-making to provide guidance to the operating officials." Kennedy compounded this error, in Lane's view, by creating an image of an omniscient leader, relegating his Department Secretaries and agency chiefs to minor roles. Lane concluded,

> This false concept of his own role and obligation led President Kennedy to attempt detailed control of matters beyond his own comprehension. In doing so he failed to use properly lieutenants who were masters of the operations in progress. The image he had cultivated impelled subordinates to bring him problems, not solutions; information, not answers. Because he was determined to make all decisions, his subordinates hesitated to make any decisions.[361]

Richard Reeves judged that Kennedy's mistrust of bureaucracy induced him to micromanage from the Oval Office. In contrast to Eisenhower, who structured the NSC mechanism

> to screen the stacks of diplomatic, military, and intelligence papers produced by the government, and then to distribute the President's reactions and orders back into the larger bureaucracies that are the operating arms of the executive branch of the United States government. Kennedy wanted to see everything himself.

And in place of the OCB, Kennedy wanted to be in direct control of the departments implement-

[361] Lane, *The Leadership of President Kennedy*, 26-27.

ing policy.[362]

As Meena Bose noted, the dissolution of the NSC system created information management problems. This did not mean Kennedy could not access information. He certainly accessed plenty of information through his informal system, but he "did not channel that knowledge into any systematic analysis of different policy options, as can be seen in his failure to review the central tenets of Flexible Response upon entering office."[363] More disquieting to Bose was the information overload inherent in the Kennedy system. "Because Kennedy lacked means of winnowing information, he risked being overloaded with detail. Moreover, he did not have channels in place for processing the information he received."[364]

Robert Cutler observed that under Kennedy,

> the Council seemed no longer a substantial entity operating at the top of Government in equal importance to the Cabinet; but appeared to operate through fragmented, quickly assembled groups. To an outsider, the operation of the forces of Government seemed no longer centripetal but centrifugal.[365]

Taylor felt that Bundy's informal approach to managing the former functions of the Planning Board and OCB "was good up to a point, but I must say that in the early days when I was in the White House, I was struck with the lack of coordination which frequently took place. Balls were being dropped and allowed to rattle around simply because they were trying to be too informal and didn't realize the components of a large government must respect procedures to some degree."[366]

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[362] Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 46, 52.
[363] Bose, 100.
[364] Ibid, 106.
[365] Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, 301; Even Kennedy's quasi-White House Chief of Staff Theodore Sorensen took some perverse pleasure attempting to manage the White House with only two deputies, remarking, "We were stretched too thin and handled too much, taking a perverse pride in keeping out staff lean, effective, and trouble-free." Sorensen, *Counselor*. Kindle e-book, 210.
[366] Taylor Interview - JFK #2 (JFKOH-MDT-02), JFKL, 3.

Since Kennedy viewed a bit of organizational chaos as a lesser evil than bureaucracy, seeking organizational efficiencies was not a priority. Historian Henry Pachter contended that the objective went deeper than securing presidential power, that Kennedy was not interested in creating organizational efficiencies in government but in injecting a sense of urgency in the government bureaucracy. The Administration was filled with Harvard intellectuals ("the Charles River crowd") who were

> the new elite of modernity which proposed to make the American government over, but since they had nothing behind them, they had to rely on the brilliance of their leader, JFK, and his myth. Most of the new men, including Kennedy, were poor administrators; but this is just the point of the Kennedy myth: the New Frontiersmen claimed that the enemy was not American society but the Administration itself. . . . Other members of the groups, above all the President himself, also suffered from their inability to move the cumbersome apparatus of government or to bend it to the purposes of Modernity. . . . The image which results is that of a government of Rhodes Scholars rolling up their sleeves to prod the sprawling departments into action, forcing them to rethink all their assumptions and to respond quickly to the manifold initiatives coming from the rejuvenated White House.[367]

As Pachter understood the Administration's agenda, international problems required bold approaches, but the President was resisted by departmental luddites. Hence, the cultivated image was

> that of the young idealistic President bogged down in the quicksands of bureaucratic proceduralism, the vested interests of departmental baronies, and the habits thought acquired by the Defense, Intelligence, and Diplomatic communities in long years of hard and disappointing experience.[368]

Within weeks of assuming office, Kennedy recognized that there was "a lag between decision and action," that he was "finding it difficult to get the giant federal bureaucracy to move."[369] Pachter concluded that

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[367] Pachter, 40.
[368] Ibid, 41.
[369] Lasky, 515.

> to move the "permanent government" at all, the White House staged periodical bursts of inroads into the towers of expertise, organized parallel sources of information, or even gave direct orders to the lower echelons. This "White House despotism" soon led to an administrative chaos unknown since the time of Roosevelt. But the difference was this: despotic governments which eventually unhinge the Establishment and create new institutions are related to a new idea or to a popular movement. Kennedy had no intention of giving the country new institutions; he only wanted to improve the results of the old, to inspire it with his own "sense of urgency." His revolution was one of methods only, and hence the "meddling" of the White House crowd was resented.[370]

It simply was not a matter of bureaucratic inertia either. As Victor Lasky noted, "Kennedy soon learned too, that even when a President clearly sees a course of action he would like to take, literally dozens of political, diplomatic, military, or other considerations may prevent him from taking it."[371]

As noted, Kennedy's management style proved incredibly disruptive to government machinery. The Administration operated with such a loose structure that the interchange of information and the requisite coordination of effort became discombobulated. This was not a tightly held secret either. The widespread belief in the government bureaucracy was that "the Kennedy NSC system operated solely on the basis of improvisation and poorly executed crisis management."[372]

Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Arleigh Burke assessed that the New Frontiersmen had no patience for complicated processes and the intentional procedural delays. While they were "ardent, enthusiastic people," they had no

> experience whatever in administering anything, including the President. . . . So they didn't understand ordinary administrative procedures, the necessity for having lines of communication and channels of command. The President himself would pick up the telephone and call people who were not connected with an operation, and give them orders or instructions or ask advice.

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[370] Pachter, 43.
[371] Lasky, 515.
[372] Preston, 47.

Because Kennedy did this with everyone, the service chiefs began notifying relevant officials of calls from the President to keep everyone informed of the President's thinking on specific issues.[373]

As Bundy's "White House Organization," memorandum (16 May 1961) to Kennedy sharply defined, Kennedy's laxness with meeting time schedules, inattention during meetings, and haphazard convening of meetings impinged on his subordinates' time and wasted the President's energy: "the most precious commodity you have brought to Washington." Moreover, the President's unrestricted open door policy, Bundy noted, even made it difficult for his office secretary to shield him from visitors stopping by to chat.[374]

Kennedy never tightened up his time and workload management. Consequently, the Administration continued to work frenetically to keep pace with the flood of issues and crises. While furious activity may have bolstered Kennedy's image, it was not productive energy. In fact, Eisenhower considered it illogical to correlate frenetic activity with positive development. "I have been astonished to read some contentions," wrote Eisenhower, "which seem to suggest that smooth organization guarantees that nothing is happening, whereas ferment and disorder indicate progress."[375]

On the other hand, Washington journalist Douglas Cater, rendering an oblique criticism of the Eisenhower Administration, argued that a neat process of structural and procedural decision-making in the Administration was a myth, amplified by the press.

In reality, nothing could be further from the truth. Even assuming that the government's

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[373] Arleigh A. Burke, Oral History Interview with Arleigh A. Burke: 4 of 4, Interview by John T. Mason Jr., Columbia Oral History Interview, January 12 1973, (OH-284), DDEL, 216-217.

[374] "White House Organization," JFKL.

[375] Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 114.

> business could be channeled so rigidly, there are finite limits to a President's time—to the number of associates he can see, the documents he can read, the decisions he has the physical endurance to make. Decision-making goes on at all stages and levels of government; important policies and programs bloom or wither often without a deliberate act by the President.[376]

Yet, by the same token, time management and proper delegation of power were not inconsequential activities. Because of these finite limits, executive management skills are essential to optimize the President's time, the amount of relevant information he can process, the integrity of his decisions, the implementation of policies, and knowledge management. It was a non sequitur for Cater to suggest that paring the Executive Office of organizational structure, procedures, and processes strengthened decision-making and policy formulation.

Kennedy claimed his brand of political pragmatism somehow changed traditional ways of governing, but as David Halberstam trenchantly pointed out, Kennedy's devotion to pragmatism was not a solution in itself.

> There were simply too many foreign policy problems, too many crises, each crowding the others, demanding to be taken care of in that instant. There was too little time to plan, to think; one could only confront the most immediate problems and get rid of them piecemeal but as quickly as possible, or at least postpone any action. Long-range solutions, thoughtful changes, would have to wait, at least until the second term. And thus it was the irony of the Kennedy Administration that John Kennedy, rationalist, pledged above all rationality, should continue the most irrational of all major American foreign policies, that policy toward China and the rest of Asia. He was aware of the change in the Communist world, he was aware of the split between the Chinese and the Russians; it was, he realized, something very important. But he would deal with it later.[377]

Kennedy's poor health likely had a major impact on his management style. Both Richard Reeves and Meena Bose surmised that Kennedy's chronic back problems made sitting for extended periods intolerable, hence his preference for short meetings. Kennedy's medical needs were not an inconvenience, but required a team of doctors treating him for "a lifetime of medical

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[376] Cater, 14.
[377] Halberstam, 102.

torment."[378] For example, White House physician Janet Travell treated Kennedy's chronic back pain with injections of anesthetic procaine and corticosteroids, the latter known to cause anxiety, irritability, and insomnia.[379] His Addison's disease required "cortisone injections, pills, and pellets implanted in his thighs."[380] Dr. Max Jacobson frequently treated Kennedy's back pain with amphetamines. Jacobson confided to friends that Kennedy was taking Demerol on his own, which "was not only addictive but would affect the President's thinking."[381] Referencing studies from the 1960s on the side effects of amphetamines, Reeves noted that "the extraordinary feelings of well-being and personal power produced by mainlining 'speed' were addictive and could lead to paranoid psychosis."[382] While there is no evidence that drug use impaired Kennedy's judgment, it does reveal Kennedy's medical condition was debilitating and might have been the reason for his attention deficit.[383]

Further, the President was often laid up for days with back problems, which made regularly scheduled meetings problematic. As Reeves noted,

He was sick and in pain much of the time, often using crutches or a cane in private to rest

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[378] Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 36.

[379] Peter Carlson, "Jack Kennedy and Dr. Feelgood," *American History* 46, no. 2 (June 2011), 33.

[380] Reeves explained further that Corticosteroid injections, quarterly implanted capsules, and daily doses of desoxycortircosterone acetate (DOCA) treated Kennedy's Addison's disease. The side effects were a tanned complexion, bloated face, and possibly a heightened sexual drive. The corticosteroids created euphoria, but "the side effects of those treatments were more dangerous: an exaggerated sense of power and capabilities, and the debilitating symptoms of classic paranoid schizophrenia, then slow death by poisoning." Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 42, 242-243.

[381] Ibid, 146-147; Jacobson gave Kennedy his first injection in September 1960, though he did not admit amphetamines were the ingredient. The next treatment came in May 1961 after Kennedy injured his back during a tree planting ceremony in Canada, followed by another on the Plane to Paris on 31 May, another prior to the meeting with de Gaulle and another prior to his meeting with Khrushchev in Vienna. The Vienna meeting lasted for hours, meaning the effects of the drug wore off, which might have caused depression with Kennedy. It is possible Khrushchev interpreted his depression as a weakness of character. Regardless, amphetamine use alters one's judgment. From May to Oct 1961, Jacobson saw Kennedy 36 times and visited the White House 34 times in 1961 and 1962. Carlson, 32-34.

[382] Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 684 n. 146.

[383] Joseph Alsop believed that Kennedy's illness did affect his memory. "When he was President, he no longer remembered even the most prominent features of the Truman Administration, such as the dominant role of the State Department in the secretaryships of George C. Marshall and Dean G. Acheson." Alsop, "The Legacy of John F. Kennedy," 266.

> his back, and taking medication, prescribed and unprescribed, each day, sometimes every hour. He had trouble fighting off ordinary infections and suffered recurrent fevers that raged as high as 106 degrees. As Candidate and President, Kennedy concealed his low energy level, radiating health and good humor, though he usually spent more than half of most days in bed. He retired early most nights, read in bed until 9:00 A.M. or so each morning, and napped an hour each afternoon.[384]

Bose deduced that Kennedy would never have tolerated an Eisenhower-type NSC mechanism because formal meetings were central to the system. However, Bose suggested the choice was not mutually exclusive (i.e., all or nothing at all). Shorter NSC meetings were possible if "the staff could have ensured that policy questions were clearly laid out, participants were prepared to make their arguments without digressions, and participants would be ready to answer the president's likely questions."[385] To be sure, her recommended process was a near replica of Eisenhower's NSC, which met for only two hours weekly. Even if this schedule was too taxing for Kennedy's health, he could have retained the entire mechanism by dividing meetings into two one-hour sessions. Doing so would have optimized the President's time and resulted in rigorous scrutiny of policy options as well as more efficient coordination of policy.

With Kennedy unwilling or unable to adopt a more formal NSC mechanism, Bundy sought to have the Bundy Group undertake the duties of the Planning Board, the OCB, and even some responsibilities of the Council itself. John Prados felt this move undermined the power and primacy of the Council, but "preoccupied by the flood of crises and day-to-day operations, Bundy probably never noticed the sea change."[386] To Bundy's credit, his actions were the most prudent he could have made under the circumstances. Ultimately though, the Bundy Group did not have the depth to match the government bureaucracy in expertise, administration, and resources.

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[384] Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 43.
[385] Bose, 105.
[386] Prados, *Keeper of the Keys*, 99.

There is little indication that the Kennedy Administration was truly a learning organization. Changes occurred, but they were more in line with ridding the Administration of officials Kennedy mistrusted and Bundy adapting to Kennedy's erratic management style. Even the much acclaimed EXCOM was short-lived. With the elimination of the Planning Board and OCB, there was no agent responsible for researching former and existing policies, archiving committee reports or policy papers, and applying lessons learned. The Administration was so encumbered with immediate events that long-term analysis was given short shrift or even considered by the President as important.

The Extent the NSC Mechanism Enhanced the President's Leadership and Management Style

Generally, Kennedy's use of presidential power did enhance his leadership style in terms of persuasion, strategic communications, and some political freedom of maneuver. However, his management style resulted in poor delegation of authority as well as disjointed policy coordination and coherency.

The casting of Kennedy as a dynamic leader of profound intellect and extraordinary vision was generally successful. Likewise, Kennedy's adroit delivery of well-crafted speeches was truly inspirational, creating a halo effect of presidential competency. Americans had such confidence and faith in Kennedy throughout his Presidency that even harrowing crises, foreign policy failures, and increased international tensions failed to impact negatively on his popularity. As Wills observed, Kennedy "thought always in terms of public relations, and of managing the press." In essence, "he controlled the images that controlled the professional critics of our society."[387]

[387] Wills, 149.

Kennedy even went so far as to claim he could read 1,500 words per minute as a means to sell his intellectual prowess.[388] The larger-than-life image of Kennedy did come with drawbacks though. Kennedy appeared to succumb to the delusion that he was infallible, that Constitutional constraints did not apply to him, and that failure was the fault of others.[389]

It was this blatant idolatry which drove historian James MacGregor Burns to write sarcastically:

> He is not only the handsomest, the best dressed, the most articulate, and graceful as a gazelle. He is omniscient; he swallows and digests whole books in minutes; his eye seizes instantly on the crucial point of a long memorandum; he confounds experts with superior knowledge of their field. He is omnipresent; no sleepy staff member can be sure that he will not telephone—or pop in; every hostess at a party can hope that he will. He is omnipotent; he personally bosses and spurs the whole shop; he has no need of Ike's staff apparatus; he is more than a lion, more than a fox. He's Superman![390]

Thomas Lane reasoned that profuse attention to Kennedy's public image created self-delusion.

> The image was beyond human realization. No one could be the leader John F. Kennedy projected because no human being had the knowledge and comprehension to fulfill the role. The astonishing fact is that the President thought he could so manage the office. The lone-wolf financial operations of his father, the experience of the legislator, the uninterrupted success of his political operations, the adulation of devoted followers, the very intoxication of political image-building, all conspired to deceive him.[391]

Author Jonah Goldberg found it disquieting that Kennedy had adopted many devices used by fascist regimes as a means to "shake America out of its complacency." He sensed that Kennedy, inspired by Roosevelt's loose, chaotic management of the New Deal and World War

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[388] The reports of Kennedy's "speed reading were greatly exaggerated." Galbraith and Kennedy had actually conspired to feed Hugh Sidey of Time Magazine a figure of 1200 words per minute in an article. Reeves, *President Kennedy, Profile in Power*, 53, 671 n; Richard Tanner Johnson perpetuated this 1,200 words-per-minute myth in his 1974 book. Richard Tanner Johnson, *Managing the White House: An Intimate Study of the Presidenc*y (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1974), 124.

[389] Wills, 168.

[390] Cited in Halberstam, 40; Lasky, 507.

[391] Lane, 26.

II, "created 'crisis teams' that could short-circuit the traditional bureaucracy, the democratic process, and even the law."[392] While Goldberg did not believe Kennedy regarded himself as a fascist, the President did adopt the "Great Man" persona. Aside from creating tensions with the Founding Fathers' precept of a nation of laws, not men, the White House created an iconic President who was the most knowledgeable person in the room, who never erred in judgment, and who possessed a flawless strategic vision for the nation. In this environment, others were always the blame for failures or set-backs, not the President.[393] This went beyond protecting the President from criticism so he could retain his freedom of political maneuver. Rather, it relieved him of conducting self-reflection and seeking ways to improve decision-making.

Kennedy placed great stock in intelligence, wit, charm, and style, believing they were a substitute for wisdom and substance.[394] They were not, and as psychologist John Heider counseled on leadership: "The leader shows that style is no substitute for substance, that knowing certain facts is not more powerful than simple wisdom, [and] that creating an impression is not more potent than acting from one's center."[395]

While Kennedy preferred to use speeches as the basis for policy formulation, they were no substitute for thorough analysis of policy issues. James MacGregor Burns recognized this artifice immediately, describing the Kennedy Administration as "a managerial age of empty rhetoric and manipulation."[396] David Rothkopf and Garry Wills observed that Kennedy's bellicose Cold

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[392] Goldberg, 209.

[393] Dietrich Doerner assessed that when a leader cannot resolve goal conflicts, he often resorts to "conspiracy theories." They do not believe they should "be held accountable for . . . mistakes, someone else (with evil intentions) should." Dietrich Doerner, *The Logic of Failure: Recognizing and Avoiding Error in Complex Situations* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1996), 68-69.

[394] Wills, 147.

[395] John Heider, *The Tao of Leadership: Leadership Strategies for a New Age* (New York: Bantam Books, 1986), 5.

[396] Cited in Lewis, 35.

War rhetoric and preconceived notions of presidential power and flexible response frequently limited his policy options and caused embarrassment since it impelled him to appear more hawkish on issues than he actually was. Ironically, it was Kennedy's angst at appearing timid or weak that drove many of his policy initiatives (i.e., Bay of Pigs, counterinsurgency, and Vietnam).[397]

Paradoxically, Kennedy could have practiced presidential power within an intact NSC mechanism, since organization is not incompatible with this leadership style. Certainly, Eisenhower practiced it from behind the scenes as Fred Greenstein noted. Kennedy would have retained his freedom of political maneuver and ability to practice presidential power more effectively. In this sense, Richard Neustadt provided poor advice to an impressionable President-elect by rejecting the underlying logic behind the NSC and hence how the NSC operated under Eisenhower. But the most detrimental advice that Kennedy accepted was Neustadt's notion that the accumulation of presidential power is more important than sound decisions.

In pursuit of presidential power, the White House waged an unrelenting public relations campaign to protect the myth of presidential omniscience. Again, this went well beyond protecting the President; it subverted facts and events to portray the President as wise, but struggling with bureaucratic luddites. The Administration pursued a two-pronged approach to this end. First, the Kennedy deliberately sought to control how the media portrayed him. Second, the White House wrote its own account of events first and suppressed unfavorable facts.

Kennedy granted special access to select journalists, such as James Reston, Joseph Alsop and Walter Lipmann among others. Kennedy easily charmed journalists and television reporters with his quick wit and sense of humor as well as opening up the White House for journalist re-

[397] Rothkopf, 79, 81-82, 86; Wills, 229-231, 234-237, 250, 256-257, 261-263, 265, 269-274.

porting.[398] Naturally, continued access to the President depended on favorable articles so journalists were not likely to write exposés. Those reporters who broke this tacit agreement could find themselves persona non grata.

Kennedy can be admired for his deft handling of the press, which greatly helped him maintain some freedom of maneuver.[399] Reeves wrote that "when Kennedy did not like the wording or the thrust of a question, he gave long and rambling, dull, answers, because he knew those questions would be the first ones on the cutting-room floor, making the final version more to his liking."[400] Kennedy was fortunate that he was photogenic and telegenic. As Norman Mailer observed,

> Jack Kennedy understood that the most important, probably the only dynamic culture in America, the only culture to enlist the imagination and change the character of Americans, was the one we had been given by movies. . . . He would be the movie star come to life as President.[401]

In this sense, Robert J. Donovan's *PT 109: John F. Kennedy in WWII*, published in 1961 and the debut of the movie *PT 109* starring Cliff Robertson certainly enhanced his star-like qualities.[402] As Garry Wills contended, "Glamour was something other people yearned for; the Kennedys

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[398] Lasky, 3-4.The 1962 *Tour of the White House* by CBS television as well as numerous articles from magazines like *Life*, *Look*, *Redbook*, *Newsweek*, and *Time* focused on intimate portrayals of the First Lady, the Kennedy family and life in the White House. The media coverage of the intimate side of the Kennedys appears far above the norm.

[399] While Kennedy held "frequent live, televised news conferences," and was easily accessible to the press, his Administration "was not especially innovative." Press Secretary Pierre Salinger was not as powerful has Eisenhower's press secretary. Though he did enjoy access to Kennedy, Salinger "was neither as well informed nor as autonomous a policy adviser as Hagerty had been. Kennedy, like Roosevelt, wanted to control his own press relations." Formal briefings to the President and development of strategy before press conferences were discontinued. "Indeed, formal staff meetings of any kind were rare in the Kennedy White House, and Salinger did not regularly attend meetings at which substantive policies were discussed." Walcott and Hult, 58-59.

[400] Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 436.

[401] Norman Mailer, "*The Leading Man, A Review of* J.F.K.: The Man and the Myth," in *J. F. Kennedy and Presidential Power*, ed. Earl Latham (Lexington, Massachusetts: D. C. Heath and Company, 1972), 292.

[402] According to Garry Wills, "In the White House, Kennedy oversaw all aspects of the movie made about his adventure, approving the script and director, choosing the star, Cliff Robertson. (His first choice, Warren Beatty, turned the President down)." Wills, 134.

could supply it. . . . The superhuman does not just happen. It must be contrived. . . . In this world, you were whatever you could make people think you were."[403] Kennedy exploited these qualities to "educate and mobilize public opinion." However, because Kennedy retained personal control of his public relations, "most of the administration's activities were sporadic and not systematically pursued."[404]

The Kennedy White House strove to portray events favorably for the President. Arthur Schlesinger served not only as a special assistant to the President, but also as the official White House historian. Sorensen and historian Theodore White were also expected to write official histories of the Kennedy Presidency. In the aftermath of the Bay of Pigs, while Kennedy publicly took responsibility for the failure, behind the scenes, the White House wanted it known that the CIA and JCS had misled the President. According to CIA analyst Jack Pfeiffer, Robert Kennedy provided his "lengthy classified memorandum" from the Taylor Committee Investigation on the Bay of Pigs operation to Schlesinger for the historical record. As Pfeiffer noted:

> According to Arthur Schlesinger, Robert Kennedy was extremely upset by the testimony of the Joint Chiefs, having written: "What really bad work the Joint Chiefs of Staff did on this whole matter [the Bay of Pigs Operation]. The plan as they approved it [the Trinidad plan] would have been even more catastrophic than the one that finally went into effect."[405]

Bundy painstakingly sought to portray the President in a favorable light, writing a 4 May 1961 memorandum for the record to the Taylor Committee Investigation because he was dissatisfied with his original oral testimony. Pfeiffer contended this move was "a classic example of a rear

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[403] Wills, 138-139.

[404] Walcott and Hult, 67.

[405] Schlesinger cites as the source for this and other derogatory comments about failures by the JCS as "RFK handwritten notes after Cuban Study Group meetings of May l and 11, 1961, RFK papers.'" Jack B. Pfeiffer, *Volume IV: The Taylor Committee Investigation of the Bay of Pigs*, 9 November 1984, accessed on the website of The National Security Archive, The George Washington University at http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB355/bop-vol4.pdf, 16 August 2011, 18, 120.

guard action to protect a President's rear." According to Pfeiffer, Bundy was sloppy in his oral testimony, issuing contradictory statements and factual errors.[406] Having learned a lesson from this investigation, Bundy provided a memorandum to answer Senator Jackson's questions on the Kennedy changes to the NSC rather than testify in person to the subcommittee. After the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962, Kennedy made a point to order Schlesinger "to put his version of what happened on the record. . . . [Concerned about press reports coming out] Kennedy was already moving on to try to control the history, giving those thirteen days an order that rationalized his own decisions."[407] The result was the 1969 book *Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis* authored by both Robert Kennedy and Arthur Schlesinger.

More than anyone, Robert Kennedy served as the President's de facto sergeant-at-arms. He alternated among Presidential disciplinarian, guardian, and hatchet man, duties unprecedented for the U.S. Attorney General. Undersecretary of State Chester Bowles recalled that Kennedy relied on Robert Kennedy as his action officer: "Management in Jack's mind, I think, consists largely of calling Bob on the telephone and saying 'Here are ten things I want to get done. Why don't you go ahead and get them done.'"[408] In the wake of the Bay of Pigs disaster, Robert Kennedy moved quickly to protect the President, regardless of the damning facts. When Robert discovered Chester Bowles had been against the operation, he "jammed his fingers into Bowles's stomach and told him, that he, Bowles, was for the invasion, remember that, he was for it, they were all for it."[409] To protect his brother, Robert Kennedy participated in the Taylor Committee Investigation with the conspicuous purpose of shifting the blame of failure on the CIA and

[406] Pfeiffer, 66, 68, 72, 74.
[407] Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 427.
[408] Reeves, "The Lines of Control Have Been Cut."
[409] Halberstam, 68-69.

JCS.[410]

While Kennedy's lieutenants successfully safeguarded his image, which remains largely unblemished in popular lore, the Kennedy Administration suffered from organizational mismanagement and caused a drift in formal grand strategy.[411]

Conclusion

The Kennedy Administration fundamentally changed the National Security Council, from an organizational-based to a personalized-based advisory system. Heeding the convictions of Eisenhower's critics and the perceived urgency of the Soviet threat, Kennedy felt it would take too much time and require too much effort to reform the Eisenhower NSC mechanism, so only its wholesale replacement would suffice to reorient U.S. foreign policy and national security policy quickly. In Kennedy's view, the New Frontier needed a clean break from the older generation of traditional foreign policy. The new generation would boldly lead, with new approaches, with imaginative ideas, and with fresh confidence. Dismantling the Eisenhower NSC mechanism, Kennedy proceeded to practice presidential power unfettered.

The Kennedy Administration replaced the work of the Planning Board and OCB with ad hoc task forces initially and subsequently the Bundy Group, which as Kai Bird noted, involved "fewer people, reports, and formal meetings of the National Security Council."[412] Once Bundy and his Bundy Group assumed a central role in the advisory mechanism, Kennedy had a loyal

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[410]According to Pfeiffer, Taylor had reservations concerning Robert Kennedy's membership on the Taylor Committee Investigation. "Taylor has written that the Attorney General 'could be counted on to look after the interests of the President." Pfeiffer also noted the number of times Robert Kennedy tried to intimidate witnesses and twist the testimony. Pfeiffer, 8-9, 13, 57, 113-114.

[411]A 2013 Time Magazine special edition of President Kennedy is largely hagiographic, perpetuating the myth of Camelot. David von Drehle, *JFK: His Enduring Legacy*, ed. Stephen Koepp, Time Home Entertainment, Inc. (2013).

[412] Bird, 183.

advisory staff and source of information which supplanted the government bureaucracy. Bundy's role as the Special Assistant for National Security shifted from Eisenhower's coordinator to Kennedy's counselor, "clarifying alternatives set before the president, recording decisions, and monitoring follow-through."[413] With the exception of Robert Kennedy and Theodore Sorensen, Bundy was Kennedy's most influential advisor because he deftly elevated himself above bureaucratic and political infighting, presenting his analysis with such eloquence, incisiveness, and confidence that his logic was difficult to refute.[414] He produced results too, which is why Kennedy once exclaimed, "Damn it, Bundy and I get more done in one day at the White House than they do in six months at the State Department."[415]

Kennedy's advisory system reflected his management style and projected image. He preferred smaller, informal meetings with a wider selection of individuals and sought out advice and expertise wherever he could find it, even calling lower officials in the government bureaucracy to glean their unvarnished views. The establishment of the White House Situation Room reflected this thirst for unfiltered information and desire to energize the government bureaucracy with White House policy initiatives. As the center of government action, Kennedy portrayed himself as youthful, dynamic, and decisive, all admirable traits of the New Frontier. Clearly, he stove to energize the nation to greatness, as Garry Wills noted:

> Kennedy's task . . . was to combat the national enervation caused by Eisenhower. If the country had to get "moving again," it was because Eisenhower had brought it to such a total standstill. In this view, presidential style not only establishes an agenda for politics but determines the tone of national life. The image projected by the President becomes the country's self-image, sets the expectations to which it lives up or down. This

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[413] Cecil V. Crabb, Jr., and Kevin v. Mulcahy, "The Lessons of the Iran-Contra Affair for National Security Policy Making," in *Fateful Decisions: Inside the National Security Council*, ed. Karl F. Inderfurth and Loch K. Johnson (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc, 2004), 165-166.

[414] Preston, 51.

[415] John F. Kennedy cited in Inderfurth and Johnson, 65.

> was the reading of history that made style equal substance, and the Kennedy transition seemed to confirm the reading.[416]

On the other hand, Kennedy's limited executive experience and scant understanding of large organizations, made him susceptible to the critics of Eisenhower's NSC mechanism and Neustadt's alluring *Presidential Power*. Hence, Kennedy became convinced that radical changes to the NSC mechanism were essential and the precepts of *Presidential Power*, the solution. The confluence of both influences was unfortunate for the presidency. The assertions against the Eisenhower Administration proved unfounded, a case of critics believing their own conjectures. *Presidential Power* prescribed how to accumulate power, but not how to wield it wisely for policy formulation. While the President certainly retains the authority to use the NSC in any manner he wishes, he must bear the responsibility for its misuse as well.

Kennedy's work habits and management style created havoc with meeting schedules, precluding preparation by his key advisers and upsetting their own work schedules. Bundy recognized this dilemma and repeatedly implored Kennedy to adopt organizational and managerial reforms. Bundy also attempted to incorporate features of the Eisenhower NSC mechanism into the NSC Staff, and the Standing Committee. However, none of these expedients could match the efficiencies of the NSC mechanism, so the Kennedy Administration struggled to educate itself on the policy issues; the President became increasingly insulated from government subject matter experts, and written policy products were no longer properly integrated to acquaint the President and his key advisers with all aspects of an issue in a comprehensive fashion.

Perhaps most detrimental, Kennedy had no structural mechanism to protect him from ex parte views and department parochialism. What Kennedy failed to acknowledge was the degree

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[416] Wills, 144.

structure, processes, and procedures could work in his favor as Chief Executive, forcing advocates to defend their proposals in the Policy Board and within a formal NSC forum. Weaknesses in their arguments, to include the multi-ordered effects of their proposals, would have been exposed in a deliberative manner without making the President appear irresolute or weak.

Kennedy had no patience for the development of grand strategy, so the Basic National Security Policy expired, leaving the government bureaucracy with insufficient strategic guidance to develop supporting strategies. Kennedy often became mired in tactical details rather than maintaining a strategic perspective. Without this perspective, policy became reactive and impulsive. Kennedy's uncritical advocacy of Flexible Response and counterinsurgency contributed to his refusal to have them undergo the scrutiny of a formal grand strategy. Consequently, U.S. policy was cast adrift, creating confusion within the U.S. government, consternation with allies, and opportunities for the Communist bloc. The danger for U. S. national security was the fact that adversaries might miscalculate and push the United States to the brink of general war. The Cuban Missile Crisis was a clear illustration of this danger.

Presidential power enhanced Kennedy's image—then and now. Everything flowed into and out of him personally, and he devoted an extraordinary amount of effort to cultivate a presidential paradigm of dynamic and wise policy. The reality is that the Kennedy system resulted in a sharp decline in policy formulation, coordination, and coherency. Fundamentally, the dissolution of the Eisenhower NSC mechanism significantly disrupted the organizational functions of the Administration, which as Rothkopf concluded, "clearly cost Kennedy and would actually harm every ensuing administration until the practice was stopped in the late 1980s."[417]

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[417] Rothkopf, 95.

Chapter 4

1956 Suez Crisis Case Study

When America's erstwhile allies invaded Egypt in the fall of 1956, President Dwight D. Eisenhower was astounded and angered, but he was not paralyzed by indecision. This is not to imply the President's policy options were straightforward, for in truth, the strategic environment throughout the crisis was infinitely complex. Considered by historian David Nichols as the most intense emergency to confront the Eisenhower Administration, the 1956 Suez Crisis threatened the solidarity of the NATO Alliance, furnished an opportunity for Soviet expansion into the Middle East, tested American strategic values and principles, threatened to undermine the authority of the United Nations, and could have easily escalated to a general war involving the super powers.[1] That the United States was able to manage the crisis prudently is due in large measure to Eisenhower and his NSC mechanism which helped cultivate his strategic thinking.

Backdrop to the Crisis

The stimulus for Middle East national security strategy formulation was the decline of Britain and France's power and influence in the region. The Planning Board began the strategic appraisal immediately, providing the NSC with key strategic factors in regards to the Middle East: the root causes of the Arab-Israeli conflict; the British and Egyptian dispute; the crucial importance of oil to the West; Arab animosity towards France and Britain, which translated to a

[1] David A. Nichols, *Eisenhower 1956: The President's Year of Crisis, Suez and the Brink of War* (New York: Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, 2011).

general mistrust of the West; Soviet interventionist designs in the region to include gaining control of Middle East oil reserves and possibly the Suez Canal; and the inability of Arab states to defend themselves against aggression. In view of Western Europe's dependency on oil and the strategic value of the Suez Canal as an international waterway, the Middle East was a vital interest to the United States. Accordingly, the U.S. strategic objective was to promote stability in the Middle East. The desired strategic effect was a Middle East alignment with the West and the exclusion of Soviet influence.[2] With the strategic objective articulated, Eisenhower turned to selecting an effective strategy and supporting capabilities (i.e. the instruments of power). The strategic appraisal and strategy formulation continued in NSC meetings, diplomatic cables, and emissary reports as the strategic environment changed.

Eisenhower's strategy was to reduce tensions using diplomatic, economic, and informational instruments of power. His initial overture was to help arbitrate the British troop withdrawal from the Suez Canal base after the Egyptian government abrogated the 1936 Anglo-Egyptian Treaty.[3] As such, the Planning Board educated the NSC on the relevant security issues, to include the 1888 Treaty of Constantinople, the Suez Canal Company, and the 1950 Tripartite Declaration. According to Eisenhower, this background information helped him gain an understanding of the treaties and the legal status of the Suez Canal. The Treaty of Constantinople made the

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[2] The President's Special Assistant (Cutler) to the Secretary of State, "NSC 155 Memoranda," May 6, 1953, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v09p1/d134; Memorandum of Discussion at the 147th Meeting of the National Security Council, Monday, June 1, 1953, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v09p1/d137; Memorandum of Discussion at the 153d Meeting of the National Security Council, Thursday, July 9, 1953, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v09p1/d144, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v09p1/d134; National Intelligence Estimate (No. 114): "Conditions and Trends in the Middle East Affecting Us Security, 15 January 1953, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v09p1/d114, 28 February 2016.

[3] The Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936 permitted the British to protect the Suez Canal with a military complex three miles wide and sixty-five miles long, garrisoned by 80,000 British troops. Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change: 1953-1956* (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1963), 150-151.

Suez Canal an international waterway detailing "how the maritime nations would handle and use the canal." Accordingly, the Suez Company was a private company to remain open for all commerce and combat vessels in war and peace.[4]

Of the three constructs, the Tripartite Declaration, designed to protect Middle East countries from military aggression, increasingly absorbed the President's attention. It committed the United States, Britain, and France to respond to any aggression of Middle East territory, in particular, "to take action to prevent any violation of the Egyptian-Israeli frontiers and armistice lines." The signatories agreed to monitor and limit arms shipments to the region, limiting weapons arsenals necessary for domestic order and maintaining the military balance. They also sought to discourage arms sales from the Communists.[5]

When Eisenhower assumed office, Britain was responsible for the stability and security of the Middle East, to include serving as the major arms supplier in the region.[6] Egyptian-British relations began to deteriorate in the wake of the military coup which installed General Mohammed Naguib as Egypt's president in July 1952.[7] While never a formal colony technically, Britain had nonetheless controlled Egypt since the 1880s, so the Egyptians rightly considered Britain imperialist. Accordingly, the Naguib government demanded the complete withdraw of British troops, a policy which Gamal Abdel Nasser continued when he became president in April 1954.[8] After Naguib's rejection of the initial plan for Suez Canal operations, Britain presented a Five-Point Plan in March 1953 and proposed a tripartite conference among the United States, Britain,

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[4] Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Eisenhower Project," interview by Ed Edwin (July 20, 1967), CCOHC, 69; Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Waging Peace* (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1965), 35; Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 150.

[5] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 22, 77, n.7.

[6] Sherman Adams, *Firsthand Report* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961), 246.

[7] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 22 n. 2, 23.

[8] John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2005), 126; Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 150.

and Egypt to construct an agreement.[9]

Eisenhower balked at participating in a tripartite conference though, wishing to avoid the impression of an American-British bloc since this would undercut the U.S. policy as a friendly neutral.[10] To underscore this impartiality and the spirit of the 1950 Tripartite Declaration, Eisenhower staged a transport ship loaded with military equipment in the Mediterranean Sea to render assistance to any Middle East country victimized by aggression.[11] While Eisenhower thought the British Five-Point Plan had merit, he felt the proposal of a tripartite conference placed President Naguib in a politically untenable position since his unequivocal policy was the complete withdrawal of Britain. As it turned out, Naguib denounced the idea when word of the conference was leaked.[12] Consequently, Britain and Egypt conducted bilateral negotiations addressing the timing of troop withdrawals and the running of the Suez Canal Company.

This did not suggest the United States was disengaged though. Early in the negotiations, Eisenhower wrote Naguib, explaining that Britain respected Egyptian sovereignty but feared a precipitous withdrawal would create a security vacuum and needed assured access to the Suez Canal Base facilities in the event of a conflict. Eisenhower encouraged Naguib to continue negotiations, offering foreign assistance as an incentive. Though Naguib's reply was polite, he underscored Egyptian suspicions and resentment of the British military presence. He assured Eisenhower that Egypt would secure its territory in accordance with the UN Charter. Due to these differences, the bilateral talks broke down on 5 May. Undaunted, Eisenhower dispatched Secretary

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[9] The plan addressed: 1) maintenance of the Canal War Zone during peace and full activation in war; 2) a joint air defense agreement; 3) a phased withdrawal of the British military; 4) the establishment of a Middle East Defense Organization with Egyptian membership; and 5) a military and economic assistance program. Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 150-151.

[10] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 22-23; Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 152.

[11] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 29-30.

[12] Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 152.

of State John Foster Dulles and Harold Stassen (Director of the Mutual Security Administration) to Cairo to foster rapport with Naguib. During their discussions on 11 May, Naguib made it clear he mistrusted the British more than he did the Soviets, an alarming remark for Dulles.[13]

Over the subsequent eighteen months the Eisenhower Administration worked assiduously towards a final agreement, recognizing on one hand that anti-British feelings among Egyptians militated against accepting any British plan and on the other urging the British to reach an acceptable accommodation.[14] Behind the U.S. strategy, Eisenhower's principles and pragmatism are evident. British retention of the Suez Canal would remain a symbol of imperialism, to which the United States was philosophically opposed. The canal had substantial strategic value as an international waterway for trade and revenue, so it was in everyone's best interests for the canal to remain open to maritime traffic. If Egypt threatened to close the canal, the Western powers retained the legal right to use military force. The national identity of the Suez Base operators was not an issue as long as they were competent, and the facilities remained available to the West in the event of war. Eisenhower thereby rejected the British argument that political and economic control of the canal, and by extension the Middle East, was necessary for defense.[15] In essence, Eisenhower's tacit policy aimed to end colonialism in the Middle East without a loss of British and French prestige and influence.

The U.S. Basic National Security Policy acknowledged these changing realities in the context of the Cold War:

> In the Middle East, a strong regional grouping is not now feasible. In order to assure during peace time for the United States and its allies the resources (especially oil) and the strategic positions of the area and their denial to the Soviet bloc, the United States

[13] Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 154-156.
[14] Ibid, 157-159.
[15] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 22; Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 152; Adams, 247.

> should build on Turkey, Pakistan, and, if possible, Iran, and assist in achieving stability in the Middle East by political actions and limited military and economic assistance, and technical assistance, to other countries in the area.[16]

Eisenhower's interest in resolving the Suez Canal dispute was underscored by the 22 June 1954 National Intelligence Estimate, which tied Egypt's participation in a regional grouping (i.e., the Turkish-Pakistani Pact) to a Suez settlement.[17] On 23 July, Eisenhower approved NSC 5428, which recognized the strategic importance of the Middle East, expressed the intent to extend U.S. responsibilities in the region (perhaps with Britain), and sought to extend U.S. regional influence through economic and military assistance as well as collective defense agreements. A supplement to NSC 5428 (the Alpha Plan) sought a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace plan so as to limit Soviet opportunism in the region.[18] Recognizing that Israel and its U.S. advocates might view the Alpha Plan as a zero-sum game, Eisenhower had Foster Dulles announce the plan as his own idea, thereby serving as the lightning rod and effectively neutralizing it as a political issue.[19]

The negotiations proved successful in October 1954 when Britain and Egypt reached a final agreement on the Suez Canal for the withdrawal of all 80,000 British soldiers by June 1956. Accordingly, British and Egyptian technicians would maintain the canal base facilities; the Royal Air Force would retain over-flight and landing rights; in the event of an attack on any of the eight Arab states or Turkey by a non-Arab state, Britain would occupy the Suez Canal Base and place it on a wartime footing; lastly there would be no infringement on freedom of navigation through

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[16] A Report of the National Security Council: Basic National Security Policy, *"NSC 162/2," October 30, 1953*, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v02p1/d100, 23 September 2011, 21.

[17] National Intelligence Estimate, "NIE 30-52", June 22, 1954, accessed on the website of the University of Wisconsin Digital Collection, FRUS at http://images.library.wisc.edu/FRUS/EFacs2/1952-54v09p1/reference/frus.frus195254v09p1.i0008.pdf, 22 August 2012, 518.

[18] Nichols, 15-17; Statement of Policy by the National Security Council, "NSC 5428," July 23, 1954, accessed on the website of the University of Wisconsin Digital Collection, FRUS at http://images.library.wisc.edu/FRUS/EFacs2/195254v09p1/reference/frus.frus195254v09p1.i0008.pdf, 22 August 2012, 525-536.

[19] Nichols, 16-17.

the canal. As an incentive the United States announced on 7 November 1954 a $40 million grant for economic development.[20]

Eisenhower's Heart Attack

The President's heart attack on 24 September 1955 in essence sequestered him from urgent foreign policy issues for seven weeks.[21] On 27 September, Egypt announced the intended purchase of Soviet arms from Czechoslovakia, a deal which threatened to undercut the Alpha Plan.[22] In reaction, Dulles attempted to convince Nasser that it was in Egypt's best interests to side with the West rather than forming a relationship with the Soviet Union. In his 27 September cable to Nasser, Dulles warned that the Soviet arms deal would prejudice Congress and public opinion against future agreements. Nasser's 1 October reply to Dulles recounted that the United States, despite promises, had stonewalled his requests for arms and did not heed his concerns regarding Israeli activities. He reminded Dulles that the basis of the coup in 1952 was over arms, so his political future was at stake. Legitimate or not, Nasser felt aggrieved and rebuffed Dulles, thereby creating an encumbrance to subsequent communications and negotiations.[23]

According to Sherman Adams, Dulles raised the issue of the arms agreement at a 30 Sep-

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[20] Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 427; Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 23; Adams, 249.

[21] For several weeks, Eisenhower's doctors enjoined NSC officials from discussing policy issues with the President until he recovered. Nichols, 29-31, 40-42.

[22] Eisenhower and Dulles learned of the arms deal on 22 September 1955; Due to his heart attack, Eisenhower had Dulles draft a personal letter for signature on 11 October to Soviet Premier Nikolai Bulganin, explaining the depth of his concern over the issue. Ibid, 27, 32.

[23] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 24-25; Nichols, 26-29; Memorandum of a Conversation, "Egypt—Purchase of Arms from USSR," September 26, 1955, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v14/d310; Telegram, Foster Dulles to Herbert Hoover Jr., "Proposed Telegram to Egypt," September 27, 1955, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v14/d314; Telegram, Foster Dulles to Herbert Hoover Jr., September 27, 1955, Proposed Telegram to Cairo," http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v14/d315; Telegram From the Embassy in Egypt, George V. Allen to Foster Dulles, October 1, 1955, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v14/d321. Accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS, 23 August 2012.

tember Cabinet meeting. He believed the Soviets were seeking to extend their influence in the Middle East, apparently in a gambit to gain control of two-thirds of the world's oil reserves. Further, the Soviets sought to cause a rift between the United States and Arab countries by fomenting mistrust over the U.S.-Israeli relationship and by providing military and economic assistance.[24] Until Eisenhower resumed his duties, the principal NSC members decided to adhere to NSC 5428, short of a crisis. In the meantime, the Planning Board began studying NSC 5428 for revision, while NSC meetings considered contingencies involving a possible Arab-Israeli conflict. Here, the chief concern was responding to an Israeli preventive war.[25] Providing arms to Israel, as a balance to the arms deal with Egypt, risked alienating the Arab states, which in turn might seek Soviet weapons.[26]

The Twin Initiatives: Aswan Dam and the Arab-Israeli Peace Settlement

Although a subject of discussion for months, the impetus for U.S. assistance to Egypt's Aswan Dam project was Prime Minister Anthony Eden's 27 November 1955 cable to Eisenhower. Eden caught the President's attention by adding, if the United States refused assistance, the Soviet Union surely would step in. Eisenhower and Dulles thought the project worth pursuing, provided the Egyptians did not try to use the Soviet-U.S. rivalry as a bargaining tool.[27]

Presiding at the 1 December 1955 NSC, Eisenhower devoted the agenda to the Aswan

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[24] Adams, 245.

[25] Memorandum of Discussion at the 260th Meeting of the National Security Council, Washington, October 6, 1955, 10 a.m., accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v14/d326, 23 August 2012; The Telegram from the Embassy in Israel to the Department of State, 17 November 1955, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v14/d417, 27 August 2012.

[26] Memorandum of a Conversation, Foster Dulles and Dwight Eisenhower, December 8, 1955, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v14/d442, 28 August 2012; Nichols, 28-29, 34-35, 48-49.

[27] Nichols, 46-47.

Dam project. Assistant Secretary of State Hebert Hoover Jr. urged a serious offer to Egypt to preempt Soviet overtures. Dulles added that such an immense project would compel the Egyptians to devote resources to peaceful means rather than an arms race with Israel. Eisenhower directed that negotiations proceed, but in view of the preponderance of U.S. funding, American engineers should review the feasibility of the project.[28]

In December 1955, Eisenhower requested World Bank President Eugene Black lead a delegation of American, British, and World Bank representatives to meet with Egyptian officials for the purpose of discussing the Aswan Dam project, which would serve as a hydroelectric power source and irrigation program.[29] Black worked out the plan with Egypt on 13 December, involving U.S. UK, and World Bank assistance. There was a stipulation though—the Egyptian economy could not support both the Aswan Dam project and high defense expenditures simultaneously, so Nasser would need to forego a military build-up. Eisenhower wanted to avoid a situation in which Egypt would abandon dam construction for military expansion, leaving the outside benefactors to finish the job.[30]

Persuading Congress remained a problem though. Senator Lyndon Johnson and Speaker of the House Sam Rayburn remained skeptical of the effort. While they recognized the dam project would promote closer ties with Egypt and safeguard the flow of oil, American public opinion favored Egypt's enemy—Israel, and Israeli interest groups would likely lobby Congress against funding. Meeting with Dulles, Senator Johnson questioned the cost of economic assistance, but Dulles defended the program, citing the promotion of closer relations with Egypt, while fore-

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[28] Memorandum of Discussion, National Security Council, December 1, 1955, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v14/d432, 27 August 2012.

[29] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 30-31. 31 n 10.

[30] Dwight D. Eisenhower, Dulles Oral History Interview: Princeton University, 28 July, 1964 (OH-14), DDEL, 29; Telegram, US Aide-mémoire to Egyptian Finance Minister, 16 December 1955, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v14/d461, 28 August 2012; Nichols, 52.

stalling Soviet influence. Egypt was still nonaligned, but it could drift into the Soviet camp if the United States stood aside. Dulles worried that current Israeli military superiority could tempt it to pursue a preventive war, which in turn would prompt Nasser to request Soviet assistance. Unmoved, Speaker Rayburn thought Egypt was anti-West and not worth the investment risk.[31] Privately, Eisenhower was not dissuaded, believing Congress would support his assistance programs once a peace treaty was signed.[32]

Meanwhile, the United States began steps towards Arab-Israeli peace negotiations as a means to create the conditions for a permanent peace. Speaking with Israeli Ambassador Abba Eban at the end of December 1955, Dulles explained that an arms race would be disadvantageous to Israel, given the potential access to Soviet arms by Arab states. He urged Israel to make concerted efforts to start negotiations through an intermediary.[33]

In preparation for his initial meetings with Egypt and Israel in January 1956, Special Emissary for the Middle East Robert B. Anderson met with Eisenhower and Dulles to discuss the strategy for Israeli-Egypt peace negotiations. With Egypt, Anderson would play on Nasser's ambition for leadership of the Arab world by suggesting the United States would seek to limit Bagdad Pact membership to Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Turkey, and the United Kingdom. As an economic incentive, Anderson would also link cotton exports, the Aswan Dam project, and an additional canal project with the peace talks. For Israel, Anderson would reiterate that an arms race with its Arab neighbors was not in its best interests and that it should "play the part of a good neighbor to

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[31] Adams, 248; Editorial Note from luncheon at Camp David, 8 December, 1955, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v14/d443, 28 August 2012.

[32] Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The Eisenhower Diaries*, ed. Robert H. Ferrell (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1981), 308.

[33] Memorandum of a Conversation, "Proposed Israel-Arab Negotiations Through an Intermediary," December 30, 1955, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v14/d472, 28 August 2012.

the Arabs and not seek to maintain itself by its own force and foreign backing." He was to warn that France and Britain might alter their support of Israel if alienation of Arab states resulted in a cessation of oil exports, and U.S.-Israeli relations might suffer as well if Israel continued on its present course.[34] Hence, this meeting laid the groundwork for the "Eisenhower-Dulles strategy—to restrain Israel while pressuring the Egyptians, using the Aswan Dam project as an enticement to work a comprehensive peace settlement."[35] For Eisenhower, the peace process became pivotal to his foreign policy because the Middle East had become a Cold War "flashpoint." Given the possibility that both superpowers would intervene in a Middle East conflict, which might escalate into a general war, defusing tensions was paramount.[36]

Unfortunately, Anderson was unable to secure agreement from Nasser and Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion for the commencement of peace negotiations. The central issue to Nasser was Arab unity because Israeli provocations had inflamed Egyptian sensibilities. Opposed to the West's security arrangements, Nasser sought an Arab mutual defense pact under Egyptian leadership. In his view, the Baghdad Pact, as well as Saudi and American money and influence, undermined Arab unity and Egyptian leadership. Hence, Egyptian-Israeli peace talks were politically impossible until Nasser increased his popular standing through economic progress.[37] To this end, Nasser was favorably disposed towards the Aswan Dam project.[38]

Ben-Gurion questioned Nasser's desire for peace and emphasized that Israel's lack of

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[34] Memorandum of a Conversation, Anderson, Dulles, and Eisenhower, January 11, 1956, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v15/d14, 28 August 2012.

[35] Nichols, 54.

[36] Ibid, 58, 64-65, 71.

[37] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 26; Message from Robert B. Anderson, January 19, 1956, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v15/d21, 28 August 2012; Message to Robert B. Anderson, at Washington, February 4, 1956, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v15/d75, 28 August 2012.

[38] Nichols, 60-61.

geographic depth precluded any concessions of territory. Further, Israel needed more weapons to offset Egypt's acquisition of Soviet arms and training. Ben-Gurion argued that peace negotiations could only occur when the military equation was balanced, warning, "If [the] U.S. maintains its present attitude of embargo of arms to Israel and failed to provide for Israel's safety, we would be 'Guilty of the greatest crime in our history.'"[39]

In view of Israeli-Egyptian intractability, the Administration pursued deterrence as a hedge. Meeting on 30 January 1956, Dulles and Prime Minister Anthony Eden discussed the most effective means of signaling allied resolve in the event of aggression. Dulles pointed out that despite its deterrent qualities, the Tripartite Declaration of 1950 would not permit the President to intervene immediately since he had to consult Congress beforehand. Alternatively, while a bilateral security treaty would give the President greater flexibility, attaining Senate approval would be difficult. Further, both Israel and the Arab states would interpret a bilateral treaty as a commitment of support to Israel. Hence, despites its flaws, the Tripartite Declaration was the best deterrent option, as long as the signatories made it clear they would act resolutely to counter aggression.[40] Accordingly, Eisenhower and Eden issued a joint statement on 1 February 1956, urging Israel and the Arab states to resolve their differences and announcing that the Tripartite Declaration was still in effect. To give the joint statement some vigor, Eisenhower deployed the Sixth Fleet to the eastern Mediterranean Sea as a show of force. Despite this public display of solidarity, Eisenhower privately believed Britain could no longer afford its security commitment

[39] Message From Robert B. Anderson, January 23, 1956, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v15/d29, 28 August, 2012; Message From Robert B. Anderson, February 1, 1956, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v15/d64, 28 August, 2012; Message From Robert B. Anderson, February 3, 1956, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v15/d72. Accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS, 28 August, 2012;

[40] Memorandum of a Conversation, "Middle East—Arab-Israel Conflict," January 31, 1956, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v15/d54, 29 August 2012.

to the Suez Canal, so he sought to allay British concerns over the Suez Canal, encouraging a peaceful withdrawal with honor.[41]

In the period following Anderson's initial visit, several rounds of discussions ensued between State, UN, CIA, and British officials on one side and Israeli and Egyptian officials on the other. The purpose of these discussions was to clarify the essential elements of the Israeli-Egyptian dispute as a prelude to negotiations in March.[42] Unfortunately, arms sales to Israel sparked partisan politics in the United States, which detracted from the peace process.[43] Israel capitalized on the Soviet arms sales to Egypt to place diplomatic pressure on the Administration for sales in kind. Under political pressure, Eisenhower and Dulles studied the issue, but were likely swayed by the 28 February 1956 National Intelligence Estimate, which warned that a weapons deal would undercut U.S. impartiality among Arab states, ignite an arms race, and increase Soviet influence. Worse, the influx of weapons might induce Israel to launch a preventive war against Egypt, resulting in an Arab oil embargo against Europe and triggering the Tripartite Declaration against Israel. Such a crisis would prove devastating to U.S. foreign policy: Congress would not likely approve a prompt military intervention; Arab states would view the Tripartite Declaration as an empty gesture and turn to the Soviet Union for help; and Soviet intervention would likely escalate into a general war. With this possibility in mind, and to mollify the

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[41] Nichols, 69-70; Circular Telegram From the Department of State to Certain Diplomatic Missions, February 9, 1956, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v15/d87, 29 August 2012; Circular Telegram From the Department of State to Certain Diplomatic Missions, Circular Telegram From the Department of State to Certain Diplomatic Missions 9 February, 1956, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v15/d88, 29 August, 2012.

[42] The discussions and correspondence involved the settlement of refugees, territorial realignments, cross-border skirmishes between Israel and its neighbors, complaints about propaganda, Jordan River water usage, the Baghdad Pact, and arms sales to Israel. FRUS Documents 78, 80, 85, 89, 90, 92, 96, 98, 99, 103, 105, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 118, 119, 129, 132, 133, 135, 136, 139, 140, 150, 152, 153, 154, 155, 157, 162. Arab-Israeli Dispute: January 1 to July 26, 1956, Volume 15. Accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v15/comp1, 29 August, 2012.

[43] Nichols, 69, 71.

Israelis without inciting the Arabs, the State Department proposed that Israel purchase twelve French and twenty-four Canadian jet fighter-bombers through NATO. Correspondingly, the United States initiated Operation Stockpile in May 1956, which established a cache of weapons, munitions, and equipment on Cypress and on ships in the Mediterranean for use by any Middle East state aggressed upon.[44]

Productive talks with Nasser during the spring proved vexing for the Administration. After Nasser abruptly torpedoed direct talks with the Israeli government during the 5 March 1956 meeting, Anderson saw no point in continuing the meetings.[45] Subsequently, Egypt raised tensions by announcing a military alliance of United Arab States (Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen), promoting the overthrow of the Libyan, Iraqi, Jordanian, and Saudi Arabian (secretly) governments and royal families, and seeking the establishment of Arab unity governments in the French colonies of Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco. In response, the Administration provided greater support to the Baghdad Pact and developed closer security relations with Saudi Arabia, Libya, and Sudan.[46]

Nasser proved equally maladroit with negotiations over the Aswan Dam project. Throughout the negotiating process, he would reverse earlier decisions, make unproductive counterproposals, and insist on changes to the project which the United States and Britain found

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[44] FRUS Documents 137, 141, 150, 165, 176, 199, 206, 220, 265, 322, 358. Arab-Israeli Dispute: January 1 to July 26, 1956, Volume 15. Accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v15/comp1, 29 August, 2012.

[45] FRUS Documents 164, 167, 168, 173, 191. Arab-Israeli Dispute: January 1 to July 26, 1956, Volume 15. Accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v15/comp1, 29 August, 2012; Nichols, 88-89.

[46] FRUS Documents192, 197, 221. Arab-Israeli Dispute: January 1 to July 26, 1956, Volume 15. Accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v15/comp1, 29 August, 2012; Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 26 n. 5; Eisenhower, *The Eisenhower Diaries*, 318-320, 323.

unacceptable.[47] Whatever his motives, Nasser not only frustrated the negotiators but also alienated Congress, which moved to reject the funding of the Aswan project. The final nail in the coffin for Aswan occurred when Nasser recognized Communist China on 16 May, an action which incensed the United States. Calling in the Egyptian ambassador, Dulles was blunt:

> Assistance toward the Dam was about as unpopular a thing as could be done in the United States. Every time he had appeared before Congress the matter of the Dam was thrown at him. Egypt was not doing the United States a favor by accepting assistance toward the Dam. Should the matter arise today, he did not think it would be possible to get authorization from Congress for the Dam.[48]

In reaction, Congress took legislative action to limit the President's foreign aid commitments, a sign of displeasure over assistance to Egypt. In the ensuing weeks, the Administration began to distance itself from the Aswan project as it worked to persuade Congress to restore funding for the other foreign aid programs. In June, the United States and Britain learned of possible Soviet-Egyptian talks on the Aswan Dam project, which suggested Egypt was still trying to play the West against the East. Oblivious to his own inept diplomacy, Nasser did not appear to appreciate fully the reasons behind the stalled talks. Rather, his only thought was to gain a guarantee from the United States to commit funds for the entirety of the Aswan Dam project—a naïve goal at this stage.[49] It was apparent that Nasser had little understanding of U.S. Middle East policy and the American political system.

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[47] FRUS Documents 91, 94, 121, 122, 123, 124, 144, 323, 343, 346. Arab-Israeli Dispute: January 1 to July 26, 1956, Volume 15. Accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v15/comp1, 29 August, 2012.

[48] Memorandum of a Conversation, May 17, 1956, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v15/d353, 29 August 2012

[49] Nasser's recognition of China was in retaliation to the arming of Israel with French jets. FRUS Documents 327, 352, 356, 357, 390, 395, 396, 397, 399, 406, 409, 411. Arab-Israeli Dispute: January 1 to July 26, 1956, Volume 15. Accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v15/comp1, 29 August, 2012; Nichols, 103-106.

Dual Crises

As Britain was completing its troop withdrawal of the Suez Base in early June 1956, the President underwent an operation to correct an ileitis ailment, a condition which had bothered him for years. Gravely, in the aftermath of the operation, Eisenhower experienced a severe depression as a result of the painful recovery, leaving him listless and detached from government business for six weeks.[50] In the meantime, Dulles focused on extricating the United States from Aswan in order to salvage the Administration's foreign assistance programs with Congress, without much thought on how to break the decision to Nasser tactfully.[51] In the 28 June NSC meeting, Dulles considered only the practical reasons for withdrawing from Aswan and not how Nasser would take it:

> With respect to the Russians taking over the High Aswan dam project, Secretary Dulles commented that the immediate results would be bad for the United States, but that the long–term results might be very good. Whatever nation undertakes to carry through this project was bound to end up by being very unpopular with the Egyptians. The building of the dam was bound to place a heavy burden on the Egyptian economy and standard of living, and the Egyptians would blame the austerities they suffered on the nation which was undertaking this great project. Moreover, the Egyptians would continuously ask for further financial assistance from this nation. In short, the project of building the dam would prove a terrific headache to any nation that undertook it.[52]

During a brief 13 July visit with the President at Gettysburg, Dulles discussed Aswan to an indifferent Eisenhower, implying the project was not worth salvaging, and did not mention that Egyptian Ambassador Ahmed Hussein was coming to Washington to discuss Nasser's full agreement on the U.S. terms. Next, on 17 July Dulles informed Congress that the Administration would not pursue Aswan, thereby assuring passage of the appropriations bill. Though he presid-

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[50] Nichols, 108-112.

[51] Memorandum of a Conversation, Department of State, Washington, June 25, 1956, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v15/d410, 29 August 2012.

[52] Memorandum of Discussion at the 289th Meeting of the National Security Council, Washington, June 28, 1956, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v15/d412, 29 August, 2012; Nichols, 113-115.

ed at the 19 July NSC meeting, Eisenhower had been out of touch with the burning issues and accepted Dulles' recommendation to withdraw from Aswan without deliberation. Meeting with Hussein later that day, Dulles bluntly told Hussein the deal was off without discussion and then issued a press release the same day before Hussein could inform Nasser.[53] While Nasser said he was not particularly surprised by the decision, the manner in which Dulles delivered the decision, coupled with the insult of an immediate public announcement, enraged him.[54]

Although they should have anticipated Nasser's reaction, it came as a dreadful shock to the United States, Britain, and France when he nationalized the Suez Canal Company on 26 July 1956. While Eisenhower and other Administration officials conjectured that Nasser used the rejection of Aswan as a pretext for nationalization of the canal, his actions seemed more reactive than premeditative.[55] Regardless of the circumstances, Britain and France reacted with outrage, and the Eisenhower Administration had a full-blown crisis on its hands.[56]

Eisenhower's Strategic Appraisal

The crisis acted as a tonic for the President, who immediately took stock of the situation with amazing clarity and cold calculation. Eisenhower certainly empathized with Britain and France, especially after his own exasperating experiences with Nasser. Nasser had deliberately

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[53] FRUS Documents 439, 438, 442, 452, 453, 466, 467, 473, 474. Arab-Israeli Dispute: January 1 to July 26, 1956, Volume 15. Accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v15/comp1, 29 August, 2012; Nichols, 120-121, 125-126.

[54] Telegram From the Embassy in Egypt to the Department of State, July 20, 1956, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v15/d484, 29 August, 2012; Nichols, 127, 131-132, 139.

[55] Gaddis, 127; Adams, 249; Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 31, 34 n. 16; Dwight D. Eisenhower, Dulles Oral History Interview: Princeton University, by Philip A. Crowl, 28 July, 1964 (OH-14), DDEL, 29-30; Andrew J. Goodpaster, Eisenhower Administration Project, Interview Two by Ed Edwin, August 2, 1967 (OH—37), DDEL, 79-81.

[56] On 27 July, Britain placed the military in the Mediterranean on alert, and the British Cabinet convened. The Cabinet did not feel constrained by legal issues, and taking the issue to the UN would take too long to resolve, creating an international norm of acceptance. Eden suggested a ministerial level meeting among Britain, the United States, and France so as to consider economic, political, and military options. Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 35.

antagonized the West with his refusal to accommodate their concerns over the security of the Suez Canal, his anti-western propaganda, his recognition of Communist China, his purchase of Soviet weapons, his support to Algerian and Cypriot insurgents, and his antagonism of the Israelis.[57] The nationalization of the Suez Canal Company also had both economic and prestige implications for Britain and France, who were major stock holders in the Suez Canal Company and depended extensively on the Canal for the transit of goods. Nasser's effrontery flaunted the decline of British and French power and influence in the Middle East, so it was understandable that they viewed the seizure of the Suez Canal as a matter of prestige.[58]

The President considered his allies' arguments. Britain claimed the seizure was a clear violation of the 1888 Treaty of Constantinople because it jeopardized access to a strategic waterway and the flow of oil—a Sword of Damocles for Europe. In a cable to Eisenhower, Prime Minister Eden doubted the Egyptians could operate the canal competently and feared that Nasser would gain tremendous prestige and profit from his aggression, which he would leverage into Middle East hegemony. French Foreign Minister Pineau supported Eden, claiming the seizure akin to Hitler's occupation of the Rhineland in 1936, and urged immediate and decisive action. Eden warned that if Nasser's actions went unpunished, British and U.S. influence would be irrevocably weakened. In essence, Britain and France sought to punish Egypt, secure a vital strategic waterway, and assure the flow of oil to Europe.[59]

Israel's security concerns remained a factor in Eisenhower's equation because its military options were limited. Egypt remained its implacable enemy, blockading Israeli shipping through

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[57] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 24, 27-28, 72; Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962*, 4th ed. (New York: New York Review Books, 2006), 85, 158;

[58] Eisenhower Interview (OH-14), DDEL, 30-31; Andrew J. Goodpaster, Eisenhower Administration Project, Interview One by Ed Edwin, April 25, 1967 (OH—37), DDEL, 81.

[59] Eisenhower Interview (OH-14), DDEL, 31; Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 36, 38-39; Adams, 246.

the Strait of Tiran, clashing with Israeli Defense Forces in Gaza, and striving to gain military superiority through Soviet arms purchases. Israel's retaliatory raids against Arab acts of terror and sabotage had become more intense once Moshe Dayan became Chief of Staff in 1953. Dayan had recommended breaking the blockade by seizing the Egyptian city of Sharm el Sheik as a means of controlling the Straits of Tiran; however the Israeli government balked, fearing Egyptian retaliatory air strikes and international isolation. Arab border clashes in the Gaza Strip continued throughout 1955 and 1956. And on 22 January 1956, the UN Security Council censured Israel for its un-proportional retaliatory attacks and threatened Israel with sanctions if it launched a preventive war against Arab states. The British withdrawal from Egypt caused considerable consternation within Israel as well, for without a British presence to check aggression, Egypt could turn its full military might against Israel.[60]

Ironically, it was Eisenhower's analysis of the conflict within the larger Cold War context and American strategic values, which led him to discount his allies' arguments. First, while Nasser was indeed a demagogue and his nationalization of the canal a despicable act, the Suez Canal Company was still a private enterprise, and Egypt had the sovereign right due to eminent domain to seize and operate the Canal. Nasser had made assurances that he would honor the Constantinople Treaty of 1888, so the official U.S. position was to recognize Egypt's legal rights: "We don't believe there's any legal or moral grounds that will stand up before world opinion or the World Court, for any interference with that thing by force." In Robert Bowie's view, Nasser's nationalization was not technically illegal since he had "offered to make payment . . . in accordance with international law." Moreover, it was in Nasser's financial interests to keep the Canal

[60] Michael Carver, *War Since 1945* (New Jersey: The Ashfield Press, 1990), 240; Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 24, 28.

open. Contrary to British claims, the Egyptians were operating the Suez Canal competently and efficiently, and to Eisenhower's thinking, this was the heart of the dispute.[61]

Second, since the western democracies were engaged in an ideological struggle with Soviet Communism, it was vital that all nations, *particularly colonial powers*, adhere to "the spirit of the United Nations" and resolve international disputes peacefully, and not only when it was convenient. Using force would be a betrayal of UN principles, and like the fate of the League of Nations, could be fatal to the relevance of the United Nations. Eisenhower certainly understood his principled stand had consequences. Nasser's defiance of the European powers resonated with Middle East Arabs. In a letter to Swede Hazlett, Eisenhower confessed,

> In the kind of world we are trying to establish, we frequently find ourselves victims of the tyrannies of the weak. . . . In the effort to promote the rights of all, and observe the equality of sovereignty as between the great and the small, we unavoidably give to the little nations opportunities to embarrass us greatly. Faithfulness to the underlying concepts of freedom is frequently costly. Yet there can be no doubt that in the long run faithfulness will produce real rewards.[62]

Eisenhower also recognized that the upsurge of nationalism in the wake of colonial independence was behind some irrational actions: "Nasser embodies the emotional demands of the people of the era for independence and for 'slapping the white man down.'"[63]

Third, as articulated in the Basic National Security Policy, denying the Soviet Union access to the Middle East was imperative. Premier Nikita Khrushchev's support of Nasser reflected "the historic Russian ambition to gain a foothold in the Middle East." Aside from the usual communist tactics of subversion and agitation to destabilize governments, the Soviets also

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[61] Eisenhower Interview (OH-14), DDEL, 31-32; Eisenhower Interview, "Eisenhower Project," DDEL, 69; Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 39; Interview with Robert Bowie, Episode 7: After Stalin, accessed on the website of The National Security Archive: Cold War, The George Washington University at http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/coldwar/interviews/episode-7/bowie21.html, 3 July 2009.

[62] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 39, 42; Eisenhower Interview (OH-14), DDEL, 26-27, 31.

[63] Eisenhower cited in Nichols, 140.

sought to "pose as the champion of the underdog, giving support to the newly emerging nations against onetime colonial power." Not only would the world condemn the West's use of force, it would provide the Soviet Union an opportunity for intervention. Thus, Eisenhower took particular notice when Khrushchev immediately announced his support of Nasser's nationalization of the canal base, as well as his warning that the Soviet Union would come to the assistance of Egypt in the event of conflict. As events would play out, Eisenhower would not tolerate Soviet intervention or threats against U.S. allies, but neither did he wish a show-down which might lead to a general war. Accordingly, Eisenhower instructed U.S. Ambassador Chip Bohlen to warn the Soviets that if negotiations broke down and Britain and France used force against Egypt, the United States would intervene, which was a subtle way of telling the Soviets not to intercede.[64]

Fourth, if Britain and France did resort to force, Egypt would most certainly close the canal to shipping, and Arab states would impose an oil embargo on Europe, which was completely dependent on oil for energy. Eisenhower made this point at a news conference, warning that

> any outbreak of major hostilities in that region would be a catastrophe to the world. As you know, all of Western Europe has gone to oil instead of coal for its energy, and that oil comes from the Mideast. The region is of great—as a matter of fact, it is of extraordinary importance to all of the free world, so that just for material reasons alone we must regard every bit of unrest there as the most serious matter.[65]

Eisenhower recognized that the strategic effect his allies were seeking was counterproductive. Even if the Suez Canal were returned to British control, Nasser defeated, and perhaps even replaced, what then? Britain and France could no longer afford to occupy Egypt let alone the entire Middle East. A punitive expedition would certainly polarize the Middle East, thrusting many Arab States into the Soviet camp. In the meantime, Europe would face economic collapse without

[64] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 41; Nichols, 147.
[65] Cited in Adams, 246.

oil and without the commerce transiting the Suez Canal. For the sake of NATO, Eisenhower could not permit his two largest allies to pursue such a ruinous course.[66] According to White House Staff Secretary Colonel Andrew Goodpaster, Eisenhower

> made it quite clear to the British, repeatedly and personally, that he would not support them if they were to go to take up arms in this affair. He questioned constantly, what is the end point? How would you bring this to a conclusion? What situation could you finally achieve and how could you disengage from it?[67]

While not pleased with Eisenhower's refusal, Prime Minister Eden assured the President that Britain would not use military force until other peaceful alternatives were explored.[68]

Waging Peace

Confident in his course of action, Eisenhower seized the initiative. He had former President Herbert Hoover and Vice President Richard Nixon inform congressional leaders of the potential outbreak of conflict in the Middle East, which might impel the President to call a special session of Congress at some point.[69] At the same time, the President dispatched his trusted diplomat, Robert Murphy, and later Foster Dulles to London to confer with the British government.[70] As conveyed through both Murphy and Dulles, Eisenhower's expressed intent was to resolve the dispute through the UN rather than Great Powers politics, so as to underscore UN relevance as well as the principle of the rule of law. Shrewdly, the President expected the maritime powers using the Suez Canal would be more effective in pressuring Egypt to make conces-

[66] Nichols, 164.
[67] Goodpaster Interview Two (OH—37), DDEL, 81-82.
[68] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 37.
[69] Ibid, 37.
[70] Nichols, 136-137, 142-144.

sions in a conference.[71] Buying time, Eisenhower sought to cool British emotions so they would not take precipitant action against Egypt or risk a rift in relations with the United States.[72]

To counterbalance against the possible closure of the Canal and/or disruption of the oil pipelines through Syria, Eisenhower ordered the mobilization of oil tankers and increased oil production to sustain Europe's energy needs. He also directed the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) to study the military options. While the 31 July JCS assessment urged prompt military intervention to secure the Canal, either in conjunction with or in support of Britain, it also stated that non-military action was preferable if it obtained prompt results. Of interest, this assessment conflicted with a 27 July NSC Joint Strategic Plans Committee (JSPC) study, which recommended only U.S. diplomatic and economic support to British military action because direct U.S. military involvement would alienate Arab states. Modifying its stance, the 23 August JCS study stated that

> the most desirable course of action for the United States would be strong public, political and logistic support for Great Britain and France, without direct military intervention by the United States in support of these countries against Egypt unless a third party intervened in the hostilities.

If a third party did intervene (i.e., Russia), then the study deemed direct U.S. military intervention appropriate. The study also stated the British and French would be able to take military action no later than 5 September.[73]

In a 12 August meeting, Director of Defense Mobilization Arthur Flemming informed

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[71] According to Adams, the heart of the matter in Eisenhower's mind lay in the status of the Suez Canal as "an international public utility" and contended the crisis should be resolved peaceably according to the principles of the UN Charter. Adams, 250; Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 37-39; Eisenhower Interview (OH-14), DDEL, 31-32.

[72] Nichols, 140-142, 165.

[73] Memorandum From the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense (Wilson), "Nationalization of the Suez Maritime Canal Company by the Egyptian Government," July 31, 1956, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v16/d50; Editorial Note, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v16/d11; Memorandum of Discussion at the 295th Meeting of the National Security Council, August 30, 1956, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v16/d149. Accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS, 2 November 2012.

congressional leaders that he had formed an emergency Middle East Oil Committee to offset any disruption of oil to Europe if Nasser disrupted canal traffic. Comprising the leading petroleum companies, the committee worked with the Department of the Interior to form a temporary oil cartel so as to regulate oil production in an orderly fashion. If Egypt severed oil deliveries, the United States and South America could provide eighty percent of Europe's oil consumption with the current tanker fleets. Hence, with some rationing, an oil crisis could be averted.[74]

From the beginning of the crisis, Eisenhower remained resolute and unequivocal—through correspondence, emissaries, and conversations—with the British government that the United States would not be a party to the use of force without cause. The British government gave little credence to Eisenhower's stance, perhaps hoping to bolster its own domestic support and believing the United States would not leave its staunch ally in a lurch. Accordingly, it never publically disclosed Eisenhower's warnings, creating the false impression after the crisis that the United States had betrayed its allies.[75] Notably, throughout their deliberations with the Eisenhower Administration, British officials argued that a peaceful resolution of the dispute was impossible and believed Eisenhower's position represented a failure of international leadership.[76]

That was hardly the case. Learning that Britain intended to punish Nasser with military force, Eisenhower explained in a 31 July letter to Eden that the Western powers needed to exhaust peaceful means before resorting to military force. Eisenhower reasoned that the use of force would be premature at this juncture: "We recognize the transcendent worth of the Canal to the free world and the possibility that eventually the use of force might become necessary in or-

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[74] Adams, 252-253; Eisenhower Interview (OH-14), DDEL, 32-33; Memorandum of Discussion at the 292d Meeting of the National Security Council, August 9, 1956, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v16/d72, 29 October 2012.

[75] Eisenhower Interview, "Eisenhower Project," DDEL, 68-69; Eisenhower Interview (OH-14), DDEL, 36; Goodpaster Interview Two (OH—37), DDEL, 81-82; Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 39, 40-41, 49.

[76] Adams, 246, 253-254; Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 52.

der to protect international rights." In the meantime, Eisenhower proposed a conference in which all users of the Canal would place "pressures on the Egyptian government that the efficient operation of the Canal could be assured for the future." Suggesting that the justification for military force required the shaping world opinion first, Eisenhower stressed that

> some such method must be attempted before action such as you contemplate should be undertaken. . . . There should be no grounds for belief anywhere that corrective measures were undertaken merely to protect national or individual investors, or the legal rights of a sovereign nation were ruthlessly flouted.

The President concluded that a conference would educate the world on the reasons for the dispute, and "most of the world would be outraged should there be a failure to make such efforts." Eisenhower reminded Eden that U.S. military intervention would require congressional approval, and it would need to be convinced that "every peaceful means of resolving the difficulty had previously been exhausted." In closing, Eisenhower made it clear he did not rule out the use of force; rather he wanted to exhaust other reasonable means, "then world opinion would understand how earnestly all of us had attempted to be just, fair and considerate, but that we simply could not accept a situation that would in the long run prove disastrous to the prosperity and living standards of every nation whose economy depends directly or indirectly upon East-West shipping."[77]

Throughout the crisis, Eisenhower stipulated that intervention would be justified if Egypt did not adhere to the 1888 Constantinople Treaty, proved incompetent in the operation of the Canal, threatened to close the Canal or cut the flow of oil, or pressed into service the foreign Canal workers (pilots). The 9 August NSC meeting clarified that the United States would support the use of force if Egypt attempted to use the Canal as an economic weapon against Europe. Ei-

[77] Eisenhower, Waging Peace, 664-665

senhower opined that Nasser's behavior had an impact on the outcome of the crisis. If Nasser continued to act arrogantly, the United States might be forced to support "reasonable counter-measures." Continuing this line of thought, the President remarked,

> The fate of Western Europe must never be placed at the whim of a dictator and it was conceivable that the use of force under extreme circumstances might become necessary. In this unhappy event, quick military action must be so strong as to be completed successfully without delay—any other course would create new problems.

Mulling over the issue more, Eisenhower added that if Nasser acted more reasonably, showing that Egypt was capable of operating the canal and adhering to the 1888 Treaty of Constantinople, then the United States would not view the use of force as justified, either morally or legally.[78]

Yet, Nasser was carefully adhering to the Constantinople Treaty of 1888 and threatened to close the Canal only if Britain attacked. The Western pilots were not impressed into service and when they voluntarily resigned on 14 September 1956, the Egyptians replaced them with their own pilots, who proved competent and efficient.[79] Under these circumstances, although Eisenhower did not rule out taking action against Nasser in the future, the West needed to pursue a peaceful settlement first, if world opinion was to accept a subsequent intervention.[80]

In the 9 August NSC meeting, Eisenhower and Dulles explored the objective of the London Conference, which would include Egypt and the maritime customers of the Canal. Dulles explained that

> the goal of the Conference would be the peaceful achievement of international operation and financing of the Canal. There had never been an international authority in charge of the Canal; the 1888 arrangements had placed operations in the hands of a private company with an international composition, but had not set up a public international organiza-

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[78] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 43-44; Memorandum of Discussion at the 292d Meeting of the National Security Council, August 9, 1956, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v16/d72, 29 October 2012.

[79] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 39-40, 51.

[80] Memorandum of a Conference With the President, July 31, 1956, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v16/d34, 24 October 2012.

> tion. At the forthcoming Conference an effort would be made, not to reinstate the company, but to establish a public international authority to operate the Canal in accordance with the Treaty of 1888. Such an authority would have control of Canal finances and would set up an operating body. Egypt would be fully represented in both organizations, but would control neither. In addition, Egypt would participate generously in Canal revenues.[81]

To garner congressional support for a potential conflict, Eisenhower and relevant Cabinet members met with congressional leaders of both parties (11 senators and 11 representatives) on 12 August to apprise them of developments as well as the economic implications if the Suez Canal closed and the Middle East oil pipeline was cut. According to Adams, Dulles provided the background to the dispute, particularly Nasser's violation of the 1888 Constantinople Treaty by seizing control of the Suez Canal Company. He explained that two-thirds of Europe's oil transgressed the canal with the remaining third coming from the pipeline. As such, Britain and France did not want Egypt to have control over canal traffic. He explained that the London Conference was necessary because the Soviet Union on the UN Security Council would veto any use of force even if justified, and the General Assembly would be too slow in acting. Dulles also stressed that the United States had warned Britain and France that it would not "support them in any precipitous or unjustified action." If however, Nasser rejected a reasonable proposal coming out of the London Conference, then the United States would feel justified in supporting the British and French. Eisenhower explained that while the Administration was consulting the UN in pursuit of a peaceful solution, in the event of a justified intervention, swift U.S. assistance to Europe would be necessary.[82] To inform the American public of the situation, Eisenhower dedicated the 31 August press conference to the Suez Crisis, clarifying Egyptian sovereignty over the canal, but also

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[81] Memorandum of Discussion at the 292d Meeting of the National Security Council, August 9, 1956, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v16/d72, 29 October 2012; Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 43.

[82] Adams, 250-253; Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 44-45, 45 n. 22; Eisenhower Interview (OH-14), DDEL, 52-53.

Egypt's obligations to the 1888 Constantinople Treaty for the free passage of all vessels.[83]

Twenty-two of the twenty-four Canal customer-nations attended the 16 August London Conference adopting the formation of a board comprising the Canal user-nations to operate, maintain, and continue development of the Canal. Because Egypt refused to attend the conference, the participants appointed a committee with Australian Prime Minister Robert G. Menzies as chairman, to discuss the proposal with Nasser. However, Nasser rejected any international control of the Canal, so the week of negotiations failed.[84] Eisenhower and Dulles next proposed in early September a User's Association with its pilots (including Egyptian pilots) based on ships on each entrance of the Canal to guide ships through and to collect revenues. Since the Canal was an international waterway, this stratagem avoided the issue of sovereignty, "to take the Suez Canal out of politics," as Dulles described the intent.[85] Aside from Nasser calling the User's Association as an act of aggression and rejecting it, the idea lost its appeal after the pilot walkout on 14 September and replacement by Egyptian pilots as well as the U.S. stipulation that the association would not use force for assured access through the Canal.[86]

The White House suffered no illusions regarding France and Britain's faith in the London Conference. At an earlier NSC Meeting, Dulles said the British and French only agreed to the London Conference plan because they were sure Nasser would reject it and were determined to use force regardless of the U.S. position.[87] Similarly, when Britain and France later brought the

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[83] Adams, 253; Nichols, 161.

[84] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 43, 46-48.

[85] Memorandum of Discussion at the 295th Meeting of the National Security Council, August 30, 1956, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v16/d149, 2 November 2012.

[86] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 51, 672-675.

[87] Memorandum of Discussion at the 295th Meeting of the National Security Council, August 30, 1956, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v16/d149, 2 November 2012; Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 48.

Suez case to the United Nations on 21 September, their intent was to shape world opinion for their planned military action, rather than a peaceful resolution to the dispute.[88]

The Eisenhower Administration was not unaware of its allies' military preparations. Ever since Nasser's seizure of the canal base, Britain and France had begun staging military forces on Cypress, a move which the Eisenhower Administration noted with mounting concern. At the end of July, the United States detected British preparations for war: mobilization of reserves and merchant vessels, readying its three aircraft carriers, and staging bomber squadrons to Malta. Likewise, the French fleet in Toulon mobilized. Even during the London Conference, preparations continued with French troops staging on Cypress. After the collapse of the London Conference, Eisenhower advised Eden to exercise patience and let the process take its course. He explained that Britain's mobilization was too rash, making Nasser a symbol of defiance and adulation by others. Moreover, U.S. public opinion was against the use of force, and Congress would not approve assistance to Britain in the event of war. He warned that a military invasion would trigger a ruinous oil embargo affecting all of Europe and would alienate the entire international community. He proposed a measured strategy: depriving Nasser of the limelight through negotiations; containing Egypt with economic measures and Arab allies; and exploring other alternatives to the Suez Canal Company if the User's Association initiative did not pan out.[89]

Nonetheless, the British government elected to force Eisenhower's hand by devising a stratagem to overthrow Nasser and gain control of the Canal again, all the while giving it a veneer of legitimacy. At a 22 October meeting in France, British, French, and Israeli leaders worked out a plan (Operation Musketeer) in which the Israelis would launch an offensive into

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[88] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 51-52.

[89] Ibid, 42-43, 48-49; Memorandum of Discussion at the 295th Meeting of the National Security Council, August 30, 1956; Nichols, 161-162, 165.

the Sinai on 29 October under the guise of a retaliatory raid, involving an airborne battalion parachuting into the Mitla Pass (20 miles east of the Suez Canal). Invoking the Tripartite Declaration of 1950, Britain and France would demand a cease fire and the withdrawal of Israeli and Egyptian forces within ten miles of the Suez Canal. Once Egypt refused to comply (as anticipated), the British and French would use it as a pretext for military intervention to protect the Suez Canal Base. For its part, Israel would launch mechanized operations southward to secure the port of Sharm el Sheikh and the Straits of Tiran and westward to the Mitla Pass. British and French airborne and amphibious forces would invade at Port Said and thrust down the Suez Canal.[90]

Although they assumed the presidential election in November 1956 would distract Eisenhower, the allies crafted a deception plan to stay the President's hand until the intervention commenced.[91] The deception story was that Israel planned to take advantage of the Suez crisis in order to annex parts of Jordan. Meanwhile, the British and the French feigned commitment to the Users Association initiative and a pledge to the UN Secretary General's peace talks, scheduled for 29 October in Geneva.[92] The deception was a brilliant success, completely deluding not only the CIA but also Eisenhower specifically.[93] Curiously, Eisenhower remained too long under the illusion that Britain was not complicit in the intervention until it became obvious, and even then, thought Britain was a reluctant partner.[94]

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[90] Carver, 240-241; Nichols, 161, 186-187.

[91] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 77

[92] Nichols, 180-183; Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 54-55.

[93] Evan Thomas, *Ike's Bluff: President Eisenhower's Secret Battle to Save the World* (New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 2012), 217; Allen W. Dulles, *The Craft of Intelligence* (Guilford, Connecticut: The Lyon's Press, 2006), 163-164; Nichols, 184, 200; Special National Intelligence Estimate, September 1956, "The Likelihood of a British-French Resort to Military Action against Egypt in the Suez Crisis," accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v16/d236, 5 November 2012.

[94] Jim Newton, *Eisenhower: The White House Years* (New York: Doubleday, 2011), 228; Nichols, 229, 233.

Two Crises and an Election

During the last two weeks of October, the three allies erected, as Eisenhower later recalled, "a blank wall between them and us," cutting off all communication. Eisenhower sensed something was afoot, though the target and timing remained elusive.[95] Suspicious, Eisenhower ordered U-2 flights over Israel on 15 October, with imagery revealing military mobilization and 60 French Mystère fighter bombers, which were far above the twelve authorized by the earlier arm sales. A few days before Operation Musketeer, U-2 imagery over Cypress revealed British airbases packed with bombers and cargo planes.[96] Still, Eisenhower believed Jordan was the target (revealing the success of the deception plan), concluding that Israel was taking advantage of the political deterioration in Jordan, the Suez dispute, and the U.S. presidential elections. Accordingly, Eisenhower instructed Dulles to warn Israel that annexation of Jordanian territory would have repercussions, and that it should not assume the upcoming presidential elections would dissuade the U.S. "government from pursuing a course dictated by justice and international decency in the circumstances . . . it will remain true to its pledges under the United Nations."[97] When briefed on 28 October that Israel had called-up 170,000 soldiers, representing 80 percent of its maximum mobilization, Eisenhower cabled Ben-Gurion to stand down the military.[98]

Hours before the Israeli offensive on 29 October, the pieces fell into place sufficiently to

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[95] Eisenhower Interview, "Eisenhower Project," DDEL, 68; Eisenhower Interview (OH-14), DDEL, 37-38; Nichols, 189.

[96] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 56; Nichols, 174, 195; Memorandum for Joint Chiefs of Staff, 5 November 1956, "Tel Aviv 477, 2 November 1956," White House Office, Office of the Staff Secretary: Records of Paul T. Carroll, Andrew J. Goodpaster, L. Arthur Minnich, and Christopher H. Russell, 1952-61, Department of Defense Subseries, Box 4, File 3, DDEL; Memorandum of a Conference With the President, October 29, 1956 accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v16/d411, 21 May 2012.

[97] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 56, 676-677.

[98] Ibid, 69-70; Nichols, 197.

alert Eisenhower that Britain, France, and Israel were conspiring for an attack somewhere.[99] Once informed that Israel was invading Egypt, Eisenhower knew he had been deceived.[100] At the Oval Office meeting at 7:15 pm, Eisenhower assessed the situation with his principal advisers. The Israelis were sweeping across the Sinai, prompting Eisenhower to threaten Israel with harsh measures unless it withdrew promptly. Eisenhower ordered Dulles: "Foster, you tell 'em, God-damn it, that we're going to apply sanctions, we're going to the United Nations, we're going to do everything that there is so we can stop this thing."[101] Dulles predicted that Nasser would retaliate by blocking the Canal, and Arab states would cut the oil pipes. He speculated that Britain and France believed the United States would ultimately side with its allies. The President remarked that America must honor its pledges, which must as a matter of principle transcend traditional alliances. Herbert Hoover Jr. added that if the United States sided with its traditional allies, the Soviet Union would intervene on the Arab side.[102]

In a second meeting that evening, Eisenhower expressed his frustration with his allies' precipitous action: "We had had a great chance to split the Arab world. Various of the countries were becoming uneasy at Egyptian developments."[103] Eisenhower then summoned British chargé d'affaires Sir John Coulson, informing him the United States planned to stand by its pledge to counter aggression in the Middle East, even if the aggressors were U.S. allies.[104]

As the conspirators continued to send dissembling replies to Eisenhower's cables, the situation deteriorated rapidly when Israeli mechanized forces converged on the Mitla Pass to rein-

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[99] Nichols, 200-201.
[100] Ibid, 201-202.
[101] Cited in Nichols, 203.
[102] Memorandum of a Conference with the President, October 29, 1956, 7:15 p.m., accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v16/d411, 6 November 2012.
[103] Memorandum of a Conference with the President, October 29, 1956, 8:15 p.m., accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v16/d412 , 21 May 2012.
[104] Nichols, 204-205.

force the paratroopers. As scripted, the British and French issued the contrived ultimatum on 30 October and promptly invaded. As expected, Egypt blocked the Suez Canal with sunken ships on 31 October, and the vital oil pipelines through Syria were sabotaged on 3 November.[105] When Britain and France vetoed the U.S.-sponsored cease fire resolution in the UN Security Council, Eisenhower forced the issue by having it brought to the General Assembly.[106] Betrayed and embarrassed by his allies' aggression, Eisenhower was confronted with no easy choices. For example, Nasser made an urgent request to the United States for the U.S. Sixth Fleet to intercept the British/French amphibious force, which placed Eisenhower in a quandary. He had to honor his pledge to defend against aggression, but he could not very well use force against his NATO allies, both on principle and for the sake of the Alliance. He refrained, informing Nasser that the United States would resolve the issue through the UN.[107]

Exacerbating international tensions, the Soviet Union was in the process of quelling a popular uprising in Hungary as the Suez Crisis unfolded, underscoring one of Eisenhower's most perceptive observations: "The Presidency seldom affords the luxury of dealing with one problem at a time."[108] Over the subsequent days, the Soviet reaction was hesitant, at times reconciliatory, before cracking down on Hungarian resistance in a series of bloody clashes. Here, an opportunity, as contemplated in the Basic National Security Policy, to pressure the Soviet Union to permit greater autonomy for Hungary was lost. International diplomatic and moral pressure on the Soviet Union to accede to the popular will was undercut by the Suez Crisis, in which two major

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[105] In response to the allied attack, the Egyptians blocked the Canal by sinking a 320-foot long ship filled with cements and rocks. Later that week, they sunk an additional thirty-two ships. Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 77 n.7, 80; Ultimately, the Egyptians sank 47 old ships filled with concrete in the canal. Carver, 241-244; Nichols, 206-207, 212-213, 232.

[106] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 77, 81; Nichols, 208.

[107] Nichols, 210.

[108] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 58.

NATO partners were guilty of aggression. With Britain and France preoccupied in Egypt and Hungary inaccessible (Austria staunchly invoked its neutrality), the United States could only condemn the Soviet invasion, but it had little moral weight. At the 1 November NSC meeting, Dulles lamented the lost opportunity:

> It is nothing less than tragic . . . that at this very time, when we are on the point of winning an immense and long-hoped-for victory over Soviet colonialism in Eastern Europe [Hungary and Poland], we should be forced to choose between following in the footsteps of Anglo-French colonialism in Asia and Africa, or splitting our course away from their course. Yet this decision must be made in a mere matter of hours—before five o'clock this afternoon.[109]

While Eisenhower was infuriated with his allies for throwing away a strategic opportunity, he maintained an outward amicable and calm demeanor. However, the time of quiet diplomacy had passed; the President elected to use the bully pulpit to educate the public.[110]

It was an education sorely needed. With the election days away, Democrats and journalists were savagely attacking Eisenhower's leadership for not backing U.S. allies against Egypt as well as not intervening in Hungary. Notwithstanding the severe pressure to yield to political expediency, Eisenhower stood on principle and his higher responsibilities to the international order. Setting aside his election campaign indefinitely, the President delivered two major addresses to the nation (31 October and 1 November) to explain his policy decisions. In the first speech, the President aired the rift with the allies, explaining "the United States was not consulted in any way about any phase of these actions. Nor were we informed of them in advance." Avoiding the subject of the Tripartite Declaration altogether, Eisenhower qualified his opposition to his allies' actions by enumerating Nasser's capricious statecraft over the past year and by reiterating the

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[109] Cited in Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 83; Nichols, 239-240; Interview with Robert Bowie, Episode 7: After Stalin.

[110] Eisenhower Interview (OH-14), DDEL, 39; Nichols, 212.

strong bonds of friendship with the allies. Perhaps to the surprise of many, the President announced he was not going to intervene militarily but instead engage the UN, underscoring the commitment of the great powers to preserving the international system: "The peace we seek and need means much more than mere absence of war. It means the acceptance of law, and the fostering of justice, in all the world."[111] It was a deft speech, avoiding a conflict with his allies and an intervention on Egypt's behalf, while checking Soviet designs. By invoking the great powers' association with the UN, Eisenhower began reorienting international politics in the Middle East towards a new era, which he addressed in his second speech:

> We cannot and will not condone armed aggression—no matter who the attacker, and no matter who the victim. We cannot—in the world, any more than in our own nation—subscribe to one law for the weak, another law for the strong; one law for those opposing us, another for those allied with us.[112]

Eisenhower concluded that the issue at hand involved U.S. strategic values: "But this we know above all: there are some firm principles that cannot bend—they can only break. And we shall not break ours."[113] In short, Eisenhower was attempting to break the great power paradigm of "might makes right" because wars were becoming incredibly dangerous in the nuclear age, and the traditional paradigm conflicted with the principles of the UN Charter.[114]

Behind the scenes, Eisenhower set into motion a strategy he had meditated on over the course of numerous NSC and inner circle meetings.[115] He ordered the immediate suspension of aid to Israel—a mild measure but it avoided the ramifications of blockade and sanctions. Preempting the Soviet Union, Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge quickly sponsored a UN resolu-

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[111] Nichols, 214-215; Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 81.
[112] Cited in Jean Edward Smith, *Eisenhower in War and Peace* (New York: Random House, Inc., 2012), 699.
[113] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 83.
[114] Interview with Bowie, Episode 7: After Stalin.
[115] Memorandum of Discussion at the 302d Meeting of the National Security Council, November 1, 1956, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v16/d455, 15 November 2012; Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 83.

tion, calling for an immediate ceasefire, withdrawal of opposing forces behind armistice lines, the halt of foreign arm sales into the region, and resumption of commerce in the Canal.[116] The Administration abruptly suspended oil tanker shipments to Britain and France, allowing the allies to "boil in their own oil" for a while.[117] Eisenhower was well aware that the disruption of oil would have an effect on all European states, creating problems for NATO, but it was the most effective way to put pressure on Britain and France.[118] The oil shortage created a run on the British pound, an event which caused considerable turmoil in the British government. With deliberation, the United States did not intervene to bolster the pound, sending a signal that the economic pain would continue until the British agreed to a ceasefire. This combined with growing domestic criticism of the war placed enormous pressure on the British government. Within two days, the British had lost $50 million in reserves, and the U.S. Treasury Department vetoed the release of IMF money to stem the currency drop. Ultimately, the war would cost Britain $420 million in reserves.[119] Meanwhile, Ambassador Raymond Hare delivered a personal message from the President to Nasser, requesting his patience.[120]

During the Suez Crisis, Eisenhower remained vigilant of possible Soviet intervention, placing U.S. armed forces on higher alert and interspersing U.S. Sixth Fleet ships among British and French ships in the Mediterranean.[121] He issued stern warnings to the Soviets not to intervene and directed U-2 flights over Syria and Egypt to detect Soviet force deployments. When

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[116] Eisenhower wanted to avoid any language characterizing the allies as aggressors and wanted to find a middle-ground between harsh sanctions on Israel and letting its actions go unpunished. The resolution passed on 2 November by a vote of 64 to 5. Nichols, 218-222, 226; Eisenhower, 83-84; Adams, 257.

[117] Memorandum of a Conference With the President, October 30, 1956, 4:25 p.m., accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v16/d435, 16 November 2012.

[118] Nichols, 223, 243.

[119] Ibid, 223, 243, 251; Newton, 232; Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 91-92; Adams, 259

[120] Until he received the letter, Nasser had assumed the United States was in league with his enemies but now felt reassured. Nichols, 228.

[121] Ibid, 246-247, 253; Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 91.

Soviet Premier Bulganin issued threats to the British, French, and Israeli governments and proposed a UN resolution authorizing Soviet military assistance to Egypt, Eisenhower responded that the United States would interpret such acts as unilateral and oppose them. He was not bluffing: "We may be dealing here with the opening gambit of an ultimatum. We have to be positive and clear in our every word, every step. And if those fellows start something, we may have to hit them—and, if necessary with everything in the bucket."[122] When the Soviets threatened to dispatch "volunteers" to Egypt, he placed them on notice. In reply to a Soviet recommendation for a joint Soviet-American force, Eisenhower said this would violate the UN peacekeeping resolution for the Suez Canal. Meanwhile, NATO Supreme Allied Commander General Alfred M. Gruenther sternly warned that any Soviet attacks on Western forces would end in the destruction of the Soviet Union and Soviet Bloc.[123]

As the crisis reached its peak, Dulles underwent an emergency operation on 3 November to remove a cancerous tumor, prompting Eisenhower to manage the State Department more closely.[124] Despite diplomatic and economic pressure, the British and French pressed on with the invasion on 5 November. While the allied invasion subverted the UN deadline for a ceasefire and deployment of a peacekeeping contingent, Eisenhower remained unmoved and directed the JCS to develop a plan to airlift UN peacekeeping troops into Egypt upon notification.[125]

On 6 November 1956, Eden yielded, informing Eisenhower that he was declaring a ceasefire. Eisenhower had prevailed, but was magnanimous, telling Eden how pleased he was

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[122] Cited in Nichols, 224, 243-245, 249-250, 252-253,260-261; Memorandum for the Record by the Director of the Executive Secretariat (Howe), November 5, 1956, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v16/d501, 16 November 2012.

[123] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 88, 90, 97; Adams, 258; Interview with Bowie, Episode 7: After Stalin.

[124] Nichols, 191,194, 233.

[125] The plan was to airlift four to five battalions of Canadian and Danish troops. FRUS Documents 508, 510. Arab-Israeli Dispute: January 1 to July 26, 1956, Volume 16. Accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v16/ch2sc3, 16 November 2012.

and likened the rift as a "family spat." However, anticipating the British and French would maneuver to have their troops remain in de facto control of the Canal, the President made it clear that the UN peacekeeping contingent would not include any of the great powers. He cabled French Premier Guy Mollet, praising his statecraft while filling him in on the UN plan. Lastly, the President instructed Ambassador Hare to advise Nasser to accept the UN peace plan and reject Soviet offers of intervention. With his NATO allies more compliant, the President authorized the flow of oil and financial assistance at the end of November.[126] Israel on the other hand remained intractable, refusing to withdraw from the Sinai and Gaza Strip without security guarantees first.[127] Almost parenthetical in comparison, Eisenhower won a landslide re-election.

Even though the crisis was in its denouement phase, potential flashpoints still threatened the tenuous peace. Eisenhower's first task was to orchestrate the withdrawal of his allies with honor, so he exercised a certain amount of patience.[128] Second, because NATO members' economic vitality was at stake, the President was anxious to revive the flow of oil and financial assistance without undue delay, but so long as Britain and France remained in Egypt, assisting the Europeans might alienate the Arab states and increase Soviet influence.[129] Third, as long as Israel remained in the Gaza Strip and Sinai, the region would remain volatile, providing opportunities for Soviet to make inroads. Fourth, having defied the great powers and survived, Nasser gained considerable prestige among Arab states, positioning Egypt as the burgeoning Middle East hegemony.[130] Fifth, in view of France and Britain's diminution of influence in the region, the

[126] Nasser assured Hare: "Don't worry about these Soviet moves: I don't trust any big power." Cited in Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 97; Nichols, 253-257; Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 93, 98; Adams, 259-260; Eisenhower Interview (OH-14), DDEL, 41; Interview with Bowie, Episode 7: After Stalin.

[127] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 94.

[128] Adams, 262

[129] Ibid, 261-262.

[130] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 115-116.

United States needed to compensate with a new security arrangement.

The first two issues were resolved when Britain declared on 3 December the unconditional withdrawal of British and French forces by 22 December.[131] Gaining Israeli compliance was infinitely more complicated, requiring both the threat of UN sanctions and the promise of UN peacekeeping troops into the Gaza Strip and Sinai.[132] Domestically, sanctions remained controversial, with congressmen refusing to stand by the President publicly, though agreeing with him privately.[133] In his televised address on 20 February 1957, Eisenhower explained why the Administration had no choice but to force Israeli compliance with the UN withdrawal plan:

> Should a nation which attacks and occupies foreign territory in the face of United Nations disapproval be allowed to impose conditions on its own withdrawal? If we agree that armed attack can properly achieve the purposes of the assailant, then I fear we will have turned back the clock of international order. . . . If the United Nations once admits that international disputes can be settled by using force, then we will have destroyed the very foundation of the organization, and our best hope of establishing a world order. That would be a disaster for us all.[134]

The combination of U.S. resolve, the auspices of the UN peacekeeping forces, and the threat of UN sanctions compelled Israel to announce to the UN General Assembly its compliance, withdrawing completely in March 1957.[135] The final two issues required a new security cooperation arrangement to co-opt Egypt and to replace the Tripartite Declaration of 1950—the Eisenhower Doctrine became the end product.[136]

The Eisenhower Doctrine

As the Suez crisis was playing out on 8 November 1956, Eisenhower began outlining

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[131] Adams, 263, 267-268; Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 98.
[132] Adams, 282-284.
[133] Ibid, 276, 280-282, 284-285.
[134] Cited in Adams, 286.
[135] Ibid, 286-287.
[136] Ibid, 271.

policy ideas for the post-conflict period: using American technicians and perhaps others to restore the pipeline and Canal immediately; commencing UN negotiations promptly; and providing humanitarian assistance to the region. Naturally, he was eager to repair the damage from the Suez dispute so as to forestall Soviet influence in the region. He felt limited arms deliveries and military training to Egypt, repair of war damage, and some economic assistance would be sufficient. Similarly, economic assistance, limited arms sales, and military training to Israel would serve to balance the assistance given to Egypt. Bilateral treaties with Middle East states would replace the 1950 Tripartite Declaration. The United States would also establish closer economic and diplomatic ties with Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Lebanon.[137] At the President's direction, Herbert Hoover Jr. produced a 13 November policy study, which essentially proposed the United States replace Britain as the guarantor of stability and security in the Middle East, to include assured access to oil and resources, the right of passage through the Suez Canal, the protection of all Middle East states (to include Israel), and the prevention of Soviet expansion.[138] This study formed the framework of "the Eisenhower Doctrine," which in Adams view, "offered to assist any independent Arab nation in the Middle East against open Communist aggression and authorized the President to use United States Armed Forces to safeguard such government from overt attack if the threatened government requested such protection." Included in this initiative was an incentive package of "broad economic and military aid."[139]

On 1 January 1957, Eisenhower hosted a bipartisan legislative meeting to introduce this deterrence policy for the Middle East. Notably, the President was asking Congress grant him uni-

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[137] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 96-97; Eisenhower, *The Eisenhower Diaries*, 333-334; Nichols, 277; Adams, 288.

[138] Nichols, 270.

[139] Adams, 271;

lateral authority to use military force in the Middle East against communist aggression, arguing that a U.S. commitment to defend Arab states would act as a deterrent. He explained further that he had no intention of intervening in an Arab conflict unless the Communists were behind it. A few days later, Eisenhower introduced his proposal to Congress, stating that while the Soviets had designs on the Middle East, the region was not a vital interest to them and hence not worth risking a general war with the United States. Eisenhower formally requested the authority for military intervention "to secure and protect the territorial integrity and political independence of such nations requesting such aid against overt armed aggression from any nation controlled by International Communism." Additionally, the President requested economic assistance for Middle East countries. The resolution passed through the House immediately and in the Senate, 72-19, on 5 March 1957, officially becoming the Eisenhower Doctrine with the President's signature four days later.[140]

Conclusion

The 1956 Suez Crisis exemplifies the dynamic nature of the strategic appraisal as the strategic environment changes. Eisenhower did not rely solely on Planning Board policy papers and national intelligence estimates as he adapted his strategy. NSC meetings, inner circle meetings, diplomatic cables, reports from emissaries, bipartisan meetings with congressmen, and discussions with British and French government officials (until Operation Musketeer) kept him apprised of developments.

Eisenhower's practice of strategic thinking is evident throughout the Suez Crisis as he employed the five competencies. Applying critical thinking (classic problem solving), he as-

[140] Cited in Adams, 272-273, 276; Nichols, 276.

sessed information (i.e., known facts, unclear data, and presumptions) and maintained an open mind regarding strategic options. He remained skeptical of British claims that Nasser was another Hitler, seeking to dominate the Middle East, as well as the need for the West to control the Canal Zone physically. He determined that Middle East tensions could not be resolved through military means. When Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal zone, he did not automatically side with Britain and France, but focused on the legal aspects of the Egyptian seizure and sought to secure a negotiated settlement. After the Suez Crisis, he concluded that the consequences of a security vacuum would undermine U.S. vital interests.

Throughout the period of increased tensions leading to the crisis, Eisenhower remained attuned to the multi-ordered effects of his allies' actions. The British could not afford the expense of maintaining troops in Egypt, and their continued occupation exacerbated tensions with Arab states. After Nasser's seizure of the Suez Canal, he repeatedly warned Britain that any military intervention would result in a closure of the Suez Canal, an interruption of oil deliveries, an expansion of Nasser's prestige, and a subversion of Arab-West relations. In turn, the Soviet Union would seize the opportunity to portray accurately the West as imperialist and extend its influence through political, military and economic assistance.

In terms of systems thinking, Eisenhower recognized the interdependence, volatility, complexity, and ambiguity of the strategic environment. His primary concern was the solidarity of the NATO alliance and unrestricted access to oil for his European allies. He recognized that British and French prestige and influence in the Middle East influenced their decisions, which is the reason he sought peaceful negotiations so as to preserve their status. He deduced that Soviet partnerships with Arab states would eventually lead to greater instability. He presumed an out-

break of hostilities (i.e., military intervention or Israeli preventive war) would likely plunge the region into a wider conflict, possibly leading to a general war between NATO and the Soviet Union. Accordingly, a military intervention would probably result in the closure of the Suez Canal and the sabotage of the oil pipelines, plunging Europe into economic straits. Anticipating this possibility, Eisenhower directed the mobilization of oil tankers and increased oil production.

During the Suez Crisis, Eisenhower applied creative thinking by employing economic and diplomatic coercion rather than military force against his allies. After their withdrawal from Egypt, he passed the crisis off as a friendly disagreement, thereby preserving British and French solidarity in NATO. He recognized that British and French imperialism in the Middle East was at an end and proposed to replace it with mutual friendship and a security guarantee—the Eisenhower Doctrine—without a permanent military presence. In this manner, Eisenhower broke the pattern of imperialism and deprived the Soviets of a powerful and popular motif.

Thinking in time, Eisenhower employed several historical analogues. He dismissed any relationship with 1930s appeasement of Hitler. Nasser may have had pan-Arab aspirations, but he lacked the resources, capabilities, and geographic position which Nazi Germany had enjoyed. He was more concerned with statesmen losing control of events as the rush of emotions and inflexibility drove their decisions, such as the events that led to World War I. Thus, he sought to restrain emotions, counsel patience, and slow the pace of decisions, which together could lower the probability of miscalculation. Similarly, he made it clear to the Soviets that the United States and NATO would respond to a military intervention in the Middle East. Finally, he sought to break the cycle of great power politics—a practice that was centuries old. The nuclear age and the devastation of both world wars made such behavior extremely dangerous and self-

destruction. Accordingly, he tactfully Britain and France had failed to note that the world had changed.

Eisenhower applied ethical thinking in his strategy and actions. He understood that imperialism was anathema both domestically and internationally and sought to negotiate an end of British imperialism in Egypt. Similarly, he believed that all nations—great and small—should adhere to the rule of law and settle disputes through the UN rather than resorting to force as the first recourse. Thus, Eisenhower based his actions on U.S. strategic values, thereby garnering domestic and international support.

Eisenhower's strategic objective was a stable Middle East, favorably disposed towards the United States, economically and diplomatically. Eisenhower's Middle East strategy evolved as the strategic environment changed, which illustrates the iterative process of strategy formulation. Eisenhower employed the instruments of power (i.e., diplomatic, informational, military, and economic) to support each strategy. The initial strategy was essentially diplomatic, helping Britain and Egypt negotiate the withdrawal of British troops and an agreement on the Suez Canal zone, all the while preserving the 1950 Tripartite Declaration. After the Soviet arms sale to Egypt, Eisenhower crafted a diplomatic and economic strategy: Israeli-Egyptian peace talks and the Aswan Dam project. The peace initiative failed because neither side was willing to invest the political capital towards reconciliation. Aswan though had potential, refocusing Egypt from military expansion to economic development and as a way to check Soviet influence. Unfortunately, Nasser mishandled the negotiations to such an extent that congressional support for the project plummeted. After Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal, Eisenhower employed a diplomatic and informational strategy to calm emotions and gain time. The use of personal diplomacy, confer-

ences and emissaries was designed to focus attention on the legal aspects of Egyptian action and reach an agreement. Accordingly, Eisenhower attempted to persuade British statesmen that patience and prudence would resolve the dispute without unintentional consequences.

During the allied invasion of Egypt, Eisenhower's objective was to put a halt to great power behavior of aggression. He employed an economic, informational, and diplomatic strategy, depriving Britain and France of oil shipments (causing a run on the British pound) and using the bully pulpit educate the public on every nation's obligation to the rule of law and the importance of the UN to resolve disputes. He supported UN sanctions against Israel and the employment of UN peacekeepers as an inducement for withdrawal. The capstone strategy resulted in the Eisenhower Doctrine, which replace the Tripartite Declaration and Britain as the security guarantor of the Middle East. This policy employed a combination of economic and military assistance in a manner which did not upset the balance of power; it replaced occupation troops with mutual security agreements; and it minimized Soviet influence in the Middle East. The attainment of the strategic objective had the desired strategic effects: Arab sentiments were mollified and independence created a degree of equilibrium.

Each strategy was feasible, acceptable, and suitable: the allocated capabilities were sufficient to support each strategy; with the exception of the Aswan Dam project. Public opinion accepted U.S. diplomatic initiatives, and the strategic effects justified Eisenhower's strategic objective. His astute selection of capabilities achieved both the strategic objective and desired strategic effects. Eisenhower's Suez Crisis strategy carried risk, both for his re-election and an escalation of the conflict. However, he reasoned his strategy was the least risky. In this, he was correct.

Chapter 5

1958 Lebanon Intervention Case Study

With congressional ratification of the Eisenhower Doctrine, the United States had become the guarantor of security and stability in the Middle East, using bi-lateral agreements with independent Middle East states as the means to assure the unimpeded flow of oil and international transit of the Suez Canal.[1] Essentially, the cornerstone of the Eisenhower Doctrine was the exclusion of Soviet influence in the region, but the Administration had to avoid any perception of imperialism in the process. For the Middle East, the Eisenhower Doctrine was a novel concept: for the first time in millennia, Middle East states were treated as sovereign states, that is, not part of or controlled by a larger political entity. In addition to the Eisenhower Doctrine's security guarantee, economic assistance, military assistance, and military cooperation were necessary to promote national independence, undercutting Communism as an attractive alternative. Sensitive to domestic politics, Eisenhower persuaded Congress that U.S. military intervention would be limited to communist-instigated aggression and only at the request of the affected governments.[2] In regards to security arrangements, the Baghdad Pact (Britain, Pakistan, Iraq, Turkey, and Iran), officially called the Central Eastern Treaty Organization (CENTO) still remained in

[1] Shulimson, 1; In his 5 January 1957 message to Congress, Eisenhower stressed that Soviet interest in the Middle East was "solely that of power politics," requiring U.S. resolve to dissuade Soviet interference**.** Special Message to the Congress on the Situation in the Middle East, January 5, 1957, accessed on the website of The American Presidency Project at http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=11007&st=&st1=, 27 December 2012.

[2] The congressional joint resolution for the Eisenhower Doctrine was referred to as the Middle East Resolution. Congress, House, Public Law 85-7, Joint Resolution: To promote peace and stability in the Middle East, 85th Cong., 1st sess., Volume 71, March 9, 1957, accessed on the website of the Government Printing Office at http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-071/pdf/STATUTE-071-1-2.pdf, 27 December2012. 5-6**;** Special Message to the Congress on the Situation in the Middle East, January 5, 1957.

place as a deterrent against Soviet expansion into the Middle East. While CENTO Headquarters was located in Iraq, it did not have a unified military command structure, and few American and British bases existed in the region.[3] Eisenhower was evidently wary of expanding the pact to include other Arab states because he felt more Arab members would involve the West in internal and inter-nation Arab politics which were "very, very difficult and complex and disorderly."[4] Thus, the United States was content to maintain some distance politically as long as the regional balance of power remained in equilibrium. Nonetheless, stability would remain elusive in the Middle East.

In terms of the Cold War, the Administration adapted the Basic National Security Policy as the international environment changed. By 1957, Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles had recognized that major conflict, including nuclear conflict, was increasingly unlikely, and that instability in The Third World, "where social and political institutions had not been developed to anything like the degree they had in Europe and elsewhere in the Northern Hemisphere," required greater U.S. attention. They assessed that fostering the "forces of law and order" in underdeveloped countries was needed to counter disorder.[5] Accordingly, the President came to consider stability operations and security cooperation as important components for maintaining the international system.

Paradoxically, the 1958 Lebanon crisis was not a major test of the Eisenhower Doctrine, which was intended to safeguard Middle East countries from international communist aggression. The main culprit for the Lebanese crisis was internal instability, abetted by Egypt and Syr-

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[3] CENTO remained in effect from 1955 to 1979, ending with the Iranian revolution.

[4] Andrew J. Goodpaster, Eisenhower Administration Project, Interview Two by Ed Edwin, August 2, 1967 (OH—37), DDEL, 87.

[5] Ibid, 64-65.

ia. But, the unrest coincided with pan-Arab Nasserism, which threatened to destabilize the entire Middle East, and more importantly, provided an opportunity for Soviet opportunism.[6] So, while Lebanon's domestic upheaval would not normally occasion American interest, much less intervention, in the immediate aftermath of the 1958 coup in Iraq, American action became a strategic imperative. Here, Eisenhower did not hesitate to intervene, even though intervention did not fit neatly into the raison d'être of the Eisenhower Doctrine; his rationale was to staunch the hemorrhaging of the Middle East, instigated by Nasserism.

Backdrop to the Crisis

Eisenhower's strategic objective remained a stable Middle East, favorably disposed towards the United States, economically and diplomatically. The strategic effects he sought were stable regimes, which maintained peaceful relations with their neighbors. The first disturbances to regional equilibrium began in January 1958, when Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser announced the union of Egypt and Syria into the United Arab Republic (UAR), formalizing the agreement on 1 February. The impact of the union was not apparent, especially in a Cold War context. While the formal agreement made the Syrian army apolitical, dissolved Syrian political parties, and increased the authority of Cairo in the selection of key political and military appointments, it did little to abate economic or employment woes. Israel's geographic location and strong military posture made military cooperation problematic. Aside from Yemen on the periphery, no other Arab state welcomed the union. In fact, Jordan and Iraq responded by forming their own Arab Union, an act which enraged Nasser. If there was a benefit to the UAR, it lay in the suppression of Communism in Syria, which had been edging towards the Soviet camp in

[6] Jack Shulimson, *Marines in Lebanon 1958* (Washington D.C.: Historical Branch, G-3 Division, 1966), 1.

1957.[7]

Saudi Arabia was hardly a rock of stability either. As a competitor with Nasser for Arab leadership, King Saud became involved in intrigues against the Syrian and Egyptian governments, but Saud's clumsy intrigues were easily uncovered, forcing him to yield power on 24 March 1958 to his brother Crown Prince Faisal, who ironically was an admirer of Nasser.[8]

Lebanon appeared stable, but pro-Nasser and pan Arab nationalists regarded the Lebanese government with enmity because of President Camille Chamoun, Prime Minister Sami es Sohl, and Foreign Minister Charles Malik's pro-Western policies.[9] The Lebanese government consequently became the target of virulent propaganda from Egypt. By the spring of 1958, the influx of Palestinian militants expelled from Israeli occupied territories and Cairo's support to rebel groups increased tensions in Lebanon. Wary of Nasser's intentions, Eisenhower suspected Egypt was looking for opportunities to annex or dominate Lebanon.[10]

In late April 1958, President Chamoun created unrest by proposing an amendment to the Lebanese constitution to permit a second term as president. According to historian Roger Spiller, Lebanese politics were complex and by no means stable, with political power shared by an informal Christian, Sunni Muslim, and Shi'a Muslim "National Covenant." By his attempt to amend the constitution, Chamoun had upset that covenant, which gave rise to the National Union Front opposition movement.[11] While already aware of Chamoun's decision of a second term,

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[7] Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Waging Peace* (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1965), 262-263, 265.
[8] Ibid, 264, 278.
[9] Ibid, 265.
[10] Robert Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors* (New York: Doubleday & Company, INC., 1964), 396-397; Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 264, 264 n. 4; Telegram From the Embassy in Lebanon to the Department of State, May 9, 1958, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d1, 30 November 2012.
[11] Roger J. Spiller, *"Not War But Like War": The American Intervention in Lebanon*, Leavenworth Paper No. 3 (U.S. Army Command and General Staff College: Combat Studies Institute, January 1981) 3-4.

which would likely spark unrest, the Administration remained impartial to Lebanese domestic politics, other than providing economic and technical assistance.[12]

While the constitutional crisis stoked Muslim-Christian discord, the 8 May 1958 assassination of a Beirut newspaper editor critical of Chamoun, resulted in violent uprisings throughout Lebanon, causing panic in the Lebanese government.[13] Although Eisenhower considered Chamoun's political maneuvering as maladroit, he believed Chamoun acted out of patriotism rather than ambition.[14] As he assessed the situation, Eisenhower regarded the Lebanese security forces, comprising nine thousand soldiers and twenty-five hundred gendarmes, as sufficient to counter militant activities. However, Lebanese Army Chief of Staff General Fuad Chehab did not want to use military force against the rebellion, fearing this move would cause the disintegration of the army.[15] Instead, Chehab restricted military action to protecting key lines of communication and countering rebel raids from Tripoli, the Chouf district in the central Lebanon, and Beirut's Basta quarter.[16]

Lebanon's political crisis prompted Eisenhower to formulate a proper strategy with supporting capabilities (i.e., diplomatic, informational, military, and economic). Convening a 13 May 1958 meeting to discuss the crisis in Lebanon, Eisenhower made it clear that military inter-

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[12] Telegram From the Embassy in Lebanon to the Department of State, February 21, 1958, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d7; Telegram From the Embassy in Lebanon to the Department of State, March 5, 1958, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d9; Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Lebanon, March 18, 1958, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d10; Telegram From the Embassy in Lebanon to the Department of State, April 11, 1958, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d13. Accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS, 3 December 2012.

[13] Shulimson, 4.

[14] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 266; Sherman Adams, *Firsthand Report* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961), 290.

[15] Spiller, 4-5; Murphy, 400-401; Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 265-266, 266 n. 5; Telegram From the Embassy in Lebanon to the Department of State, May 11, 1958, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d23, 3 December 2012.

[16] Shulimson, 5.

vention would only occur at the formal request of Chamoun, but not in support of a second term. Dulles felt an intervention would be difficult to justify under the Eisenhower Doctrine unless the UAR invaded Lebanon and only if it did so at the behest of international Communism. Though Eisenhower acknowledged his Constitutional authority to take appropriate action to protect U.S. interests, he also believed he was obliged to consult Congress beforehand. Congress would likely support intervention if American lives and property were threatened. Further, U.S. policy sought to promote regional stability and to demonstrate support of threatened friendly states.[17] Playing devil's advocate, Dulles warned that going in would be far easier than getting out, and intervention might alienate Arab governments, likely leading to the sabotage of oil pipelines and the blockage of the Suez Canal. Dulles' concerns prompted Eisenhower to direct appropriate U.S. embassies to advise host Arab governments that intervention would only occur at the request of Lebanon and then only to preserve its sovereignty. Dulles believed the case for intervention would be strengthened if Chamoun presented a formal request and invoked the UN Charter. Accordingly, U.S. Ambassador Robert McClintock informed Chamoun the United States would support a formal request through the UN, but requested he strive to manage the unrest with his own resources first. As an assurance to Chamoun, the embassy also shared information on the raised alert status of U.S. forces.[18] Dulles then cabled Nasser, warning that U.S. intelligence indicated arms and militants were coming from the UAR, that the United States honored its com-

[17] James F. Ponzo, *The New Look, The Eisenhower Doctrine, and the Lebanon Intervention, 1958* (New Port, Rhode Island: Naval War College, 13 March 1991), 34.

[18] Memorandum of a Conversation, "Lebanese Crisis," May 13, 1958, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d30; Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 267; Editorial Note, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d40. Accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS, 4 December 2012.

mitments (a tacit reference to the Suez Crisis), and urged Nasser to cease support to the rebels.[19]

Remarkably, the security situation in Lebanon stabilized, though some unrest continued. During the respite, Eisenhower used personal diplomacy to urge Chamoun not to seek a second term.[20] While Beirut remained secure, Tripoli still experienced unrest, and Syria continued to infiltrate militants into Lebanon.[21] Following Eisenhower's advice, Chamoun requested an urgent meeting with the UN Security Council on 22 May, citing Egyptian and Syrian use of proxies to subvert Lebanon's sovereignty. Subsequently, Malik presented a formal report to the UN Security Council on 6 June, charging the UAR with supporting militants in Lebanon.[22]

As the unrest in Lebanon continued, the Administration concluded that the principal reason for political instability was Chamoun's decision to seek a second term and not UAR subversion (though Nasser did seek to foment unrest). If this issue was resolved, the militants, whether supported by UAR or not, would likely stand down. In view of the likely multi-ordered effects resulting from U.S. intervention, the Administration focused on alternative solutions.[23] In a 9 June meeting with Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, Dulles surmised that Chamoun would not likely seek a second term, a conclusion with which Undersecretary of State William Rountree seconded. Hence, the issue would be to find a viable, pro-West candidate for the scheduled Sep-

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[19] Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Egypt, May 15, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d36, 4 December 2012.

[20] Telegram From the Embassy in Lebanon to the Department of State, May 24, 1958, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d50#fn2, 5 December 2012.

[21] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 267; Editorial Note, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d46; Editorial Note, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d53. Accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS, 5 December 2012.

[22] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 267-268; Editorial Note on Malik's formal complaint to the UN Security Council, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d62, 5 December 2012.

[23] Telegram From the Embassy in Lebanon to the Department of State, June 02, 1958, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d56; Special National Intelligence Estimate, "Consequences of Possible Us Courses of Action Respecting Lebanon," June 5, 1958, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d60. Accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS, 5 December 2012.

tember 1958 elections. Rountree opined that Chehab was the strongest candidate for president. The next day, Eisenhower and Macmillan decided to propose the dispatch of a UN observer team to Lebanon.[24]

A degree of stability continued into June, likely due to Chehab's maintenance of order rather than quashing "anti-government" forces. On 10 June, the UN Security Council agreed (10 to 1) to send a military observation team to Lebanon, which arrived a week later.[25] Apparently, at this point Nasser, having lost interest in subversion, decided to play the mediator, but clumsily laid out terms as though he were the victor in a war. Understandably, Chamoun rejected Nasser's offer.[26] As a hedge, Eisenhower directed the Defense Department to hold ready by 16 June the deployment of 1,600 troops within twelve hours of notice and follow-on forces within twenty-four hours. The military's orders were "to protect U.S. property, to assist the Lebanese authorities in maintaining their position, and to restore those authorities if they are overthrown." By 17 June, the State Department had reviewed a joint U.S.-UK military directive, which covered several contingencies, providing the President with options if the situation changed after intervention. During this period, rumors of coups and rebel offensives abounded, leading to a few false alarms and prompting Chamoun to request immediate U.S. intervention. The Eisenhower Ad-

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[24] Memorandum of a Conversation, June 9, 1958, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d65, 5 December 2012.

[25] "By June 26, the team was supported by 94 military officers from 11 member nations, assigned to act in the capacity of observers." Editorial Note, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d66, 5 December 2012.

[26] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 267-268; Telegram From the Embassy in Egypt to the Department of State, May 20, 1958, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d44; Telegram From the Embassy in Egypt to the Department of State, June 7, 1958, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d63; Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Lebanon, June 12, 1958, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d67; Telegram From the Embassy in Lebanon to the Department of State, June 11, 1958, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d69. Accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS, 5 December 2012.

ministration took it all in stride, careful not to react impulsively.[27]

UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold visited Lebanon on 18 June 1958 during a 48-hour truce and concluded Syrian infiltrations were not as pronounced as Chamoun had claimed, though objectively, the UN investigation lacked the manpower and time to make such a definitive conclusion. At his press conference, Eisenhower commented that he was not considering military options until the UN observation team and the Secretary General had assessed the situation fully.[28] Alarmed, Chamoun contacted Eisenhower, worried that the United States was reneging on its promise. Eisenhower replied that strategic patience was essential, adding that he did not wish to undermine the UN with a premature move.[29] He warned that a precipitate intervention would likely cause strong resentment among Arabs and urged Chamoun to seek a solution to the unrest first before requesting U.S. assistance. Nonetheless, he assured Chamoun, the United States would respond immediately in the event of a crisis. Privately, Eisenhower and Dulles did not wish Chamoun to perceive the United States as a quick reaction force as long as the Lebanese defense force efforts sufficed. While they recognized the army was weakened by Christian-

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[27] Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Lebanon, June 16, 1958, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d87; Memorandum for the Record by the Secretary of State's Special Assistant (Greene), June 17, 1958, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d92; Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs (Rountree) to the Secretary of State, "Directive for American Commander in Charge of Combined U.S./U.K. Military Operations in Lebanon," June 17, 1958, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d93; Editorial Note (on19 June NSC), http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d95. Accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS, 6 December 2012.

[28] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 268; Adams, 290; Telegram From the Embassy in Lebanon to the Department of State, May 16, 1958, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d38; Telegram From the Embassy in Lebanon to the Department of State, June 15, 1958, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d80. Accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS, 6 December 2012.

[29] Telegram From the Embassy in Lebanon to the Department of State, June 19, 1958, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d96,; Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Lebanon, June 19, 1958, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d97; Memorandum From Colonel D. J. Decker of the Joint Middle East Planning Committee of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Chief of Naval Operations (Burke), May 19, 1958, "Meeting at Department of State, 1115 Monday, 19 May 1958," http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d42. Accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS, 6 December 2012.

Muslim factionalism and thought Chehab was exercising irresolute leadership, replacing Chehab was Chamoun's prerogative, not theirs. Regardless, Eisenhower had not taken intervention off the table, keenly aware of the U.S. security pledge. Maintaining Arab trust in the word of the United States was imperative in order to prevent Egyptian, or worse, Soviet domination.[30] Mollified, Chamoun expressed his appreciation, vowing that "he would not request US intervention 'unless the knife is at my throat.'" Addressing the subject of Arab alienation, Chamoun thought that Turkey, Lebanon, Iraq, and Iran would favor intervention under the circumstances and added that 99 percent of Lebanese Christians and 25 percent of Lebanese Muslims would welcome it.[31]

The correct course of action for the United States was by no means clear or without potential unintended consequences. In a 22 June 1958 meeting at the State Department, Dulles framed the dilemma regarding U.S. intervention:

> The question of our possible intervention posed a difficult problem from a juridical standpoint and would be difficult in the United Nations. Yet the only thing worse than intervening if requested to do so by the Lebanese Government would be not to go in. Our intervention would probably result in the Governments of Jordan and Iraq being swept away and the Lebanese Government itself probably would not survive our withdrawal. The situation would of course be better if we went in under United Nations auspices. On the other hand if we were called upon and did not respond, the Governments of Jordan and Iraq would also be overthrown. In this respect there was little difference either way. The real difference lay with the peripheral countries. If we did not respond, it would gravely shake the confidence of the peripheral countries and in that case the consequences of our failure to act would not be limited to the Arab countries alone but would undermine the Northern Tier, Sudan and Libya. Obviously the best thing would be for Chamoun to work out a solution himself. Accordingly, our first priority should be to step

[30] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 268-269; Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Lebanon, June 19, 1958, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d97; Memorandum for the Record of the State–Joint Chiefs of Staff Meeting, Pentagon, May 16, 1958, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d39; Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Lebanon, June 14, 1958, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d75; Special National Intelligence Estimate, June 14, 1958, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d77; Memorandum of a Conversation, June 15, 1958, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d84. Accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS, 6 December 2012.

[31] Telegram From the Embassy in Lebanon to the Department of State, June 20, 1958, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d98, 6 December 2012.

> up United Nations help but the United Nations should not get in a position between the government and the rebels. . . . The new government would not be as pro-Western as Chamoun but might hold the balance between the West on the one hand and Nasser and Soviet influence on the other. . . . Our failure to respond would destroy the confidence in us of all the countries on the Soviet periphery throughout the Middle and Far East.[32]

On 23 June 1958, Dulles apprised key congressional leaders of the latest developments in Lebanon. Reiterating the points from his 22 June meeting, Dulles said the U.S. effort was focusing on having the Lebanese government resolve the crisis peacefully. If that effort failed, the Eisenhower Doctrine justified intervention, stressing that the "United States regards as vital to the national interest and world peace the preservation of the independence and integrity of the nations of the Middle East." Dulles believed that Nasser had overextended himself with the UAR and was confident that Nasserism would run its course. He further assessed that the Soviets were hoping Nasser would displace the influence of the Western powers and would exploit that opportunity to extend their own influence into the region. Lastly, he expected the Lebanon elections scheduled in July 1958 would end the crisis.[33]

Speaking with Dulles on 26 June 1958, UN Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge divulged that the UN observer team had found very little evidence of Syrian collusion with Lebanese militants. He also learned from Hammarskjold that Nasser had ordered Syria on 24 June to cease support to Lebanese militants, which in turn the Syrians relayed to the Lebanese rebels. Nasser's decision evidently came about as a result of a meeting between Hammarskjold and Nasser. Hammarskjold frankly told Nasser that he had "overplayed his hand very badly and that the best thing for him to do would be to get out and get out quick." He also said that the adventure in

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[32] Memorandum of a Conversation, "Lebanon," June 22, 1958, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d102; Letter From the Representative at the United Nations (Lodge) to the Secretary of State, June 23, 1958, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d103. Accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS, 7 December 2012..

[33] Memorandum of a Conversation, "The Situation in Lebanon," June 23, 1958, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d105, 12 December 2012.

Lebanon might prompt Soviet intervention which would lead to a superpower conflict in the Middle East. He concluded by advising Nasser to stop the anti-Lebanese government propaganda campaign immediately. Regarding his talk with Chamoun, Hammarskjold dissuaded him from requesting a UN Security Council resolution to permit the UN observer team to use force, as well as requesting a UN resolution for a UN Emergency Force deployment. Neither would solve the fundamental political problems in Lebanon and would likely exacerbate tensions. Concerning Lebanon, Hammarskjold assessed that the opposition was united against Chamoun, whom he considered an inept politician. Once Chamoun publicly announced that he was stepping down in September, Hammarskjold believed calm would likely return to Lebanon.[34] Hence, the prospects for a peaceful resolution looked promising.

After receiving an update on the military situation in Lebanon (apparently Chehab was taking military action in Tripoli and Beirut's Chouf quarter) at a 1 July 1958 meeting with Chamoun, the American, British, and French ambassadors entreated Chamoun to identify and support a successor for the elections scheduled for 24 July. The British and French ambassadors (McClintock abstained) went a step further, urging Chamoun to make a public announcement to settle the question of a second term. Chamoun heatedly rejected a public statement and claimed no suitable successor existed, suggesting he was looking for a way to remain as president and to leverage the great powers towards that end. Chamoun attempted to turn the tables on the ambassadors, accusing the great powers of reneging on their pledges to protect Lebanon. The ambassadors replied that the pledges were steadfast and assured Chamoun economic and military assis-

[34] Memorandum From the Representative at the United Nations (Lodge) to the Secretary of State, June 26, 1958, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d106; Memorandum of a Conversation, Department of State, July 7, 1958, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d117; Editorial Note, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d107; Memorandum of a Conversation, Department of State, July 7, 1958, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d116. Accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS, 13 December 2012.

tance would continue.[35]

The diplomatic pressure on Chamoun finally bore fruit when he announced publicly that he would not seek a second term. In a meeting with McClintock, Chamoun confided that Chehab had the best chance of being elected and promised to persuade the general to run.[36] Two days later, the three ambassadors gained Chamoun's acceptance to speak with Chehab separately to induce him to consider candidacy. The ambassadors were heartened to learn that Speaker of Parliament Adel Osseiran told Chehab he was the unanimous choice in parliament for president. Although Chehab did not accept on the spot, neither did he reject the idea.[37] The crisis in Lebanon seemed in denouement.[38]

The Bombshell

At 05:30 am on 14 July 1958, a conspiracy of Iraqi military officers staged a coup d'état, brutally killing King Faisal II, Crown Prince Abdallah, their immediate family, and Prime Minister Nuri Said. In place of the Hashemite monarchy, a pan-Arab government emerged under General Abd al-Karim Kassim, who was anti-West, pro-Nasser, and ironically also inclined towards Communism. Aside from the heinous murders of the royal family and the terror wrought by Iraqi mobs, the coup threatened to destabilize the Middle East.[39]

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[35] Telegram From the Embassy in Lebanon to the Department of State, July 1, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d112#fn2; Memorandum of a Conversation Between the Minister of the British Embassy (Lord Hood) and the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs (Rountree), July 3, 1958, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d115. Accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS, 13 December 2012.

[36] Telegram From the Embassy in Lebanon to the Department of State, July 10, 1958, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d119, 13 December 2012.

[37] Telegram From the Embassy in Lebanon to the Department of State, July 12, 1958, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d120, 13 December 2012.

[38] By this time, the Lebanese army had restored government authority in the major cities and some control in the rural areas. Ponzo, 41.

[39] Goodpaster Interview (OH-37), DDEL, 87; Adams, 291.

The coup prompted Eisenhower to reassess his strategy and needed capabilities. At the 10:50 am NSC Meeting on 14 July 1958, CIA Director Dulles opened with a briefing on the reverberations of the Iraqi coup on the region: Jordan's King Hussein had thwarted a coup that coincided with the one in Iraq; Israel was deeply agitated over the turn of events and needed reassurance; King Saud was urging the signatories of the Baghdad Pact to intervene in Iraq, warning that failure to take action would force Saudi Arabia to acquiesce to UAR subversion; and Chamoun speculated that Nasser was behind the Iraqi coup and immediately requested American intervention within 48 hours in accordance with Eisenhower's pledge of assistance. He told McClintock that he planned to request British and French intervention as well, though he expected France's participation would only be symbolic.[40]

After discussing the risks associated with both action and inaction during the NSC meeting, Eisenhower concluded that immediate intervention was necessary. A major factor in this decision was the belief the Soviet Union would remain on the sidelines for the moment.[41] Eisenhower had given significant thought to the problems in the Middle East, so his mind was "practically made up regarding the general line of action we should take, even before we met." Weighing the risks, the President felt that inaction would be worse than action because the loss of the Middle East, due to its strategic position and oil reserves, would have global consequences. Privately, he wanted to send a message to potential revolutionaries that the United States would resist attempts to destabilize established governments. Publicly, rather than citing the Eisenhower Doctrine, the White House announced the intervention was to protect American lives and proper-

[40] Telegram From the Embassy in Lebanon to the Department of State, July 14, 1958, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d121, 13 December 2012; Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 270.

[41] Goodpaster Interview (OH-37), DDEL, 90; Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 270-271.

ty in Lebanon. Lastly, the President decided to have Britain intervene in Jordan and Kuwait, while the United States concentrated on Lebanon.[42]

At 2:35 pm on 14 July, Eisenhower held a bipartisan meeting with 22 congressmen to apprise them of the situation. He stressed that inaction would undercut faith in America's word and resolve, likely lead to further instability if not the overthrow of many Middle East governments, and threaten access to oil and the Suez Canal. Dulles remarked disingenuously that the Soviets were behind the coup in Iraq but correctly assessed its effect could cause events to spiral out of control, of which the Soviets would surely take advantage. Eisenhower recognized that an intervention would raise anti-American feelings among Arab people, but not among the governments, an important distinction. He emphasized that the intervention was at the request of the Lebanon government, and not a response to international communist aggression. Instead, U.S. military intervention aimed to create stability. His final point to the congressmen was emphatic: if the United States did not act, it would lose the Middle East. In view of these discussions, Eisenhower was confident that Congress would support the intervention as long as the mission did not expand beyond what was discussed, so executive authority regarding the deployment of military force was tacitly accepted. With both international and domestic interests established, Eisenhower decided intervention was the correct course of action.[43]

Following this meeting, Eisenhower met with his inner circle to discuss his decision. Dulles recalled that Jordan had requested British intervention, who in turn requested American logistical support. Eisenhower agreed and decided the United States would go into Lebanon unilater-

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[42] Memorandum of a Conference With the President, July 14, 1958, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d124, 18 December 2012; Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Eisenhower Project," interview by Ed Edwin (July 20, 1967), CCOHC, DDEL, 53.

[43] Memorandum of a Conference With the President, July 14 (2:35 pm), 1958, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d127#fnref2, 27 December 2012; Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 272.

ally.[44] Turning to Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Nathan Twining, the President wanted to time the 3:00 pm (local) landing of the Marines on 15 July to coincide with his address to the nation (i.e., 9:00 am EST) in order to maintain the element of surprise. He then ordered the implementation of Operation BLUEBAT, the contingency plan for military intervention.[45] Later recalling his decision to intervene in Lebanon, Eisenhower said, "I believed, if you took action promptly, and showed that you meant business, that this would be more effective and would lead to less serious consequences, rather than the opposite; that if you sat around and temporized too long, others would get the idea that you were afraid to do something, and then you would have a different and worse situation."[46]

Operation BLUEBAT

Illustrative of Eisenhower's forward thinking, the U.S. military had begun preparations for a possible intervention in November 1957, standing up a specified command in the Mediterranean Sea (SPECCOMME) under Admiral James Holloway, as well as preparing contingency plans, mission preparations, training, practice alerts, and exercises. Alerted during the Lebanon crisis in mid-May 1958, the U.S. 6th Fleet with the 2d Provisional Marine Force moved into the eastern Mediterranean; at the same time, Army Task Force 201, comprising two airborne battle groups and a logistical support package from the 11th Airborne Division, staged in Germany.

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[44] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 273.

[45] Memorandum of a Conference With the President, July 14, 1958, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v11/d128, 28 December 2012.

[46] Eisenhower Interview, "Eisenhower Project," 60-61; Nevertheless, Eisenhower reminded the inner circle that an intervention in Lebanon would not bring stability to the rest of the Middle East automatically. The situation required continued study of each Arab state. He directed that the U.S. policy of maintaining friendly relations with all Middle East states would remain in effect, as well as U.S. attentiveness to the UN Charter and world opinion. Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 271.

Once the crisis passed, the military stood down.[47]

While the BLUEBAT forces were like a coiled spring in late May and June, much had changed by the first two weeks of July 1958, and this is where Clausewitzian friction hindered execution. For instance, standing down from the Lebanon crisis several days earlier, the 6th Fleet sailed towards Athens and Nice for port visits when the alert order came on 14 July. Only one Marine battalion landing team (2/2d BLT) was immediately available for an amphibious landing instead of the envisioned two-battalion task force.[48] While the 2/2d BLT landed south of Beirut at the appointed time of 3:00 pm on 15 July and secured the airport, it did not have its complementary Landing Ship Dock (LSD) of artillery, tanks, special teams, and heavy equipment available until the morning of 16 July. Still, the 1700-strong Marine contingent was sufficient for the nonce. Upon the arrival of the 3/6th BLT at 7:30 am (16 July), the American position was sufficiently secure to permit the 2/2d BLT to move into Beirut to occupy the port facilities.[49]

The Army had its share of friction as well. The 11th Airborne Division had converted to a regular infantry division (24th Infantry Division) on 1 July 1958, resulting in the loss of its veteran airborne leaders and the reduction of the heavy drop platoon (parachute riggers who prepare supply and equipment packages for airdrops). Moreover, the Army units comprising TF 201 were involved in numerous exercises in Germany when the Iraqi coup occurred. Due to this turmoil, TF 201 was forced to leave one battle group (503d Infantry Regiment) behind.[50] Despite

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[47] David W. Gray, *The U.S. Intervention in Lebanon, 1958: A Commander's Reminiscence* (U.S. Army Command and General Staff College: Combat Studies Institute, August, 1984), 1-9; Spiller, 5-17, 21, 26; Shulimson, 7-8; Ponzo, 40.

[48] Shulimson, 8-9.

[49] Ibid, 9-10, 16-18; Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 275; Arleigh A. Burke, Oral History Interview with Arleigh A. Burke: 1 of 4, Interview by John T. Mason Jr., CCOHC, November 14 1972 (OH-284), DDEL, 45-46.

[50] Memorandum for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Summary Situation Reports on Middle East, 14-15 August 1958, White House Office, Office of the Staff Secretary: Records of Paul T. Carroll, Andrew J. Goodpaster, L. Arthur Minnich, and Christopher H. Russell, 1952-61, Department of Defense Subseries, Box 4, Volume II, File 5, DDEL.

these difficulties, TF 201 commander Major General David Gray and other Army leaders, adapted to the situation, innovated, and overcame obstacles with minimum loss of time, with TF Alpha (the command group and 187th Infantry Regiment) closing on Beirut airport by 9:30 pm, 19 July.[51]

Meanwhile, Admiral Holloway and Brigadier General Sidney S. Wade, commander of the 2d Provisional Marine Force, arrived early on 16 July at the Beirut airport and were briefed by the 2/2d BLT commander on the local situation. Uncertainty regarding the attitude of the Lebanese Army necessitated immediate contact and coordination with Ambassador McClintock, General Chehab, and Colonel Toufic Salem (Army Chief of Staff) in order to prevent unintentional clashes as the Marines advanced. Fortunately, the National Union Front militants took no action other than propaganda. While Wade instructed the 2/2d BLT to prepare for movement into Beirut, Holloway held an impromptu coordination meeting with McClintock and Chehab at a Lebanese Army road block to mitigate friction between the Marine force and the Lebanese Army. Accordingly, the Lebanese Army escorted the newly arrived 2/2d BLT to the port, carefully avoiding the Muslim Basta quarter. In the meantime, 3/6th BLT worked out arrangements with the local Lebanese Army units for mutual security of the airport.[52]

The American presence increased over the next two weeks. On 18 July 1/8th BLT conducted an amphibious landing north of Beirut and secured the approaches into the city, and 2/8th BLT air-landed at the Beirut airport after a 54-hour flight from the United States. The following

[51] TF 201 had staged at Adana, Turkey from 16-19 July, waiting for Major General Gray to make final coordination with Admiral Holloway and for the advance party to recon the lodgment area at the airport. Gray, 10-21; Spiller, 21-24; Memorandum for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Situation Reports on Lebanon, 16-18 July 1958, White House Office, Office of the Staff Secretary: Records of Paul T. Carroll, Andrew J. Goodpaster, L. Arthur Minnich, and Christopher H. Russell, 1952-61, Department of Defense Subseries, Box 4, Volume II, File 1, DDEL.

[52] Perhaps making the column of Marines as non-threatening as possible as well as serving as a deterrent against attacks, McClintock, Holloway, Chehab, and the other principal U.S. commanders formed the vanguard in two cars. Spiller, 19-21; Shulimson, 14-15, 18-21.

morning, Major General Gray's Task Force Alpha air-landed at the Beirut airport and moved immediately into security positions east of the airport, tying into the Marine defenses. Major General Gray then reconnoitered the airport area with the 3/6th BLT commander as well as coordinating indirect fire support with Brigadier General Wade. From 20 July to 1 August 1958, U.S. Army combat service support (Task Force Charlie) flowed in with logistical and medical support. Army logistics were crucial to the intervention because the Marines were a strike force and had few logistical capabilities.[53] Major General Gray soon established close relations with Chehab, the commanders of the two local Lebanese units, the local mayor, the U.S. Embassy, and other U.S. agencies, as well as providing progress reports to higher Army command. In order to create unity of command between the Marine and Army units, Major General Paul Adams (U.S. Army) assumed command of American Land Forces (AMLANFOR) on 24 July. A significant achievement, the United States had deployed within ten days a force totaling 8,508 Army troops and 5,790 Marines, and more significantly, provided robust logistical support via the air and sea. On 17 July, the British Brigade (3,700 troops) in Cypress deployed to Jordan at the request of King Hussein, with the United States providing logistical support.[54]

Presidential Crisis Management

Once the President made the decision to intervene, he kept tabs on the intended strategic effects. Brigadier General Andrew Goodpaster briefed Eisenhower every morning with the Joint Chiefs of Staff Situation Reports, which provided comprehensive details on the local situation, regional reactions, relevant Soviet activities, U.S. military force levels, and recent U.S. military

[53] Shulimson, 28-29, 31.
[54] Gray, 20-23, 26-27; Shulimson, 24-25, 29, 31; Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 273.

activities in support of the intervention. A remarkable feature of these reports was an annotated map of Europe and the Middle East, portraying a snapshot of forces for the President's edification.[55]

While the Eisenhower left implementation of BLUEBAT to the military, he shaped the operation in two fundamental ways. First, he insisted on an amphibious landing rather than debarking at the Beirut port in order to forestall potential, militant targeting of the port facilities with artillery.[56] Second, he confined the operation to the occupation of the airport and Beirut, assessing political considerations outweighed the military risks. He contended if the Lebanese army could not restore order outside of the capital, then the government would lack legitimacy, and no number of U.S. forces would rectify that. Confining the activities to Beirut simplified the operation, reducing the probability of mishaps.[57]

Eisenhower directed a multi-level strategic communications campaign from beginning to the end of the crisis. The White House immediately released a press release, highlighting the reasons for the intervention, and provided similar messages to Congress and the UN. Careful not to invoke the Eisenhower Doctrine, the President explained that the Lebanese government had requested the intervention and not as an act of war. On the contrary, the intent of the intervention was to protect American lives and give encouragement to the Lebanese government for self-defense.[58] The intervention demonstrated U.S. commitment to Lebanese independence and sov-

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[55] Memorandum for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Situation Reports on Lebanon, 16 July-30 September 1958, White House Office, Office of the Staff Secretary: Records of Paul T. Carroll, Andrew J. Goodpaster, L. Arthur Minnich, and Christopher H. Russell, 1952-61, Department of Defense Subseries, Box 4, Volume II, Files 1-10, DDEL; Memorandum for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Summary Situation Reports, 1-27 October 1958, White House Office, Office of the Staff Secretary: Records of Paul T. Carroll, Andrew J. Goodpaster, L. Arthur Minnich, and Christopher H. Russell, 1952-61, Department of Defense Subseries, Box 5, Volume III, Files 1-4. DDEL.

[56] Eisenhower Interview, "Eisenhower Project," 61; Shulimson, 13.

[57] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 277, 275 n. 8; Gray, 17-18.

[58] Adams, 292

ereignty, which U.S. policy deemed vital to national interests and global stability. Additionally, the United States would provide economic assistance as appropriate. Finally, the intervention was in accord with the right of collective self-defense in the UN Charter. Eisenhower reiterated these points in his evening address to the nation. He explained that the United States was not assuming the UN's role, but swift action was necessary to protect Lebanon's independence, and the UN would replace U.S. troops as soon as feasible. He stressed that the decision was made after weighing the risks and consequences of action; the troops were not there to fight but to render assistance if needed.[59] As one historian of the crisis observed, what the President communicated to the American people was "a display of American support, military ability, values, and commitment to stability."[60]

On the day the Marines landed, American planes dropped millions of leaflets throughout Lebanon explaining the reason for the American presence and the intent to depart as quickly as possible. As promised earlier, American aid began arriving in early August 1958, just as the Marines began to withdraw—a dual signal to the Lebanese regarding American intentions.[61]

Eisenhower also dispatched his trusted diplomat, Deputy Undersecretary of State Robert D. Murphy to serve as political advisor to Admiral Holloway and to coordinate the military activities with the U.S. Embassy.[62] Accompanying McClintock, Murphy met daily with Chamoun, pressing him to support a successor for the sake of a peaceful transition of power. Upon learning that Lebanese parliamentarians planned to protest the American intervention, Murphy skillfully dissuaded them, pointing out the protest would only serve the designs of Nasser and the Soviets.

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[59] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 274-275.
[60] Ponzo, 46.
[61] Murphy, 408; Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 278-279.
[62] Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 279, 280-281.

Acquiescing, they focused their energies on the presidential election. With unbounded energy, Murphy traveled around Lebanon, meeting with the major rebel leaders and convincing them the American intervention was not to keep Chamoun in power; rather, the United States sought a peaceful election of a new president; Murphy asked for their cooperation and encouraged their participation in the new government. Because of these productive discussions with the rebel leaders, firing incidents against American troops dropped dramatically.[63]

Once a sense of normalcy had returned to Lebanon, Murphy traveled to Egypt and Iraq at the President's behest. Meeting with Nasser, Murphy learned that the American intervention had surprised Nasser because he thought the United States would never conduct a unilateral military operation. He was in Yugoslavia at the time and flew immediately to Moscow to gage the Kremlin's response. Upon learning the Soviets would take no action and observing the success of the U.S. stabilization of Lebanon, his esteem of the United States rose in direct proportion to his disdain of the Soviet Union. Pleased with the selection of Chehab as president, Nasser established warm relations with the new government.[64]

Traveling to Iraq, Murphy explained to General Kassim that the United States had no designs on Iraq other than establishing peaceful relations. Apparently relieved, Kassim replied that his government would remain on friendly terms with the United States and other western powers. Kassim assured Murphy that Iraq would not kowtow to either Russia or Egypt and would increase the sale of oil fifty percent.[65]

Goodpaster noted that during a crisis, and Lebanon was no exception, Eisenhower would hold one-to-three long meetings discussing the issues and then meet with different people for

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[63] Murphy, 398, 404-406; Shulimson, 33.
[64] Murphy, 409-411.
[65] Ibid, 413-414.

part of the day rather than devoting the entire day to the crisis. In other words, the President would not allow the crisis to consume his attention when other issues and crisis areas needed attending. He marveled at Eisenhower's "great ability to shift gears mentally and move from one subject to another, and I would say, if a President doesn't have the ability, he would really be in terrible shape, because the job makes it mandatory."[66]

This skill to compartmentalize analysis and decision-making became essential when Communist China began bombarding the National Chinese islands of Quemoy and Matsu on 24 August 1958, sparking a crisis that lasted until late October. Ordering the intervention of the 7th Fleet into the Taiwan Straits, Eisenhower responded by resupplying the Quemoy and Matsu garrisons to convince mainland China that the United States would not permit their seizure. Eisenhower also had to contend with Taiwan's President Chiang Kai-shek, who attempted to exploit the crisis for his own agenda.[67] As with the Lebanon intervention, Goodpaster briefed the President daily using the JCS Situation Reports, complete with annotated maps.[68]

On 31 July 1958, the Lebanese parliament elected General Chehab as president, with inauguration day scheduled for 23 September.[69] Accordingly, Dulles announced the United States would withdraw its forces at the request of the new Lebanese government. With the situation stabilized, the Marine Corps contingent began disembarking on 14 August, with their mission assumed by U.S. Army units. On 8 October, the United States announced its intention for a com-

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[66] Goodpaster Interview (OH-37), DDEL, 88-89.

[67] Interview with Robert Bowie, Episode 7: After Stalin, accessed on the website of The National Security Archive: Cold War, The George Washington University at http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/coldwar/interviews/episode-7/bowie21.html, 3 July 2009.

[68] Memorandum for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Summary Situation Reports on Middle East, 24 August-27 October 1958, White House Office, Office of the Staff Secretary: Records of Paul T. Carroll, Andrew J. Goodpaster, L. Arthur Minnich, and Christopher H. Russell, 1952-61, Department of Defense Subseries, Boxes 4 & 5, Volume II, Files 6-10, and Volume III, Files 1-4. DDEL; Eisenhower, Waging Peace, 292-304.

[69] Murphy, 407-408.

plete troop withdrawal on 26 October, which was preceded by the formation of a new Lebanese government on 23 October.[70]

Conclusion

The Lebanon crisis provides ample evidence of Eisenhower's practice of strategic thinking and the use of the NSC mechanism throughout the process. While the Planning Board provided the background of the immediate crisis, Eisenhower continued the strategic appraisal through NSC meetings, inner circle meetings, diplomatic cables, reports from emissaries, bipartisan meetings with congressmen, and personal discussions with Chamoun. The strategic appraisal was essentially a continuation of the Suez Canal crisis, so national interests, strategic factors, and the strategic objective remained unchanged.

In terms of the five competencies of strategic thinking, Eisenhower applied critical thinking as he formulated his strategy. He recognized immediately that the crisis was triggered by Chamoun's attempt to change the constitution. He remained skeptical of Dulles' assertion that Nasser or the Soviets were behind the instability in Lebanon. He kept an open mind regarding options, which led him to practice strategic patience. Hence, he urged Chamoun to refrain from seeking a second term as president and to resolve the unrest internally before asking for U.S. intervention. Further, he pressed Chamoun to find a viable presidential candidate who would unite the country.

In the wake of the Iraq coup d'état, Eisenhower concluded that stabilizing Lebanon was

[70] Shulimson, 34-35; Memorandum for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Summary Situation Reports on Middle East, 15-17 August 1958, White House Office, Office of the Staff Secretary: Records of Paul T. Carroll, Andrew J. Goodpaster, L. Arthur Minnich, and Christopher H. Russell, 1952-61, Department of Defense Subseries, Box 4, Volume II, File 5, DDEL; Memorandum for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Summary Situation Report, 22-27 October 1958, White House Office, Office of the Staff Secretary: Records of Paul T. Carroll, Andrew J. Goodpaster, L. Arthur Minnich, and Christopher H. Russell, 1952-61, Department of Defense Subseries, Box 5, Volume III, File 4. DDEL.

the key to staunching the spread of revolution in the Middle East. His logic dictated that a military intervention, swiftly executed but limited in scope, would achieve the desired strategic effects of restoring regional peace.

Exercising systems thinking, Eisenhower recognized that Soviet support for revolutionary movements fomented Middle East insurrection. Correspondingly, Nasserism served as the vehicle for spreading revolution, although not at the behest of the Soviet Union. On a higher level, Eisenhower understood that Cold War competition was free enterprise democracy versus communism. Eisenhower needed to ensure U.S. actions did not undermine democratic principles with the pursuit of realpolitik. Here, the UN and the international system must remain relevant. Accordingly, Arab states needed to view the intervention as legitimate so as to keep the Suez Canal open and oil flowing to the West. Further, a swift intervention would demonstrate U.S. resolve and military strength, as well as revealing Soviet shortcomings correspondingly.

In terms of creative thinking, Eisenhower rejected the use of coercion (i.e., UN sanctions and censure) against Egypt and Syria for supporting Lebanese rebels. Instead, he sought to undergird the democratic process and to involve the UN in resolving the crisis. With the military intervention in July, he emphasized that the U.S. action was in support of the presidential elections and not as a long-term occupation. This approach was novel to the Arab states, who were accustomed to foreign powers imposing their through annexation or mandates. Withdrawing the military within weeks of the intervention signaled that the United States could be trusted.

Eisenhower's use of creative thinking was a product of thinking in time. He understood that Arab grievances with the West stemmed from the British and French mandates in Iraq, Syria, the Levant, and Palestine, as well as the British occupation of Egypt and Iran as strategic necessities. He wanted to avoid the impression that the West prized order at the expense of sover-

eignty. Hence, American and British intervention would only be at the request of Lebanon and Jordan respectively, and more importantly, short-lived.

Eisenhower applied ethical thinking to ensure the intervention was accepted as legitimate, both domestically and internationally. As the guarantor of Arab sovereignty, intervention and support of free elections in Lebanon were an ethical obligation. As important, Eisenhower wanted to promote the image of the United States as the defender of democracy.

Eisenhower's articulated objective was a stable Lebanon for the political process to proceed unfettered (i.e., the scheduled presidential elections). He initially employed a multi-pronged diplomatic-information-economic strategy: convince Chamoun to renounce a second term in order to defuse unrest; provide assistance to Lebanon; involve the UN to monitor Syrian activities; stage the U.S. military for a potential intervention while keeping Congress apprised; and consult with Arab states to determine their attitudes regarding a military intervention but stressing such an intervention would be at the request of the Lebanon government. This strategy had the desired strategic effect as calm returned to Lebanon.

Eisenhower's strategy was feasible, acceptable and suitable. He applied capabilities judiciously in support of his strategy, and public opinion accepted U.S. diplomatic initiatives and the limited intervention. Moreover, the strategic effects justified the strategic objective pursued. His strategy achieved the strategic objective and the strategic effects he pursued. While the intervention carried risks, the rapid execution of the intervention convinced Nasser that the Soviet Union was an unreliable ally, and that it was in his own best interests to remain on friendly terms with the United States.

Chapter 6

Bay of Pigs Case Study

The U.S. involvement in Cuba is instructive because it reveals the stark differences between the Dwight D. Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy Administrations' approaches to strategic thinking. The rise of the Fidel Castro regime came near the end of the Eisenhower Administration, which had a well established record of successes in foreign affairs. Typically, Eisenhower depended on the NSC mechanism to gather information on the problem at hand, exchange views and options from advisors and assistants, and work his way to a solution as time allowed. His deference to the rule of law, world and domestic opinion, and U.S. strategic values served as his guideposts in policy formulation. Lastly, he demonstrated strategic patience, waiting for an adversary to overreach and shaping the conditions to lend justification for the use of force. All the while, Eisenhower never lost sight of the desired strategic effect.

In contrast, the invasion of Cuba was to be the hallmark of the New Frontier foreign policy—bold, decisive, and vigorous—and President Kennedy was to be the bellwether of a fresh, dynamic, and vibrant leadership:

> In addition to being ambitious, impatient, and voracious, Kennedy and his fellow New Frontiersmen were aggressive and tough. They possessed—that word again—balls, as in grit, aggression, testicular fortitude. More specifically, in context of 1961, it meant that these were men, unlike some of their more appeasement–oriented fellow Democrats (read former presidential candidate Adlai Stevenson), who could be trusted to stand up to the enemy. And the enemy, in 1961, meant Communists.[1]

[1] Jim Rasenberger, *The Brilliant Disaster: JFK, Castro, and America's Doomed Invasion of Cuba's Bay of Pigs* (New York: Scribner, April 5, 2011), Kindle e-book.

With his sweeping dissolution of the Eisenhower NSC mechanism, Kennedy was keen to demonstrate through a successful Cuban operation the immense power of the United States when unfettered by bureaucracy and executive complacency.[2] In turn, success would heighten Kennedy's presidential power. Of course, the complexities of the strategic environment often intrude upon the best laid designs.[3]

The Eisenhower Administration's Preliminary Actions on Cuba

Once it became apparent the Fidel Castro regime was not only anti-American but also a Soviet client state, the Eisenhower Administration began planning for regime change. Assigned as the lead agency, the CIA tasked the 5412 Committee (also called the Special Group) to study the options for a covert operation.[4] Receiving Eisenhower's approval on 16 March 1960, the project proposed the creation within Cuba of a government-in-exile, a guerrilla movement led by paramilitary Cuban exiles, an espionage network, and an extensive propaganda campaign. Pivot-

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[2] Rasenberger, Kindle e-book.

[3] *Bay of Pigs: 40 Years After, Chronology*, accessed on the website of The National Security Archive at http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/bayofpigs/chron.html, 16 January 2013; Jack B. Pfeiffer, *The Bay of Pigs Operation: Evolution of the CIA's Anti-Castro Policies, 1950-January 1961*, Volume III, December 1979, accessed on the website of The National Security Archive at http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB341/index.htm, 16 January 2013; and *Bay of Pigs Declassified: The Secret CIA Report on the Invasion of Cuba*, ed. Peter Kornbluh (New York: The New Press, 1998).

[4] According to CIA Historian Jack Pfeiffer, "The Special Group consisted of the Deputy Under Secretary of State, Deputy Secretary of Defense, Director of Central Intelligence, and the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs. It was referred to as the 5412 Committee because it was authorized under NSC 5412/2." Jack B. Pfeiffer, *Volume IV: The Taylor Committee Investigation of the Bay of Pigs*, 9 November 1984, accessed at the website of the *National Security Archive, The George Washington University* at http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB355/bop-vol4.pdf, 16 January 2013, 182, 182 n; The revision of NSC 5412/2 on 28 December 1955 "removed the policy coordination and approval functions from the OCB and transferred them to "designated representatives" of the President and the Secretaries of State and Defense to meet with the DCI as the "normal channel" for policy approval of covert operations. The coordinative body came to be known as the "5412/2 Designated Representatives" or the "Special Group." "It was charged with reviewing in advance all major covert programs initiated by CIA or otherwise directed." For the background on the Special Group, see CIA Paper, Coordination and Policy Approval of Covert Operations, February 23, 1967, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v33/d263, 16 January 2013.

al to the project was the avoidance of U.S. involvement.[5]

While the 5412 Committee had overall responsibility, operational planning fell to the CIA's WH/4 (Western Hemisphere, Branch 4), under Task Force Chief Jacob D. Esterline for the program's planning and training.[6] Upon the completion of its seven-month training, the cadre of 300 paramilitary leaders would infiltrate into Cuba and initiate an extended guerrilla campaign.[7] The formation of a government-in-exile (Frente Revolucionario Democratico [FRD]) and the emergence of a Cuban leader proved problematic since infighting and jealousies among the exile groups continued unabated to the end of Eisenhower's term in office.[8] Hence, until progress was made on this key issue, the desired strategic effect would remain elusive.

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[5] A Program of Covert Action Against the Castro Regime, 16 March 1960, accessed on the website of The National Security Archives, http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB341/index.htm, 16 January 2013; Memorandum of a Conference With the President, March 17, 1960, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v06/d486, 26 January 2013.

[6] According to Esterline, WH/4 was formed in January 1960. Having served in the OSS during World War II, Esterline had extensive experience in guerilla warfare. He was also in charge of the successful coup d'état in Guatemala a few years earlier. Jacob D. Esterline, Oral History Interview by Jack B. Pfeiffer, Saint Croix, Virgin Islands, 10-11 November 1975, accessed on the website of The National Security Archive at http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/bayofpigs/esterlineinterv.pdf, 19 January 2013, 2-3; WH/4 comprised Allen Dulles (Director of Central Intelligence), General Charles P. Cabell (Deputy Director of Central Intelligence), Richard Bissell (Deputy Director for Plans), Tracy Barnes (Assistant Deputy Director for Plans), J.C. King (Chief Western Hemisphere Division), and Jake Esterline (Task Force Chief). Esterline had command responsibility over the paramilitary staff (under Colonel Jack Hawkins), the air force operations and training (Guatemala), ground training (Guatemala), tank training (Fort Knox), maritime training (Vieques), and the Nino Diaz Group (Belle Chase, Louisiana). For the amphibious operation, Esterline had command responsibility for the air operations, transport ships, and the landing of the Cuban Brigade. Once on the beach, land command responsibility passed to Cuban Expeditionary Commander, Jose San Roman. Para-Military Study Group Taylor Report, Part III—Annex 5, Chart of Command Organization for Plans and Training, Papers of the President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box 61 A (Overflow), JFKL; Para-Military Study Group Taylor Report, Part III—Annex 6, Chart of Command Organization for Operations, Papers of the President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box 61 A (Overflow), JFKL.

[7] Memorandum for the Record, First Meeting of Branch 4 Task Force, 9 March 1960, accessed on the website of The National Security Archive, http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB341/index.htm, 16 January 2013; Para-Military Study Group Taylor Report, Part I, Memorandum 1, 13 June 1961. Papers of the President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box 61 A, JFKL, 2; Gray Interview, DDEL, 29, 31-33.

[8] Para-Military Study Group Taylor Report, Part III—Annex 3, *Chronology of the Development of the Emergence of the Revolutionary Council*, 17 May 1961, Papers of the President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box 61 A, JFKL; Memorandum of a Meeting With the President, August 18, 1960, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v06/d577, 27 January 2013; Esterline Interview, 68; Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Eisenhower Project," Interview by Ed Edwin, July 20, 1967, CCOHC, 62-63; Despatch From the Embassy in Cuba to the Department of State, "Analysis of the Opposition Movement to the Castro Regime," December 6 1960, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v06/d617, 28 January 2013.

For the remainder of Eisenhower's term in office, the project expanded in size and composition as the CIA gained presidential approval for the creation of a contingency force with Special Forces training and an air contingent of B-26 bombers flown by Cuban pilots for the purpose of insertion and resupply.[9] While amenable to the expansion, Eisenhower urged his advisers to proceed with caution to mitigate "the danger of making false moves, with the result of starting something before we were ready for it."[10]

Due to difficulties experienced with airdrops to Cuban resistance forces, and the apparent success of the Castro regime's counterinsurgency measures, WH/4 revised the project design at the end of September. WH/4 reduced the guerrilla operation to 60 leaders and made it the secondary effort, while the contingency force comprising 1,500 troops became the main effort as an airborne and amphibious strike force. Additionally, the B-26 bomber contingent would support the conventional operation rather than the guerrilla effort.[11] On 15 November, WH/4 raised the force requirements again to a 3,000-man brigade and determined that the Defense Department would need to join the effort because of the increased logistics needs.[12]

Allen Dulles briefed the "new paramilitary concept" to Eisenhower on 29 November 1960, who directed the "project expedited."[13] As directed, WH/4 began developing the concept

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[9] Esterline Interview, 26-27, 37, 85.

[10] Memorandum of a Meeting with the President, August 18, 1960, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v06/d577, 27 January 2013.

[11] Memorandum From the Secretary of Defense's Deputy Assistant for Special Operations (Lansdale) to the Deputy Secretary of Defense (Douglas), "Cuba," November 7, 1960, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v06/d607, 27 January, 2013; Taylor Report, Part I, Memorandum 1, JFKL, 3; Pfeiffer, *Volume IV: The Taylor Committee Investigation of the Bay of Pigs*, 149; Para-Military Study Group Taylor Report, Part III—Annex 4, Message on Recruitment Status, Papers of the President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box 61 A (Overflow), JFKL.

[12] Jack Pfeiffer, Official History of the Bay of Pigs Operation: Evolution of CIA's Anti-Castro Policies, 1959-January 1961, Volume III, accessed on the website of The National Security Archive, http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB341/index.htm, 16 January 2013, 149; Editorial Note, accessed on the website of DOSOH, at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v06/d612, 27 January 2013.

[13] Para-Military Study Group Taylor Report, Part I, Memorandum 1, 13 June 1961, JFKL, 4-5.

of operations. On 8 December, WH/4 Chief of the Paramilitary Staff Colonel Jack Hawkins briefed the 5412 Committee that following the infiltration of 60-80 guerrilla leaders into Cuba,

> an amphibious landing on the Cuban coast of 600-750 men equipped with weapons of extraordinary heavy fire power [would follow]. The landing would be preceded by air strikes launched from Nicaragua against military targets. Air strikes as well as supply flights would continue after the landing. The objective would be to seize, hold a limited area in Cuba, maintain a visible presence, and then to draw dissident elements to the landing force, which *hopefully* [my emphasis] would trigger a general uprising.[14]

Defense Department officials were not impressed with the concept. Defense Secretary Thomas Gates thought the concept was "quixotic" because the size of the amphibious force was "wholly inadequate" to hold a beachhead and the invading force lacked a leader with "national appeal." Colonel Edward Lansdale assessed the proposed landings were logistically infeasible and doubted the invasion would trigger a general uprising. Eisenhower considered the concept still "in its infancy" and remained skeptical. At any rate, he would withhold reviewing the plan until the Cuban training was complete.[15]

Undaunted, WH/4 planners reviewed the preparations for the invasion on 4 January 1961. Provided President Kennedy approved the concept, the tentative target date would be in February 1961. Hawkins noted that D-1 air strikes (i.e., the day before the invasion) were designed to destroy the Cuban air force and relevant naval forces as well as other military targets. The planners clung to the assumption that the invasion would trigger a general uprising, including "the revolt of large segments of the Cuban Army and Militia." They assessed the beachhead would serve as a "rallying point" for the resistance and the "establishment of the provisional government," after which the United States could render "overt military assistance," resulting in the "prompt over-

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[14] Para-Military Study Group Taylor Report, Part I, Memorandum 1, 13 June 1961, JFKL, 4-5; Editorial Note, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v06/d621, 28 January 2013; Peter Wyden, *Bay of Pigs: The Untold Story*, 2d ed. (Reprint New York: A Touchstone Book, 1980), 72-73.

[15] Peter Wyden, *Bay of Pigs: The Untold Story*, 2d ed. (Reprint New York: A Touchstone Book, 1980), 72-73.

throw of the Castro Government."[16] Hawkins concluded the best invasion site was the Las Villas province because anti-Castro forces were operating in the nearby Escambray Mountains, and the terrain was best suited for guerrilla warfare.[17]

Although the Eisenhower Administration broke diplomatic relations with Cuba on 3 January 1961, no Latin American states followed suit, so Eisenhower was unable to secure OAS solidarity before Kennedy assumed office. At Eisenhower's direction to expand the training program, 38 Special Forces soldiers augmented the training team in Guatemala on 13 January 1961 with an estimated readiness timeframe of 24 weeks.[18]

With the expansion of the project, the 5412 Committee established the Special Interdepartmental Working Group (SIWG) with Ambassador Whiting Willauer (State Department) as chairman and Tracey Barnes (CIA) as his deputy.[19] At the 13 January meeting, SIWG concluded the strike force needed to expand beyond its 750 combatants and directed Major General David W. Gray of the Joint Staff to conduct a mission analysis of the concept. Notably, SWIG accepted WH/4's assumption of large scale defections.[20]

Discussing the Joint Study on 19 January, the 5412 Committee listed three possible

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[16] Memorandum From the Chief of WH/4/PM, Central Intelligence Agency (Hawkins) to the Chief of WH/4 of the Directorate for Plans (Esterline), Policy Decisions Required for Conduct of Strike Operations Against Government of Cuba, January 4, 1961, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d9, 30 January 2013.

[17] "The Bay of Pigs Revisited: An Interview with Jacob Esterline and Col Jack Hawkins," in *Bay of Pigs Declassified: The Secret CIA Report on the Invasion of Cuba*, ed. Peter Kornbluh (New York: The New Press, 1998), 260.

[18] From the Department of State to the Embassy in Cuba, January 3, 1961," http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d7, 30 January 2013; Editorial Note, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d2, 26 January 2013; Taylor Report, Part I, Memorandum 1, JFKL, 3-4; Memorandum Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency, "Special Group Meetings—Cuba," 5 January 1961," http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d14. Accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS on16 February 2013.

[19] Memorandum From the President to the Secretary of State, December 7, 1960, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v06/d618, 28 January 2013.

[20] Editorial Note, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d16, 30 January 2013; Memorandum of Conversation, January 13, 1961, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d18. Accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS on 31 January 2013.

courses of action: a U.S. unilateral invasion; a Cuban strike force invasion openly supported by the United States; and a joint American-Cuban invasion. Dismissing the option of a convert operation, the committee concluded an invasion would require strong Latin American public support beforehand, and the second option would require a surprise airstrike followed by an invasion force of 5,000; however, this option *would not guarantee* the overthrow of the Castro regime.[21] Lastly, before definitive planning could progress the incoming Kennedy Administration would need to address the following issues:

> (a) the use of U.S. air bases for strikes before and after D-Day, (b) staging of the invasion force, possibly from the U.S., (c) specific action, including timing, to get support of other Latin American countries, (d) how and when to recognize a provisional government, [and] (e) the possibility of having to provide considerably more overt support than originally planned.[22]

Eisenhower did not prepare Kennedy for success when he authorized the CIA to expand its planning beyond a covert operation. While the CIA had not presented a formal briefing for presidential scrutiny, decision, and guidance, Kennedy likely assumed Eisenhower had approved the basic proposal. Eisenhower's strategic objective and desired strategic effects were not clearly articulated (the process has not reached that point yet). Without these, proper strategy formulation could not proceed. At this point, Eisenhower allowed the CIA to create paramilitary capabilities for a nonexistent strategy. Further, diplomacy had failed to achieve OAS support and assistance for the proposal; and a unified government-in-exile under a recognized leader had yet to form, depriving any possible strategy of an informational capability. It is likely that Eisenhower intended the Cuban operation to remain strictly covert, as he had pursued in Iran and Guatemala.

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[21] Staff Study Prepared in the Department of Defense, "Evaluation Of Possible Military Courses Of Action in Cuba (S)," January 16, 1961, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d19, 31 January 2013.

[22] Memorandum Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency, "Special Group Meetings—Cuba," January 19, 1961, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d23, 31 January 2013.

A covert operation entailed little risk if it failed but high payoff if successful. However, Eisenhower never articulated his caveats to Kennedy during the transition.

Kennedy Administration Planning of the Invasion

In the process of dismantling the Eisenhower NSC mechanism, the Kennedy Administration also dissolved the Special Interdepartmental Working Group, the 5412 Committee, and the WH/4 Task Force. Realizing it had acted too broadly, the White House reinstated the 5412 Committee and the WH/4 Task Force in February 1961, but their involvement in the subsequent planning process was diminished.[23]

In a 25 January 1961 meeting with President Kennedy, Lemnitzer explained that Soviet arms and Cuban security measures had secured Castro's hold on power and facilitated Cuba's exportation of revolution in Latin America. He then outlined the broad features of the anti-Castro project to include a provisional government under a charismatic leader, an invasion force acting in concert with guerrillas, and areas of U.S. support.[24]

The following day, the CIA provided its concept of the operation to the White House: 1) the strike force would secure a beachhead with an airfield, permitting the insertion of the provisional government; 2) the size of the invasion force would suffice to hold the lodgement area for two-to-four weeks and would trigger widespread uprisings; 3) though the invasion alone would not topple the Castro regime, U.S. recognition of the provisional government might encourage OAS intervention and lead to elections. In order to gage the strength of Cuban resistance and

[23] Memorandum for the Record, "Cuban Meeting on 28 January 1961," 28 January 1961, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d31, 17 February 2013; Taylor Report, Part I, Memorandum 1, JFKL, 4.

[24] Memorandum of Conference with President Kennedy, January 25, 1961, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d26, 17 February 2013.

gather more intelligence on the Castro regime, the CIA was conducting "softening up activities," viz., "infiltration of teams, maritime resupply, sabotage, extension of agent communication nets, and air resupply and leaflet missions."[25] The JCS followed up the CIA memorandum with its own assessment (JCSM 44-61, 27 January) to Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, outlining courses of action in increasing order of intensity: economic and political pressure, supporting internal uprisings, covert U.S. support to the strike force invasion, covert support of the guerrilla operation, overt support of the strike force invasion, a joint U.S.-Latin American intervention force, and a unilateral U.S. invasion force. Unfortunately, McNamara misplaced the top secret document and did not read JSCM 44-61.[26]

At the 28 January 1961 White House meeting, Secretary of State Dean Rusk assessed that the CIA proposal had scant chance of overthrowing the Castro regime and that OAS support was a prerequisite for U.S. overt intervention. According to Tracy Barnes' notes:

> Should a strike force effort be made against Cuba, State clearly would want such an effort to obtain a fairly sizable piece of Cuban real estate with an ability to hold it in order to enable a provisional government to be identified and recognized and in order to provide territory from which such provisional government could operate against the Castro regime. . . . There was some discussion of the possibility of using the Cuban strike force as a guerrilla force. Such use would be an alternative to a strike force landing and would assume the use of a greater number of teams and a much longer term approach to the problem.[27]

Based on these discussions, Kennedy requested the JCS conduct a formal assessment of the CIA proposal, including its chances of success. Lemnitzer agreed to do so, but said in his opinion,

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[25] Memorandum Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency, "Cuba," January 26, 1961, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d27, 17 February 2013.

[26] Memorandum From the Joint Chiefs of Staff to Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, "JCSM-44-61: U.S. Plan of Action in Cuba," January 27, 1961, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d28#fnref2, 17 February 2013; Pfeiffer, *Volume IV: The Taylor Committee Investigation of the Bay of Pigs,* 89; Taylor Report, Part I, Memorandum 1, JFKL, 6.

[27] Memorandum for the Record, "Cuban Meeting on 28 January 1961," 28 January 1961; Editorial Note, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d32, 17 February 2013.

while the Cuban strike force could seize a small beachhead, "no force of 600 to 800 men is adequate for success . . . that final planning will have to include agreed plans for providing additional support for the Cuban force—presumably such support to be [the United States]."[28] Kennedy thereupon directed the State Department to develop a plan to isolate the Castro regime in conjunction with Latin American countries and the OAS. To this end, Kennedy said he was willing to use his office to secure the commitment of Latin American leaders.[29]

Inauspiciously, the JSC assessment was hampered by the CIA's obsession with secrecy. Led by Major General David Gray, the JCS assessment team discovered the CIA would not provide it a written plan; instead six CIA officers briefed the team verbally over several hours at a CIA facility. Despite this encumbrance, the team was able to piece together the concept for study. From their notes, the team produced a 25-page Trinidad Plan, named after the city located in the Las Villas province (to include the Escambray Mountains). The CIA confided that the Cuban strike force was still a cadre force, but expected "local volunteers" would double its size "within four days." Hence, the logistics package would need to include thirty thousand rifles to arm the local volunteers.[30]

On 3 February 1961, the JCS issued its assessment (JCSM 57-61) of the CIA concept, which identified Trinidad as the invasion site. By now, the strength of the strike force had grown to 826 combatants, organized into a battalion headquarters company, four rifle companies (one was airborne), one heavy weapons company, and one tank platoon. The air contingent comprised

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[28] Memorandum of Discussion, "Memorandum Of Discussion On Cuba," January 28, 1961, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d30, 17 February 2013.

[29] Ibid.

[30] The team comprised Major General Gray, an Army colonel tactics specialist, a Marine colonel logistics specialist, an Air Force B-26 specialist, and an Army intelligence officer who had served in Cuba. Wyden, 88-89, 92.

17 B-26 bombers, 10 C-54 transports, and 5 C-46 transports.[31] The JCS found the Trinidad invasion site sufficiently remote to secure a beachhead with an airfield, estimating Castro's security forces would need two-to-four days to deploy to the area, and longer to conduct a deliberate attack. The terrain would allow the strike force to seal off the landward approaches to the lodgement area, and the strike force could make contact with local resistance groups and egress to the Escambray Mountains if forced to abandon the beachhead. The planned airstrikes against the Cuban air force and other military facilities on D-1 and D-Day favored success due to surprise. The plan did suffer from defects though. The sea movement to Cuba was inherently complex, requiring precise planning, centralized command and control, and fourteen days advanced notice to D-Day. In order to assure proper loading of supplies and troops on the transport ships, an additional week was necessary, making a total of 21 days advanced notice. While the amphibious landing plan appeared "feasible," the off-loading and stockpiling of supplies in the beachhead would be problematic. In fact, the JCS concluded logistical issues were the weakest part of the plan and noted that a "detailed analysis of logistics plans should be made by a team of Army, Naval, and Air Force officers." Another issue of concern was the inability to secure the rear area of the beachhead (i.e., civilians, sabotage, traffic control, prisoners, etc.) since all the combatants were needed for the frontlines.[32] JCSM 57-61concluded,

> Since [the] objective . . . is dependent on a degree of popular support and success of the political, psychological part of this plan rather than on purely military factors, success of this part of the mission cannot be definitely assured, but it is estimated [to have] a fair chance of

[31] Memorandum From the Joint Chiefs of Staff to Secretary of Defense McNamara, Para-Military Study Group Taylor Report, Part III—Annex 9, JCSM-57-61, Military Evaluation of the Cuban Plan, 3 February 1961, Papers of the President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box 61 A (Overflow), JFKL; Pfeiffer, *Volume IV: The Taylor Committee Investigation of the Bay of Pigs,* 149-150; Taylor Report, Part I, Memorandum 1, JFKL, 5.

[32] "JCSM-57-61: Military Evaluation of the Cuban Plan," JFKL.

success.[33]

While Major General Gray was uncomfortable about assigning an estimate of success, Lieutenant General Earle Wheeler (Director of the Joint Staff) pressed him, so Gray wrote "fair," meaning only a thirty percent chance of success. He lamented not including this percentage in JCSM-57-61 because it led to so much misunderstanding in the Kennedy Administration. After reviewing JCSM-57-61, Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Arleigh Burke considered the CIA project "weak" and "sloppy," and was frustrated that secrecy prevented a detailed study of the primary CIA documents. Moreover, the plan lacked a logistics annex, which was a crucial planning factor.[34]

Rather than discussing JCSM-57-61 at the NSC, Kennedy directed that an ad hoc, interagency deputies meeting review the concept on 7 February 1961. Unfortunately, the participants did not deliberate on the strengths and deficiencies noted by the JCS, but rather settled on the conclusion that the plan had a fair chance of success. Curiously, the chairman, Adolf Berle (Chief of Department of State Latin American Task Force), did not know that Trinidad was the invasion site and said he did not want to know it. As the lone voice of dissent, Assistant Secretary of State Thomas Mann took issue with the U.S. covert stance. He felt that once the invasion occurred, "the United States Government would have to underwrite the success of the venture even if it meant the employment of U.S. naval and military forces." He also stated that the overt nature of the operation required the United States to garner OAS support prior to the invasion. The meeting notes concluded:

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[33] The objective was to "hold a beachhead long enough to establish a provisional government, act as a rallying point for volunteers and a catalyst for uprisings throughout Cuba." "JCSM-57-61: Military Evaluation of the Cuban Plan," JFKL.

[34] "JCSM-57-61: Military Evaluation of the Cuban Plan," JFKL; Wyden, 89, 89 n, 92; Taylor Report, Part I, Memorandum 1, JFKL, 7.

> Mr. Berle announced that since differences of opinion still existed as to what course of action should be recommended to the Secretary and the President, it would be necessary for him and Mr. Mann to take their differences to the Secretary for consideration. Mr. Goodwin then remarked that the President had made it quite clear that if there were unresolved differences of opinion on the Cuban problem, the persons concerned should come to the President's office and in his presence orally set forth their arguments for his consideration and eventual decision.

Despite the policy split, Berle recommended approval of the plan to the President and the Secretary of State making the following points: 1) expeditious execution of the invasion is necessary while the Cuban military is weak; 2) U.S. overt support is unnecessary because the strike force can egress to the Escambray Mountains and hold out there indefinitely; 3) the invasion will "attract popular support" which might not be available once Castro's civil control takes effect; and 4) Cuban jet pilot training in Czechoslovakia might conclude by the end of March, giving the Cuban air force a significant tactical advantage, so time is of the essence. While Berle did not present the policy splits to the President, McGeorge Bundy gave Kennedy an overview of this meeting, warning of the differences of opinion, particularly Mann's objections.[35]

At the 8 February 1961 White House meeting with the President, CIA Deputy Director for Plans Richard Bissell briefed the CIA plan and JCS assessment, stating the JCS had concluded "this plan had a fair chance of success—'success' meaning ability to survive, hold ground, and attract growing support from Cubans. At worst case, the invaders should be able to fight their way to the Escambray and go into guerrilla action." Bissell added that due to the complexities associated with an amphibious landing, a decision to invade needed to be made 21 days in advance of D-Day. Wary, Kennedy urged the CIA to find alternatives to a conventional amphib-

[35] Memorandum for the Record, "Meeting on Cuba, February 7, 1961, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d38#fn2, 22 February 2013; Memorandum From the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy) to President Kennedy, February 8, 1961, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d39, 22 February 2013.

ious landing, preferring instead a covert infiltration of forces into the mountains and suggesting he favored the guerrilla approach. The President also wanted the formation of a "small junta" of Cuban leaders to accompany the Cuban infiltrators.[36] Here was an opportunity for the President to initiate a discussion on the original concept of infiltrating guerrilla cadres into resistance areas. He never questioned the reasons behind the CIA's rejection of Eisenhower's original project. Kennedy wanted both a covert operation and decisive (read quick) results, but the two were incompatible; and the CIA, which certainly knew better, never called attention to the contradiction.

During this period, Kennedy often received conflicting advice in meetings and individually. In an 11 February 1961 memorandum, White House Special Assistant Arthur Schlesinger cautioned Kennedy about a military adventure in Cuba:

> However well disguised any action might be, it will be ascribed to the United States. The result would be a wave of massive protest, agitation and sabotage throughout Latin America, Europe, Asia and Africa (not to speak of Canada and of certain quarters in the United States). Worst of all, this would be your first dramatic foreign policy initiative. At one stroke, it would dissipate all the extraordinary good will which has been rising toward the new Administration through the world. It would fix a malevolent image of the new Administration in the minds of millions.[37]

Adolf Berle, apparently taking Thomas Mann's stance, continually urged the President in meetings and memoranda that American prestige as a great power dictated overt U.S. action:

> At the first meeting I suggested that the United States, instead of acting covertly, should act as a great power. Since Castro's government was no longer in the OAS, Lleras Camargo's observation that Castro could not claim the benefits of immunity as an American agreements government against intervention at the time that he denounced the system and violated all its principles and obligations. The rights of these treaties automatically lapse under those circumstances. In any event, it was an attack. Neither the Cuban people nor the United States nor any other country has given up its capacity to act when a member of

[36] Memorandum of Meeting With President Kennedy, February 8, 1961, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d40, 22 February 2013.

[37] Memorandum From the President's Special Assistant (Schlesinger) to President Kennedy, February 11, 1961, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d43, 22 February 2013; Wyden, 97.

the regional collective security group becomes an aggressive enemy of that group.[38]

At one point, National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy complained to Dean Rusk of officials privately inundating the President with advice on Cuba, "if there is a serious difference of view he [Bundy] would like the people to come over and argue with him."[39]

Taking advantage of his exclusive access to the White House, Bissell submitted a new CIA paper to McGeorge Bundy on 17 February 1961, reviewing the security situation in Cuba and reaffirming Kennedy's guidance to exclude an American invasion of Cuba. He offered three alternatives: 1) "Intensification of economic and political pressures coupled with continued covert support of sabotage and minor guerrilla actions but excluding substantial commitment of the Cuban opposition's paramilitary force;" 2) "Employment of the paramilitary force but in a manner which would not have the appearance of an invasion of Cuba from the outside;" and 3) "Commitment of the paramilitary force in a surprise landing, the installation under its protection on Cuban soil of the opposition government and either the rapid spread of the revolt or the continuation of large scale guerrilla action in terrain suited for that purpose." Dismissing the first two options, Bissell strongly suggested the third option offered the greatest chance of success:

> The Joint Chiefs of Staff have evaluated the military aspects of the plan for a landing by the Cuban opposition. They have concluded that "this plan has a fair chance of ultimate success" (that is of detonating a major and ultimately successful revolt against Castro) and that, if ultimate success is not achieved there is every likelihood that the landing can be the means of establishing in favorable terrain a powerful guerrilla force which could be sustained almost indefinitely. The latter outcome would not be (and need not appear as) a serious defeat. It would be the means of exerting continuing pressure on the regime and would be a continuing demonstration of inability of the regime to establish order. It could create an opportunity for an OAS intervention to impose a cease-fire and hold elec-

[38] Berle Interview, JFKL, 38; Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Mann) to Secretary of State Rusk, "The March 1960 Plan," February 15, 1961, , accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d45, 25 February 2013.

[39] Memorandum of Telephone Conversation Between the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy) and Secretary of State Rusk, February 3, 1961, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d34, 17 February 2013.

tions.

He added that while U.S. involvement would be suspected, proving it would remain difficult, and most Latin American countries would approve of the operation tacitly as long as U.S. support remained covert. Ultimately, quick success would mitigate any associated political costs to the United States.[40] Bundy immediately forwarded the paper to Kennedy, expressing his approval of Bissell's recommendation.[41]

Bissell's influence on Kennedy and his advisors colored their acceptance of his plan. A highly confident and accomplished debater, Bissell commanded through long association the awesome respect of the Bundy brothers, the Rostow brothers, Schlesinger, and Rusk among others in the Administration. These attributes coupled with Kennedy's open admiration of Bissell's intellect made him a dominant figure in the Kennedy inner circle.[42] Hence, no one openly questioned Bissell's optimism regarding the plan's likely success. Moreover, Bissell's mania with secrecy and compartmentalization of information forestalled debate on his plan. Without the Special Interdepartmental Working Group, it was up to Bissell to sort out the various implications whenever Kennedy made alterations to the plan. In the end, the operational details became too complex for him to handle, and his obsession with secrecy created confusion in the minds of Kennedy and his principal advisers regarding the soundness of the plan.

Rusk had a role in altering important parts of the plan as well, but by operating behind the

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[40] Paper Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency, "Cuba," 17 February, 1961, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d46, 27 February 2013.

[41] Memorandum From the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy) to President Kennedy, February 18, 1961, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d47, 27 February 2013.

[42] While Bissell warned the senior officials present "to discount his bias" during his briefing, Schlesinger and the rest "all listened transfixed . . . fascinated by the workings of this superbly clear, organized and articulate intelligence." Schlesinger, 241; Bissell impressed the Kennedy Administration by his ability to cut through bureaucracy and having a reputation of getting things done quickly. Kennedy said Bissell was "probably one of the four or five brightest guys in the whole administration." Cited in Wyden, 12-15, 17-19, 45, 95-97.

scenes and influencing Kennedy in more subtle ways. Though Rusk rarely expressed himself during meetings, evidence suggests he was not in favor of the anti-Castro project in any form—overt or covert. It appears he wanted to limit U.S. involvement to reduce the political fallout if the operation failed, specifically the use of air power because he considered it too overt. Hence, Rusk was the likely culprit behind Kennedy's alterations of the plan.

In the meantime, at the request of Dulles at an 8 February 1961 meeting, the JCS sent a team to Guatemala to assess the combat effectiveness of the Cuban Brigade and Cuban Volunteer Air Force, including an analysis of the logistics plan. The resulting 10 March 1961 assessment (JCSM-146-61) concluded that while establishing a beachhead would likely succeed, *ultimate success would depend on the invasion triggering anti-Castro uprisings*. From a military standpoint, the Cuban Brigade and air contingent were tactically competent, motivated, and well-led. The invasion forces had limited logistical expertise however, so the JCS recommended the assignment of a U.S. logistics specialist for logistical training. Remarkably, in view of the number of communist agents and sympathizers near the Guatemala training camp and airfields in Guatemala (Retalhuleu) and Nicaragua (Puerto Cabezas), JCSM 146-61 judged the planned airstrikes had about a 15 percent chance of achieving surprise, in which case, elements of the Cuban air force would likely survive and wreak havoc on the invasion force. To compensate, the assessment recommended expanding the target list to include four communication centers, interdiction targets (e.g., bridges and defiles), and targets of opportunity during the invasion. The JCS also urged McNamara to press the President for a decision because of the required 21-day lead-time, the restlessness of the Cubans for action, and the approach of the rainy season. The invasion force now comprised a Brigade Headquarters (116 men), four rifle companies (varying from 109 to 162 men each), a 4.2 in mortar battery (6 mortars), a 75 mm recoilless rifle battery (3

guns), and a tank battalion (25 tanks) with five tanks currently training at Fort Knox, Kentucky.[43] Oddly, the potential compromise of surprise elicited no concern among the CIA planners.

A supplemental assessment (JCSM-149-61) proposed the covert waterborne insertion of a 162-man company into the Trinidad area to precede the invasion by 24-48 hours. The company would include the 32 guerrilla trained cadre as well as an element of the provisional government to establish political legitimacy. The company would seize dominate terrain two miles northeast of the landing site, and revert to guerrilla operations upon the landing of the Cuban Brigade. The JCS concluded this operation would be successful, and the pending formation of a logistics company would mitigate logistical deficiencies and serve as a reserve force in the beachhead.[44]

One positive development was the FRD's election of the Revolutionary Council on 10 March 1961, comprising six members who crafted a political program for the post-Castro government. On 21 March, the Revolutionary Council selected Miro Cardona as the official leader.[45] On the other hand, the effort to persuade Latin American states to isolate Castro diplomatically failed, even though most of the governments quietly feared the Cuban regime.

On 11 March 1961, Bissell requested an impromptu meeting with Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, McNamara, Rusk, Mann, Berle, Dulles, McGeorge Bundy, William Bundy, Major General Gray, and Colonel B.W. Tarwater to discuss the latest CIA revision, which outlined four

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[43] Memorandum From the Joint Chiefs of Staff to Secretary of Defense McNamara, "JCSM-146-61: Evaluation of the CIA Cuban Volunteer Task Force," March 10, 1961, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d56, 23 July 2012; Taylor Report, Part I, Memorandum 1, JFKL, 8.

[44] Memorandum From the Joint Chiefs of Staff to Secretary of Defense McNamara, "JCSM-149-61: "Evaluation of Proposed Supplementary Phase, CIA Para-Military Plan, Cuba," March 10, 1961, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d57, 17 April 2012.

[45] Paper Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency, "Status Of Efforts To Form A Provisional Government Of Cuba," March 10, 1961, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d54, 27 February 2013; Memorandum From the Assistant Deputy Director (Plans) for Covert Operations (Barnes) to Director of Central Intelligence Dulles, "Political Events," March 21, 1961, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d69, 2 March 2013; Berle Interview, JFKL, 39.

courses of action: 1) infiltration of the entire paramilitary force at night into the Escambray Mountains as a guerrilla force, sustained by aerial resupply; 2) an airborne and amphibious landing of the entire Cuban Brigade accompanied by the provisional government and under the protection of tactical air support so as to trigger an uprising, or failing that, shifting to the Escambray Mountains to initiate guerrilla warfare; 3) landing a diversionary force of 160 fighters into a remote region, followed 48 hours later by an amphibious landing of the strike force as outlined in the second option; and 4) destruction of the Cuban air force followed by an amphibious landing into an inaccessible area, U.S. recognition of the provisional government, and a slow build-up of forces leading to a break-out. Bissell recommended option three as having "the best chance of achieving the desired result."[46]

Upon conclusion of the presentation, Kennedy rejected Bissell's recommendation for an overt amphibious landing as "too spectacular," likening it to a "World War II invasion." Kennedy rejected Trinidad as well because it was too conspicuous, and the airfield ostensibly did not support B-26 bombers, undermining plausible deniability.[47] Bissell inferred that Kennedy wanted a site that supported a covert landing that had easily defensible terrain for a gradual build-up of forces, that had geography conducive for guerrilla warfare, and that included a B-26 usable airfield so as to give credence to the story that the Cuban defectors were operating out of it. Above

[46] Paper Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency, "Proposed Operation Against Cuba," March 11, 1961, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d58, 28 February 2013; Editorial Note, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d59, 28 February 2013.

[47] Dulles remarked that disbanding the Cuban Brigade would present some political problems because the Cuban volunteers would claim Kennedy had lost his nerve and was not committed to rolling back communism in Cuba. According to Taylor, the search for alternative landing sites was Kennedy's attempt to make the best out of a set of poor options. Taylor Report, Part I, Memorandum 1, JFKL, 9; Rasenberger, Kindle e-book.

all, the parameters of the operation must provide deniability of U.S. involvement.[48]

Remarkably, Kennedy's decision was not preceded by meaningful discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of the Trinidad plan or the basis for changing the landing site. According to the Taylor Report, the plan was fully discussed in the NSC, but the setting was more of a briefing with questions focused on the basic plan rather than an overview of possible landing sites, a task the CIA should have presented much earlier. When Kennedy directed the CIA to study alternative sites, no discussion took place on the implications of changing the landing site at this late stage in the planning.[49] No discussion occurred on the President's basic assumptions regarding the operation. An invasion of this scale could not remain covert for long, regardless of the remote location and use of darkness. Taylor reached this same conclusion in his report. "This effort to treat as covert an operation which in reality could not be concealed or shielded from the presumption of U.S. involvement raised in due course many serious obstacles to the successful conduct of the operation."[50] Remarkably, few advisers believed in the U.S. plausible deniability scheme. Too much evidence of U.S. involvement was evident—the U.S. B-26 variants, the landing craft, the cargo ships, CIA recruitment in Miami, and the training camp and airfields in Guatemala and Nicaragua. If the Trinidad plan truly hinged on a B-26-usable airfield, a bit of research would have revealed its suitability. Built in 1957, the Trinidad airfield had a 4,000 foot, hard-surfaced runway from as early as 1957 and was listed in 1960 as "one of the seven major civilian airfields of Cuba." This information was readily available from the CIA National Intelli-

[48] Wyden, 100; Pfeiffer contends that Kennedy and Rusk actually dictated the change in plans. Pfeiffer, *Volume IV: The Taylor Committee Investigation of the Bay of Pigs,* 32 n; In an earlier meeting with Esterline, Rusk thought Trinidad was too overt and rejected it because the airfield was too short for B-26 bomber usage. Esterline told Rusk he thought that was an "idiotic suggestion" and was excluded from later meetings with Rusk. Esterline Interview, 37, 50-51, 142.

[49] Taylor Report, Part I, Memorandum 1, JFKL, 10.

[50] Ibid, 8.

gence Surveys, which regularly published technical information on runways from the "*Airfields and Seaplane Stations of the World*, a joint publication of the USAF and the USN." Since the Cuban B-26 pilots trained on 4,000-foot runways in Retalhuleu, Guatemala, this feature was not a constraint.[51]

Angry, Esterline and Hawkins felt the rejection of Trinidad was "ridiculous," because the B-26 bombers were too slow and limited in range, and the size of the invasion was too large to remain a secret. Moreover, establishing command and control in Washington instead of a command ship off-shore under Hawkins made no operational sense. In short, "the politicians were wrong to reject this idea; by pruning away at the operation, they were making it technically impossible to win." While Bissell agreed with them philosophically, too much time and effort had gone into the project and convinced them to stay on.[52]

After the meeting, Bissell began revising the new parameters based on Kennedy's guidance: 1) "An Unspectacular Landing," of small group infiltrations at night without air support; 2) "Base for Tactical Air Operations," operating within the lodgment area and resembling an insurgent force; 3) "Slower Tempo," designed for a progressive increase of forces and U.S. recognition of the provisional government before breaking out of the beachhead; and 4) "Guerrilla Warfare Alternative," reverting to guerrilla warfare if the defense of the lodgment area failed.[53]

Consequently, Bissell and WH/4 scrambled to find a suitable, alternative invasion site,

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[51] Pfeiffer, *Volume IV: The Taylor Committee Investigation of the Bay of Pigs*, 33, 33 n, 240.

[52] Esterline did not work on the new landing site at Zapata but thought it might have been Hawkins and the Paramilitary staff. When he saw the new plan, he did not think it would work, since it had shifted to a conventional military operation. This entailed a change in parameters, in which the brigade would need to create and sustain a bridgehead with adequate air cover and destroy the Cuban air force. If this was successful, it might energize the indigenous resistance groups. Esterline Interview, 40-41, 51-52; Wyden, 160.

[53] Paper Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency, "Revised Cuban Operation," March 15, 1961, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d61, 1 March 2013.

submitting a joint CIA/JCS working group study on 15 March 1961 to the JCS.[54] After studying five potential locations, the CIA recommended the Bay of Pigs site in the Zapata province. Bissell proposed a three-part operation: 1) an unopposed landing to seize key terrain and an airfield, the off-loading of initial supplies at night, and the withdrawal of all transport ships over the horizon before daybreak; 2) the following morning, the staging of combat aircraft in the airfield to conduct airstrikes and the landing of cargo aircraft with supplies; 3) with the beachhead secure from attacks for the initial 24-48 hours, the transport ships would return to off-load heavy weapons (i.e., tanks) and supplies. Once sufficient combat power had massed, a breakout supported by tactical air support would commence. Bissell remarked that U.S. recognition of the provisional government and perhaps additional support could occur when conditions permitted. One disadvantage noted was that the remoteness of the site prevented the Cuban resistance from joining the Cuban Brigade. Bissell concluded the operation would minimize but not eliminate international suspicions of U.S. involvement.[55]

The 15 March 1961 JCS evaluation (JCSM-166-61) of the new landing site agreed with the CIA that the Bay of Pigs was the best of the alternative sites. However, JCSM-166-61 clearly stated that the JCS considered the original paramilitary plan (Plan Trinidad) as the most feasible and likely to accomplish U.S. objectives. The JCS conclusions were confusing though. The JCS rejection of the Trinidad site rested on the inadequate airfield (erroneous), which precluded the staging of B-26 bombers. Additionally a night landing would be daunting. Without due scrutiny,

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[54] The WH/4 Paramilitary Staff provided its revised study to the JCS Working Group on 14 March, which submitted the joint plan to the JCS on 15 March. Taylor Report, Part I, Memorandum 1, JFKL, 10.

[55] Bissell rejected the other sites "because of unfavorable geography (notably the absence of a suitable air strip) or heavy concentrations of enemy forces, or both." "Revised Cuban Operation," March 15, 1961, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d61, 1 March 2013; The airfield at Playa Giron was about the same length (4,100 feet) as Trinidad's. Pfeiffer, *Volume IV: The Taylor Committee Investigation of the Bay of Pigs*, 32.

it appeared the JCS had rejected the original plan, despite its caveat. Taylor noted that McNamara did not understand the JCS position, and neither Kennedy nor his principal advisors questioned the reasons for the JCS judgment.[56] On the one hand, the JCS assessed the Bay of Pigs met the President's parameters for a clandestine landing, an available airfield, and the possibility of expanding the operation. The remoteness of the landing site and restricted terrain favored the creation of a bridgehead. On the other hand, Cuban resistance groups would have difficulty joining the invasion force; the attitudes of the local populace were unknown; and the restrictive terrain militated against a breakout.[57] Given the new landing site's distance from the Escambray Mountains (75 miles), the guerrilla option was not possible and applied only to the Trinidad Plan, but this option was never discussed for the Zapata Plan.[58] The JCS might have added that given the time constraints, the Bay of Pigs could not receive the same exhaustive analysis as the Trinidad site. General Wheeler recalled that the Joint Staff, augmented by Army Engineer planners, had in fact made a general survey of all the beaches in Cuba in addition to Trinidad. Because the CIA had selected Trinidad, the staff extensively studied its beaches, the accessibility of the Escambray Mountains from the invasion site, and other relevant issues. However, with the change in landing sites, no such survey was possible for the Bay of Pigs.[59]

The subsequent White House meetings on 15, 16, 17, and 29 March 1961 finalized the plan. In preparing the President for the 15 March meeting, Bundy explained that the planners had

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[56] Taylor Report, Part I, Memorandum 1, JFKL, 11; According to Pfeiffer, while the JCS did not outright disapprove the Zapata Plan, it assessed the Trinidad Plan was "more likely to accomplish the objective." Pfeiffer, *Volume IV: The Taylor Committee Investigation of the Bay of Pigs,* 33, 41.

[57] Memorandum From the Joint Chiefs of Staff to Secretary of Defense McNamara, "JCSM-166-61: Evaluation of the Military Aspects of Alternate Concepts, CIA Para-Military Plan, Cuba," March 15, 1961, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d62, 19 July 2012.

[58] Pfeiffer, *Volume IV: The Taylor Committee Investigation of the Bay of Pigs,* 38; Esterline thought Schlesinger confused the guerrilla option with the Trinidad plan. Esterline Interview, 30-31.

[59] Earle G. Wheeler Oral History Interview—JFK #1 by Chester Clifton, 1964 (JFKOH-ERGW-01) JFKL, 22.

concluded the destruction of the Cuban air force was essential to success and said the initial air strikes could originate from Nicaragua without political risk. Kennedy approved the Zapata Plan on 16 March. Nevertheless, he reserved the right to cancel the operation as late as 24 hours prior to the landing. While the President had earlier emphasized the capability to extract the invasion force if needed, on 17 March he changed his mind, concluding if the venture failed no extraction would occur because there was no place to take the survivors. During the course of discussions, "it was emphasized that the plan was dependent on a general uprising in Cuba, and that the entire operation would fail without such an uprising." When pressed by the President on the probability of success, Admiral Burke replied, "about 50 percent."[60] But Burke had not personally studied the plan in detail, so his answer can only be described as an impromptu guess.

At the 29 March meeting, the question of extracting the invasion force was raised again. In reply to the President's question whether the invaders could "fade into the bush" if the venture failed, Bissell said the force would require extraction. Lemnitzer noted that the idea was to extract the force and land it elsewhere in Cuba. Kennedy approved Bissell's proposal for a diversionary landing to draw off Castro forces from the Bay of Pigs area. Finally, for reasons of secrecy, Kennedy agreed the Cuban commanders and the Frente would not be informed of the invasion until just before D-Day, which was rescheduled for 10 April from the original 5 April date, and subsequently rescheduled again for 17 April.[61]

The rush to develop an alternative plan resulted in oversights in planning details. The fact

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[60] Memorandum From the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy) to President Kennedy, "Meeting on Cuba, 4:00 PM, March 15, 1961," March 15, 1961, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d64, 2 March 2013.Editorial Note, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d65, 2 March 2013; Editorial Note, website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d66, 2 March 2013.

[61] Editorial Note, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d74, 2 March 2013.

that Zapata was 75 miles away from the nearest resistance groups in the Escambray Mountains should have given pause regarding flexibility in the plan. The remoteness and isolation of the Bay of Pigs militated against a landing sparking a general uprising. Aside from the easily attainable information on airfields, the CIA also failed to consult hydrographic charts and current maps of the Bay of Pigs area. Consequently, they were not aware of off-shore coral reefs, which acutely disrupted landing craft access to the beaches, delaying the withdrawal of ships and making them vulnerable to air attacks on D-Day.[62] Coincidentally, the Bay of Pigs was Castro's favorite fishing spot, and he knew the area well. Castro had also transformed the area into a resort, endearing the locals to the regime and unlikely to welcome the invasion forces. In contrast to the proximity of the two Trinidad landing sites, the three beaches at Bay of Pigs were spread over 16 miles.[63] While none of these details by themselves warranted a change of plans, in aggregate they weighed against success. For the Pentagon, the fact the President had failed to commit to the decision signaled ambiguity, and the military loathes ambiguity.

In the meantime, a small interagency working group was formed on 21 March 1961 to coordinate the implementation of the Zapata Plan, officially called "Bumpy Road."[64] The working group comprised Major General Gray serving as the chief, Daniel Braddock from the State Department and Barnes for the CIA.[65] With very little time before execution of the new plan, hundreds of details needed attention. Undaunted, the working group produced a tasking paper on

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[62] Esterline Interview, 58; When briefed on the landing sites, a few Cubans pointed out the coral reefs from the imagery. The briefers knew the point of no return had passed, and hence ignored their warnings. Wyden, 136-138.

[63] No guerrillas had operated in Zapata for over fifty years. Wyden, 103-107, 134.

[64] The CIA name for the operation was "Crosspatch." On 1 April, the official name for the entire operation became "Bumpy Road." Memorandum From the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Lemnitzer) to the Commander in Chief, Atlantic (Dennison), "SM-363-61: 'Bumpy Road,'" April 1, 1961, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d76, 3 March 2013.

[65] Editorial Note, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d71, 2 March, 2-13.

23 March to integrate and coordinate the various activities of the departments, an accomplishment which Taylor highlighted in his report, stating "this paper was the first successful action to formulize the interdepartmental coordination which up to this point had depended largely upon ad hoc committees and meetings at Presidential level."[66]

Following a 30 March memorandum to the President, Senator William Fulbright met with Kennedy and his principal advisors on 4 April to make his case against the invasion. His salient points were that U.S. involvement could not be concealed, the FRD was tenuously cobbled together, the invasion violated standing treaties and U.S. laws, and the scheme undermined U.S. moral values and its international standing vis-à-vis the Soviet Union.[67] After Fulbright finished, Kennedy asked his principal advisors whether they supported or opposed the invasion—without deliberation—a simple "yes" or "no." Placed on the spot and devoted to supporting the President, they voted in the affirmative. Afterwards, the participants found the manner in which Kennedy ran the meeting wholly unsatisfactory, especially the exclusion of discussion. Rusk in particular felt it an affront that his opinion had the same weight as the other participants. Nevertheless, the participants suppressed their doubts and clung to irrational hope. Because the meeting was inconclusive, each participant walked away with differing impressions. Rusk thought Kennedy would cancel the invasion, but regardless, he felt it was too late to voice dissent now. Bissell was certain the invasion was on.[68] Schlesinger was not so sure, so he wrote two memoranda asking Kennedy to consider the ramifications of the invasion. Evidently, Schlesinger's concerns were giving the President second thoughts, so Robert Kennedy stepped in on 11 April

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[66] Taylor Report, Part I, Memorandum 1, JFKL, 13.
[67] Wyden 122-123, 146-150, 162.
[68] Editorial Note, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d80, 4 March 2013.

1961 to bring Schlesinger back in line. After listening to Schlesinger's concerns, Robert said, "You may be right and you may be wrong, but the President has made up his mind. Don't push it any further. Now is the time for everyone to help him all they can."[69] When Kennedy informed him of the Cuban plan, Dean Acheson thought it was "a disastrous idea," saying he "did not think it was necessary to call in Price Waterhouse to discover that 1,500 Cubans weren't as good as 25,000 Cubans." Acheson dismissed the idea because it was too bizarre.[70]

Subsequent meetings on 5 and 6 April 1961 focused on the ruse of Cuban pilot defections, the simultaneous D-2 airstrikes, and the diversionary landing of a guerilla group at Pinar Del Rio (western Cuba), which would also stage an uprising on D+5. Rusk remarked that the "plan was as good as could be devised." Kennedy concluded the meeting by stating the "objective" was U.S. plausible deniability in the invasion. According to Major General Gray's notes:

> The President questioned whether or not a preliminary strike wasn't an alarm bell. The President also asked as to the last date on which he could delay or cancel the operation, and he was told 16 April. He wanted to know what he could do if the operation was called off and was told by Mr. Bissell that the plan was to divert the force to Vieques [Puerto Rico].[71]

At this point, the CIA and the JCS voiced opposition to the D-2 airstrikes because they were less decisive and reduced the element of surprise as opposed to a massive D-Day air attack, but Kennedy's desire for non-attribution overrode their dissent.[72] Accordingly, Lemnitzer issued the operations order to naval forces supporting the invasion with a projected D-Day of 17 April. U.S.

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[69] Memorandum From the President's Special Assistant (Schlesinger) to President Kennedy, "Cuba," April 5, 1961, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d81, 5 March 2013; Memorandum From the President's Special Assistant (Schlesinger) to President Kennedy, "Cuba: Political, Diplomatic and Economic Problems," April 10, 1961, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d86, 5 March 2013; Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 259.

[70] Dean G. Acheson Oral History Interview – JFK #1, Interview by Lucius D. Battle, April 27, 1964 (JFKOH-DGA-01-TR), JFKL, 13-14.

[71] Editorial Note, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d83, 5 March 2013; Editorial Note, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d84, 5 March 2013.

[72] Taylor Report, Part I, Memorandum 1, JFKL, 13.

escort destroyers would move ahead of the Cuban Expeditionary Force (CEF) but would remain over the horizon, viz. just out of sight. The invasion craft would rendezvous twenty miles off of Cuba at 5:30 pm, D-1 with U.S. Navy combat air patrols providing a security umbrella.[73]

As a result of these discussions, the CIA presented the modified plan on 12 April 1961. As the President had directed, the massive D-Day airstrike was replaced by two airstrikes: the D-2 (15 April) airstrike, designed to look like the work of Cuban defectors; and the D-Day airstrike, designed to look like the B-26 bombers emanated from the invasion site airfield. Instead of one deception force, two would be used: the first under Nino Diaz would land on D-2 in the Oriente province (eastern Cuba), followed a week later by another in Pinar Del Rio (western Cuba). The CEF would land under the cover of darkness at three separate, widely spaced beaches. In conjunction with the invasion, CIA operatives would encourage defections within the Cuban military and police. Support to resistance groups would resume as the invasion unfolded. Multiple propaganda broadcasts would begin flooding the airwaves with calls for an uprising. The six leaders of the FRD would be briefed at an appropriate time of the invasion and be transported into Cuba to form a provisional government. Only one of the six (Manuel Artime) would accompany the invasion force. Still, the President withheld final approval even as the CEF and U.S. naval escort were speeding towards the rendezvous point.[74]

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[73] Memorandum From the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Lemnitzer) to the Commander in Chief, Atlantic (Dennison), "CM-179-61: 'Bumpy road,'" April 7, 1961, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d85, 5 March 2013.

[74] Paper Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency, "Cuban Operation," April 12, 1961, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d93, 7 March 2013; Editorial Note, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d92, 5 March 2013; Telegram From the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Lemnitzer) to the Commander in Chief, Atlantic (Dennison), "JCS 468-61. Exclusive for Admiral Dennison, General Lemnitzer sends," April 13, 1961, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d96, 7 March 2013; Telegram From the Director of the Joint Staff (Wheeler) to the Commander in Chief, Atlantic (Dennison), "JCS 469-61. Exclusive for Adm Dennison, Gen Wheeler sends. Operation Bumpy Road con-

13 and 14 April were pivotal days for the invasion. In light of Kennedy's persistent procrastination, Colonel Hawkins traveled to Guatemala to assess the tactical capabilities of the CEF. His 13 April cable assessed that the Cuban forces were highly trained, well-equipped, confident, and motivated. Regarding both the CEF and air force as good as their American counterparts, Hawkins exuded confidence that the 1400-man CEF would accomplish its tactical objectives and succeed in overthrowing Castro. His laudatory assessment impressed Kennedy so much, he gave the final approval, which is odd since Hawkins' assessment was the same as the JCS team's in JCSM-146-61 (3 February 1961).[75] Schlesinger and Berle met with Miro Cardona, the leader of the Revolutionary Council to inform him U.S. forces would not support the invasion, and U.S. recognition of the provisional government would not be immediate. While Cardona was disappointed by this news, he remained optimistic, declaring 10,000 Cubans would join the CEF immediately.[76]

On 14 April 1961, Kennedy called Bissell and gave his final approval for the D-2 airstrikes. Then astonishingly, he asked how many B-26s were involved. When Bissell replied 16, the President balked and told him to scale the numbers down. In compliance, Bissell reduced the number to eight B-26s, which dutifully attacked the three target airfields at dawn on 15 April.[77] Despite the vastly reduced B-26 numbers, the 16 April U-2 imagery showed that the airstrikes had destroyed or rendered inoperative about 18 of the 36 combat aircraft. The imagery also re-

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tingency planning," April 13, 1961, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d97, 7 March 2013.

[75] Memorandum Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency to General Maxwell D. Taylor, April 26, 1961, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d98, 7 March 2013; Both the President and his brother Robert said Hawkins cable was the single most important factor in convincing Kennedy to go ahead with the operation. Wyden, 168-169, 169 n.

[76] Memorandum From the President's Special Assistant (Schlesinger) to President Kennedy, "Conversation with Dr. Miro Cardona," April 13, 1961, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d101, 7 March 2013.

[77] Kennedy's question was odd since the number of B-26s involved had been discussed in numerous meetings. Wyden, 170; Rasenberger, Kindle e-book.

vealed that the remaining aircraft had not been dispersed in the aftermath and hence were still vulnerable to the planned airstrikes on D-Day.[78] Despite the earlier concerns of JCSM 164-61, not only had surprise been achieved, the Cuban air force had not scattered—a phenomenal piece of luck. Curiously, during the battle damage assessment briefing at the JCS Operations Center, McNamara directed the U.S. Air Force provide more B-26s to the Cubans, the staging of equipment (tanks and armor personnel carriers) in open support of the provisional government, and the training of Cuban recruits on the equipment. When the service chiefs said this contradicted the President's proscriptions, McNamara replied a successful invasion would override the restrictions.[79]

Unfortunately for the next phase of the operation, Clausewitzian friction became a factor. Earlier in the week, the Administration had misled U.S. Ambassador to the UN Adlai Stevenson into believing the airstrikes came from Cuban defectors. He therefore proclaimed to the UN General Assembly that the United States was not involved.[80] Distraught when he learned the defection strikes were part of the CIA's deception plan, Stevenson complained to Rusk that the Administration had placed him in an uncomfortable position at the UN. This deception had a profound impact on the second phase of the airstrike plan when Deputy Director of Central Intelligence General Charles P. Cabell called Rusk late on the afternoon of 16 April to confirm the D-Day airstrikes. In view of Stevenson's dilemma and Kennedy's desire for plausible deniability,

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[78] The remaining Cuban aircraft included six Lockheed T-33 jet trainers armed with machine guns and rockets, six British Sea Furies, and six B-26s. Rasenberger, Kindle e-book.

[79] On 15 April, the Joint Chiefs of Staff established the "Bumpy Road" Operations Center to monitor the operation. Editorial Note, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d102. 7 March 2013; Memorandum for the Record, "General Gray's Briefing for DOD [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] Operations," April 16, 1961, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d107, 8 March 2013.

[80] Editorial Note, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d104, 7 March 2013.

Rusk called Kennedy around 6:20 pm to revisit the D-Day airstrikes. Kennedy appeared surprised that a second round of airstrikes was scheduled, stating, "I'm not signed on to this." Consequently, and despite vehement remonstrations later that evening from Cabell, Bissell, and Hawkins, Kennedy directed the D-Day airstrikes delayed until the CEF had seized the airstrip at the invasion site. The cancellation of the D-Day airstrikes also affected a vital part of the invasion, for it spared the microwave communications centers on the target list, permitting Castro to alert and coordinate the movement of his forces to the invasion beaches.[81] Adding to the friction, the planned diversionary landing in Oriente province by 164 guerrillas under Nino Diaz failed on the morning of 15 April 1961 because the force could find no place to infiltrate without being discovered. Hence, no Castro forces were drawn away from the invasion area.[82]

The Invasion

Placing the Cuban army and militia on alert following the D-2 airstrikes, Castro began rushing infantry, artillery, and tanks towards the Bay of Pigs as soon as he learned of the initial landings at 1:30 am, 17 April 1961. For the invasion forces, delays and damage to the landing craft as a result of the coral reef in front of the main landing at Blue Beach (Playa Giron) significantly delayed the landing, causing the cancellation of the landing at Green Beach five miles to the east. The availability of only eight flimsy boats (all but two sank) delayed the disembarkation of the battalions designated for Red Beach (Playa Larga), eighteen miles to the left (north) of Blue Beach.

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[81] Schlesinger, 273; Rasenberger, Kindle e-book; Bissell contended that had Dulles been in Washington D.C. rather than Puerto Rico, he would have convinced the President to permit the airstrikes. Bissell, 195-196.

[82] Wyden, 170-172, 17s n; Editorial Note, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d102. 7 March 2013; Taylor Report, Part I, Memorandum 1, JFKL, 15.

Unable to off-load all of the troops and little of the supplies before dawn, the cargo ships were still present in the bay at dawn, exposed to Castro's air force, which appeared at 6:30 am. In short order, two Cuban combat aircraft sank two cargo ships with a large portion of the CEF's ammunition, vehicles, and communications equipment, damaged another cargo ship severely, and shot down several CEF B-26s which were providing tactical air support. The appearance of Castro's air force also disrupted the airborne operation, which was to seize the causeways through the swamps. As a result, Castro's forces were able to advance through the swamps north of Red Beach before encountering opposition, just a few miles from the shore. Withdrawing to a rendezvous point twelve miles south of the Bay of Pigs, the four surviving cargo ships were to come under the protection of U.S. naval air. However, Kennedy withdrew that support, leaving the freighters vulnerable to air attacks. While two cargo ships held their position, staving off the air attacks, the other two ships completely left the area. As a result, none of the cargo ships ventured forth to unload supplies to the beleaguered CEF ashore. Though the CEF fought valiantly and inflicted heavy losses on Castro's troops, the lack of reserve ammunition caused the beachhead to collapse by the second day.[83] U.S. involvement could not be denied at this point, but Kennedy refused to intervene, leaving the Cuban Brigade in the lurch. When briefed on the full extent of the disaster, Eisenhower noted in his diary on 5 June 1961: "If this whole story is substantially correct, it is a very dreary account of mismanagement, indecision, and timidity at the wrong time." The story behind the Bay of Pigs should be called a "Profile in Timidity and Inde-

[83] Wyden, Chapter Six passim; Rasenberger, Part IV passim, Kindle e-book; Report by Grayston Lynch of the Central Intelligence Agency, "After Action Report on Operation [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*]," May 4, 1961, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d109; After Action Report, "Mr. Robertson's Report of Activities on Barbara J," May 4, 1961, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d110; Editorial Note, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d112; Editorial Note, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d116. Accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS, 8 March 2013; Rasenberger, Kindle e-book.

cision."[84]

Conclusion

The Bay of Pigs failure reveals a breakdown in strategic thinking due to the dismantlement of the NSC mechanism and replacement with informal structures. The CIA never presented Kennedy with a strategic appraisal: 1) to articulate national interests and their level of intensity; 2) to assess information in terms of known, unclear, and presumptions; and 3) to identify the key strategic factors for the development of strategy. Since the CIA controlled the information and turned the informal meetings into command briefings, it was difficult for Kennedy to continue the strategic appraisal with his key advisors. Sufficient information was available and dissenting views were often expressed, but Kennedy never brought everyone together in a formal NSC meeting to debate the pros and cons of the CIA plan. Even when Senator Fulbright expressed his opposition to the invasion in a special meeting, Kennedy did not open the issue up for debate. Eisenhower believed the breakdown was due to poor organization:

> Organization in the Executive branch provides the means for performing systematically, promptly, and accurately the research and related work essential to the orderly presentation to the President of all the pertinent facts and calculations which he must take into account in making a sound decision on any issue. Thereafter, it assures that his decision is communicated to and essential resulting action is coordinated among the appropriate agencies.
>
> Good organization provides for the allocation of authority and fixing of responsibility in each echelon of the entire establishment. Inefficient functioning of governmental organization, bringing about indecision and untimely counterorders, was apparently part of the cause for the 1961 Bay of Pigs fiasco.[85]

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[84] Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The Eisenhower Diaries*, ed. Robert H. Ferrell (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1981), 389-390.

[85]Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Waging Peace* (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1965), 631; Bissell was also convinced the dismantlement of the NSC mechanism and the Staff Secretariat was the ultimate cause of the debacle. The normal lines of communication were severed, and the NSC staff was unable to perform the normal review, analysis, and coordination of the planning process. Consequently, differences of views and doubts regarding the operation's success were never properly aired. Bissell, 197.

According to Admiral Burke, Kennedy's management style led to "a complete breakdown of channels," with the President constantly making changes to the plan and giving "conflicting orders given to different people. There was an unreasonable amount of secrecy involved so that people who should have known about the operation didn't know it."[86] General Maxwell Taylor noted that limited JCS participation made it "impossible to follow the development of the Cuban plan." Without adequate access to the documents, "there was always doubt in the minds of the participants in the planning as to where the plan stood at any given moment. It was constantly changing, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff were . . . trying to keep abreast of the status of the plan but apparently unable to react in time to be able to apply effective influence in its shaping."[87]

Kennedy accepted Eisenhower's strategic objective of replacing the Castro regime with a friendly government. The desired strategic effects were a democratic Cuba, which did not foment revolutionary warfare in the western hemisphere.

CIA dominance of the strategy formulation process undermined the practice of strategic thinking through the five competencies. Here, the White House violated the principle of separating policy from operations by having the CIA formulate both policy and plans. This mistake had the greatest impact on critical thinking, in which Kennedy accepted the CIA plan with little reflective skepticism.[88] While he privately expressed doubts regarding the presumption that the invasion would trigger a mass uprising in Cuba, he did not air it for discussion in meetings. Fur-

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[86] Arleigh A. Burke, Oral History Interview with Arleigh A. Burke: 1 of 4, Interview by John T. Mason Jr., Columbia Oral History Interview November 14 1972 (OH-284), DDEL, 218;

[87] Maxwell D. Taylor Oral History Interview - JFK #1 by Elspeth Rostow, Fort Meyer, VA, 12 April 1964, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library (JFKOH-MDT-01), JFKL, 8-9.

[88] Reeves wrote that Kennedy "never questioned whether or not the CIA knew what it was doing, and no one on his staff or in his cabinet or on the Joint Chiefs of Staff had any direct responsibility for the project. Kennedy himself never even saw the paperwork." Reeves, "The Lines of Control Have Been Cut;" Wyden, 99; Thomas A. Lane, *The Leadership of President Kennedy* (Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, LTD, 1964), 26-27.

ther, his uncritical acceptance of the CIA plan hindered his ability to keep an open mind to other ideas as well as the potential multi-ordered effects of a failed invasion and U.S. involvement. Kennedy exacerbated an already defective strategy by becoming too involved in tactical details, selecting landing sites, the timing of the operation, and even the number of aircraft and airstrikes, rather than maintaining a holistic view of the strategy.[89] This mindset created the conditions for groupthink to dominate meetings.[90]

Kennedy did apply systems thinking though. He understood that Soviet support to Cuba represented an existential threat to the United States, particularly if Cuba served as a base for Soviet military operations. Moreover, Cuba represented a threat to Latin America by fomenting revolution. He instinctively favored a covert operation with no apparent U.S. involvement because domestic and international opinion would view an overt U.S. intervention as aggression, thereby subverting the UN and international rule of law. He recognized that OAS support, even if tacit, was essential to the desired strategic effects. He deduced that an overt invasion could endanger the security of Western Europe if the Soviet Union used the invasion as a pretext for an attack on Berlin. Logically, covert support of a Cuban insurgency seemed an obvious choice. Accordingly, the Administration could have considered invoking the Monroe Doctrine to isolate Cuba diplomatically, economically, and militarily. In the end, Kennedy's instincts proved correct; once plausible deniability unraveled, the Administration's international standing suffered, while Castro's prestige soared. Predictably, the Soviet Union sensed weakness in Kennedy's resolve and redoubled its assistance to Cuba.

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[89] Lane, *The Leadership of President Kennedy*, 30; Pfeiffer contended that the White House became a quasi-operational headquarters when the President denied follow-on airstrikes so as to maintain non-attribution. Pfeiffer, *Volume IV: The Taylor Committee Investigation of the Bay of Pigs*, 75; Rasenberger, Kindle e-book.

[90] Irving L. Janis, *Groupthink*, 2d ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1982), 14-47.

Creative thinking suffered during the planning of the Cuban operation. Because he did not preside over formal meetings to debate the pros and cons of the CIA plan and strategy alternatives, he did not fully recognize the flaws in the CIA plan and did not remain open to novel solutions. He did not consider alternative solutions for the attainment of the strategic objective, nor did he consider the efficacy of the strategic objective. Eisenhower bears some responsibility because he had elevated regime change to a strategic objective rather than one of many strategy options. Forestalling Soviet assistance to Cuba or containment of Cuba were also viable strategic objectives, but Eisenhower never considered them during the strategic appraisal process. This approach would have opened a greater range of strategies for consideration. For instance, support to a protracted insurgency would have remained covert and would have forced Castro to concentrate on defending his regime rather than causing instability in Latin America.

Kennedy did not apply thinking in time to consider historical analogues. He could have drawn on the decision-making process leading to World War I, in which senior policy makers became mutual hostages to alliances, mobilization plans, and obsolete strategies. Similarly, Kennedy felt compelled to proceed since he feared rejecting the operation would make him appear weak and indecisive. He might have considered the history of U.S. interventions in Latin America, which had led to authoritarian regimes and had caused lingering animosities with the United States. While U.S. support for the 1954 insurgency in Guatemala was casually referenced in meetings, the differences were stark. President Jacobo Arbenz was not a strong-willed leader like Castro, and he made no earnest attempt to resist the U.S. backed militants. The CIA knew Castro was of a different mettle but never raised this fact with Kennedy.

Similar to systems thinking, ethical thinking also impacted on Kennedy’s desire to keep the operation covert without conspicuous U.S. involvement. Domestic and international opinion

would not have accepted such an outright use of U.S. power, and as it turned out, the Kennedy Administration was lambasted by every quarter in the aftermath of the Bay of Pigs operation. Covert operations have ethical overtones, which is the reason Eisenhower retained personal control of them. Given their nature, the international community turns a blind eye to covert operations so long as they remain non-attributable; hence, covert operations are permissible, even if they are, in fact, unethical.

While Kennedy originally identified regime change as the strategic objective, it appeared at the 6 April meeting that his strategic objective mutated to plausible deniability. Kennedy clearly wanted a covert strategy, which is the reason he kept the CIA in charge, but once the CIA rejected a guerrilla campaign and pursued a pseudo covert, conventional invasion, requiring extensive logistics and air support, the strategy expanded beyond the CIA's competency and resources.[91] A conventional invasion was the bailiwick of the military and many in the military lambasted Kennedy for failing to assign the mission to the Defense Department.[92] However, even if the CEF had established a beachhead, Castro had an extensive advantage in manpower, equipment, weapons, and time. This strategy was doomed from the beginning. Castro merely accelerated the process by capitalizing on Kennedy's airstrike cancellation and by sinking the CEF cargo ships.[93]

Clearly the strategy was not feasible, acceptable, and suitable to achieve the strategic ob-

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[91] Burke Interview Four, January 12 1973 (OH-284), DDEL, 219, 221; Wyden, Chapter 3, passim.

[92] Taylor Report, Part I, Memorandum 1, JFKL, 11, 13; Para-Military Study Group Taylor Report, Part III—Annex 13, Briefing of JCS on "Bumpy Road" by General Gray, 4 May 1961, Papers of the President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box 61 A (Overflow), JFKL; Pfeiffer, *Volume IV: The Taylor Committee Investigation of the Bay of Pigs*, 58, 147; Richard Reeves, "The Lines of Control Have Been Cut," *American Heritage Magazine* 44, Issue 5 (September 1993), http:www.americanheritage.com/articles/magazine/ah/1993/, accessed 15 April 2011; Gray Interview, DDEL, 46; Burke Interview Four, January 12 1973 (OH-284), DDEL, 218-219; George H. Decker, Oral History Interview by Larry J. Hackman, September 19, 1968, JFKL, accessed at the website of the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum at http://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/Archives/JFKOH-GHD-01.aspx, 16 September 2013, JFKL, 10; Wheeler Interview, JFKL, 21.

[93] Bissell, 194-195.

jective. Hence, the capabilities could not support the strategy, and the strategy was not aligned with the strategic goal of regime change. Due to its unavoidable overt character, the strategy would have proven unacceptable to the public and international community.

Meeting with Eisenhower at Camp David on 22 April 1961, Kennedy confided, "Everyone approved—the JCS, the CIA, [and] my staff." When pressed, Kennedy admitted that the JCS had only given "guarded approval." Eisenhower asked, "Mr. President, before you approved the plan did you have everyone in front of you debating the thing so you could get the pros and cons yourself and then make a decision, or did you see these people one at a time?" Kennedy conceded that he did not call a formal meeting to discuss the invasion plan.[94] In this regard, Kennedy's failure is attributable to his dismantling of the NSC mechanism, which inhibited his ability to engage in strategic thinking, and his failure to separate policy planning from operations.

[94] Cited in Evan Thomas, *Ike's Bluff*, 406-407.

Chapter 7

The 1961 Berlin and 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis Case Study

The Kennedy Administration faced two genuine crises—Berlin in 1961 and the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962. Both crises were linked, with the Berlin crisis leading to the Cuban Missile showdown. As evidenced by both crises, the Kennedy Administration excelled at crisis management. Paradoxically, although Kennedy's informal advisory system hampered strategic thinking for national policy formulation, the President actually employed strategic thinking during crises, achieving a remarkable synergy during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

The Berlin Crisis

Like most crises, the Berlin question had deep roots, extending back to the outbreak of the Cold War and arguably one of the principal causes of it. The proximate cause of the 1948 Berlin Crisis was the Western powers' establishment of a unified currency in the western sectors of occupation so as to boost the German economy. This policy undercut Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin's designs to extend the post-war recession in order to foment civil unrest, undermine confidence in liberal democracy, and subvert western European governments. Stalin reacted by denying Western allies' access to Berlin, thereby prompting President Truman to conduct the Berlin Airlift from June 1948 to May 1949.[1] In June 1953, an uprising in East Germany over forced socialism policies was brutally repressed by Soviet and East German forces. Both the policies and subsequent repression led to massive emigration, known as the "brain drain." Due to

[1] Ironically, Stalin's machinations only served to undercut American isolationist opposition to entangling alliances, resulting in the U.S. Senate ratifying the European Recover Act and prompting the Truman Administration to begin talks on NATO. John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2005), 33-34.

the militarization of the East-West borders, East Germans began emigrating to the West through West Berlin.

Khrushchev inherited this situation in 1956 and attempted to resolve the problem by maneuvering the West out of Berlin. East German Communist Party General Walter Ulbricht continually pressured Khrushchev to take action, warning that if the current emigration rates continued, East Germany would have no choice but to join the West. Since it was politically impossible for Khrushchev to allow the secession of East Germany (the supposed model state of Soviet socialism), he threatened on 10 November 1958 to sign a separate peace treaty with East Germany, empowering the Ulbricht regime to force the West out of Berlin on the grounds it violated East German sovereignty.[2] Eisenhower replied that this proposal was a violation of the 1945 Potsdam protocol and Paris Agreement of 1949, and would refuse to recognize Eastern Germany as a sovereign state. Eisenhower recognized that Soviet rhetorical threats and intimidation were part of the Soviet strategy to disrupt the U.S. economy through continual military emergencies. Eisenhower framed the Berlin issue as part of the long term struggle and counseled patience, concluding that the appropriate response was firmness combined with a willingness to work with the Soviets reach a reasonable solution.[3] Hence, the Soviet Union remained accountable to any actions East Germany might take. Rather than risk a show-down with Eisenhower, Khrushchev bided his time until the Kennedy Administration came into power. In fact, Khrushchev promptly revisited

[2] Hope M. Harrison, *Driving the Soviets up the Wall: Soviet-East German Relations, 1953-1961* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, October 5, 2003).

[3] Henderson, 46-47; Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 329-349, 360; John S. D. Eisenhower, *Strictly Personal* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, INC., 1974), 211-231.

the Soviet-East Germany treaty in a January 1961 speech.[4]

In March 1961, Kennedy discussed the Berlin problem with Dean Acheson, who framed the issue as a test of wills, recommending no negotiation since Khrushchev would interpret it as a sign of weakness. He also supported the policy of nuclear retaliation should the Soviets use military force on West Berlin, a view shared by the State Department. He recommended that the United States increase its conventional and nuclear forces quietly and deploy two divisions to Europe to demonstrate resolve, regarding access to Berlin. If the Soviets attempted to cut access to Berlin, the United States should conduct an airlift, followed by a military movement to Berlin if the airlift proved unsustainable. In a subsequent discussion, Harvard Professor Henry Kissinger urged Kennedy to visit Berlin as part of his European trip in June 1961 to bolster NATO solidarity. In turn, Kennedy discussed the Berlin issue with British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, and Berlin Mayor Willie Brandt. While Kennedy listened to advice and reassured allies of U.S. resolve, he let the matter rest for the time being. But, he clearly wanted an option short of nuclear retaliation to resolve the Berlin issue and was clearly frustrated with the State Department's stance on automatic nuclear response, complaining "they never have any ideas over there, never come up with anything new."[5] McNamara felt the United States should respond first with conventional forces if a conflict over Berlin broke out, before resorting to massive retaliation. U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union Llewellyn Thompson framed the issue as a matter of national prestige and urged Kennedy to discuss ways for both sides to save face during the Vienna summit in June 1961.[6] During Kennedy's visit to Paris just

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[4] Robert Dallek, *Camelot's Court: Inside the Kennedy White House* (October 8, 2013), 180; Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 303; Freedman, 59.

[5] Cited in Dallek, *Camelot's Court*, 184.

[6] Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 380-383, Dallek, *Camelot's Court*, 181-186; Freedman, 62-64.

prior to Vienna, Charles De Gaulle counseled the President to remain firm and remind Khrushchev of the dire consequences if he tried to change the status quo by using force. While Kennedy considered De Gaulle's views self-serving, he was impressed with one bit of advice: "You can listen to your advisers before you make up your mind, but once you have made up your mind then do not listen to anyone."[7]

After the Bay of Pigs debacle, Khrushchev sensed an opportunity to force the West out of Berlin, viewing Kennedy as a weak leader who could be intimidated. At the June Vienna summit, Khrushchev ambushed Kennedy, browbeating him and threatening to sign once again a sovereignty treaty with East Germany within six months if the Berlin issue remained unsettled. Paradoxically, Khrushchev had little bargaining power given the tremendous U.S. advantage in strategic weapons, so he resorted to intimidation as his only foil. After the summit, Khrushchev concluded he had successfully cowed Kennedy, viewing the young President as "very inexperienced, even immature. Compared to him Eisenhower was a man of intelligence and vision." Though shaken from the ordeal, Kennedy was not intimidated, returning to the United States convinced a showdown over Berlin was imminent.[8]

Upon his return from Vienna, Kennedy informed congressional leaders of Khrushchev's conduct and threat to sign the peace treaty by the end of the year. He warned however, that a measured but firm refusal to change the status quo was called for. His televised speech to the nation underscored the U.S. obligations to defend Berlin regardless of Soviet intimidation.[9] While Kennedy gave little thought to Berlin prior to Vienna, he now directed his full attention to the

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[7] Cited in Dallek, *Camelot's Court*, 186-187.
[8] Cited in Dallek, *Camelot's Court*, 190, 194-195, 198; Freedman, 55, 58, 64.
[9] Dallek, *Camelot's Court*, 200-201.

issue, directing the formation of the Berlin Task Force as well as requesting separate studies from the government bureaucracy. But, Kennedy was frustrated by the Berlin Task Force's July memorandum because it was simply a rehash of the 1958 Berlin crisis, offering few insights. Divided by hawks and doves, the separate studies offered no innovative solutions to Berlin, merely advising military preparations and negotiations respectively.[10] In defense of the State Department though, Freedman pointed out that "the Foreign Service Officers who had been dealing with this problem for years and had seen ultimata come and go saw little wrong with a policy based on reiterating past positions. Moreover, these positions had been worked out with allies who would soon take umbrage at unilateral shifts in policy." As such, Rusk and his staff experienced difficulties with the White House as they sought to explain the essential roles of diplomacy, protocols, negotiations, the UN, and international law. Rusk, who had been engaged with the Berlin issue since 1945 believed the "best course was a firm resolve to outtalk the Russians rather than outfight them."[11]

Unconvinced, Kennedy sought more imaginative approaches from his advisers and outsiders (particularly Acheson) to develop viable options for resolving the Berlin crisis peacefully. As was his wont, he held small, informal meetings with his inner circle, the JCS, and NATO's Supreme Allied Commander General Lauris Norstad. As before, all advised the President to stand firm, though Acheson and the military advised an increase in military readiness, including a partial mobilization of the Ready Reserve, deployment of additional divisions to Europe, and a show-of-force convoy into Berlin along the Potsdam Treaty access routes. According to Robert Dallek, Kennedy became despondent over the advice he received: "No one seemed to have an-

[10] Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 383-384; Dallek, *Camelot's Court*, 201.
[11] Freedman, 64-65.

swers to any of the major problems that had descended on him so quickly. The only response to the mounting difficulties he could identify was to appear confident and hope for the best."[12]

As a result of internal pressure to take military action and Acheson's public criticism of the President's leadership, Kennedy held a press conference on 19 July 1961 followed by a presidential address to the nation on 25 July to announce the U.S. policy on Berlin. Kennedy made clear that the U.S. would honor its commitments to NATO and raise its military posture, but it would not be pressured into precipitous action, meaning the Administration would pursue diplomatic efforts. Aside from putting advisers and critics in their place, the address convinced the Soviets that Kennedy would not yield on Berlin.[13]

Promptly putting his words into action, Kennedy secured from Congress an increase of defense spending, funding for a civil defense program, a partial mobilization of the Reserve Ready Forces, and ordered on 18 August a U.S. brigade to "show the flag by traveling the 110 miles from West Germany to West Berlin," thereby reinforcing the U.S. military garrison.[14] Despite some fiery rhetoric, Khrushchev did not provoke a military showdown. Instead, and to Kennedy's surprise, Khrushchev ordered on 13 August 1961 the construction of barriers and checkpoints to stem the flood of East Germans pouring into West Berlin. When the U.S. government did not challenge the construction, Khrushchev ordered the construction of the Berlin

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[12] Acheson did not hold Kennedy or his circle of advisers in high regard, considering them "too young and inexperienced for the challenges they were facing." Cited in Dallek, *Camelot's Court*, 204-205, 221-222; Freedman, 65-70.

[13] Dallek, *Camelot's Court*, 221-224; Freedman, 70-71.

[14] Kenneth O'Donnell, *Johnny, We Hardly Knew Ye* (Boston: Little Brown, 1976), 350; Dallek, *Camelot's Court*, 226-227; Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 391, 396-397; Freedman, 80.

Wall.[15]

While Norstad and Berlin mayor Willy Brandt argued the Berlin Wall created "a crisis of confidence" on U.S. resolve, Kennedy judged that Khrushchev was backing off, musing to Special Assistant Kenny O'Donnell, "This is his way out of his predicament. It's not a very nice solution, but a wall is a hell of a lot better than a war."[16] Symbolically, the Berlin Wall underscored the repressive character of the Soviet Bloc: whereas the United States builds alliances to defend democracy, the Soviet Union builds walls to deny freedom to people—a stark contrast between the West and East.[17] While Acheson, de Gaulle, and Taylor warned against the hazards of negotiations, Dean Rusk, George Kennan, Robert McNamara, McGeorge Bundy, and Adlai Stevenson convinced Kennedy that U.S.-Soviet talks would ease tensions and might lead to a permanent solution of the Berlin problem. Rather than staking out a stance on German unification and free elections, which would likely prompt Khrushchev again to threaten a separate peace treaty with East Germany and threaten access to West Berlin, Kennedy prudently decided to accept tacitly the division of Germany without recognizing East Germany—a preservation of the status quo. Although the U.S.-Soviet negotiations in September 1961 yielded no breakthrough, as Kennedy had foreseen, they did restore calm. Consequently, Khrushchev ended the immediate crisis in a 17 October 1961 speech to the 22d Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, announcing he would not sign "a peace treaty absolutely before December 31, 1961."[18] Avoiding the extreme solutions of military confrontation and withdrawal from West Berlin, Kennedy took the middle course of patient steadfastness, thereby frustrating Khrushchev's attempts at intimidation and

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[15] Dallek, *Camelot's Court*, 225; Kennedy also had McNamara organize an expeditionary force in the United States comprising six Army and two Marine Corps divisions. Freedman, 70, 73-74, 77.

[16] Cited in O'Donnell, 350

[17] Dallek, *Camelot's Court*, 225-226; O'Donnell, 350.

[18] Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 399-400; Dallek, *Camelot's Court*, 227-228.

giving him room to retreat without losing face. For Kennedy, the important lesson of Berlin was that some crises have no silver bullet solutions. In the Cold War struggle, preserving the status quo through containment in Europe served U.S. vital interests, and avoiding a general war was the key to eventual success.

While negotiations over Berlin continued into March and April 1962 without result, Khrushchev elected to pursue a different stratagem to gain bargaining leverage over the United States on Berlin. In April 1962, the Soviet Union decided to deploy secretly intermediate and medium range nuclear missiles (i.e., 24 IRBMs from 16 permanent launch sites and 36 MRBMs from 24 launch sites) to Cuba to offset the U.S. strategic balance. Khrushchev planned to announce this fait accompli at the UN in November 1962, showing that the United States would no longer be in a secure position to threaten a nuclear response to preserve the status quo of Berlin. Moreover, assuming the Administration accepted the presence of the missiles, U.S. allies would likely question the credibility of U.S. obligations. Prestige also factored into Soviet reasoning. With the failure of their economic policies, the rivalry with China, and pressure from their East German allies over Berlin, the Soviets needed a resounding success and were willing to take the gamble.[19]

On 12 April 1962, the Soviet Presidium approved the delivery of military assistance to Cuba, to include 180 SA-2 surface-to-air missiles (SAM), coastal defense cruise missiles, trainers, and a motorized rifle regiment. Since this military package was known to the Americans, the

[19] Revising their 1971 book in 1999 to reflect recently declassified documents and tape transcripts, Allison and Zelikow thoroughly examined the crisis using three models for analysis: Model I—the Rational Actor; Model II—Organizational Behavior; and Model III—Governmental Politics. Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 2d Edition (New York: Longman, Inc., January 29, 1999). Kindle e-book.

Soviets hoped to slip the missiles into Cuba. Authors Graham Allison and Phillip Zelikow discounted the narrative that the deployment of these nuclear weapons was designed to enhance Cuban defenses, judging Khrushchev's decision as "impulsive." The missiles did not enhance deterrence on Cuba that much since the Soviet military assistance package and the Russian contingent served both defensive and deterrent purposes.[20] Of significance, Kennedy did not believe the Soviets were trying to alter the strategic balance per se; rather he believed the missile deployment was linked to Soviet designs on Berlin.[21] While Castro was reluctant to have Cuba serve as a military base for the Soviet Union, assurances from Khrushchev to deter a U.S. invasion convinced him to support the Soviets out of socialist solidarity.[22]

On 21 and 24 May 1962, Khrushchev decided to enlarge the Soviet contingent in Cuba, prioritizing the delivery and installment of the SAM sites first, in order to deter U-2 over-flights. Coincidentally, during the summer of 1962, CIA Director John McCone had ordered U-2 surveillance flights over Cuba in support of Operation Mongoose (i.e., the U.S. covert operation to subvert the Castro regime). Accordingly, the CIA reported that Soviet vessels were transporting Soviet soldiers, technicians, and large-sized equipment into Cuba in late July.[23] Suspicious, McCone briefed Kennedy on 13 August that the Soviets were installing SA-2 surface to air missiles (SAM) sites.[24] While the State Department argued the SAMs were defensive in nature, McCone countered that SA-2s were designed to target high altitude aircraft like the U-2 and must be in Cuba to cover the presence of high value weapons, such as nuclear missiles. McCone

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[20] Nevertheless, the Soviets planned to transform Cuba into a major strategic base to include a submarine port for eleven submarines, which included seven SLBM submarines. Allison and Zelikow, Kindle e-book.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Freedman, 162-163.

[23] Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 338-339.

[24] Ibid, 339.

surmised that Soviet medium- and intermediate-range nuclear missiles were the likely weapons given the proximity of Cuba to the United States.[25] Roger Hilsman remained skeptical of McCone's assessment since it was uncorroborated intelligence, resulting from secondary sources, or as he referred to as "'Guess what my cousin saw'" intelligence.[26]

Equally skeptical, Rusk and McNamara reasoned that Khrushchev might act erratic at times but deploying nuclear weapons into Cuba was too provocative and risky, an act quite out of character for the Soviets. The Soviets, they argued, had not even deployed nuclear weapons in Eastern Europe despite the proximity, so it would be highly unlikely they would do so on a distant ally's territory. Moreover, having a show-down in Cuba defied military logic since the United States commanded a tremendous geographical and military advantage there.[27]

Despite mounting evidence from McCone's subsequent reports and an NSC study group's conclusion that the Soviets were attempting to match the U.S. defense build-up, as well as McCone's assessment that a Soviet deployment of tactical nuclear missiles would offset American ICBM superiority, Kennedy remained unconvinced.[28] After all, The 22 August CIA Current Intelligence Memorandum provided no hard evidence other than the arrival of Soviet heavy equipment and technicians, so McCone stood alone in his assessment.[29]

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[25] Ibid, 339, 340.

[26] Ibid, 340.

[27] Dean Rusk and Robert McNamara discounted McCone personally as an alarmist, whose fervent anti-communist views tainted his judgment. Moreover, he was likely distracted by his upcoming marriage and simply leaping to conclusions without due analysis. Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 340; Allison and Zelikow, Kindle e-book.

[28] Numerous spies and Cuban refugees were reporting seeing vehicles towing ballistic missiles. Allison and Zelikow. Kindle e-book; Kennedy directed Rusk, McNamara, McCone, and Lyman Lemnitzer to form a study group for the purpose of determining how the U.S. defense build up was driving the Soviet national strategy. Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 340-342.

[29] Memorandum From the President's Special Assistant (Schlesinger) to the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy), August 22, 1962 with attachment, Central Intelligence Agency, "Recent Soviet

Rather than challenge Khrushchev directly regarding the meaning of this activity, Kennedy issued instead NSAM 181 on 23 August, ordering various actions and studies. Accordingly, the Pentagon began preparing three plans for military action if missiles were discovered.[30] When U-2 imagery on 29 August confirmed SA-2 sites under construction, the Kennedy Administration deliberated over the next six weeks on the meaning of the military build-up, while closely monitoring Soviet activities in Cuba.[31] Kennedy sought to keep his options open and to gain greater clarity of the situation rather than rushing to judgment. Kennedy prudently did not wish to provoke a showdown with Russia until more facts were in.[32] He opted not to acknowledge publicly the growing crisis because public knowledge would limit his options, give ammunition to critics, and possibly imperil his party during the congressional mid-term elections in November.[33] Moreover, Kennedy delayed more definitive action due to Khrushchev and Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin's personal assurances that Soviet intentions in Cuba were purely defensive, that they would never do anything to risk a general war, and that they would not bring up

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Military Aid to Cuba," *Current Intelligence Memorandum*, dated 22 August 1962, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d383, 17 June 2014; Freedman, 164; Dallek, *Camelot's Court*, 288.

[30] One of the studies (OPLAN 312) focused on destroying nuclear-capable installations with airstrikes. The other two studies (OPLANs 314 and 316) focused on invasion variants. National Security Action Memorandum No. 181, August 23, 1962, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d386, 17 June 2014; Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 342-343; Allison and Zelikow. Kindle e-book; Freedman added that Kennedy instructed the Pentagon to "find a way of getting Jupiter missiles out of Turkey." Freedman, 164.

[31] McCone reiterated that the SA-2s were likely for the protection of high value weapons. The CIA and State Department estimated that 5,000 Soviet troops were now in Cuba; whereas in reality more than 40,000 Soviets were in Cuba by that time. Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 343, 345; Allison and Zelikow. Kindle e-book.

[32] Kennedy had read Barbara Tuchman's *The Guns of August* and noted how the European powers had rushed into a devastating war in 1914 without assessing other options. Dallek, *Camelot's Court*, 320.

[33] Domestic political pressures in late August were forcing Kennedy to respond publicly to the alleged Soviet build up, which had the effect of limiting his political maneuver room with the Soviets. This pressure mounted as intelligence leaks and partisan speeches began alarming Americans to the dangers of the Soviet build up. Kennedy may have become distracted by the politically oriented criticism. Reeves, 344-345; Dallek, *Camelot's Court*, 293.

the Berlin issue again before the November elections.[34]

It was not until 4 September 1962 that Kennedy issued a public statement confirming the presence of SA-2s and around 3,500 Soviet military technicians, but he emphasized there was no evidence of surface-to-surface nuclear missiles (which was accurate since the first MRBMs did not reach Cuba until 8 September, and their nuclear warheads arrived on 4 October) or combat troops in Cuba (which was inaccurate since four motorized rifle regiments with 250 combat fighting vehicles were now deployed in Cuba for a total of 40,000 soldiers and technicians).[35] However, Kennedy made it clear the United States would not permit nuclear weapons in Cuba. In response to Kennedy's statement, Khrushchev reinforced the military assistance package with 80 nuclear armed coastal cruise missiles and 12 tactical nuclear missiles (FROGs)—unbeknownst to the Administration until late in the crisis—to shore up the defenses of Cuba.[36] The heightened Soviet military activity in Cuba concerned Kennedy, so he met with the JCS on 14 September to discuss airstrike plans.[37]

Paradoxically, the Soviet troops manning the nuclear missile sites did not camouflage the sites because this was not part of their standard operating procedures and did not try to hide the missiles in the woods due to the oppressive heat and mosquitoes within. Thus, they remained in plain sight.[38] When U-2 imagery on 14 October revealed indisputable evidence of the MRBM

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[34] Allison and Zelikow. Kindle e-book; Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 346; Dallek, *Camelot's Court*, 291.

[35] A total of 144 SA-2s operated out of 24 sites (six launchers per site) were operational by 9 October. Allison and Zelikow. Kindle e-book; Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 347; Freedman, 163, 175.

[36] Aside from the Soviet ground contingent, the military package included 42 IL-28 medium bombers (armed with six nuclear bombs), 42 MiG-21 jet fighters, additional SAMs, and 12 patrol boats. Only seven IL-28s were assembled by the end of the crisis. Allison and Zelikow. Kindle e-book.

[37] Ibid.

[38] According to Allison and Zelikow, Castro accepted the intermediate nuclear weapons because he felt it would help rectify the U.S.-Soviet military balance. Ibid; Freedman contends Castro's acceptance of nuclear missiles was contingent on Soviet defense guarantees should the United States discover the missiles. Freedman, 163.

sites, the Kennedy Administration realized it faced a volatile crisis.[39] Ironically, the Soviet SAM crews did not fire at the U-2 because their orders were to fire only at combat aircraft, an oversight which frustrated Khrushchev's best-laid plans. Kennedy and his advisers were both surprised and nonplussed as to why the Soviets would take such a dangerous risk, especially after Kennedy had demonstrated strong resolve during the Berlin crisis.[40]

The Kennedy Administration immediately organized for crisis management for what became known as the Cuban Missile Crisis (16-28 October 1962). Janis assessed that the Administration had applied the lessons of the Bay of Pigs to the Cuban Missile Crisis, precluding the development of groupthink in the decision-making process. After several days of deliberations, the White House established the formal Executive Committee (EXCOM) on 22 October 1962.[41] The unique feature of the crisis was the degree it focused the energies of the EXCOM participants. Diverging from normal White House practices, the EXCOM encouraged dissension, skepticism, and candor within the expanded group of advisers.[42] Hence, the EXCOM successfully sought imaginative solutions through vigilant appraisal and much argument—at times heated argument. Incidentally, the Soviets were not aware of the U.S. discovery of the MRBMs until 22

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[39] Due to political pressure, Kennedy authorized the U-2 mission, believing it would prove that McCone and Republican critics were wrong regarding the nature of the Soviet build-up. When the photos revealed the missile sites, Kennedy and his principal advisers were shocked. Kennedy exclaimed Khrushchev "can't do that to me!" Cited in Dallek, *Camelot's Court*, 293.

[40] Nor did the SAMs fire on the 15 and 17 October over-flights. Allison and Zelikow. Kindle e-book; Henderson, 267.

[41] Establishment of an Executive Committee of the National Security Council, "NSAM 162," 22 October 1962, accessed on the website of DOSOH, FRUS at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v11/d42, 26 September 2014; Allison and Zelikow. Kindle e-book.

[42] According to Janis, the EXCOM comprised President Kennedy, Secretary Dean Rusk, Secretary Robert McNamara, Assistant Secretary Paul Nitze, and Special Assistant for National Security McGeorge Bundy. Other key members included Attorney General Robert Kennedy, JCS Chairman Maxwell Taylor, Vice President Lyndon Johnson, Special Assistant Theodore Sorensen, CIA Director John McCone, Assistant Secretary Roswell Gilpatric, Assistant Secretary George Ball, and Ambassador Llewellyn Thompson. Irving L. Janis, *Groupthink*, 2d ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1982), 134; Allison and Zelikow recorded that the core group consisted of 32 officials. Allison and Zelikow. Kindle e-book.

October, so they had no crisis management arrangement in place.[43]

EXCOM members were instructed to act as skeptical generalists instead of functional experts so as to adopt a broader view for policy options. The EXCOM sometimes broke into two subgroups to study different aspects of a policy option and then reassembled to debate it. Robert Kennedy or Dean Rusk chaired meetings because the President wished "to avoid undue influence on the way his advisers conceptualized a problem."[44] Bundy acted as devil's advocate to keep all options open for discussion, although many thought he offered erratic advice. Rusk managed the deliberative decision-making process and ensured Kennedy made no hasty decisions due to JCS pressure. Robert Kennedy also opened a daily back channel with Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin in order to gage Soviet intentions and to pass communications to the Kremlin. The President extended the EXCOM to outsider experts and allowed junior officials to voice their opinions in meetings to ensure they were not stifled by bureaucratic protocols.[45] As the crisis unfolded the EXCOM consulted select congressmen to keep them apprised of developments and available options. Other EXCOM teams worked on the diplomatic initiatives to gain the support of the Organization of American States (OAS), as well as interested European and African countries.[46]

While the President and many EXCOM members initially considered airstrikes to destroy the missiles, they decided to expand their range options in order to explore every alternative and contingency (i.e., branches and sequels). The options were broadly cast as military action, dip-

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[43] According to Allison and Zelikow, the 19 "Soviet decsionmakers 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." Allison and Zelikow. Kindle e-book; Dallek, *Camelot's Court*, chap. 8 passim.

[44] Janis, 142.

[45] Adlai Stevenson, Robert Lovett, and Dean Acheson were invited to a few White House meetings but did not participate in the EXCOM. Allison and Zelikow. Kindle e-book; Dallek, *Camelot's Court*, 332-333.

[46] Janis, 144-147; Allison and Zelikow. Kindle e-book.

lomatic pressure, and naval quarantine.[47] Variants within each option helped the EXCOM refine graduated responses to the crisis. Six military variants included graduated airstrikes as follows: missile sites only; expanding to aircraft; expanding to SAMs, cruise missiles, and patrol boats; expanding to all military assets except tanks; and finally expanding to all military targets throughout Cuba as a prelude to military invasion. After initial consideration, the EXCOM ruled out surprise airstrikes because such a move contradicted U.S. strategic values (i.e., a Pearl Harbor in reverse), but it retained the military option if diplomacy failed to compel the Soviets to remove the missiles. Still, the military option (surprise or not) was seen as an action of last resort since it risked Soviet retaliation on Berlin, possibly escalating into general war.[48] In light of the Soviet tactical nuclear weapons in Cuba, an invasion would have proven costly to the U.S. military and might have escalated into a general war—a war neither side sought.[49]

While the EXCOM initially considered diplomatic talks with the Soviets, it believed Khrushchev would employ delaying tactics until the missile installations were completed and also use the talks to create divisions with U.S. allies. Instead, the Administration would use the UN General Assembly, back channel discussions between Ambassador Dobrynin and Robert Kennedy, private letters to Khrushchev, and public statements and speeches to persuade the So-

[47] Janis identified ten options and their variants. Janis, 143; Allison and Zelikow divided them into six alternatives. The options of "No action" and "secret talks with Castro" were briefly considered but quickly ruled out. Allison and Zelikow. Kindle e-book

[48] Kennedy worried that the Soviets would launch missiles before they could all be destroyed. Taylor had told Kennedy that a single airstrike would not be successful, so multiple airstrikes would be needed. On 17 October, the Pentagon briefed that it would take 2,000 of air sorties to destroy everything on the target list, a factor which convinced Kennedy the military option was not as decisive as initially considered. Allison and Zelikow. Kindle e-book; Dallek, *Camelot's Court*, 314.

[49] On 22 October, the Soviet Presidium drew up a draft order delegating the authority to Commanding General Issa Pliyev to use the tactical nuclear weapons to repel an invasion, but then prudently changed its mind, requiring Kremlin authorization first. Allison and Zelikow. Kindle e-book.

viets to withdraw the missiles.[50]

Because the term blockade had political and legal implications, the EXCOM chose the less provocative term quarantine. It was considered a moderate approach between inaction and attack, placing the onus of further action on the Soviets. The problem remained though of what to do with the missiles already in Cuba. To avoid a humanitarian crisis from developing, the EXCOM decided to limit the quarantine to nuclear missiles, permitting normal commerce through. Thus, the EXCOM opted for the quarantine to go into effect on 23 October, coupled with a missile withdrawal ultimatum.[51]

In view of the distinct possibility of a nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union, the deliberations were both intense and exhausting as EXCOM participants recognized no easy solution existed to eliminate miscalculations between the super powers. Hence, the EXCOM proceeded in a deliberative manner, questioning proposals and dissecting the possible multi-ordered effects. As the EXCOM shaped the U.S. response, members rejected stereotypes of the Soviet leadership, regarding them as rational actors who would react more or less to U.S. proposals in a predictable way. It was essential not to humiliate the Soviets or limit their options during the crisis, so the naval quarantine remained flexible, signaling to the Soviets U.S. resolve without provoking a military response.[52]

Kennedy's understanding of the strategic environment proved instrumental in resolving the crisis peacefully, more so as friction and the fog of war were ever-present. Kennedy recognized immediately, that ultimately the underlying issue was Berlin, so he needed to resolve the

[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid; Freedman, 197.
[52] Janis, 147-156.

Cuban crisis firmly but peacefully since Berlin could become an issue again.[53] At the EXCOM meeting on 20 October, Kennedy decided that if he had to take military action, it would be graduated, limited to missiles and missile sites only.[54] Signaling resolve in his address on 22 October, Kennedy raised the U.S. alert status to DEFCON 2, announced the establishment of the quarantine, and staged massive military forces in Florida. By 25 October, the military was primed for action.[55]

The President had to consider the effects his actions would have on domestic and international concerns. Once the Administration made it clear that the removal of the missiles was non-negotiable, he discerned that the Soviets had realized their gamble had failed and needed a way out of the dilemma without losing face. Kennedy took no military action when the Soviets shot down a U-2 on 27 October (an incident which had unnerved Khrushchev) and pledged on multiple occasions not to invade Cuba if the Soviets withdrew the missiles. Kennedy understood that his NATO allies would have condemned the Administration had military action resulted in a Soviet attack on Berlin, triggering a general war.[56] Neither would Americans have accepted a nuclear exchange if a peaceful solution was available. Kennedy wanted to maintain tight political control of the quarantine rules of engagement, ensuring the Soviets knew the location of the quarantine line and moving it 300 miles closer to Cuba (i.e., 500 miles off the coast) on 23 Octo-

[53] Freedman, 173; Allison and Zelikow. Kindle e-book.

[54] Freedman, 181.

[55] Chief of Staff of the Air Force General Curtis LeMay had already begun staging air assets into Florida a week before the nuclear missiles were discovered. All together, 200,000 invasion troops and hundreds of combat aircraft staged in Florida. On 27 October, McNamara activated 14,000 airmen of the Air Force Reserve to mobilize 24 troop cargo squadrons in preparation for airborne operations. Allison and Zelikow. Kindle e-book; Freeman, 175.

[56] Freedman, 173.

ber to give the Soviets more time to recall their nuclear-laden cargo ships.[57]

For his part, Khrushchev was visibly relieved that earlier intelligence of an imminent U.S. attack proved false and ordered most of the 30 cargo ships en route to Cuba to stop on 23 October. However, he ordered four ships with IRBMs and one ship with nuclear warheads to proceed, along with four submarine escorts. Not wishing to surrender the initiative yet, he thought the quarantine signaled weak U.S. resolve, which was reinforced when the U.S. Navy allowed two tanker ships (the *Bucharest* and the *Grozny*) to pass through the quarantine line on 25 October. It was not until the U.S. Navy began boarding cargo ships and forced a Soviet escort submarine to surface that Khrushchev issued the full recall order. While the EXCOM had not considered the possible seizure of sophisticated Soviet equipment when discussing the quarantine option, the Soviets certainly did, and this possibility weighed heavily in Khrushchev's decision to turn the ships around. Once intelligence confirmed the Soviet retreat to the EXCOM, Rusk sensed the Administration had won the test of wills: "The Soviets had blinked."[58]

However, Khrushchev confused matters by sending mixed messages. In a personal letter to Kennedy on 26 October, he pledged to withdraw the missiles provided Kennedy honored his pledge not to invade Cuba; but then in a public statement the next day, he tied the removal of Soviet missiles in Cuba to the removal of U.S. IRBMs in Turkey.[59] In his reply letter on 27 October, Kennedy accepted the pledge in the first letter but ignored the quid pro quo offer from the public statement. Kennedy deduced that Europeans would take issue with a unilateral U.S.-

[57] While McNamara and the Navy argued against moving the quarantine line, Kennedy overrode them to give the Soviets more latitude. Allison and Zelikow. Kindle e-book; Freedman, 196.

[58] The Soviets contacted lead ship *Kimovsk* among other ships at 2:30 am just as it was closing on the quarantine line. Allison and Zelikow. Kindle e-book; Freedman, 197.

[59] The 15 Jupiter IRBMs had just arrived in Turkey in April 1962 upon completion of the five launching sites in March. While the Soviets considered the missiles an irritant, they were less of a strategic threat than the nuclear armed bombers stationed in Turkey. Allison and Zelikow. Kindle e-book.

USSR deal over missiles. Thus, with the President's carefully crafted letter in hand, Robert Kennedy warned Dobrynin that Soviet missiles had to be removed within 24 hours, but that U.S. missiles in Turkey would not be part of the deal. Nevertheless, Robert promised they would be removed quietly at the appropriate time (i.e., four to five months). Finding this arrangement acceptable, Khrushchev announced on 28 October his agreement to remove the missiles. Kennedy's diplomacy was astute because the delayed missile withdrawal gave him time to consult with NATO allies. Accordingly, the United States replaced the obsolete IRBMs in Turkey and Italy with more modern and powerful Polaris submarines armed with Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missiles (SLBM), thus strengthening NATO's nuclear deterrence.[60]

While Cuban dictator Fidel Castro refused to allow UN inspectors to verify the removal of the missiles, despite Khrushchev's agreement, the Administration verified the withdrawal of all nuclear weapons with the Corona surveillance satellites and U-2s. The Administration did not make an issue of the remaining Soviet medium range bombers or the ground contingent because they were strategically irrelevant. Not everyone was pleased with Kennedy's decisions during the crisis, notably Dean Acheson and the service chiefs, who thought the military option would have eliminated Castro and the Soviet presence. However, neither was aware of the tactical nuclear missiles at the time.[61]

Conclusion

The Berlin and Cuban Missile crises are indicative of Kennedy's practice of strategic thinking, particularly the use of the EXCOM in the decision-making process. Kennedy was frus-

[60] Kennedy planned to launch airstrikes on 30 October if the Soviets did not comply, which likely prompted the Soviets accept the agreement. Allison and Zelikow. Kindle e-book; Sorensen wrote Kennedy's reply letter. Sorensen, *Counselor*, 293-294; Freedman, 205-207; Dallek, *Camelot's Court*, 328.

[61] Allison and Zelikow. Kindle e-book; Dallek, *Camelot's Court*, 330-331.

trated with the staff papers during the Berlin Crisis since they did not provide him with novel or conclusive solutions. Still, the strategic appraisal process on Berlin had been ongoing since the beginning of the Cold War, so Kennedy understood the strategic environment fully. For the Cuban Missile Crisis, the informal advisory system suffered from shortcomings between the discovery of the SA-2 sites in August and the missiles in October, with instances of groupthink and wishful thinking dominating meeting discussions. This situation changed with the establishment of the EXCOM, which conducted a strategic appraisal early and continued it throughout the crisis. Thus, Kennedy gained a greater understanding of the strategic environment and was able to exercise strategic thinking.

In terms of the five competencies of strategic thinking, Kennedy applied critical thinking during the Berlin crisis. He remained skeptical of conclusions in department reports and sought the views of outside experts and foreign leaders. He remained open-minded regarding the underlying reasons for the dispute, though neither he nor Eisenhower was aware of the intense pressure Khrushchev was under by the East German regime. Unlike Eisenhower, who could treat the crisis as a normal discourse in the Cold War struggle, Kennedy understood that Khrushchev meant to escalate the issue to the point of miscalculation. Therefore, he needed to demonstrate unequivocal resolve as he crafted an effective strategy. Refusing to over-react and placing the burden of action on Khrushchev, Kennedy wanted to retain flexibility and respond in a graduated manner. Regardless of the ultimate strategy, Kennedy wanted to ensure he did not back Khrushchev into a corner or humiliate him in the process.

The EXCOM also engaged in reflective skepticism as it explored diplomatic, informational, military, and economic options. Initially, the EXCOM strongly considered the military option, but after questioning the effectiveness of airstrikes, the JCS admitted thousands of air-

strikes would be necessary to destroy the missiles; and even then there was always a chance the Soviets would be able to launch some missiles at the United States. This possibility militated against the military option. Instead, the EXCOM concluded that a naval quarantine and a transparent military build-up in Florida would signal the seriousness of the U.S. response. In regards to the quarantine, The EXCOM limited sanctions to military hardware, allowing commodities through for humanitarian reasons. After debating the option of formal negotiations, the EXCOM concluded the Soviets would use delaying tactics until the missile installations were complete, so it ruled this out. The EXCOM remained open-minded regarding the Soviet reasoning for deploying missiles, concluding it was linked to the Berlin issue as a means to sow discord between the United States and NATO. Treating the Soviet leaders as rational actors, the EXCOM judged that a graduated strategy would compel Soviet compliance in a predictive and rational manner.

During the Berlin Crisis, Kennedy exercised systems thinking, by taking a heuristic view of the issue. The Soviet-East German treaty sought to circumvent treaty obligations by using East Germany as a proxy. While withdrawing from Berlin made sense from a military perspective, U.S. credibility and resolve were core issues for NATO solidarity. Further, retreat from Berlin would likely embolden the Soviets to pursue other strategies to weaken the Alliance and challenge U.S. leadership elsewhere. Hence, remaining firm on Berlin would protect the international system, which rested on the rule of law, existing treaties, and U.S. security obligations.

The EXCOM applied systems thinking as well, recognizing that Soviet missiles were linked to the Berlin impasse. The U.S. security guaranty to NATO deterred the Soviets from attacking West Berlin since this would automatically trigger a general war involving nuclear weapons. The Soviets sought to use nuclear missiles in Cuba to undermine NATO solidarity and U.S. resolve to defend Berlin. The EXCOM understood that mishandling the missile crisis could

prompt the Soviets to move on Berlin. Moreover, accepting the Soviet missile deployment would undermine Latin American confidence in the United States, perhaps inducing many states to align with communism. Lastly, the American people would not tolerate nuclear missiles in Cuba, so their removal was non-negotiable.

While Kennedy sought creative thinking with the Berlin problem, the government bureaucracy could offer no silver bullet solutions. Still, by seeking the advice of department officials, outside experts, and foreign leaders, Kennedy gained a profound understanding of the essential issues surrounding the Berlin dilemma. This process was useful, for it convinced Kennedy that a firm but patient stand was the most effective counter to Soviet demands.

During its deliberations on the Soviet missile deployment in Cuba, the EXCOM optimized creative thinking. The naval quarantine avoided international implications of a blockade, signaled U.S. resolve to the Soviets, and provided sufficient time for the Soviets to recall its missile laden cargo ships. In addition, the quarantine checked demands for immediate military action, couching it in terms as an initial step in a strategy of graduated escalation. Robert Kennedy's use of the backdoor channel with Ambassador Dobrynin allowed the EXCOM to communicate with the Kremlin quickly and clearly. Although Castro refused to permit inspectors to verify the removal of the remaining missiles, U.S. surveillance satellites and aircraft sufficed to monitor their removal. Finally, delaying the quid pro quo withdrawal of missiles from Turkey allowed Kennedy to consult with NATO and replace U.S. IRBMs with more modern and secure Polaris submarines.

Kennedy practiced thinking in time throughout the Berlin Crisis. His queries on the history of Berlin acquainted him with Truman's use of the Berlin airlift and Eisenhower's firm but patient stand on Berlin, all the while reaching out to the Soviets to reach an accommodation.

Keenly aware that a Soviet miscalculation could lead to a nuclear war, he prudently signaled his resolve by increasing defense spending, mobilizing a portion of the Ready Reserve forces, and deploying some military units to Germany. He next ordered the movement of a U.S. brigade to Berlin on the Potsdam Treaty access routes to reinforce the Berlin garrison. This approach placed the onus of initiating hostilities on the Soviets, who backed off when they realized Kennedy would not be intimidated.

During the Cuban Missile Crisis, the EXCOM utilized thinking in time. Kennedy recalled that World War I resulted from miscalculations and the uncontrollable rush of events. He resolved to arrest the rush to action and to provide sufficient time for both sides to resolve the issue peacefully. Hence, the deliberative approach of the EXCOM, the transparency of U.S. responses, and a graduated response permitted the Administration to control events and ensure the Soviets did not miscalculate. The EXCOM recalled the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor when debating the use of surprise airstrikes on Cuba. Regardless of the reasons, international opinion would likely view a surprise attack as unjustified—the U.S. giant picking on a small neighbor.

Kennedy demonstrated ethical thinking during the Berlin Crisis with his measured response to Soviet intimidations. Defending Berlin was an ethical obligation for the defense of Western Europe, and the United States needed to stand by that principal because it reflected U.S. strategic values. Kennedy's task was to do everything in his power to prevent a war because Europeans would bear the brunt of a war.

With the Cuban Missile Crisis, a surprise attack on Cuba contravened U.S. strategic values—"Pearl Harbor in reverse" as Robert Kennedy remarked. The United States needed to provide every peaceful opportunity to the Soviets to remove the missiles before taking action. Once those means were exhausted, then the United States would be justified in taking military action.

There would be no surprise, and the international community would judge the conflict as just. Finally, Kennedy wanted to avoid humiliating the Soviets as they retreated. This too was an American ideal that demonstrated benevolence in the wake of success.

Kennedy's articulated strategic objective for Berlin was the preservation of the status quo in accordance with established treaties. The desired strategic effects were unhindered Western access to Berlin, preservation of German democracy, and the cessation of Soviet demands.

Kennedy's articulated strategic objective for the Cuban Missile Crisis was the removal of all Soviet nuclear missiles. The desired strategic effects were a return of the strategic balance, a de- nuclearized Cuba, and the preservation of solidarity in NATO.

Kennedy's Berlin strategy was feasible, acceptable and suitable. He applied diplomacy throughout the crisis and used military capabilities judiciously in support of his strategy. His information campaign placed public opinion solidly behind U.S. diplomatic initiatives. In stark contrast, the communist construction of the Berlin Wall was a symbol of oppression, subjugation, and injustice. The strategy achieved the strategic objective, which was aligned with the strategic effects. While the movement of the combat brigade to Berlin carried some risks, it was carried out in accordance with accepted treaties and not provocative.

The EXCOM's Cuban missile strategy was exceptionally feasible, suitable, and acceptable. The use of naval power to enforce the quarantine was measured and predictable. Diplomacy kept open the lines of communication for a peaceful resolution of the crisis, ensuring the Soviets preserved their prestige. Kennedy's information campaign educated domestic and international audiences on the Soviet nuclear gambit, the U.S. position, and the desire to seek all means to resolve the crisis peacefully. Hence, public opinion strongly supported the Administration's actions. The strategic objective was in accord with the strategic effects, and the selected strategy

supported both. Of all the options the EXCOM considered, the ones it selected promised the least risk without weakening the strategy.

The one pitfall of the EXCOM was that the crisis exhausted the participants, who worked under extreme stress without a break and on very little sleep. Hence, except for the most extreme crises, Cabinet officials could not devote the same amount of time and energy to replicate the effectiveness of the EXCOM for normal policy formulation.[62] It was for this reason that Kennedy did not adopt the arrangement for subsequent decision-making.

[62] Allison and Zelikow. Kindle e-book; Dallek, *Camelot's Court*, 295.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

The complexities and challenges of the modern presidency have not abated with the increase in the size of the Executive Office of the President. In fact, the proliferation of committees, offices, and aides may add to the complexities if no unifying organization attends the growth. While President Dwight D. Eisenhower and President John F. Kennedy shared similar views on foreign policy, were skeptical of expert opinions, and sought middle of the road policy decisions, they held divergent views concerning the value of organization and the need for a formal grand strategy.

As a comparative study of the Eisenhower and Kennedy NSC mechanisms, this inquiry examined their organizations and operations. Equally important, it explored how each president used the mechanism to exercise leadership and management. Finally, this study analyzed which system cultivated strategic thinking for the development of policy and decision-making.

As the study has demonstrated, organization plays a crucial role in the development of foreign policy and national security policy. To this end, strategic thinking disciplines the strategist's mind, sharpening his judgment for effective decision-making, whether for national policy or crisis management. The strategic appraisal is the start of the process, helping the policy maker understand the strategic environment, identify the level of national interests, and extract key strategic factors that may impact on the strategy. For the policy maker, the strategic appraisal continues as new information emerges from meetings, diplomatic cables, communications with foreign leaders and officials, and so forth. Because the strategic environment is dynamic, the strategic

appraisal adjusts to changes so as to ensure the proper strategy is applied to the actual problem.[1]

The five competencies of strategic thinking help the strategist study complex problems from different angles. Critical thinking permits the strategist to assess known and unclear information as well as presumptions. The strategist engages in reflective skepticism in regards to intelligence, conclusions, opinions, and interpretations of facts. The strategist keeps an open mind to gain a full understanding of the environment. This thought process leads to the articulation of a strategic goal, an effective supporting strategy, and the needed capabilities to support the strategy. Due to the strategic environment, it integrates new information in an iterative manner. Systems thinking allows the strategist to study a complex problem comprehensively. This thinking weighs dependent and independent variables which transcend simple cause and effect. Creative thinking seeks to find imaginative solutions to a problem, even if these ideas are in the minority. Reflective in nature, it seeks an epiphany to a difficult problem; a solution that is rarely apparent. Thinking in time draws on historical analogues, considering similarities and differences of historical events which may relate to a current issue. It employs the "Goldberg rule" to get the full story behind a problem, using timelines portraying key trends behind the issue. Accordingly, it studies these key trends in terms of journalist questions (i.e., who, what, when, where, and why). Ethical thinking guides the policy maker in terms of obligatory, prohibited, and permitted state behavior. When considering different strategies, the policy maker should factor in perceived legitimacy and public opinion as a test to justified action.[2]

The five competencies discipline policy maker thinking for the articulation of the strate-

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[1] Harry R. Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional: Strategic Thinking and the Strategy Formulation in the 21st Century* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2008), 153-155.

[2] Ibid, 11-14.

gic objective and desired strategic effects. Determining the strategic objective is the most difficult part of the process and requires deep reflection. If the policy maker gets it wrong, the desired strategic effects will likely remain unrealized. The selected strategy is the way to achieve the strategic objective. The policy maker considers the needed capabilities to support the strategy. Capabilities are normally described as the state's instruments of power (i.e., diplomatic, informational, military, and economic), and the policy maker selects those which will most effectively support the strategy. The strategist tests the strategy for feasibility, acceptability, and suitability. Feasibility tests whether the available capabilities are sufficient to accomplish the strategy. Acceptability tests whether the strategy and capabilities are legitimate and acceptable to the public. Suitability tests whether the strategy will achieve the desired strategic effects.[3]

The practice of strategic thinking within the NSC is especially relevant today because U.S. foreign policy and national security strategy has been experiencing strategic drift since the end of the Cold War. As strategic theorist Harry Yarger noted in 2008,

> The strategic dilemma in which the United States finds itself today is greater than it has ever been in our history—it owns the twenty–first century but is strategically clueless as to what to do with it. Paradoxically, at the time it is most needed, our leaders appear increasingly inept at thinking strategically, and the "sound bite" has replaced the national debate on policy and strategy. The dilemma is so evident that it appears to be nothing less than a systemic failure in the policy and strategy formulation processes throughout the government.[4]

Strategic theorist Colin Gray believes this inattention to strategy formulation is due to an American propensity for silver bullet solutions to strategic problems: "technology, generalship, eco-

[3] Ibid, 155-157.
[4] Ibid, 2.

nomic strength, logistical competency, political popularity," etc.[5] Writing in 2011, Lieutenant General James Dubik questioned, after a decade of war, whether the United States had lost the ability to construct and execute a coherent national strategy. A year later, Professor Rosa Brooks argued that the "2010 National Security Strategy (NSS) is many things—press release, public relations statement, laundry list of laudable aspirations—grand strategy it ain't."[6] A contributing factor to this drift in strategy formulation is a tenfold increase in size of the NSC Staffs to 400 since the 1990s, suggesting the NSC is attempting to create a mini-government bureaucracy within the White House.[7] This trend increases the likelihood of ivory tower policies and strategies since the NSC does not enjoy the full range of ideas and perspectives residing outside of the White House. This state of affairs needs a corrective course. The Eisenhower Administration was able to formulate grand strategy, despite a myriad of crises, in a consistent and conscientious manner. As this study has shown, grand strategy formulation is possible if the NSC mechanism is organized to enhance teamwork, seeking efficiencies in the process and focusing its effort on well-staffed, integrated policy papers and studies.

Assessment of the Eisenhower and Kennedy NSC Mechanisms

As Chapter Two demonstrated, Eisenhower designed his NSC mechanism to serve sever-

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[5] Colin S. Gray, *Modern Strategy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 248; Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional*, 7.

[6] James M., Dubik, "A National Strategic Learning Disability?" *ARMY Magazine*, September 2011, 20; Rosa Brooks, "Obama Needs a Grand Strategy," *Foreign Policy*, January 23, 2012.

[7] The Bill Clinton NSC Staff grew to 100 staffers. *The National Security Council Project*, 24-25; The G. W. Bush NSC Staff doubled to 200, and the Barrack Obama NSC Staff has doubled again to 400. Karen DeYoung, "How the Obama White House runs foreign policy," August 4, 2015, accessed on the website of The Washington Post at https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/how-the-obama-white-house-runs-foreign-policy/2015/08/04/2befb960-2fd7-11e5-8353-1215475949f4_story.html, 22 October 2015.

al purposes. It was foremost the central forum for foreign policy and national security strategy formulation. The Planning Board served as the interface between the government bureaucracy and the Council, producing well staffed policy papers and educating the NSC principals on topical policy issues. The Operations Coordinating Board (OCB) rendered assistance on the coordination and implementation of presidential policy decisions. Council meetings permitted Eisenhower to hear all sides of a policy debate before exercising leadership. At some point in the discussion, Eisenhower would take over, summarize the main points, identify the central problem and solution, and make his decision. As was his nature, Eisenhower used the NSC to ply his impressive powers of persuasion.

Recognizing the crosscutting nature of domestic and foreign issues, Eisenhower established linkages between the NSC mechanism and the White House Cabinet, Staff Secretariat, the Executive Branch Liaison Office and the Congressional Liaison Office. The White House operated with a synergy, seeking efficiencies, coordinating activities, and establishing policies through study, deliberation, and strategic thinking. Eisenhower employed the NSC boards, the White House offices, and his special assistants to increase his situational awareness and extend his influence. As revisionist scholars widely acknowledge, Eisenhower was a much more active and influential president than originally perceived. As such, Eisenhower never let formal organization hinder his ability to exercise persuasion and leadership in the pursuit of his goals.

The Eisenhower NSC mechanism fostered greater communication and coordination, so everyone in the Administration was versed on official policies and White House stances on issues. The system cultivated strategic thinking, with the Planning Board conducting strategic appraisals and incorporating the five competencies into policy papers. The President continued the

strategic appraisal as he formulated national policies and strategies. The development and annual revisions of the Basic National Security Policy epitomized this process, which served to guide supporting policies and strategies and to rebalance the armed forces in the aftermath of the Korean War. Eisenhower principally operated tirelessly behind the scenes, studying issues, directing action, and engaging in personal diplomacy—all the while projecting an image of calm, confidence, and optimism.

While the Eisenhower NSC mechanism was complex, NSC and White House functionaries ran the system, so the machinery would have continued to function in a new Administration. An incoming president does not necessarily need to be an organizational expert to enjoy the benefits of good organization. He cares only that the information coming to him is useful. Eisenhower did not view the NSC mechanism as a final product and expected future Administrations to seek organizational improvements on a system that had undergone close study and iterative reforms. Of course, Eisenhower was unique as a consummate strategist, but the mechanism was accustomed to framing issues using a strategic appraisal and incorporating the five competencies of strategic thinking. The Eisenhower NSC did not inhibit innovative ideas, presidential leadership, or decisive action. Hence, Eisenhower left a highly functional NSC mechanism for future Administrations.

Eisenhower presided over the longest period of peace and prosperity in the modern era, enjoying an average approval rate of 64 percent. He balanced the federal budget, reduced the national debt, and resisted excessive military spending. Further, the nation experienced an average

unemployment rate of 4.9 percent and low inflation.[8] Eisenhower's guiding hand made this happen.

As Chapter Three indicated, the Kennedy advisory system sought to pierce through bureaucracy with the President employing the tenets of Richard Neustadt's *Presidential Power* to shake the nation out of its purported doldrums. Kennedy supplanted the NSC system with the metaphorical spokes on the wheel structure: the President sat at the hub; information flowed in through the spokes; and decisions flowed out through the spokes. Essentially, Ad hoc task forces were designed to perform the duties of the Planning Board and OCB. Kennedy expected definitive solutions to complex problems. Unfortunately, the various papers and studies from ad hoc task forces, departments, and agencies could not provide comprehensive perspectives because the integrative, iterative process of the Planning Board was missing. Hence, it was left to the Bundy and Kennedy to integrate the information before and during meetings. This burden complicated organizational procedures and policy coherence. To compensate, Bundy used the NSC Special Staff (i.e., the Bundy Group) to formulate policy and disseminated policy action through National Security Action Memorandums (NSAM). Since he preferred small, informal meetings, Kennedy did not normally benefit from hearing all sides of an issue debated in his presence. The Executive Committee (EXCOM) was an exception because it conducted a thorough strategic appraisal throughout the crisis. In this instance, Kennedy was able to exercise strategic thinking, which contributed substantially to the successful outcome of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

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[8] Gallup, WSJ Research, "How the Presidents Stack Up," accessed from the website *The Wall Street Journal* at http://online.wsj.com/public/resources/documents/info-presapp0605-31.html, 23 February 2015; U.S. Department of Labor: Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Civilian Unemployment Rate," http://research.stlouisfed.org/fred2/data/UNRATE.txt, 23 February, 2012; "The US Economy from Presidents Eisenhower to Carter," accessed from the Macro History: World History Website at http://www.fsmitha.com/h2/ch37-econ1d.htm, 10 December 2015.

Kennedy was an exceptional orator, and his inspirational policy speeches spurred the nation to fulfill the ideals of the Founding Fathers. His Alliance for Progress and the Peace Corps sought to assist countries in need. His space program expressed a national desire to transform the Soviet-U.S. nuclear missile race to a healthy competition for a moon landing and space exploration. During the Berlin and Cuban Missile crises, his televised addresses educated the public on Soviet provocations and the Administration's response, projecting firm and patient leadership to resolve each crisis peacefully.

The drawback of the Kennedy advisory system was its personalized nature. Subsequent administrations could not adapt the system very well because the procedures and processes were attuned to Kennedy's management style and leadership. The Bundy Group was largely insular, prodding the government bureaucracy into action with little attempt to integrate the policy views of government subject matter experts. Moreover, informal meetings were not conducive to policy and strategy formulation, and Kennedy rejected any attempts to review and revise the Basic National Security Policy. Like Eisenhower, Kennedy was an accomplished brain-picker, seeking different viewpoints. But this talent was not transferable to other presidents. The Kennedy advisory system functioned well during crises, especially the EXCOM, but it exhausted the participants to such an extent that its usefulness for normal policy formulation was limited (though Bundy tried to replicate it with The Standing Committee of the NSC). For longer challenges, such as Laos and Vietnam, policy and strategy formulation remained problematic. It was for all of these reasons that the Kennedy advisory system was not successfully replicated in subsequent administrations.

Case Studies

This study examined four case studies—Suez 1956, Lebanon 1958, Bay of Pigs 1961, and the linked Berlin-Cuban Missile crises 1961-1962—to exemplify the degree their NSC mechanisms cultivated strategic thinking for strategy development. In each case, the strategic appraisal was a key factor in helping the President to understand the strategic environment. The use of the five competencies illustrates how the President studied the problem from various angles as he formulated strategy.

The 1956 Suez Crisis (Chapter Four) typified Eisenhower's well-functioning NSC mechanism. In both cases the Planning Board initiated the strategic appraisal, which continued in NSC meetings, inner circle meetings, diplomatic cables, communications with foreign leaders, and consultations with congressmen. Employing the five competencies of strategic thinking, he recognized that the British occupation of Egypt was untenable, both politically and economically. While Egyptian President Gamal Nasser was often querulous, he was not a threat to the West, and the nationalization of the Suez Canal was irrelevant as long as the international waterway remained open. Potential Soviet dominance of the Middle East, however, represented a significant threat in view of Europe's dependence on oil and commercial access to the Suez Canal. Despite Eisenhower's initial strategy to create friendly ties with Nasser and resolve the dispute between Britain and Egypt over the Suez Canal, his allies' (Britain, France, and Israel) invasion of Egypt threatened to trigger a general war between the superpowers, splinter NATO, and plunge Europe into an economic depression when the oil pipelines were severed and the Suez Canal blocked. To restore stability, Eisenhower employed a strategy to compel the withdrawal of his allies before the Soviets intervened. He used diplomatic, informational, and economic capabili-

ties to impel compliance but in such a way that did not humiliate them. The capstone of his strategy was the Eisenhower Doctrine, which established security, military assistance, and economic assistance to Middle East states. Accordingly, he achieved the desired strategic effects of a stable Middle East and unencumbered access to oil and the Suez Canal.

In regards to the 1958 Lebanon Intervention (Chapter Five), the Eisenhower Administration responded quickly when Lebanon's President Camille Chamoun caused mass unrest by trying to revise the constitution. The strategic appraisal process had continued from the Suez Crisis, so Eisenhower was ready to employ the five competencies for strategy formulation. While the spread of pan-Arabic Nasserism and the United Arab Republic (Egypt and Syria) support to Lebanese militants fueled instability in Lebanon, Eisenhower concluded a diplomatic strategy would dissipate the discord with the election of a new president. The Iraqi coup d'état in July, however, changed the equation, so Eisenhower revised his strategy, employing military, informational, economic, and diplomatic capabilities to establish stability in Lebanon. The celerity of the U.S. military intervention (and British intervention in Jordan) surprised Egypt and the Soviet Union, both of whom remained on the sidelines. Eisenhower secured the legitimacy of the intervention by announcing it was at the request of Chamoun, assured the Lebanese people that the United States would withdraw once the elections were held, and promised economic assistance. He dispatched Ambassador Robert Murphy to Lebanon, Egypt, and Iraq to gain their acquiescence for the intervention. The strategy stabilized Lebanon and convinced Egypt and Iraq to remain on friendly terms with the United States.

The Bay of Pigs debacle (Chapter Six) is attributed to Kennedy's immediate dismantling of the NSC mechanism and the rejection of formal NSC meetings where all the principal advis-

ers could provide different perspectives in front of the President. The CIA exacerbated by becoming involved in policy formulation, controlling information and turning the informal meetings into command briefings. Accordingly, Kennedy had little opportunity to exercise strategic thinking. Moreover, groupthink took root in discussions and decision making, so dissenting views were not properly aired. Kennedy uncritically accepted the strategic goal of regime change, anticipating the desired strategic effects would be a democratic Cuba which would not export revolution in the region. While Kennedy wanted the operation to remain covert and without U.S. ostensible involvement, the CIA invasion plan was too conspicuous to achieve these conditions. Kennedy undermined his role as President by becoming involved in the tactical details rather than maintaining a holistic view of the strategy. The failure of the invasion exposed the U.S. involvement, tarnishing its rule of law image, increasing Fidel Castro's prestige, and encouraging the Soviet Union to extend its influence in Cuba.

The Berlin and Cuban Missile crises (Chapter Seven) illustrated the maturation of the Kennedy advisory system for crisis management. The government bureaucracy had been conducting strategic appraisals of Berlin since 1948, which educated Kennedy on the strategic environment and U.S. strategic objective. Frustrated by the State Department's mundane solutions to the Berlin dilemma, Kennedy reached out to a variety of subject matter experts and foreign leaders to gain a greater understanding of the relevant issues. Recognizing that the Soviet strategy to compel the West's withdrawal from Berlin rested on intimidation, Kennedy adopted a strategy of firm but patient resolve. He blunted the Soviet stratagem to use East Germany as its proxy by holding the Soviet Union responsible for its treaty obligations. When his diplomatic strategy failed to dissuade Soviet threats, he directed an increase in defense spending, mobilized a portion

of the Ready Reserve forces, and deployed some military units to Germany. He then directed the movement of a U.S. brigade to Berlin along the Potsdam Treaty access routes to reinforce the Berlin garrison. With the burden of initiating hostilities on their shoulders, the Soviets backed down. While Kennedy did not intervene in its construction, the Berlin Wall became a defining symbol of tyranny, marking the difference between the East and West. While continuing diplomacy with the Soviet Union failed to break the impasse, the Soviet Union ended the crisis in October 1961 by delaying the treaty with East Germany indefinitely.

The Soviet Union's secret deployment of nuclear missiles to Cuba in mid-1962 was a strategy to intimidate the United States and sow discord within NATO. The Soviet strategic objective was to offset the U.S. strategic balance with intermediate range ballistic missiles in Cuba. In this manner, the Soviet Union sought to neutralize U.S. nuclear deterrence in Europe. Upon discovery of the missiles in October, the Administration established the Executive Committee (EXCOM), which conducted a strategic appraisal and employed the five competencies of strategic thinking for strategy formulation. The EXCOM selected a graduated strategy in order to forestall the rush of events and to compel the Soviets to withdraw the missiles. It rejected the immediate use of military operations, choosing instead a naval quarantine. The EXCOM wanted to avoid the appearance of unwarranted U.S. aggression, a Pearl Harbor in reverse as Robert Kennedy termed it. Further, Robert Kennedy proceeded on the diplomatic track with his backdoor channel with Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin to communicate quickly with the Kremlin. The President's informational strategy informed the public of the Soviet ruse and the Administration's determination to exhaust all reasonable means for the removal of the missiles peacefully. Faced with a determined and measured U.S. response, the Soviets withdrew the missiles

without incident, returning the strategic balance to its status quo ante.

The case studies illustrate the value of organization for policy and strategy formulation. For the Suez and Lebanon crises, the NSC mechanism provided strategic appraisals early and continuously. For the Berlin Crisis, Kennedy benefited from earlier strategic appraisals and continued the process with his outreach to subject matter experts. While the EXCOM was ad hoc, it successfully employed the strategic appraisal throughout. The five competencies disciplined thinking so the President could consider all aspects of the problem as he and the NSC formulated strategy. Each strategy was feasible because it could achieve the strategic objective and the supporting capabilities were sufficient. Each was acceptable because the risks and costs were within parameters, and public support amenable to the effort. And each was suitable since the selection of capabilities achieved both the strategic objective and desired strategic effects. In contrast, the Bay of Pigs operation exemplifies dysfunctional strategy formulation when NSC organization is poor.

Best Practices for the National Security Advisor

Incoming National Security Advisers might be surprised to learn their roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined. As Colin Powell noted when Frank Carlucci and he became the National Security Adviser and Deputy National Security Adviser respectively, "We found nothing which spelled out the duties of the position. There was no job description, there was no directive, and there was no specific guidance from the president."[9] To be of value to the president, the National Security Adviser must study former NSC mechanisms, their decision-making pro-

[9] Colin L. Powell, "The PNSA Advisor: Process Manager and More." *The Bureaucrat* (Summer 1989), 46.

cesses, and assess what factors contributed to effective and ineffective policies. He must study the roles and responsibilities of his predecessors, engaging in some trial and error as he organizes the NSC mechanism in accordance with the President's desires. Further, the National Security Adviser needs to be well versed on the art of strategic thinking since it forms the basis for policy formulation and decision-making.

The National Security Adviser must attend to a variety of tasks if he is to serve the President effectively: organize and manage the NSC mechanism; delineate the parameters of his role and responsibilities; to ensure the system provides the president with essential information to make informed decisions and cultivate strategic thinking; and act as the honest broker.

Organizing the NSC Mechanism

While the president and his National Security Adviser are free to organize the NSC mechanism as befits the president's leadership and management style, the NSC should be the principal forum for foreign policy. As Harry Yarger notes, "Congress mandated the NSC to ensure that presidential decision making was informed by the appropriate executive department officials, particularly in regard to national defense policy. National security . . . [encompasses] the defense of the United States, protection of our constitutional system of government, and advancement of U.S. interests around the world."[10] As such, the National Security Adviser should seek systemic efficiencies to optimize time management, work load, presidential leadership, and policy coordination.

The National Security Adviser needs a clearing house for policy formulation similar to

[10] Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional*, 98.

Eisenhower's Planning Board in order to optimize time management for the NSC principals. Board membership should comprise prominent officials from each department, agency, and bureau, who continually apprise their bosses on the development of draft policy papers and elicit their perspectives for board consideration. The National Security Adviser should avoid a system which creates a proliferation of NSC subcommittees, working luncheons and breakfasts, and informal meetings because they require busy Cabinet officers to leave their offices several times a week to discuss and coordinate policy issues. A single board with dedicated members is the most efficient in terms of time and personnel.

As the clearing house for policy papers, studies, and intelligence estimates, the board creates a routine relationship between the government bureaucracy and the NSC for input in accordance with the established agenda. The National Security Adviser should have the president approve the policy topics agenda, so policy papers will meet his needs or interest. The National Security Adviser should control the work load for the NSC principals by limiting the number of draft policy papers for an NSC session to three or four. Further, Planning Board members should routinely interact with their parent organizations in accordance with the agenda, so government bureaucrats (i.e., analysts, staff officers, regional and functional experts) can anticipate requirements and respond punctually. These single points of contact are more efficient than the multiplicity of ad hoc task forces, the NSC Staff, and NSC subcommittees. The National Security Adviser needs to avoid bombarding government bureaucrats with uncoordinated and redundant requests for information or papers. Since government bureaucrats have full-time jobs, they are more likely to ignore, resist, or give little attention to requests that do not originate from their board member. One of the National Security Adviser's primary goals is to ensure draft policy

papers represent the views of the government bureaucracy so the NSC principals are privy to the full range of views and innovative ideas.

Educating the NSC principals on all facets of a policy issue should be a primary function of the board. For particularly complex issues, the National Security Adviser might consider using outside consultants or committees since they provide fresh perspectives and expertise. The National Security Adviser should create an open system, encouraging the submission of individual or department staff papers for board study and submission to the NSC. In the process of resolving differences, clarifying points, and identifying policy splits, board members may educate the NSC principals prior to NSC meetings, so everyone is prepared to discuss the issues.

The National Security Adviser should recommend regularly scheduled NSC meetings with the president presiding. While some presidents may not relish engaging in debates in the Council, they must personally listen to the arguments, read the body language, and the intensity of feelings surrounding issues. The president must use the NSC forum to exercise personal leadership and persuasion. He should use the NSC to make his decisions, share his reasoning behind the decisions, and issue strategic guidance. At the end of meetings, the National Security Adviser should summarize and distribute the president's decision to forestall misunderstandings.

The National Security Adviser should seriously consider resurrecting the Operations Coordinating Board since it appears to have been the most effective way to provide essential assistance for the coordination and implementation of policy. Additionally, the OCB can monitor policy implementation and render progress reports to the NSC, as well as serving as the clearing house for feedback and innovations from the field. Since it provides an essential service, the OCB can more easily cultivate close rapport with department and agency officials, which should

engender greater cooperation. As Brzezinski observed, "Probably not since Eisenhower's time has any systematic reassessment been made of how to supervise the execution of policy. It appears that even the most assertive NSC heads have failed to give enough attention to policy implementation."[11]

Managing the NSC Mechanism

The National Security Adviser must specify the roles and responsibilities of the NSC Staff to forestall impingements on the other NSC structures and government bureaucracy. He must remain attentive to its size and composition in order to create a balance between workload and bureaucratic demands. Scowcroft warned that excessive size increases the danger of the NSC staff becoming a large bureaucracy. He had 40 professional staffers, with only one or two assigned to each geographic or functional area. He felt that the National Security Adviser should manage the NSC Staff personally (face-to-face meetings) rather than delegating this responsibility to the Deputy National Security Adviser.[12] As evidenced by the subsequent inflation of the NSC Staff, Scowcroft's concerns were well-founded. Concerning NSC staff composition, Lake contended that professional staffers are imperative due to their institutional memory and continuity of operations. Political appointee staff positions are also important because they bring in fresh ideas, so getting a good mix of ideas is beneficial to the NSC. McFarlane sought balance in the NSC Staff. The core of his staff consisted of 44 professional staffers with regional and functional assignments interacting with counterparts in State, Defense, and the CIA. The other staffers were

[11] Brzezinski, "The NSC's Midlife Crisis," 96-97.

[12] *The National Security Council Project: Oral History Roundtables: The Role of the National Security Advisers*, 24-25, 27-29.

organized into thirds: one-third outside experts mostly from academia; one-third from the career services (i.e., the military, foreign service, CIA, and Treasury); and one-third journeymen with good staff skills, understanding of governance, and experience on the Hill.[13]

Delineating the Parameters of the National Security Adviser's Role and Responsibilities

Constitutionally, the president is free to use the National Security Council and his National Security Adviser as befits his leadership and management style. Nothing compels him to even use the NSC, as some presidents have proven. However, failure to use the NSC or underutilize it carries risks and penalties in terms of promoting and protecting U.S. interests. In the past, overreliance on the informal model and under-reliance on organization have created foreign policy dilemmas as well as a drift on U.S. grand strategy. Since the U.S. government is an incredibly large bureaucracy, organization is of the utmost importance. This political reality means the president and National Security Adviser must carefully determine his/her roles and responsibilities.

As Cecil Crabb and Kevin Mulcahy have described, the responsibilities of the National Security Adviser have differed among presidencies: Administrator (low policy-making, low implementation), Counselor (high policy-making, low implementation), Coordinator (low policy-

[13] McFarlane Interview. *The National Security Council Project*, 48-49; Cutler's NSC Staff comprised 17 administrative/secretarial and 11 professionals. Robert Cutler, "The Development of the National Security Council," *Foreign Affairs* 34, No. 3 (April, 1956), 455-456; Bundy's NSC Staff totaled 48 with the Bundy Group comprising under a dozen. John Prados, *Keeper of the Keys: A History of the National Security Council from Truman to Bush* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1991), 101-102.

making, high implementation), and Agent (high policy-making, high implementation).[14] As this study has demonstrated, Eisenhower's Special Assistants for National Security Affairs acted as coordinators for policy issues emanating from the Policy Board, for implementation of policy decisions through the Operations Coordinating Board (OCB), and for the initiation and summation of NSC discussions. In the Kennedy NSC, Bundy served as counselor, "clarifying alternatives set before the president, recording decisions, and monitoring follow-through." Because of his close association with President Kennedy, Bundy enjoyed tremendous influence and power, serving as policy advocate and spokesman. In the Carter NSC, Brzezinski served as counselor bordering on agent. Like Bundy, Brzezinski had special access to the President, serving as "guardian of the 'presidential perspective' in decision making." Over time, Brzezinski became involved in diplomatic initiatives and acted as a policy advocate and spokesman. In the Bush NSC, Scowcroft served as a low-end counselor, bordering on coordinator, underscoring organization and providing the President "the faithful presentation of the views of NSC members."[15]

Alexander George's multiple advocacy provided guideposts for National Security Adviser roles and responsibilities. As a "custodian manager," the National Security Adviser performs several functions:

> 1. balancing actor resources with the policymaking system; 2. strengthening weaker advocates; 3. bringing in new advisers to argue for unpopular options; 4. setting up new channels of information so that the president and other advisers are not dependent upon a single channel; 5. arranging for independent evaluation of decisional premises and options, when necessary; [and] 6. monitoring the workings of the policymaking process to

[14] Cecil V. Crabb, Jr., and Kevin v. Mulcahy, "The Lessons of the Iran-Contra Affair for National Security Policy Making," in *Fateful Decisions: Inside the National Security Council*, ed. Karl F. Inderfurth and Loch K. Johnson (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc, 2004), 163.

[15] Ibid, 165-166; Karl F. Inderfurth and Loch K. Johnson, "National Security Advisers: Roles," in *Fateful Decisions: Inside the National Security Council*, eds. Karl F. Inderfurth and Loch K. Johnson (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc, 2004), 139-140.

identify possibly dangerous malfunctions and instituting appropriate corrective action. George added that over time, National Security Advisers have assumed additional roles, such as "policy adviser-advocate;" "policy spokesman;" "political watchdog for the president's power stakes;" enforcer of policy decision;" and "administrative operator."[16]

George warns however that with these additional functions, the National Security Adviser might incur "role conflict that will eventually undermine the effectiveness with which he performs his basic custodial functions." Once he becomes an adviser-advocate the National Security Adviser risks undercutting his impartiality regarding the information and advice the president receives. If he becomes a policy spokesman and policy enforcer, he might resist the "timely and objective reevaluation of ongoing policy" because of a personal commitment to the status quo. The watchdog role may undermine his obligation as an honest broker the more he seeks to promote the president's power. Lastly, assuming operational duties for the president, such as diplomatic initiatives, policy research, and mediation, is not only time consuming but also a distraction from his primary duty as custodian-manager. While the National Security Adviser works for the president, he should point out that these additional functions can create role conflicts and work overload—a manifestation which engulfed Bundy.[17]

George's insights are noteworthy. The President has the full array of advisers from the departments and agencies, so the National Security Adviser must guard against becoming the perceived éminence grise of the Administration. Such an outcome not only undermines his role as honest broker, but it may also detract from his primary responsibilities. The National Security

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[16] Alexander L. George, *Presidential Decision Making in Foreign Policy: the Effective Use of Information and Advice* (Boulder Colorado: Westview Press, 1980), 195-196.

[17] Ibid, 196-197.

Adviser's primary responsibility is to ensure the NSC mechanism functions properly so the president receives pertinent information for decision-making. He should chair the clearing house board to ensure written products are punctual and well staffed.[18] He should manage the long-term policy agenda and the Council agenda, as well as running NSC meetings. As Powell and other National Security Advisers experienced, the president may want his National Security Adviser to participate in diplomatic initiatives and help prepare the president for trips abroad and meetings with foreign leaders.[19] But, the National Security Adviser should remind the president that the secretary of state can perform these functions as well, ameliorating the jealousies, perceived slights, and insecurities that past secretaries of state have experienced. While the president has the right to overrule the National Security Adviser's concerns, he will at least remain sensitive to incursions on the secretary of state's authority.

In regards to public relations, Lake and Carlucci judged that while the National Security Adviser will interact with the news media, he must remain wary of becoming a policy spokesman because it politicizes his position; this might prompt Congress to demand confirmation hearings for subsequent National Security Advisers, which will undermine the National Security Adviser's special relationship with the president. Lake said that if the National Security Adviser must interact with the media in which foreign policy is discussed, he should coordinate his remarks with the secretary of state beforehand. Similarly, Except for background information, NSC staffers should not interact with the press.[20] Eisenhower forbade his National Security Advisers from interacting with the press because of the aforementioned pitfalls. He relied on the

[18] *The National Security Council Project*, 34.
[19] Powell, "The PNSA Advisor: Process Manager and More," 47.
[20] *The National Security Council Project*, 14-16, 44-45.

Executive Branch Liaison Office and the Press Secretary to insure White House "messages" reached the appropriate audiences.

Providing Essential Information for Informed Decision-making

While the president sets the overarching foreign policy and national security strategy agenda, the National Security Adviser spurs the NSC mechanism into action. In McFarlane's view, during the first year, the National Security Adviser must "establish policy, build interdepartmental groups, and create the habit of coordinating the processes put in place."[21] Powell noted that in his role as processor manager, the National Security Adviser

> must insure that the president gets full, objective, coherent, and balanced recommendations on issues he must decide. . . . [He] cannot allow end runs. He cannot allow unpleasant information to be shunted aside. He cannot allow minority views to be ignored because they do not reflect the consensus view. . . . [He] must always ensure that the president gets the full range of objective and subjective information to make his decision.

In short, Powell described the National Security Adviser as the "vigilant truant officer of the Washington schoolhouse," ensuring the government bureaucracy implements the "president's decisions in the spirit that he intended." [22] Here, an Operations Coordinating Board could be of value to the National Security Adviser.

Establishing a functioning NSC mechanism is only the beginning of the National Security Adviser's job, which requires unremitting work. One of the conundrums the National Security Adviser faces is the constant attention to changes in the strategic environment. While the Nation-

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[21] McFarlane Interview. *The National Security Council Project*, 49.

[22] Powell also warned that policy papers must not succumb to the lowest common denominator or "suffer from an absence of tone and tint or the emotional flavor of an issue." Powell, "The PNSA Advisor: Process Manager and More," 46.

al Security Adviser assists the president in gaining greater understanding of foreign affairs, the nature of the strategic environment is too volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) to render any assurances for the attainment of the desired strategic effects. Thus, the National Security Adviser must ensure the clearing house board is capable of conducting a strategic appraisal as a starting point for strategy development.[23]

The president has at his disposal other organizational devices to save his National Security Adviser from conflict roles and work overload. A Staff Secretariat can provide essential liaison with the Pentagon, intelligence agencies, and combatant commands as well as performing daily intelligence briefings and tracking near term national security issues. An Executive Branch Liaison Office under the tutelage of the Press Secretary can act as the policy spokesman for the Administration. A Congressional Liaison Office can adequately liaise with Congress for consultations and White House meetings. The secretary of state and special envoys can conduct diplomatic missions, speaking on behalf of the president just as effectively as the National Security Adviser. In short, the National Security Adviser needs to return to basic duties rather than a presidential Jack of all trades.

The National Security Adviser must ensure the White House Situation Room does not intrude into the traditional authorities of the government bureaucracy. While the Situation Room's access to raw data (i.e., embassy cables, tactical intelligence, and routine traffic), departmental intelligence reports, and secure communications links can be useful for the president, it creates the conditions for White House micromanagement of subordinates. Due to its communications

[23] For the strategic appraisal process, see Harry R. Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional: Strategic Thinking and the Strategy Formulation in the 21st Century* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2008), 116-134.

capabilities, the Situation Room can transform the White House into an operational command center, intruding on operational and tactical activities. Further, its ability to collect raw data is dangerous because it can give the White House the illusion of understanding the international environment. The study of raw data should remain the purview of departments and agencies, whose analysts convert into studies with context, relevance, and meaning. Moreover, the rationale for the Situation Room was dubious. Its establishment reflected Kennedy's mistrust of "experts" after the Bay of Pigs fiasco. However, its existence would not have prevented the Bay of Pigs operation, and its subsequent use did not prevent self-delusion from setting in regarding progress in the Vietnam conflict. Again, the Situation Room has good uses, but some activities must stop.

Honest Broker

The National Security Adviser must preserve the role of honest broker because, as John Burke assessed, it yields more positive presidential decisions than its absence. In Burke's view, "The presence of honest brokerage facilitates an informed and balanced deliberative process. The Eisenhower-era advisors provide early evidence of this."[24] Scowcroft concluded that honest brokerage is essential to the functioning of the NSC mechanism: "If you are not the honest broker, you don't have the confidence of the members of the NSC. If you don't have their confidence, then the system doesn't work, because they will go around you to get to the president and then you fracture the system." Accordingly, the National Security Adviser must gain the trust of the

[24] John P. Burke, *Honest Broker?: The National Security Advisor and Presidential Decision Making* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2009), 7-8, 279, 281.

principal advisers that he will fairly represent their views. This is the most effective way to foster harmony in the NSC.[25]

Colin Powell recognized that the "derived authority" of the National Security Adviser cannot help but foster substantial political power because of his proximity and access to the president as well as his confidence. Derived authority extends to the departments and agencies once trust and confidence are established.[26] As such, Powell affirmed the National Security Adviser and the NSC Staff

> must also act to enhance the role, prestige, power, and influence of the members of the National Security Council and, particularly that of the secretary of state and the secretary of defense. It is in the best interest of the United States for the secretary of state and the secretary of defense to be seen as the principal players in the execution of the president's foreign policy. . . . It is in the best interest of the foreign policy of the United States for the world to see a secretary of state and a secretary of defense who are solidly supported by the entire Washington bureaucracy; who are armed with coherent, consistent, [and] well-support positions.[27]

However, the National Security Adviser is not a passive honest broker in the process. Carlucci and Powell explained that the National Security Adviser serves as a conflict resolver with cabinet officers. Whether in a meeting or through correspondence, the National Security Adviser delineates the arguments (i.e., policy splits) encompassing a policy issue and includes his own views. The tacit understanding among the Cabinet officers is that the National Security Adviser will fairly present their views to the president but will also include his own views as well. In the process, the National Security Adviser makes it clear that Cabinet officers have the

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[25] *The National Security Council Project: Oral History Roundtables: The Role of the National Security Advisers*. Center for International and Security Studies at Maryland and The Brookings Institution (October 25, 1999), 2.

[26] Powell wrote that derived authority with departments rests on the degree department secretaries and agency heads senior officials accept his decisions without trying end-runs to the President. Powell, "The PNSA Advisor: Process Manager and More," 47.

[27] Ibid, 46.

"right to appeal" once the president makes a decision. In Powell's view, the National Security Adviser should not avoid conflict among Cabinet officers; rather he should "let collisions take place." In this manner, the National Security Adviser can "grind the issue down and get it into a form so that you could present the president with two acceptable alternatives. Either one of these would probably work, and you had already dumped out three or four multiple-choice that wouldn't work."[28]

This process that Powell described was similar to that which occurred in Eisenhower's Planning Board. The distinction is collisions occurred among Planning Board members, who represented the views of their parent organizations and their Cabinet bosses. Out of this process, policy issues were burnished into finely honed policy papers to include concise courses of action and policy splits for NSC consideration. Eisenhower and G. H. W. Bush enjoyed participating in the debate of these points with their principal advisers because it helped them with their intellectual process.[29]

Whether the president or the National Security Adviser likes it or not, collisions among principal advisers are unavoidable as Zbigniew Brzezinski observed:

> Over time the secretary of state or the secretary of defense in every recent administration has become a propagator of his own department's parochial perspective, even to the detriment of the broader presidential vision. Every president needs some arrangement that helps him develop policy and strategy, coordinate decision making, supervise policy implementation, provide him with personal advice that keeps his own presidential perspective and interests in mind, and articulates the policies he is pursuing.[30]

Under these circumstances as Anthony Lake explained, the National Security Adviser

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[28] *The National Security Council Project*, 2; Appendix C: Interview with General Colin L. Powell, *The National Security Council Project*, 51-52.

[29] Powell Interview, *The National Security Council Project*, 57.

[30] Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The NSC's Midlife Crisis," *Foreign Policy*, no. 69 (Winter 1987-88), 94.

should remain apolitical and remain in the background during White House meetings, being careful not to "openly challenge" the president's principal advisers. Aside from representing everyone's views in a balanced manner, the NSC must never "twist or block intelligence" from the president due to the potential serious consequences of the president acting on bad intelligence.[31]

In Lake and Carlucci's opinion, the secretary of state is perhaps the most sensitive regarding his relation with the president, especially if the president wants to control foreign policy directly from the White House. The National Security Adviser must ensure no sense of rivalry between the secretary of state and the National Security Adviser manifests—a prevalent problem which cuts across all Administrations. Hence, as Walt Rostow viewed the relationship, the National Security Adviser acts as "the bridge between the president and the secretary of state." Frank Carlucci observed that occasionally, the president will want to use the National Security Adviser as an emissary or become involved in diplomatic negotiations, which creates tensions; but the National Security Adviser works for the president, ensuring his interests are represented directly. As a rule though, the president should confer with the secretary of state on all manners involving foreign policy.[32] In those instances in which rivalries disrupt harmony within the Administration, other devices are needed. For instance, in the Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan Administrations, the National Security Adviser hosted informal lunches or breakfasts with the secretaries of state and defense in order to resolve differences and mitigate rivalries. Attuned to the sensitivities of the secretary of state, Robert McFarlane made it a practice to inform Secretary

[31] *The National Security Council Project*, 6.
[32] Lake and Carlucci. *The National Security Council Project*, 9, 11, 13.

George Schultz of back channel interactions between the White House and foreign leaders.[33]

The National Security Adviser must understand the art of strategic thinking to ensure it is infused in the policy formulation process. The National Security Adviser ensures the strategic appraisal is applied to major policy and strategy papers. Similarly, the National Security Adviser can guide NSC debate by touching on the five competencies of strategic thinking. Of course, very few presidents and National Security Advisers enter office with a background in strategic thinking. However, the military senior service colleges teach courses in strategic thinking, so select instructors could provide a special course on this discipline for an incoming National Security Adviser during the transition period, inviting former National Security Advisers to participate.

The National Security Adviser must not succumb to complacency regarding the functioning of the NSC mechanism. Management is a heuristic process, so the National Security Adviser must remain cognizant of flaws or persistent challenges in the system and seek improvements. The NSC mechanism must be a learning organization if it is to meet the challenges of the strategic environment. Hence, the National Security Adviser should encourage innovative ideas for reforms from all the stakeholders.

The NSC mechanism is largely the bailiwick of the National Security Adviser, so he has significant freedom on determining its design. Consequently, he should study former NSC mechanisms and interview NSC personnel of the former Administration as he puts together his organizational plan. The National Security Adviser must get the organizational design essentially right because the Administration will need to work with it for the next four years at least.

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[33] Appendix B Interview with Robert C. McFarlane, *The National Security Council Project*, 42-43, 47.

Concluding Thoughts

While President Kennedy capably managed the Berlin and Cuban Missile crises, this should not be the sole determinant in assessing the efficacy of his Presidency. Any large enterprise—whether a business venture, a military campaign, or foreign affairs—requires organization. Favorable outcomes are more often the result of preeminent organizational efficiencies and effectiveness. Of course, Constitutional checks and balances constrain intra-government efficiency, but this does not extend internally to each branch of government. Accordingly, Eisenhower designed the NSC mechanism—and the Executive Office of the President—to optimize organization. His mechanism sought to draw on and integrate the expertise of the government bureaucracy and outside experts for NSC deliberation. It sought to assist departments and agencies with the coordination and implementation of policy decisions. It sought to ensure officials were educated on the policies so the Administration could speak with one voice. It cultivated relationships with congressmen and ensured legislative proposals were well staffed and logically presented for legislation. Eisenhower used the Council to consider everyone's views, exercise persuasion, make decisions, and issue strategic guidance. Lastly, his NSC mechanism provided him with analyses which stimulated his strategic thinking process. While the NSC mechanism served his needs, it was structured to assist future presidencies as well.

Abbreviations

ADST	Association For Diplomatic Studies And Training
CCOHC	Columbia Center for Oral History Collection
DDEL	Dwight D. Eisenhower Library
DOSOH	Department of State Office of the Historian
FRUS	Foreign Relations of the United States
JFKL	John F. Kennedy Library

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